

# ALWAYS THE HORIZON: FORCES, FUTURITIES, AND THE CHURN OF WHITE NATIONALISM

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“I am a child of the horizon. A broken remnant of the Aryan. An aspect of Being. Or as Mussolini put it, ‘a feeling’” (Murdoch 2021, 6). So begins the narrative of *Always the Horizon*, an enigmatic novel written in 2021 by a pseudonymous author named Murdoch Murdoch who had previously amassed a huge fanbase around their animated series that fuses neo-Nazi ideology and esoteric White nationalism with 4chan meme culture and metaphysical philosophy. *Always the Horizon* does much the same, resulting in what one fan aptly describes as “*The Pilgrim’s Progress* filtered through Nietzsche, Heidegger, Evola, Hitler, and anime” (Dominique 2023). Throughout the novel, the book’s protagonist pledges to always “look out at the horizon,” refusing to have “our eyes here on the grave, fixed on what was, [which] will only obstruct our gaze and the pursuit of what can be” (Murdoch 2021, 2). He declares that this ideal—*looking out at the horizon*—is “the most Aryan of all principles” (Murdoch 2021, 2). To be White is to feel oneself in relation to the horizon.

Across the topologies of contemporary White nationalism and neo-fascism, “the trope of horizons” has started to emerge as a far-right device “for viewing the near future and pushing the envelope of change,” as Alexandra Minna Stern (2019) notes in her study of White ethnonationalism (45). Stern (2019) writes that these discourses are increasingly calling upon “‘long time horizon’ philosophies that can induce distinct (meta)political possibilities” (45). Alexander Dugin (2024), for example, expounds on the “unknown horizons of a post-liberal future” (n.p.).

Jason Reza Jorjani (2020) argues that White people possess a “genetic predisposition to . . . a horizon-expanding will to transcend all apparent limitations” (81). Ward Kendall’s self-described “new vision for the White nationalist movement” adopts the trope in its title, *Beyond This Horizon: A White Nationalist Blueprint*. And, in a gleeful post to their Telegram channel, the neo-Nazi group “White Lives Matter” proclaims, “The horizon that lies ahead is luminous with promise” (February 27, 2024).

One particularly striking instance of the horizon trope comes from the epigraph to *The White Nationalist Manifesto*, written in 2018 by popular far-right author (and self-proclaimed White nationalist) Greg Johnson. The epigraph depicts an imaginary dialogue between a student and what Johnson (2108) derisively calls a “multiculturalist” teacher:

Teacher: A society in which all races and cultures live together in peace and harmony is just over the horizon.

Student: What’s the horizon?

Teacher: An imaginary line that always recedes as one approaches it. (1)

Intentionally or not, this dialogue reveals a polyvalent sense of the horizon within White nationalist rhetoric. On one hand, Johnson (2018) frames the “multicultural horizon” as dangerous insofar as it strategically produces constant action toward the unreachable (and ambiguous) goal of total racial harmony. On the other hand, he explicitly argues that in order to “unify as many whites as possible around the idea of the ethnostate” (2018, 81), strategic ambiguity and receding horizons are key. “The more specific our proposals for the ethnostate,” writes Johnson (2018), “the less likely we are to get any kind of ethnostate at all” (81). For Johnson, the very thing that makes the “multiculturalist horizon” so dangerous is also what makes it a powerful tool for White nationalism.

Something about the horizon has punctured my usual lines of thought. Its refrain snapped something into place as a *problem* for me—or, rather, as a series of problems—in thinking about structures of White nationalism. Like many others, I’d primarily come to see such structures as shaped by (and, in turn, shaping) what Casey Kelly (2020) describes as White victimhood that cannot possibly experience “social change as anything other than a catastrophic loss” (3). Loss narratives

like the “Great Replacement” theory imagine that something is being “taken away by—or given to—people who do not deserve it” (Miller-Idriss 2022, 12). Loss was the message of Donald Trump’s 2017 inaugural address, for example, which rages against all that had been “ripped” from our country, “disappear[ing] over the horizon.” As Toni Morrison (2016) put it in her essay “Making America White Again,” written just days after the 2016 election, the power of these narratives is their ability to instill a “kind of terror that makes knees tremble” when thinking about the collapse of White privilege. Their currency is not so much anger, Morrison writes, but the terrifying fear of what might be lost. Living in the current moment, it’s impossible not to see the power of loss narratives as they shape a sense of White victimhood.

At the same time, it has become increasingly hard for me not to also see different forms of White nationalism registering. Alongside politics of despair, other modes of attunement seem to navigate *away* from loss, lack, and absence. Rather than anchored in lack, these forms are oriented more toward what appears like hope, futurity, and even utopianism. To be clear, what I’m signaling here is not (only) the explicit contents of White nationalist narratives, but rather something at a more structural level—something that operates through emergent forces, affects, and intensities. Furthermore, though this emergent structure shifts attention away from loss, it is not simply a reversal of loss into optimism (e.g., “The horizon that lies ahead is luminous with promise.”) Rather, its “hope” is the felt-sense of a “potential *next* [that] is never consumed in any given event,” where the “present is shadowed by a remaindered surplus of indeterminate potential for a next event running forward back to the future, self-renewing” (Massumi 2010, 53). This structure—what I describe as White nationalism’s horizon—is thus thoroughly implicated in the realm of the virtual.

To describe the horizon in terms of the virtual is not to turn away from very real and material aspects of White nationalist violence. We are constantly pelted by impacts and effects of felt realities that, as Brian Massumi (2020) puts it, are “so superlatively real that [they] translate into a felt certainty about the world” (55). However, as a form of virtuality, the horizon is “not contained in any actual form assumed by things or states of things” but instead “runs in the transitions from one form to another” (Massumi 2021, 135). Functioning as a form of *connectibility*, the White nationalist horizon might also be described alongside notions of turning, troping, and what we might call *the churn*. With etymological roots linking movement and kernel/seed/core (*cyrnel*), churning is the constant movement of transitions that never settle into a fixed form; churning is never consumed by any single transformation. Churning is an in-betweenness, unfulfillable and, consequently, always “in the emergence of new potentials” (Massumi 2021, 134).

Churning thus evokes ways in which the horizon links a “next” with a forever “not yet,” orienting subjects within a perpetual *infra-moment* of the virtual that will never fully transpire (Massumi 2021; Seigworth and Gregg 2020). An always horizon.

