The Terminology of Contemporary National Socialist Online Communities

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With the advent of the Internet, spreading ideas and information has become easier than ever before. This did not escape the attention of white nationalist organizations, who have embraced the new medium as an unprecedented opportunity for their movement and quickly relocated most of their political activities online (Vysotsky 2002). The enormous social and communication power of the Internet allows white supremacist groups to facilitate to maintain communication and coordination between members, safely and easily expose potential recruits to their discourse, inspire criminal activities, organize events, and make profit by selling merchandise (Vysotsky 2002, 6-7).

The Internet provides its users with relative anonymity, and by nature resides somewhere in the legal grey area, due to unclear lines of jurisdiction. This has turned it into a haven for otherwise unacceptable, if not illegal, white supremacist discourse. However, even online one cannot espouse such extremely infamous a doctrine as National Socialism without being heavily stigmatized. Virtually everywhere outside of their own safe spaces neo-Nazis are condemned and mocked, just as the historical Nazis have become both a symbol of evil and a laughing stock. As individuals, the self-described White Power advocates have to cope somehow with their community's highly negative image present in the collective consciousness of the West. This is achieved through psychological processes. On the scale of the movement as a whole, white nationalists employ a variety of communication strategies, both among themselves and when interacting with the outside world, to advance their political agenda.

The purpose of this essay is to identify and explicate these strategies and processes by analyzing the terminology of contemporary National Socialist online communities, which have a notable tendency to produce large numbers of neologisms. It will be presented how the extremists can influence the socio-political landscape by introducing new words reflective of their worldview, and distorting the meaning of the pre-existing ones. For the sake of this essay, the

terms 'white supremacist' and 'National Socialist' (here abbreviated WS and NS respectively) are considered synonymous. While certainly not all white nationalist adhere to the NS ideology, there is a great amount of terminological overlap between various groups within the movement. Nonetheless, Ku Klux Klan, the Creativity Movement (World Church of the Creator), and Christian Identity will not be discussed as too distinct to be conflated with neo-Nazis. The data on National-Socialist argot was gathered from the websites below:

1. *Stormfront.org*, launched in 1995, the first (Klein 444) and the largest (430) WS website;
2. *Metapedia*, a WS alternative to Wikipedia, posing as a scientific and reliable source of information. It is an online encyclopedia "designed to offer Internet-users an educational outlet on tens of thousands of subjects, providing of course, a racial spin on their explanations" (Klein 437);
3. *WhitakerOnline.org*, the website of an influential American white nationalist Robert Whitaker, the author of "the Mantra", and its forum, *Bugs Swarm*.

PROJECTION

Each member of a WS community must frequently struggle to maintain a positive perception of themselves and to protect the reputation of their organization in the face of overwhelming amounts of criticism. To do so, they project the negative traits commonly attributed to them onto their detractors. According to *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*, this psychological process of projection is one of the Ego defense mechanisms, introduced by Sigmund Freud and Anna Freud, which are unconscious and "involve some degree of self-deception and distortion of reality" (Gross 675). The textbook *Psychology: Core Concepts* describes projection as follows:

When some personal attitudes or values cannot be fully accepted or owned up to, they can be directed outward as characteristics of others. (…) Someone who cannot accept harboring prejudiced views toward some outgroup comes to see others as prejudiced, sexist, or racist, for example. (Johnson et al. 432)

In the case of NSs, the act of projection is reflected in a number of their neologisms, which can be easily recognized as Nazi counterparts of commonly

accepted terms. A complete reversal of meaning takes place, as the extremists turn all the accusations back at the accusers. This process in demonstrated in (1):

(1a)

Term associated with WS:	Definition (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*):
'Anti-Semitism'	"Hostility toward or discrimination against Jews as a religious or racial group."
WS counter-terms:	Definitions (*Metapedia*):
'Resistance to Jewish supremacism'	"Tactics, strategies and praxis, by which gentiles work to live as free men, independent of the yoke of Jewish supremacy."
'Counter-Semitism'	"The position of opponents of Jewish supremacism and chauvinism in the dialectic of Jew-Gentile relations."
'Loxism'	"The Jews' hatred not merely of gentiles but specifically of white people."

(1b)

Term associated with WS:	Definition (*Oxford Dictionaries*):
'Anti-racism'	"The policy or practice of opposing racism and promoting racial tolerance."
WS counter-terms:	Definitions:
'Europhobia'	"'Fear of Europeans', also called anti-white racism, is characterized by an aversion to persons of European racial origin." (*Metapedia*)
'Anti-white'	"Advocate for a future which excludes white children; proponent of white genocide; seeks to silence pro-whites." (*B.U.G.S. Glossary*)

(1c)

Term associated with WS:	Definition (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*):
'Holocaust / Shoʾah'	"The systematic state-sponsored killing of six million Jewish men, women, and children and millions of others by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during World War II."
WS counter-terms:	Definitions (*Metapedia*):
'Holohoax' / 'Holocash' / 'Holofraud' / 'Holycause' / 'The Holocaust™' / 'Holocaust swindle'	"Folk accounts of Jewish casualties during World War II, disputed by revisionists."

