

**PROUD BOYS
AND THE WHITE
ETHNOSTATE**

**HOW THE ALT-RIGHT
IS WARPING THE
AMERICAN IMAGINATION**

ALEXANDRA MINNA STERN

**BEACON PRESS
BOSTON**

CHAPTER 4
.....

CAT LADIES, WOLVES, AND LOBSTERS

A Menagerie of Biological Essentialism

The West Is the Best!⁷¹ That's the motto of the Proud Boys, a men's group launched in 2016 by Gavin McInnes, controversial cofounder of Vice Media and a jester-provocateur who hovers on the outer rings of the alt-right. "Proud of Your Boy," a song from the musical *Aladdin* inspired the group's name. The Proud Boys bemoan that men are falling behind, becoming depressed and marginalized, and have nostalgia for a time when "girls were girls and men were men."⁷² The main culprits of this desolation are feminism and leftism, which, according to the Proud Boys, spur women to assume ill-fitting male roles based on the specious logic of gender equity. The cure for this malaise is the full restitution of the male/female "biological binary."⁷³

To fulfill their half of the binary, Proud Boys man up through bonding rituals—hanging out and drinking beer—and undergoing a three-phase initiation. Declaring oneself a Proud Boy is, in their lingo, the "first degree" of this fraternal hazing. The second degree has two steps. The first is you "get the crap beaten out of you by at least five guys until you can name five breakfast cereals."⁷⁴ The second is #NoWanks, or restricting porn to "once every 30 days" and having permission to "ejaculate [if he is] within one yard of a woman with her consent." The third degree is

branding with a Proud Boy tattoo. These frat boy antics and exercises in sexual abnegation are meant to inculcate “adrenaline control” and to get single men “off the couch and talking to women” and married men off their screens and “back into bed” with their wives. The Proud Boys’ jocular form of confidence building strives to make fathers out of slackers; it pushes its members “to settle down and have kids.” McInnes boasts that their veneration of the housewife has earned them a “big female following,” dubbed the Proud Boys’ Girls, who crave such cocksure and dependable men.⁵

The Proud Boys is a staunchly antifeminist group. As demonstrated by its motto, it also is unabashedly pro-Western. Its members describe themselves as “Western chauvinists” who “refuse to apologize for creating the modern world.” These #NoWankers once were “ashamed of themselves” and accepted the “blame for slavery, the wage gap, ableism, and some fag-bashing that went on two generations ago.” But now they have shed that white guilt and chest-thump about the “greatest culture in the world.”⁶ Yet, according to McInnes, “the greatest fraternal organization in the world” is not prejudiced; it welcomes all races, religions, and sexual preferences. The Proud Boys walk a fine line—professing to be anti-SJW (social justice warrior) “without being alt-right.”⁷ As one Proud Boy put it, “We’re like the alt-right without the racism.”⁸

Despite these punchy proclamations of inclusivity and anti-racism, most of the men who joined the Proud Boys when it was formed in 2016 were white, straight, and aggrieved. They embodied the profile fleshed out in Michael Kimmel’s study of the contemporary crisis of masculinity in America: white men of overlapping generations with faith in the American Dream who came of age “believing they would inevitably take their places somewhere on the economic ladder, simply by being themselves.” They never realized or had to comprehend the extent to which the “deck was stacked in their favor for generations.” They are hostile to notions of equality and diversity, which promise not to improve their lot but to humiliate and displace them. This nagging sensation of dispossession and impotence, Kimmel argues, “is the source of their rage.”⁹

For this demographic, the internet is the go-to place to blow off steam, usually in the form of unbridled sexism and racism.¹⁰ In cyberspace, the anonymity and ephemerality of avatars and message boards enable personal re-tweeting and re-meming of hateful posts with no accountability.