Giving an account of the White nationalist horizon is, however, yet another problem. Engaging with the “superlatively real” forces that exist in (and as) transitions means that we must adopt analogical models for reading and writing. One such methodology is found in José Esteban Muñoz’s (1996) approach to *working through* ephemeral evidence, which does not attempt to represent the thing itself, but rather what’s left behind of what has transpired: “traces, glimmers, residues, and specks of things” ( 10). It’s along these lines that my inquiry draws from an admittedly strange (and ephemeral) archive—one that leaves behind traces and residues of forces that persist in White nationalism today. More specifically, I *work through* a history of White nationalist bookstores that operated across the United States during the 1960s and 1970s. My inquiry revolves around several vignettes of six different bookstores that existed between 1962 and 1978. With their their dense and fragmented assemblages—churning accumulations of names, dates, acronyms, shifting alliances, places, events—these bookstores serve as useful devices to track White nationalism’s infrastructural trajectories. They give us one way into the problem of the horizon.

This archive may seem like an odd choice, especially since their accounts are stories of abject failure. Many of the bookstores opened and closed within a few years, and their histories are closely tied to the broader failings of the groups they were affiliated with. Yet, this account also reflects the way in which “the churn—clubs launching, collapsing, merging, and rebranding—is built into” White nationalist history, as journalist Daniel Walters’ writes (2023). More significantly, their accounts of failure also signal how utopic forces of futurity can enact failure as a feature, not a bug. I also find these histories useful for the way they leave behind traces of “something real” that orients subjects toward a perpetual threshold of a *next* and a *not yet*. The following vignettes are thus offered as a critical and creative means of reckoning with the White supremacy that continues to shape broader horizons of publicness. It is also a way to *work through* the ongoing problems of White nationalism’s ever-emergent horizon of violence.

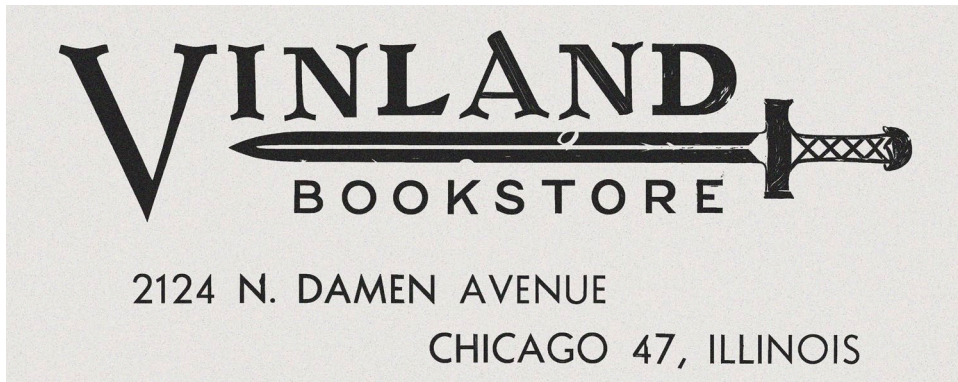
## I.

VINLAND BOOKSTORE, 1962, AMERICAN NAZI PARTY, CHICAGO  
THE WHITE BOOKSTORE, 1964, THE WHITE PARTY OF AMERICA,  
WASHINGTON D.C.

Something spills out from the stories that follow. They exist on a threshold of sorts, hovering around a feeling of a horizon that is both just within and just outside of reach. Accounts of the White nationalist atmospheres of the early 1960s are punctuated with an incipient sense of potentiality, of being on the edge of something *real*, though always seeming to fall short of grasping whatever was waiting. The stories are full of stumbles and falls, collapses and breakdowns, followed by renewed attempts to get it right. Pervading these scenes is a perpetual sense of near-graspability, a mode of attunement that pulls attention away from the constant disappointment of *this time* and instead looks toward a *next time* that will be a *final next time*. This sense arguably permeates the story of the American Nazi Party (ANP), which had earned the dubious distinction of being one of the best-known White nationalist groups in the country by the early 1960s. The story of the ANP is a story of churns: its various stumbles and breakdowns spun out a significant number of other White nationalist groups and figures throughout the 60s and 70s. It is a story of many *next times*. And so, to begin an inquiry into the White nationalist horizon, it makes sense to begin in the middle of this particular churn.

When George Lincoln Rockwell founded the American Nazi Party in 1959, he had a penchant for knowing how to attract attention. The son of vaudeville performers, Rockwell leaned heavily on over-the-top theatrical tactics to grab publicity for the ANP. In short time, Rockwell proved successful in his attempts to attract attention, whether it was by wearing Swastika armbands or driving a VW van painted with the phrase "Hate Bus" across the country. Thank to these tactics, it only took a few years to grow the ANP from a single operation in Arlington, Virginia to multiple chapters across the country. So, in 1962, when the party opened the Vinland Bookstore in Chicago, it seemed downright unremarkable compared Rockwell's typical ploys. What made Vinland Bookstore noteworthy, however, was his decision to name Matt Koehl as bookstore manager.

Koehl's assignment to the Vinland Bookstore was symbolic and provocative on multiple fronts. He had only recently joined the ANP after resigning from his official position in the National States Rights Party (NSRP), an organization that launched violent attacks on anti-segregation and civil rights efforts. Yet, while the NSRP's discourse was infused with antisemitism, it was extremely outspoken



against the ANP's pro-Nazi discourse. For his part, Rockwell argued that NSRP leaders were simply too cowardly to admit their own pro-Nazi sentiments, a sign of the group's weakness. The Vinland Bookstore's announcement thus gave Rockwell yet another opportunity to boast that men like Koehl had finally "seen the uselessness" of the NSRP's "disguised Nazi-ism" (Rockwell 1962, 6).

For years, the ANP and the NSRP traded jabs back and forth, often framing the situation as (metaphorical) matters of life and death. In a pamphlet titled "Swastika Smearbund," for example, NSRP member James Warner (1961) declared that "the Nazi party is a dead issue and should not be revived" (17). In response, Koehl (1962) penned an angry open letter to NSRP leaders, fuming that "you and I both knew, from the very beginning, that we were NAZIS, . . . [but] you said, and I believed you, that it was suicide to come out and admit this openly" (15). Koehl (1962) painted the NSRP as a moribund enterprise and declared that Rockwell would "spark new Life [into the cause] by the fight he has been putting up" (15). While the two groups continued to trade back-and-forth barbs about who was truly bringing "life" to the movement, the discourse suggested a more fundamental question stumping both groups: how to achieve something *real*.