'Holocaustianity' / 'Holocaust religion' / 'Shoaismus'	"A secular religion, created by proponents of Talmudism for gentile consumption since the late 20th century. It is based primarily upon enforced guilt and self-loathing over alleged Jewish casualties during World War II."
'Holocaust Industry'	"The systematic collection or extortion of funds from European countries by Jewish organizations purportedly on behalf of Jewish 'survivors' of the Third Reich detention centres in World War II."

(1d)

Term associated with WS:	Definition (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*):
'Racism' / 'Racialism'	"Any action, practice, or belief that reflects the racial worldview—the ideology that humans are divided into separate and exclusive biological entities called "races," that there is a causal link between inherited physical traits and traits of personality, intellect, morality, and other cultural behavioral features, and that some races are innately superior to others."
WS counter-terms:	Definitions (*Metapedia*):
'Racial denialism'	"The viewpoint that human races biologically or as natural groups don't exist."
'Ethno-masochism' / 'Ethno-nihilism'	"Self-hatred on an ethnic basis, a condition peculiar to postmodern whites after 1945, especially in the West."

(1e)

Term associated with WS:	Definition (*Oxford Dictionaries*):
'[White] privilege'	"A special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group."
WS counter-term:	Definition (*Metapedia*):
'Jewish privilege'	"The main privilege of the world."

(1f)

Term associated with WS:	Definition (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*):
'White supremacy' / 'White supremacism'	"Beliefs and ideas asserting the natural superiority of the lighter-skinned, or 'white,' human races over other racial groups."
WS counter-terms:	Definitions:
'Jewish supremacism'	"The belief, and promotion of the belief, that the Jews are superior to all others and should rightfully have control over non-Jews in all matters." (*Metapedia*)

'Multiracial supremacist' / 'Anti-'	"A bigot and hypocrite that has no tolerance or acceptance for [White Power movement] while demanding tolerance and acceptance for all, with the expectation of everyone to succumb to their demands." (Steelcap Boot)

From (1) we can discern information about the NS projected image of 'reality:' (1a) it is the Jews who are the real racists, whereas the so-called 'anti-Semitism' is merely a natural response to Jewish aggression; (1b) similarly, anti-racism is but a cover for hatred of white people; (1c) the Nazis are not guilty of genocide, since the Holocaust is a Jewish swindle designed to exert money and gather sympathy; (1d) those accused of racism are simply realistic about race, while the white accusers are self-hating and hypocritical race denialists; (1e) the Jews are the ones privileged, not whites; (1f) it is the Jews who are the true supremacists, and the self-described anti-racists seek to subjugate white people to other races.

Simultaneously with inventing counter-terms for the purpose of their semantic warfare, white supremacists also distort or even reverse the meaning of existing terms. A selection of examples is presented in (2):

(2a)

Commonly accepted term:	Definition:	WS redefinition (Steelcap Boot)
'Multiculturalism'	"The co-existence of diverse cultures, where culture includes racial, religious, or cultural groups and is manifested in customary behaviours, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking, and communicative styles." ("Defining 'Multiculturalism.'")	"The supremacist ideology demanding several different, active, identifiable cultures that are universally controlled by one governing body and set laws."
'Neo-Nazi'	"1 A member of an organization similar to the German Nazi Party. 1.1 A person of extreme racist or nationalist views." (*Oxford Dictionaries*)	"A term now in attempted used [sic] as a form slander against proud White people around the world, especially when expressing their pride publically. Some modern National Socialists openly accept and use the term "Neo-Nazi" with great pride."

(2b)

Commonly accepted term:	Definition:	WS redefinition (*B.U.G.S. Glossary*)
'Political correctness' [often referred to as 'semitical correctness' by WSs]	"The avoidance of forms of expression or action that are perceived to exclude, marginalize, or insult groups of people who are socially disadvantaged or discriminated against." (*Oxford Dictionaries*)	"The established anti-white religion Western Civilization submits to."
'[White] privilege'	see (1e)	"Europeans and/or European Americans simply existing and attempting to survive in their former homelands and in largely ethnically-homogeneous neighborhoods."

From (2) additional information about the NS projected image of 'reality' can be discerned: (2a) 'multiculturalism' is a plot to force racial diversity on white nations; the term 'neo-Nazi' is a slur used against those whites who refuse to be ashamed of their identity; (2b) 'semitical correctness' is a way of controlling white people by the Jews; 'white privilege' is fictional and serves to attack honest whites just living their lives. Although (2) contains only the examples of outright changing the meaning of a term to better suit it to WS worldview, it must be stressed that websites such as *Metapedia* tend to distort the meaning of most terms, only using somewhat subtler methods.