Even if users are LGBTQ-friendly millennials in real life, their online activity, especially in nameless forums, frequently follows hacked homophobic scripts, excoiating betas on the left, right, and center.¹¹ Great contempt is held for “cucks,” particularly those on the conservative side of the aisle, who are viewed as the epitome of traitors to vigorous white manhood. An alt-right neologism, “cuckservative,” derived from the Old English “cuckold,” was devised to describe establishment Republicans who are selling out to diversity speak and civic nationalism; being “cucked” is represented, often visually, by their wife having sex with another man, usually a black man, while the cuckservative raply watches.¹²

Mike Wendling, a British journalist who explores the heterogeneous typology of alt-righters in his book *Alt-Right*, spent a lot of time on achan and Reddit’s r/The_Donald, reaching out to American alt-righters. Rather than encountering “a cool posse of young intelligent kids,” the self-image aggrandized by many on the alt-right, the decidedly unscientific sample of men Wendling interacted with online was “older—in some cases old—and skewed working class.”¹³ Wendling suggests that many angry white men online “might be internet-savvy, but they’re not particularly young, or countercultural. Mostly they seem to just harbor lingering resentments against political correctness, and their actions tumble forth from there.”¹⁴ Although its members slant toward the younger crowd, and their modus operandi includes meeting off-screen to drink beer and stir up trouble, the Proud Boys fit this profile of male embitterment.

It is ironic that Dante Nero, an African American comedian friendly with McInnes, devised #NoWanks. He wanted to encourage men to be less self-obsessed and more empathetic in their encounters with women. As Nero’s novelty became the group’s hallmark, he observed a troubling trend that flew in the face of its message of inclusivity. As the Proud Boys grew in numbers during the 2016 presidential campaign, it swelled with Trump supporters who plastered Facebook walls with racial epithets directed at blacks and Jews. Nero was taken aback by the intense racism and the “perception of being disenfranchised” expressed by the white guys flocking to the Proud Boys.¹⁵

After he learned about this, McInnes spanked his acolytes for their wrathful and off-color remarks, and vocally defended his buddy Nero. Nevertheless, white nationalists found the Proud Boys to be a receptive and raucous haven for their angst about male victimhood and cultural

dispossession. Indeed, Jason Kessler, who co-organized both Unite the Right rallies, was a member of the Virginia chapter, and several Proud Boys marched in Charlottesville with him in 2017.¹⁶ Proud Boys have joined the pugnacious Patriot Prayer, a loud far-right and pro-Trump group founded in Portland, Oregon, for pitched skirmishes against anti-fifa in the streets of their hometown and Seattle.¹⁷ The Southern Oregon Proud Boys chapter Facebook page features a pastiche celebrating gun culture, condemning sanctuary cities, and blasting Mexican immigrants.¹⁸ More recently, men of color are joining the Proud Boys, where they can vociferously exclaim their macho contempt for leftists, immigrants, and Muslims.¹⁹ Given the rank and file's adherence to Western chauvinism, and McInnes's previous collaborations with organizations such as the anti-immigrant VDARE and American Renaissance, the Southern Poverty Law Center added the Proud Boys to its roster of hate groups.²⁰ The antics of its members, which on a dime turn from boisterous to bloody, often foist the Proud Boys into the news. In August 2018, on the eve of the second Unite the Right rally, Twitter suspended the account of McInnes and the Proud Boys based on its "policy prohibiting violent extremist groups."²¹ In fall 2018 a riled-up posse of Proud Boys brawled on the Upper East Side of Manhattan after leaving a speech given by McInnes at the Metropolitan Republican Club.²² Supposedly a plastic bottle thrown their way by protestors who had staked out the event prompted the Proud Boys, who were joined by the local skinhead group 211 Boot Boys, to beat up three people.²³ New York governor Andrew Cuomo called for an FBI investigation, and the NYPD arrested five Proud Boys for their role in the incident.²⁴ Soon after these legal developments, McInnes announced in a YouTube video that he was leaving the Proud Boys, a maneuver orchestrated as "100% a legal gesture" intended to help "alleviat[e] the sentencing" of the nine men ultimately arrested for the brawl.²⁵