For many ANP members, this question became more pressing as time wore on and there seemed to be little in what they considered to be real achievements. After years of public stunts—picketing theaters showing interracial romance films, handing out flyers to indifferent passersby—members began to feel disillusioned. "Our men are action-minded. There's nothing to do but pass out literature,"

grumbled ANP member Ralph Forbes (1966), “They grow restless” (20). The Vinland Bookstore also seemed to offer little more than an empty gesture, failing to attract much attention, even from the local press. In 1963, only a year after its grand opening, the Vinland closed. Shortly thereafter, twenty-six ANP members resigned from the party, publishing an open letter complaining that despite having “suffered, starved, and froze” for the cause, it had accomplished nothing (Schmaltz 1999, 196).

One of the twenty-six members who resigned was Karl Allen, a former ANP leader who believed he could achieve the success that the ANP and NSRP had failed to accomplish. In 1964, Allen launched his own party—the White Party of America (WPA)—and announced that its centerpiece would be the White Bookstore, located in Washington, D.C. Many of Allen’s associates echoed the sentiments of right-wing publisher Conde McGinley, who told Allen that he would “need more than luck having a racist book store which is just three blocks from the White house” (1964). Nevertheless, Allen seemed confident that his different approach would succeed where others had failed. In contrast with Rockwell’s performative shock tactics, Allen dispensed with Nazi symbolism, placing ads for the White Bookstore in mainstream publications that simply listed “Books, new and used, bought and sold,” or “Right Wing Reading: Books, Magazines, Papers.” In correspondences with publishers, Allen carefully tailored the bookstore’s image to fit different audiences, presenting it as a primarily “patriotic” enterprise to anti-communist publishers who may have been reluctant to be associated with an explicitly racist operation. Meanwhile, for publishers who were sympathetic with the White nationalist cause, Allen (1964) proudly described the shop as “a White racist bookstore, . . . featuring racist and patriotic newspapers, magazines, and books.”

Allen (1964) also leaned heavily on themes of action in WPA party literature, taking care to distance the WPA from “feeble” efforts that “channel patriotic drive and energy into blind alleys or into impotent attempts to resurrect or justify the dead past.” Allen (1964) repeatedly emphasized that the WPA was action-oriented, insisting that “If you join THE WHITE PARTY, you must be prepared to do something” . This included helping the bookstore succeed by “stocking the shelves with good, racist, White Man’s reading,” or “send[ing] the books gathering dust on your shelves at home” (1964). Elsewhere potential members were told that they “may be asked to distribute pamphlets in the streets, to picket, to speak to a group, to manage a meeting, to talk to your neighbors about the Party.” While this list of actions was not much different from what ANP and

other parties were already doing, Allen pushed the idea that the WPA was an organization destined to “channel drives and energy” into a new future marked by action and vitality (n.p.). Nevertheless, while the White Bookstore managed to stay in business longer than Vinland, it too eventually closed as the White Party of America disintegrated.

BOOKS  
NEW AND USED  
BOUGHT AND SOLD

**The White Bookstore**  
**1216 New York Ave., N. W.**  
**Washington, D. C.**

These two accounts reflect a kind of futurity that is evoked by the horizon. Here I return to José Esteban Muñoz (2009) and his description of a utopian queer horizon: yes, an admittedly strange parallel to draw with White nationalism’s anti-utopianism. As Muñoz (2009) theorizes it, the anticipatory horizon of queerness resides not in a distant future but in a present moment that posits queerness “as something that is not yet here” ( 22). Queer futurity is thus a utopian project that leverages the queer horizon’s “not yet” as a way to escape the trappings of what is said to (already) be. It thus draws its generative potential from the unfulfillability of “not yet” as a capacity for doing things differently right now. The key to queer futurity’s utopianism lies precisely in a sensitization to the *not yet here’s* virtuality—a sensitization to that which will never fully eventuate, whatever may come. In contrast to the queer horizon’s *always-not-yet*, however, the White nationalist horizon shows up in the guise of a *final next time*: a horizon imagined as one that can be (and must be) fulfilled. While the White nationalist horizon is far from utopian, it possesses a similar capacity to sensitize toward what Brian

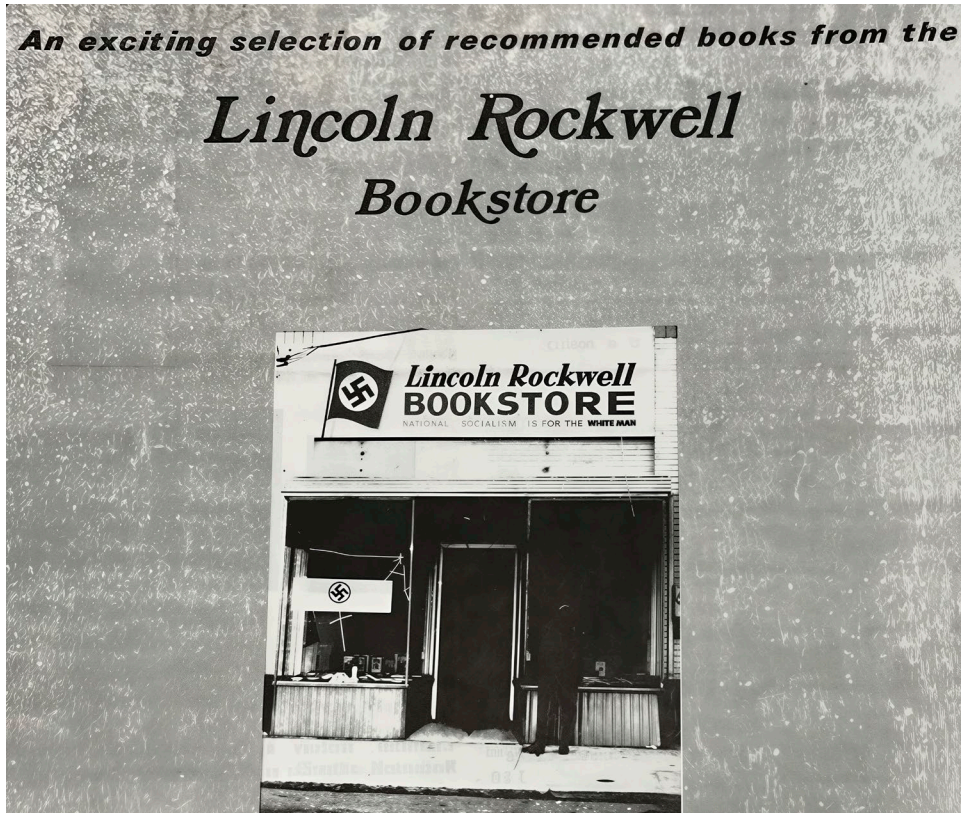
Massumi describes (2021) as the “felt momentum” of “a vector-feeling produced by the fusion of the fused past-present with an ‘aim’ at futurity” ( 180). The horizon’s constant iterations of *next time* point to the force of the virtual: “a force of existence: the press of the next, coming to pass (Massumi 2014, 55). Of course, insofar as the nearly-graspable is never capable of being grasped, any final next time is impossible.