LEGITIMIZATION

Unlike individual members who project more or less unintentionally, the WS collectives deliberately attempt to legitimize their discourse in the public eye (Klein; Kompatsiaris and Mylonas; Vysotsky 2004). The process of legitimization consists of four distinguishable elements:

A. Stigma transformation, defined as "traveling from deviant to minority space across the cultural landscape" (Berbrier 556) by presenting oneself "as having been labeled, stigmatized, or otherwise assigned status in a deviant cultural space" (557). As is evident from (1) and (2), white supremacists cast themselves in the role of a minority unjustly persecuted by oppressive forces.

But to successfully convey such an image, NS propaganda must reach its audience. This is achieved through:

B. Information laundering, an effort to "disguise and convert their form of illegitimate currency – hate-based information – into what is rapidly becoming acceptable web-based knowledge, thus washed virtually 'clean' by the system" (Klein 431). On the Internet, NS websites are on an equal footing with reliable sources of information, due to comparable accessibility through search engines and social media. However, it is still necessary for them to convincingly pose as a legitimate source, which is done by the means of:

C. Intellectualization, that is "intellectualizing the discourse within the movement to give it an air of scientific validity" (Vysotsky 2004 24). The prime example of this strategy is of course *Metapedia*, a racialist alternative to *Wikipedia*. In addition, it gives members a sense of intellectual superiority due to posession of higher or secret knowledge, and being awaken (20).

D. Concealment of the more extreme and overtly NS aspects of their ideology, so as not to destroy the illusion of legitimacy and alienate the audience. When discussing the modus operandi of a Greek Nazi party Golden Dawn, Kompatsiaris and Mylonas (2014) observe how

by not being explicit about Nazism, GD manages to maintain its connection both to its hardcore Nazi followers, who understand this as a necessary strategy because society is not yet 'radicalized enough,' and to broader masses of conservative or indignant people who may regard GD as an honest political party[.] (122)

As a communication strategy, concealment means avoidance of terminology that is too racialist or easily recognizable as being NS in origin. Instead, alternative, relatively inoffensive terms may be applied, as shown in (3):

(3)

Term associated with WS:	Definitions:
'Anti-Semitism'	see (1a)
'Racism' / 'Racialism'	see (1d)
WS counter-term:	Definition (*B.U.G.S. Glossary*):
'Pro-White'	"Advocate for a future which includes white children; opponent of white genocide; seeks to obtain access to Free Speech for and liberate whites."

The term 'pro-White' fulfills the principles of legitimization. It is positive, appeals to emotion, presents white people as an endangered, oppressed minority, and white nationalists as socially conscious activists proud of their heritage. It makes its user difficult to criticize, since doing so would imply being 'anti-white.' It hints at the user's actual views, but without containing any compromising WS references. Finally, 'pro-White' is a relatively new term and thus not yet discredited in the public eye.

Legitimization is therefore the chief method of WS organizations for influencing public discourse and advancing their agenda. It would not be possible without the Internet, which "has managed to close the gap on the public's access to white supremacist propaganda" (Vysotsky, 2002 2).

"THE MANTRA"

There is perhaps no better example of WS's strategic use of language being combined with legitimization to create propaganda than "the Mantra." It is a short manifesto written by an influential white nationalist Robert Whitaker which claims that "anti-racist is a code word for anti-white" ("The Mantra"). This phrase has become a very popular WS slogan and highlights the movement's tendency to reverse meanings and accuse the accusers. According to a report by the Southern Poverty Law Center, "the Mantra" appeared for the first time in 2006, and to this day is being actively spread around the Internet by "a small but highly dedicated group of activists who call themselves the 'swarm'" (Lenz 2013) and who post "the Mantra" wherever and whenever possible.

This tactic is a realization of a well-known rule of propaganda, often misattributed to Joseph Goebbels, that if you repeat something often enough, it becomes the truth. There exists a number of websites, blogs, online communities, social media profiles, info graphics, videos, cartoons, and a radio podcast, whose main purpose is to saturate the World Wide Web with "the Mantra" and the notion of 'white genocide.' It is a persistent, coordinated effort. Some websites even give advice on how to effectively spread the message, which terms to use and which to avoid. For example, the website *bugsbuddy.co.nf* explicitly instructs the 'Swarm' members to "always call it genocide," "appeal to emotions," and "make it quotable" (*BUGS Buddy*).

CONCLUSION

It has been demonstrated how, to combat stigmatization, WSs engage in projection of their negative traits onto the alleged enemies of the white race. This

is revealed by their redefining the terms used by their critics, or inventing WS counter-parts to them. Furthermore, online NS groups use language as a weapon in an attempt to influence the public discourse and advance their agenda. To do so, WSs legitimize their own movement and its discourse by adopting the role of a persecuted minority ('stigma transformation'), providing WS alternatives to information and community websites ('information laundering'), masquerading their hate speech as reliable information ('intellectualization'), and concealing their NS identity through careful use of words ('concealment'). As evidenced by the example of "the Mantra" Internet campaign, projection and legitimization combine into effective propaganda, short, simple, evocative, appealing to emotions, and involving constant repetition. The language of NSs excludes any possibility of rational debate, and is therefore difficult to counter.

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