McInnes, who glibly calls the Proud Boys a latter-day "Elks Lodge," has decried its characterization as Far Right and fascist, and blames this ostensible exaggeration on leftists and the liberal media, who, he says, hysterically associate every group that extols the West with neo-Nazis and the KKK. After Charlottesville, which he did not attend, McInnes tried to distance the Proud Boys from that debacle. On his YouTube channel, McInnes chastised Proud Boys who participated in Unite the Right, declaring that "all white nationalists/anti-Semites are banned from Proud

Boys" whether they express racial ideas or not. "We Are Not Alt-Right" was splashed across media platforms to insist that the group diverges from the alt-right on "the [Q] [Jewish Question] and racial identity politics," the implication being that this dual reputation ipso facto disqualified the Proud Boys from the alt-right.²⁶

McInnes might be naive, calculating, or duplicitous. He certainly resorts to the ruse of asserting plausible deniability and offering up excuses of irony or ignorance.²⁷ But the motives behind his inconsistent approach are difficult to ascertain and not ultimately relevant to understanding the Proud Boys phenomenon. The bigger and more interesting question is the nature of the relationship of the Proud Boys' masturbatory and hypermasculinist obsessions to the alt-right-verse. An Escherian stairwell built on the ideological affinities of anti-feminism, xenophobia, and racial othering connects the Proud Boys to the alt-right. Moreover, these prejudices are anchored to a rigid dogma of innate biological differences and natural hierarchies, and a corollary belief that the sacrosanct order of Western society is being dismantled at a vertiginous pace, rushing toward several possible endpoints, all of them tragic for white men and European peoples.²⁸ From this vantage point, the future of "white well-being" hinges on the (re)imposition of natural hierarchies and biological differences.²⁹

Race might be the master switch of the alt-right circuit board, but it does not operate at full capacity without the currents of gender and sexuality. When men carrying tiki torches through the streets of Charlottesville chanted, "You will not replace us," they were referring to the perceived takeover of white America by Jews and immigrants. However, the gendered implications of "The Great Replacement" were not trailing far behind. From the white nationalist viewpoint, it is incumbent upon white women to take on their ordained roles as mothers and breeders to forestall white genocide, which could be a mere few generations ahead. Motivated by these concerns, a small contingent of white women, such as the Canadian Faith Goldy, in 2017 a rising star at Rebel Media (but who subsequently was fired after appearing on a Daily Stormer podcast), and Lana Lokteff, who runs Red Ice TV with her Swedish husband, attended the Charlottesville march to represent the TradLife (traditional life) flank of white nationalists.³⁰ Ayla Stewart, aka Wife with a Purpose, whose webpage tagline is "the restoration and preservation of traditional values," had planned to join them, but ultimately did not attend, citing security

concerns, and she blamed the violence on the local police. Stewart delivered the speech she had prepared on her YouTube channel.³¹

Alt-right men and women alike concur that a massive roadblock to the restoration of the White Republic is feminism, which is the arch-enemy of natural hierarchies and gender binaries. As the late British nationalist Jonathan Bowden, an intellectual maharshi among the American alt-right, asserted in a 2011 lecture titled “Feminism: Lilit Before Eve,” feminism has “turned the world upside down in 50 to 60 years.”³² It has emasculated men and masculinized women. To right the ship, new movements must advance one of the “most powerful political discourses that can ever be enunciated”—the biological truth of “traditional male and female role models.” The alt-right certainly is not the first movement to enshrine “differentiation as the key to advancement.”³³ Conservatives and fascists in a variety of sociohistorical contexts have foregrounded the gendered idea that “roles and identities are essential” and “are fixed in biology and spirit.”³⁴ Moreover, feminist scholars have elucidated how in Europe and the Americas nationalist ideologies are intertwined with deep-seated concerns about the fortitude of white masculinity.