*Life and death, success and failure, having and not having, real action and impotent efforts*—within these accounts, there’s a kind of inflection or attunement to such experiences as other than dialectical. Rather, they exist within the broader field of a White nationalist horizon: generative forces oriented toward futurity, equally operating in service of momentum. *The churn*. Consequently, while I certainly do not mean to suggest that the White nationalist horizon mirrors Muñoz’s queer futurity, there is something to be gleaned here about “belonging to the horizon” as a sensitizing force of momentum. Something is happening here around capacities that both sustain and accelerate White nationalist violence. While the individual accounts of two failed bookstores may not seem very significant, they do leave behind traces of capacities in flux and thresholds yet to be reached.

## II.

THE LINCOLN ROCKWELL BOOKSTORE, 1970, ARLINGTON,  
NATIONAL SOCIALIST WHITE PEOPLE’S PARTY  
WESTERN DESTINY BOOKSTORE, 1970, WASHINGTON DC,  
NATIONAL YOUTH ALLIANCE

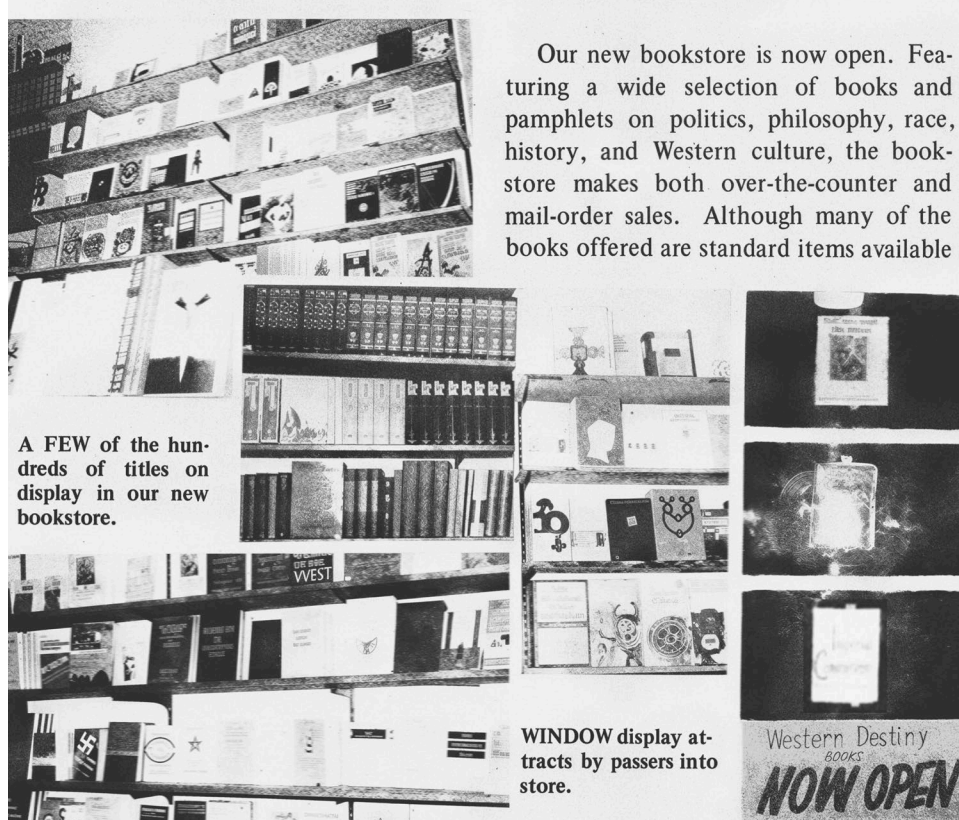
Other *next times* play out a bit differently in another set of histories. The first is that of the short-lived Lincoln Rockwell Bookstore, which is somewhat of a sad reboot of the Vinland Bookstore. Opened in 1970, the Lincoln Rockwell Bookstore was part of an effort to renew the faltering ANP, which had since been rebranded as the National Socialist White People’s Party (NSWPP). After Rockwell’s 1967 assassination by an aggrieved former member, Koehl assumed leadership and declared that the party was heading toward a new chapter that would finally achieve tangible success. As part of this effort, Koehl announced the opening of the Lincoln Rockwell Bookstore and named long-time party member Robert A. Lloyd as manager, a position that seemed to suit Lloyd (a self-professed “former beatnik”) quite well.



Not surprisingly, things soon fell apart. Members began openly complaining about Koehl's poor leadership, and Lloyd accused Koehl of deliberately trying to "sabotage . . . the country's only National Socialist Bookstore" in retaliation for Lloyd's own outspoken criticism of Koehl. In a heated letter to a friend, Lloyd wrote that "Koehl isn't going to assist the bookstore. In fact, he's doing everything he can to wreck the whole venture" (November 24, 1970). However, things took a turn when Lloyd found an ally in fellow bookstore worker William Luther Pierce, another disillusioned party member (and future author of *The Turner Diaries*). When Pierce finally decided he'd had enough of the NSWPP's failures, he published a lengthy statement to party members, complaining that "for more than a year now we have been standing on a threshold. We have not even begun building an organization with real revolutionary capabilities." Pierce bemoaned the lack of "real successes," which he believed were stymied by the party's "sole purpose of generat[ing] an artificial sort of publicity" rather than "actual activity." (Pierce 1970, 2). Continuing the churn, Pierce resigned from the NSWPP and instead embraced the promise of a (new) *next time*: Willis Carto's National Youth Alliance (NYA), an explicitly neo-Nazi organization with broad national reach.

I can't help but hear Pierce's statement registering a low-level attunement to the forces of actuality and potentiality. It emerges in the shape of a threshold problem—perhaps something akin to what Ernest Bloch (1968) calls the “substratum of the real seeth[ing] on a dialectical fire” between what is grasped and what is out of reach (282). The churn of *next time* continued as Pierce eventually persuaded Lloyd to abandon the Lincoln Rockwell Bookstore and open a new bookstore under the auspices of the NYA. The Western Destiny Bookstore, located on the ground floor of the NYA's Washington D.C. headquarters in Georgetown, was to be an important part of this rebeginning. With the failures of past movement efforts in mind, Lloyd was eager to make the Western Destiny Bookstore's success fully graspable by giving it a professional ethos that had none of the swastikas or pro-Nazi connotations of the Lincoln Rockwell Bookstore. Although it was thoroughly invested in promoting White nationalist material, Lloyd attempted to legitimate the bookstore through positive press attention, like a *Washington Post* profile that managed to lend some credence to the endeavor. (Valentine 1970, B1).

## Western Destiny Books



Our new bookstore is now open. Featuring a wide selection of books and pamphlets on politics, philosophy, race, history, and Western culture, the bookstore makes both over-the-counter and mail-order sales. Although many of the books offered are standard items available

A FEW of the hundreds of titles on display in our new bookstore.

WINDOW display attracts by passers into store.

Western Destiny  
BOOKS  
**NOW OPEN**

Meanwhile, the NYA took dramatic steps to distinguish itself from previous movement efforts. Echoing Karl Allen's earlier themes in White Party literature, NYA propaganda similarly amplified the theme of *essential action*. Unlike Allen's calls to action, however, the NYA was much more explicit about what *action* meant. In his many columns written for NYA periodicals, Pierce (1971) repeatedly emphasized that "real and meaningful revolutionary action" cannot be accomplished through "revolutionary rhetoric" (11). Real action, according to Pierce, meant more than

parading or picketing or writing a letter to your Congressman or even beating up pro-Viet Cong hippies. . . It is waging real warfare against the System, using whatever means are most effective in weakening, in crippling, in ultimately destroying the System. (1971, 11)

Explicitly spelling out what "waging real warfare" entailed, NYA's *Attack!* magazine featured a regular column titled "Revolutionary Notes," which aimed to "arm the patriot detailed information on urban guerilla warfare techniques" (1972, 13). These techniques included instructions for making bombs and the use of various guns and other weapons (1972, 7). In these ways, Pierce and the NYA helped cultivate an articulation between *real action* and *violent action*. Turning potentiality into actuality seemed to require an arsenal.

Of course, as these stories often go, neither the NYA nor the Western Destiny Bookstore managed to last beyond a few short years. According to some accounts, Lloyd turned over the bookstore inventory to a friend before returning to college and disappearing from the movement altogether. Meanwhile, Pierce's trajectory was much different. After a bitter feud with Carto, Pierce splintered the NYA to form the National Alliance—an organization that would eventually become one of the largest White nationalist groups in the world. Years later, in response to an interview question about the NYA's failure, Pierce (1978) remarked that "there just were not enough White Americans with a revolutionary outlook to enable us to challenge the System through direct action," which made calls to "Smash the System" an ultimately "hollow" effort. In the same interview, Pierce goes on to describe how the newly-formed National Alliance is "standing alone [as] the only viable future for our race." It was to be a final rebeginning (or so he thought).

Buried in these accounts is a kind of felt momentum, or a “fusion upon fusion that add up not to quantitatively more but to dynamically one: potentiation” (Massumi 2021, 180). They reflect accumulations of compounding forces that seem to both shut down and open up trajectories. We might therefore read these accounts alongside Deleuze’s (1986) reflections on the active/reactive forces that Nietzsche identifies within the will to power. As Deleuze (1986) writes, “an active force is one which goes to the limit of its consequences” (66). Meanwhile, an “active force separated from what it can do by reactive force thus becomes reactive” (66). In this sense, we could potentially describe Pierce’s threshold problem as an experience of diminished capacity—a reactivity issue. Yet, Deleuze (1986) identifies an ambiguity in Nietzsche’s thinking on reactive forces, as they also seem to go to the limits of what they can do. “If active force, being separated, becomes reactive,” writes Deleuze, “does not, conversely, reactive force, as that which separates, become active? Is this not its own way of being active?” (66). In this regard, he continues, reactive forces “separate us from our power but at the same time they give us another power, ‘dangerous’ and ‘interesting’” (66). While Deleuze (1986) makes clear that such reactive forces do not become truly active forces, he suggests that reactive–active forces are capable of generating a different sensibility—one that is felt as a momentum.

Deleuze (1986) describes the active power of reactive forces as dangerous (and interesting as a problem) in their ability to “bring us new feelings and teach us new ways of being affected” (66). In other words, the power to sensitize a body to new possibilities of being is what makes them so dangerous in their production-through-limiting force. Deleuze (1986) points to Nietzsche’s example from *Ecce Homo* of a sick body’s diminishment through reactive force. Though illness “narrows my possibilities and condemns me to a diminished milieu,” it also opens “a new capacity, it endows me with a new will that I can make my own, going to the limit of a strange power” (66). However, insofar as this new capacity—new will— is produced through destruction, it is essentially bound up with forms of violence.

So, while Lloyd and Pierce’s stories have nothing to do with any actual power or momentum, they register sensitizations to diminished capacities that generate new feelings and new forms of being affected. The narrowed possibilities that arise from a bookstore’s failure or a group’s breakdown are also the sources of new capacities and intensifications. The “real action” now made possible in a *next time* is birthed through the destruction of a failed last time. But this next *next time* also requires an intensification from that last time—an intensification of action that is sensed as real. It intensifies through the fusion upon fusion of “real action” and “violent action.” Consequently, these ephemeral histories reveal a disturbing

aspect of sustainability within White nationalism's violence: the intensifications of potentiation, the capacities generated through reactive-active forces, give violence a form of sustainability that is not easily countered through *limitation*. Furthermore, as I explore in final set of stories below, it is this intensification that continues to shape the trajectories of White nationalism today.