The Alt-Light Turnstile

The alt-right and so-called alt-light are engaged in low-intensity warfare that periodically flares with verbal firebombs. Yet these sparring camps share the same gender politics, characterized by deep-seated anti-feminism and transphobia. Until he became persona non grata after the discovery of a YouTube video in which he countenanced pedophilia, Milo Yiannopoulos, who had capitalized on his own brand of flamboyant queerness, was a lightning rod for the alt-light. He titillated, astounded, and red pillled audiences with his incessant recitation of the provocation “Feminism is cancer” and his tirades against women and trans folks.³⁵ In typical alt-fashion, Yiannopoulos responded to criticism of his gross sexism with the favorite retort of trolls, namely that his detractors could not grasp a joke.

The alt-light is prone to dog-whistling, promoting conspiracy theories, and spreading disinformation, and its roster of media personalities include the now de-platformed bombastic Alex Jones of Infowars and provocateur Mike Cernovich, who is fixated on twisted tales of Democratic Party cabals and clandestine child sex-trafficking rings.³⁶ Much to the dismay of alt-righters, despite noticeable similarities, alt-lighters

hedge and deflect, refusing to explicitly advocate white nationalism. For this reason, many alt-righters view Jones, Cernovich, McInnes, the politically incorrect YouTuber Stefan Molyneux, and others as menaces to the movement, “sopping up money and energy that could be used to liberate our people.”³⁷ Nevertheless, the alt-light’s retrograde gender politics make it an unflinching turnstile into the alt-right.³⁸ It dispenses legions of red pills and primes the pump of us-versus-them thinking, which is so central to white nationalist thinking.³⁹ The Southern Poverty Law Center recently conducted a study of social media patterns to explore the “pipeline between the alt-lite and racist ‘alt-right.’” Gathering information from users on the Right Stuff website, they found that the most common introduction “to hardcore, veteran white nationalists” was via alt-lighters like McInnes and Molyneux. About 15 percent of respondents specifically “mentioned McInnes as a step in their path to white nationalism or recommended using his videos and writing to convert others.”⁴⁰ Although the two top converters are 4chan’s “Politically Incorrect”/pol/ forum and Jared Taylor, the doyen of race realism and head of American Renaissance, Molyneux ranked third and McInnes ranked fifth (of twenty-four total) in their influence, higher than Richard Spencer and Red Ice TV.

The alt-light/alt-right convergence is starkly captured by their indistinguishable panic over gender fluidity and gender nonbinariness. Several years before founding the Proud Boys, McInnes wrote a blog post titled “Transphobia Is Perfectly Natural,” in which he contends that “transnines” and their SJW enthusiasts suffer from a collective delusion, and that they are destroying natural gender norms and manufacturing people with mutilated bodies.⁴¹ Posted on thoughtcatalog.com, this rant was “reported by the community as hateful or abusive content” and removed, although it can be retrieved online with a Google search.⁴² Greg Johnson of Counter-Currents indulges in similar trans-bashing in his book of essays *Truth, Justice, and a Nice White Country*.⁴³ Although these days Johnson derides McInnes as obnoxious and “coke-addled,” he concurs with him that transphobia is “a perfectly natural feeling” of revulsion.⁴⁴ Transitioning from a cisgendered body to a transgendered body is tantamount to ontological sacrilege: “Sex changes’ do not change anyone’s sex. They merely transform a man into a butchered simulacrum of a woman, or a woman into a butchered simulacrum of a man.”⁴⁵ For Johnson and many alt-righters, “transnines” are the categorical destabilizers of biological

binaries and gender roles. As the Scottish nationalist Millennial Woes, who travels in international alt-right circles, pronounced in one of his Ask Me Anything (AMA) videos on YouTube, “the trans thing is the most fundamental attack on a civilization.”³⁴⁶ For the alt-right, then, “transmies” provoke monumental dread. According to Johnson, they are scarier than antifa: “Like the lesbians of Berkeley, they can reduce a man to a skeleton in under 30 seconds.”³⁴⁷ To be trans is synonymous with the destruction of existential and embodied maleness, eliciting fears of castration: “I love my penis, and the thought of losing it fills me with horror.”³⁴⁸