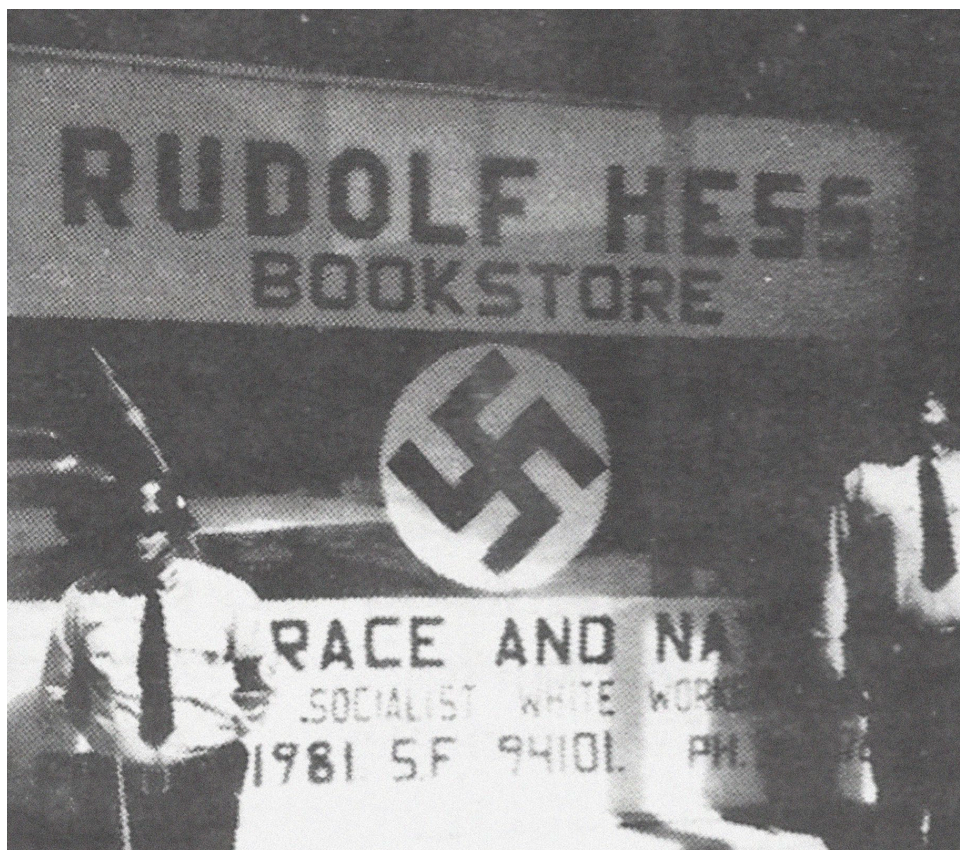
### III.

#### THE NEW ORDER BOOKSTORE, 1974, NATIONAL SOCIALIST LIBERATION FRONT, EL MONTE

#### THE RUDOLF HESS BOOKSTORE, 1977, NATIONAL SOCIALIST WHITE WORKERS' PARTY, SAN FRANCISCO

My last pieces of ephemeral evidence begin with a story of the comically short-lived Rudolf Hess Bookstore, which opened and closed in less than a single week. In 1977, the National Socialist White Workers Party (NSWWP) opened the Rudolf Hess Bookstore on Taraval Street in San Francisco, a predominantly Jewish neighborhood whose residents included many Holocaust survivors. The building's owner, Nathan Green, was himself a survivor, and he leased the space to the bookstore tenants with no knowledge of their organization or their intentions. Within days of moving in, the NSWWP covered the storefront with swastikas and other Nazi symbols. Employees dressed in SS stormtrooper uniforms stood at the entrance with Nazi anthems loudly blaring behind them. Neighborhood residents were understandably outraged, and Green immediately sought to evict the NSWWP. Before the eviction could even take place, however, residents decided to take matters into their own hands. On April 1, 1977, a crowd of around fifty people wielding tire irons, sledgehammers, and crowbars broke down the door of that small bookstore on Taraval Street in San Francisco. The group ransacked the shop, overturning shelves and setting fire to the books inside. Store workers escaped the mob by sneaking out a back door, but the store itself was completely destroyed. After a mere six days in business, the Rudolf Hess Bookstore closed for good.

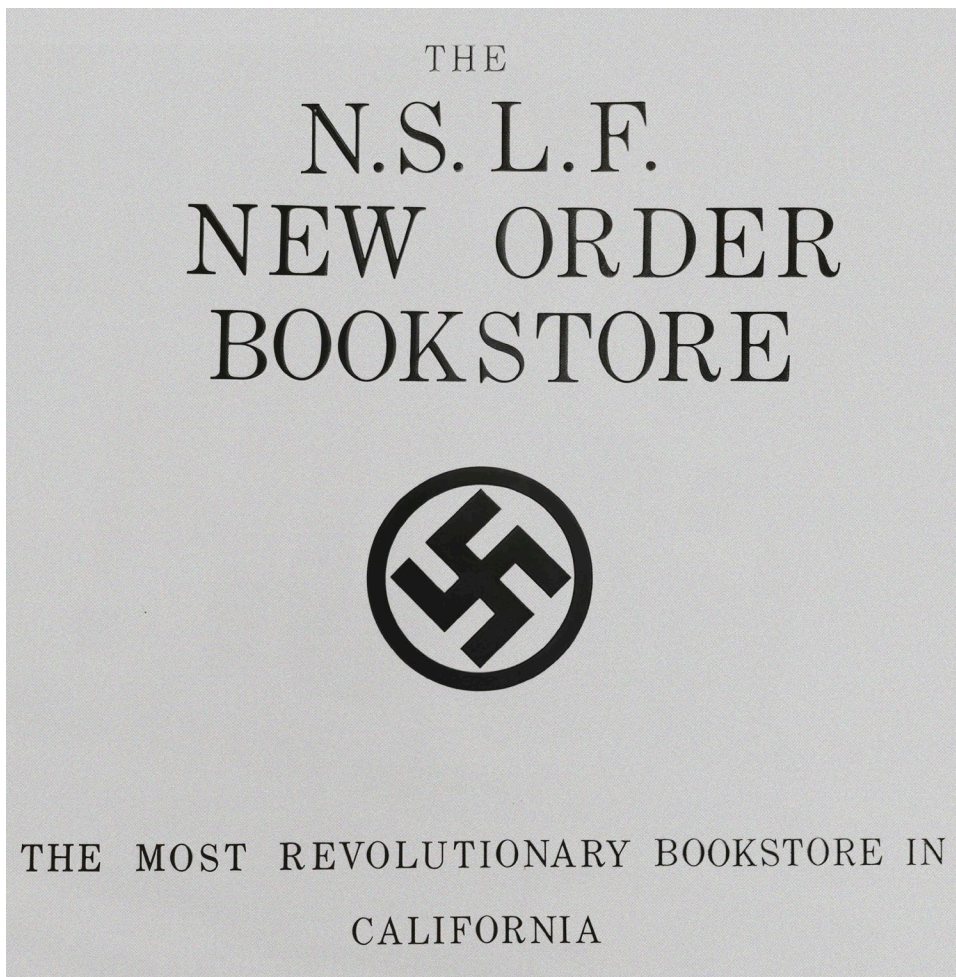
As word spread of the bookstore's destruction, there seemed to be a notable consensus across the movement that opening a neo-Nazi bookstore in a heavily Jewish neighborhood was a heedless mistake. Many of the criticisms echoed the same kinds of back-and-forth arguments over "dead pasts" in exchanges between

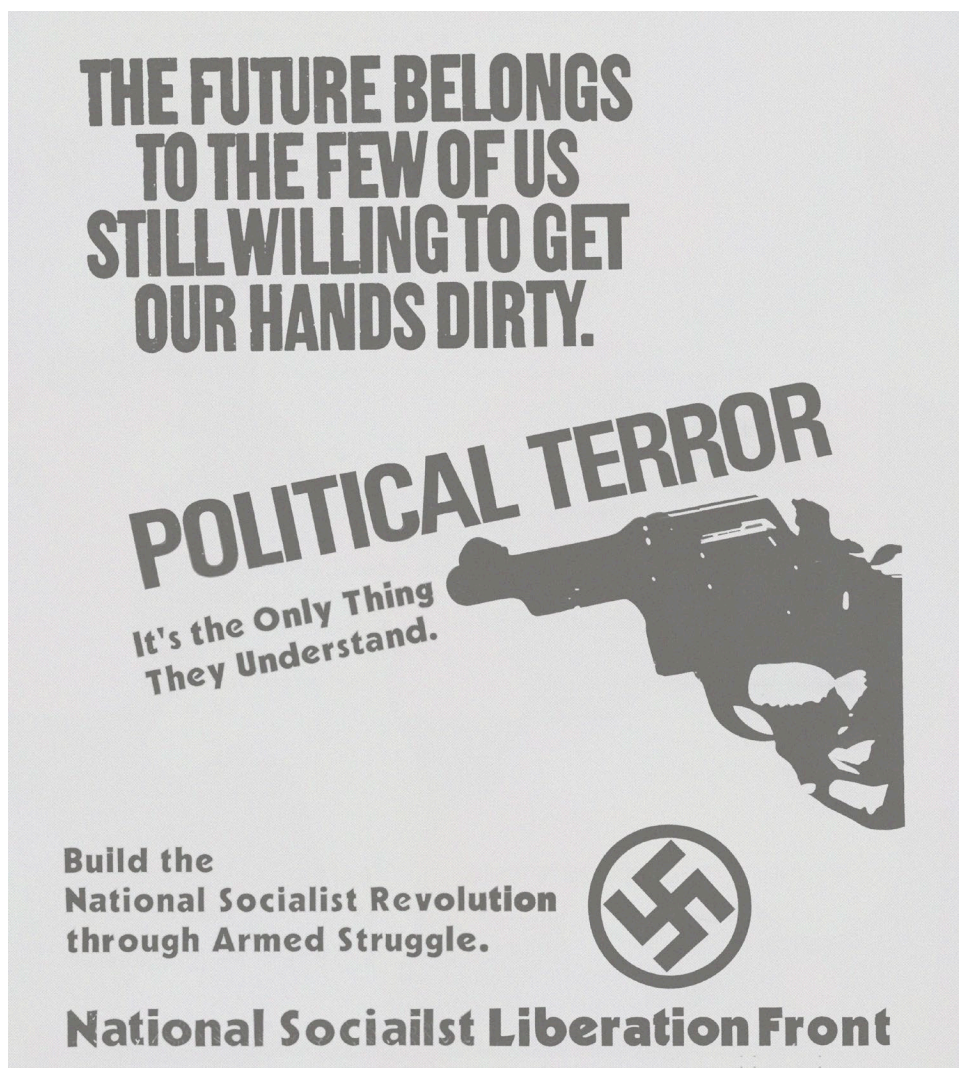


Rockwell and the NSRP. An article in *The White Power Report* condemned it as “an object lesson in ‘How Not to Do It,’” arguing that “publicity at any price” was a losing strategy. It accused the swastika-waving NSWWP as clinging to outdated tactics, wasting time on a “treadmill to oblivion” rather than pursuing meaningful progress (“Making” 1977, 30). Outside of the NSWWP, few White nationalists expressed much sympathy for the Rudolf Hess Bookstore’s “Hollywood Nazi” tactics.

For the most part, the Rudolf Hess Bookstore is largely forgotten in White nationalist discourse. It lives on as little more than a weird blip in movement history. The same can’t be said for another bookstore that opened roughly around the same time, however. In 1974, the New Order Bookstore—billing itself as “The most revolutionary bookstore in California”—opened in El Monte. The New Order was launched as part of the newly formed National Socialist Liberation Front (NSLF), led by former NSWPP/ANP member Joseph Tommasi. By the early 1970s, like many other NSWPP members, Tommasi (1974) described feeling “alienated by the . . . unrealistic outlook and tactics of the Party,” which he found too caught up in “fantasies and dreams” (3). In a letter to Willis Carto, Tommasi declared that

he was done with “exhausting all our efforts on building a bureaucracy with no ‘progress’ in sight.” He told Carto of his plans to form a new group that would be “an underground guerrilla organization in the hopes of striking at the heart of the enemy” (Letter to Carto, October 7, 1974). According to Tommasi (1974), the NSLF would achieve real outcomes through “armed struggle” as a way of “hurting the enemy through force and violence” (1974, 4). True to his word, the NSLF actually did carry out Tommasi’s vision, claiming responsibility for several targeted bombings of progressive bookstores and leftist organizations across Los Angeles between 1974 and 1975. Tommasi (1975) proudly boasted that these acts proved the NSLF was bringing something new to the movement, “something tangible” (1).





Plans for the New Order Bookstore were equally ambitious, to say the least. Operating hours were from 10 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week (1974, 3), a massive undertaking given the NSLF's limited resources. No surprise then, it soon proved impossible to keep the bookstore open for almost 100 hours a week, and Tommasi announced that staff shortages meant the New Order Bookstore would temporarily be open for only three to five days a week (1975, 3). In an effort to get the New Order back to running fourteen hours daily, NSLF begged supporters to relocate to El Monte to help staff the bookstore. A few loyal members did move across the country to help, but the New Order Bookstore would still falter not long after. The first snag happened when the bookstore's landlord terminated the group's lease after discovering their affiliation. The final hitch came after Tommasi himself was shot and killed during a fight in 1975.

While the New Order Bookstore did not last very long as “the most revolutionary bookstore in California,” however, the influence of both the NSLF and Tomassi have grown in profound and disturbing ways over the past fifty years. Perhaps most significantly, their idolized status owes a lot to the influence of James Mason’s *Siege*, a book that builds on Tommasi’s model of direct violence as a blueprint. *Siege*’s popularity skyrocketed around 2015 when it was adopted by White nationalist groups inspired by Tomassi’s call to “love the angels of destruction and disorder” and Mason’s idea of “FORWARD action” (as opposed to what he dismisses as “‘treadmill’ action”): both violently destructive at their core. Throughout *Siege*, Mason praises Tommasi as a symbol of White nationalism’s future, as he “personified the kind of man we MUST have: Those desiring to serve the Movement with great facility, and not pose around in gaudy uniforms as ‘Hollywood Nazis’” (2015, 62). For Mason, the NSLF’s commitment to “political terror” broke from the dead-end approaches that ended in short-lived fiascos like the the Rudolf Hess Bookstore’s demise.