The same antipathy to gender nonbinariness propelled Jordan Peterson, the Canadian psychologist and best-selling author of the self-help book *12 Rules for Life*, into the media spotlight. Peterson made headlines in 2016 by announcing his vehement opposition to C-16, a bill in the Canadian parliament prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity and expression.³⁴⁹ Peterson claimed this legislation would obligate him to use alternative gender pronouns, which amounted to “compelled speech” imposed by the totalitarian Left, with its army of “social justice warrior, left-wing radical political activists” and “radical social constructionists.”³⁵⁰ Like McInnes and Molyneux, Peterson is scorned by the alt-right (although not without a tinge of envious admiration), which likes to cast him as a celebrity-hungry demagogue. In turn, he has criticized the alt-right as misguided and flirting with authoritarianism. Yet Peterson is the Pied Piper of red pills, reeling in thousands of young men and women through his sold-out book tours and Twitter (over 900,000 followers) and YouTube (more than 1.5 million followers) accounts. In his Canadian cadence, he entralls them with lectures on the virulence of feminism and leftism and his exhortations for the imposition of order—coded as male—over chaos, coded as female.

On media venues such as the popular podcast hosted by Joe Rogan, Peterson dexterously employs alt-right lingo, throwing out terms such as “enforced monogamy” and “incels.”³⁵¹ He combines calm and collected rhetoric with select empirical evidence to support the biological basis for natural hierarchies, which he attests are good for both women and men: “The thing that makes them [women] miserable is having weak partners.”³⁵² Women, he says, “want deeply men who are competent and powerful.”³⁵³ His preferred analogy for natural hierarchies are lobsters: “I use the lobster as the example.... We diverged from lobsters in evolutionary history

about 350 million years ago, common ancestry. And lobsters exist in hierarchies. They have a nervous system attuned to the hierarchy. . . . And it’s part of my attempt to demonstrate that the idea of hierarchy has absolutely nothing to do with sociocultural construction, which it doesn’t.”³⁵³ In *12 Rules for Life*, Peterson writes that in the lobster universe, the female gravitates toward the alpha male, to whom she becomes “irresistibly attracted,” and proceeds to exhibit her feminine charms. She “will disrobe, shedding her shell, making herself dangerously soft, vulnerable, and ready to mate.”³⁵⁴ Projecting his interpretation of the mating behavior of a lower order species that has existed since the age of dinosaurs to humans, Peterson paints with a primordial brush, driving home the point that evolutionary biology is destiny.

Peterson’s pop psychology appeals to a wide spectrum and exemplifies the powerful role that ideas about gender, especially about masculinity, can play in politics, sometimes in unexpected ways. For example, a researcher who embedded herself within the alt-right after Trump’s election was surprised to find that half (fifteen of thirty total) of the young white men she interviewed had campaigned for Bernie Sanders in the 2016 presidential election.³⁵⁵ In a similar vein, on one of Identity Evropa’s podcasts, one former “Bernie Bro” explained why he did a “total 180 in a few months.”³⁵⁶ As “antimale” and “antiwhite” rhetoric began to feel all pervasive to him, it simultaneously dawned on him why he had enjoyed living in Vermont (Sanders’s home state), which is 95 percent white, earlier in his life. Young white male progressives are not immune to red pilling; in fact, their familiarity with progressive identity politics makes the identitarian politics of the alt-right legible to them.

Restoring the Biological Binary

The alt-right refers to many white women as “Cat Ladies.” The stereotype is not one of spinsters living with a bevy of felines but of virginal women who want to rescue all creatures, including those from the “Parasite Class,” such as undocumented immigrants and “African boat people.”³⁵⁷ Cat Ladies have been indoctrinated to foolishly accept and even coyly beckon Islam despite its patriarchal tendencies. The French New Right author Guillaume Faye, who is highly regarded among the alt-right literati, links Islam and feminism, viewing them as fire-breathing twins that are irretrievably enfeebling and wrecking European society. Alt-right

authors also often collapse what they see as the dual destructive effects of feminism and Jewish influence, both of which sanction race mixing and unchecked immigration. According to long-time white nationalist Kevin MacDonald, the strong in-group preferences of Jews, coupled with their high intelligence, has resulted in their successful manipulation of resources and capital to control Western societies. His book *The Culture of Critique* features the age-old conspiracy theory of Jewish dominance (a la *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*) masked in a scholarly façade.⁵⁸ MacDonald sees the Jews' conscious promotion of race mixing, immigration, and feminism as part of a concerted plot to leverage their media and financial power to hasten America's transition from a white-majority country to a nonwhite-majority country.

Locked arm in arm, feminists, Jews, and liberals have cemented the pathological altruism and ethnonasochism that dooms white society. They have self-righteously disrupted the gender binary and show no signs of abating; worse, they have created a world in which “cuckservatives” attend gay pride marches and might even praise Caitlyn Jenner. From the alt-right perspective, Western countries that should be preserving their heritage instead are Polyanas rolling out the welcome mat for aliens and credulously engendering the conditions for demographic change. Liberal white women are the most culpable of this capitulation, acting as brainwashed gatekeepers who spent a lot of time “virtue signaling”—making sanctimonious proclamations to win moral brownie points in diversity-drunk American society.

The novel *The Camp of the Saints*, by the French novelist Jean Raspail, is integral to the alt-right canon and can be read as a harbinger of anxieties about hyperfeminization. Many Americans first heard about this book when Steve Bannon touted its prescience in speeches and media interviews that betrayed his strident xenophobia.⁵⁹ Yet *The Camp of the Saints* was known in nationalist and right-wing circles long before Bannon's rise to prominence during the 2016 Trump presidential campaign. Since its publication in 1973 (and translation into English in 1975), Raspail's novel has provided the narrative template and patios for stories about immigrant invasions and the subsumption of the white race. The pretense of the story is that Hindus from the Ganges River region are invading France. Raspail demonizes these interlopers with a barrage of animalistic terms: they are “swarming all through,” “spreading through

cities,” “worming their way by the thousands,” and “slithering in.”⁶⁰ Ultimately, they overrun French shores: “a million poor wretches, armed only with their weaknesses and their numbers, overwhelmed by misery, encumbered with starving brown and black children, ready to disembark on our soil, the vanguard of the multitudes pressing hard against every part of the tired and overtired West.”⁶¹ France succumbs to their onslaught, forfeiting its venerable culture and tradition. The desperate migrants, however, are only partially to blame. This foreign inundation would not have transpired without the softening of French society, without younger generations gripped by a “morbid, contagious excess of sentiment.”⁶² Alt-right YouTuber RamZPaul (Paul Ramsey) has referred to *The Camp of the Saints* as prophetic. He heralded this book when retweeting an image of a white European woman handing “bottled water to a migrant,” with the caption that “helping an invading army used to be known as treason, but our enemies have rebranded it as ‘humanitarian aid.’”⁶³ A post on the webzine *Charcoal Heuriste*, a pivotal node in the manosphere, echoes RamZPaul. The caption under an image of African migrants arriving on Spanish shores reads the “Camp of the Saints happening right before our eyes.”⁶⁴ Raspail is a hero among European identitarians, who have produced visual memes that feature a portrait of his face accompanied simply with the word “Saints,” which serves as ethnonationalist code for the near inescapability of the Great Replacement.⁶⁵

Some alt-right authors admire that the feminist movements of the 1960s unfolded for understandable reasons. Yet they are hypercritical of what they see as feminism's subsequent disruptive trajectory: “Deviantions and excesses began to appear and feminism, from being a movement promoting equality of the sexes before the law, was transformed into an emotional ideology with egallitarian and extremist overtones.”⁶⁶ Once past this tipping point, ever-hungry feminists launched into a vampire-like crusade to skew the gender order and violate basic principles of biology and nature. This narrative of overspilling and oozing feminism is repeated over and over by alt-righters. From their perspective, white women are afflicted with psychosexual complexes of massive proportions. They despise men, yet in an act of quintessential transference want to become them. For this reason, white women can easily become barren and unfulfilled. In the words of a *Counter-Currents* blogger: “I can pretty much guarantee you that these women aren't happy—childless and sucking down their