Today, *Siege* is widely regarded as “a kind of neo-Nazi bible” and perhaps “the most venerated postwar work among neo-Nazis” (Johnson and Feldman 2023, 5). It’s also strongly associated with White nationalism’s increasingly accelerationist trajectories. Although violence has always been inherent within White nationalism, accelerationism marks a different orientation to violence and its horizon of futurity. As Kieran Aarons (2023) so perceptively notes, far-right accelerationism “configures a horizon that is not meant to be understood” but is rather meant “to function as a call to arms” (267). In Mason’s account, violent action is undertaken in service of the horizon, but not in order to clear the threshold. To this end, Mason (2015) writes:

Let us drop the dreaming, the faking, and the immature unreality, and recruit an army of the worst - if need be - in order to smash the Beast System and make way for the Ideal to dominate the planet and the universe ten thousand years from now. ANY action taken against the Enemy, no holds barred, is a heroic deed. (6)

Mason’s (2015) words here reflect what Aarons describes as *Siege*’s (2023) “pedagogy of the useless task [taken] to its ultimate nihilistic conclusion,” wherein “a radical negativity separates accelerationist violence from its ostensible revolutionary goals, resulting in a total suspension of any causal or strategic tie between means and ends” (267). Consequently, sensitizing to the horizon’s distance is a way to reimagine the possibilities for violent action.

Aarons points to the differences between how White nationalists like William Luther Pierce and accelerationists like Mason responded to Timothy McVeigh's terrorist acts in Oklahoma City, which were partly inspired by *The Turner Diaries*. According to Aarons (2023), Pierce "lamented the 'disorganized' character of McVeigh's terrorism and dreamed of using the Turner Myth to channel it back into disciplined cadre formations" (286). At the same time, Aarons (2023) continues, insofar as McVeigh's acts of destruction seemed to be (intentionally or not) disconnected from tangible goals, "*Siege celebrates it*" (286). Thus, while certain strains of White nationalism articulate *real action* and *violent action* in service of a *final next time*, accelerationist action seems more in line with how Umberto Eco (1995) describes fascism's "cult of action for action's sake," which sees pure action as "beautiful in itself."

I would certainly not be the first to point out here the parallels between the logic of accelerationism and Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) notion of the schizophrenic "universal producer," which makes no distinction "between producing and its product," as "the pure 'thisness' of the object produced is carried over into a new act of producing" (2004, 7). Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari's theories of accelerationism have been adopted by thinkers on both the left and right as a political strategy to "accelerate the uprooting" of a system rather than "await[ing] its demise at the hands of its own contradictions" (Mackay and Avanesian 2014, 4). While I disagree with scholars who argue that Deleuze and Guattari's accelerationism has become tainted by rightwing appropriation, there's something important to note here about how far-right accelerationism increasingly articulates "action for action's sake" with "something real." On this note, I find an online exchange between active members of the White nationalist Traditional Worker's Party particularly illuminating:

Kombat-Unit: Activism needs to feel rewarding, and when you're doing it right it is, but if it's just you banging your head against the wall and not feeling you get anywhere, I can get blackpilledness. Net nazism feels fucking bad man. It doesn't feel "real," in a tangible sense.

cr4ck3r: I want to do more real shit

Kombat-Unit: When I joined, I had this burning fire inside me, felt like I had to put it to good use or I'd burn myself. It felt so good to be able to direct it into something productive. (May 16, 2017)

While it lacks a certain eloquence, the expressed desire to "do more real shit" says a lot about sensitizations. "Net Nazism feels fucking bad" both because it "doesn't feel 'real' in a tangible sense" and because it doesn't direct "this burning fire inside" into "something productive" (i.e., "real shit"). Yet, it also doesn't seem

to matter that *doing more real shit* is disconnected from explicit goals or outcomes. The horizon here functions less as an endpoint and more as a site of intensification. *Doing real shit* as the churning force of production. It is a horizon that exists primarily as iterative points of propulsion.

## Always the Horizon

It's a strange phrase. There seems to be an adverb missing, since it would make more sense to say *on* the horizon, or *toward* the horizon. Yet, this strangeness reveals a fundamental aspect of White nationalism's horizon whose generative intensities are not temporal or spatial, but ontological. It points to the fusion of Whiteness with a feeling of oneself as an immanent relation to the horizon. Meanwhile, the stakes of this horizon are starkly articulated in Biko Mandela Gray's (2023) "Turning Away: White Nationalism and a Paraphenomenology of Darkness," where he points to the deep structural effects of White nationalism that shape broader horizons of publicness: As Gray writes:

If we only think of the actors, if we only think of White supremacy in terms of those who say and do disgusting things, then [we] mistake the map for the territory; for the *real* source of the violence is in its capacity to dominate our attention and occupy our headspace. Whiteness, White supremacy, White nationalism—call it whatever you like—shapes the horizon of what we can and should see. White people are beneficiaries of these horizons and this shaping. (2023, n.p.)

In order to understand the territory and not just the map, as Gray puts it, calls for us to continue probing the violence of/in structuring attention and feeling in ways that link "belonging to the horizon" with "an aspect of Being."

But, in making certain trajectories more legible, we are also better able to understand what *does* show up on the map. We see this structural force, for example, playing out in the pervasive violence of the far-right movement euphemistically referred to as MAGA. For all of Trump's boasts about *winning*, it's difficult to pinpoint exactly what he or his supporters are referencing in these claims. In fact, many of the explicit promises (like the border wall) Trump did promise turned

out to be failures. Yet, as we see above, failure is somewhat beside the point. What drives Trumpism and MAGA is precisely what I've described here as the churn: intensifications, activity, the felt sense of accumulating forces that open up a new capacity, endowing bodies with new wills that they can make their own, going to the limits of a strange power.

Of course, MAGA is simply one example of how different forms of White nationalism demonstrate a violent “capacity to dominate our attention and occupy our headspace, . . . shap[ing] the horizon of what we can and should see,” as Gray (2023) puts it. And while many of us are experiencing the profound terror of how our public horizons are being reshaped, we are also tasked with responding to these forces. Responding to the multiple trajectories of White nationalism's ongoing violence is a *problem*—or rather a series of problems—that requires us to think through forces of virtuality. Such response means reckoning with ways that Whiteness is inflected with different senses of futurities that are not only temporal but also bound up with belonging. Our own hopes for futurity must therefore be capable of critically and creatively *troping* the horizon, upholding its utopic potential and redirecting its violent force.

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