Diet Cokes at 47.⁶⁷ Moreover, this ravenous urge is leading to the erosion of masculinity: "In practice, since the feminist can never be the equal of men at the male role, she concentrates her efforts upon sabotaging that role."⁶⁸ The alt-solution for gender disorder is to put women back in their "natural" place—to reestablish the biological binary through the formation of hypermasculinized tribes, patriarchal control of hypergamous women, and pronatalist incentives, as well as dating apps for white women to mate and propagate the race. The alt-right, and the alt-light for that matter, engages these approaches on a continuum that ranges from sentimental to punitive.

In its benevolent form, anti-feminism manifests in "gender complementarity," a construct in which men and women have different but equal roles to play. Once freed from the shackles of feminism, white women can return to reproduction and mothering. The British nationalist Mark Collett often takes to YouTube to expound on this vision. According to him, feminism has yanked white European women away from their natural motherly and nurturing instincts, and is impeding the coalescence of traditional families.⁶⁹ In addition to abetting demographic suicide, feminism demeans men, who are not embraced as loving partners, fathers, and husbands, merely as oppressors. Collett, more than most alt-righters, regularly broaches the topic of gender relations and has cohosted programs, such as "This Week on the Alt-Right," with women. He also has criticized the Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW) and men's rights contingents of the alt-right for banishing women.⁷⁰

Romanticized notions of white heterosexual relationships are another thread of the alt-right gender narrative, espoused by a handful of women, like Empress Wife, who, until her Twitter account was suspended, unapologetically praised white women who wanted to "preserve your people" while displaying nostalgic images of white families and gesturing to Nazi iconography.⁷¹ To encourage white matchmaking, one alt-right woman started WhiteDate for European singles. With the tagline "We Have Woken Up," this service seeks to put "like-minded" white singles in contact in Europe and anglophone countries, sponsoring meet-ups and virtual groups.⁷² Its website features a panorama of smiling couples enjoying romantic dinners and snuggling, chastely clothed, and informs searching singles that they can find mates with the same cultural heritage, assuring them that "we follow classic roles, where strong men take

the lead, and graceful women play the game." Inremittingly blocked on Twitter, WhiteDate nonetheless has over 1,500 followers, and its #WhiteFamily messaging about courtship and etiquette has a dedicated crowd on its website and on the microblogging platform Gab.

More often than not, however, alt-paternalism has an unforgiving dictatorial edge, and rather than being idealized, white women are trashed as deviant sluts who deserve to be disciplined by daddy. According to men's rights activist F. Roger Devlin, author of *Sexual Utopia in Power: The Feminist Revolt Against Civilization*, women are programmed for hypergamy. While men are wired to spread their seed, given their endless supply of semen and ability to impregnate from puberty until senescence, women, with their finite ova, are much more selective about their mates. Hypergamy compels women to find the fittest genetic male specimen and the strongest protector; this pursuit of alphas makes women untrustworthy and fickle. In one of his podcasts, Molyneux derides a woman who supposedly poked holes in the condom of an unsuspecting guy because she wanted to have his baby and later extort him for child support. Hypergamous instincts motivated this incidence of "sperm jacking," a female trick to deceive unsuspecting men and potentially leave them in a state of "indentured servitude."⁷³

In the view of the alt-right, managing hypergamy requires "enforced monogamy," most often in the form of traditional marriage, an arrangement advocated across the alt-light to alt-right continuum. Mandatory monogamy channels "female hypergamy in a socially useful way" and is the tried and true way for men to reinstate innate gender norms. As Devlin writes, "Men are supposed to have authority over women; that is part of what a marriage is."⁷⁴ In essence, these alt-right thinkers envisage the glorious return of the imperious paterfamilias, with men overseeing mating and matrimonial decisions for the benefit and propagation of the white race. Greg Johnson, for example, has suggested that it is imperative to "roll back sexual liberation by reestablishing social shaming for female promiscuity and, most importantly, involving the family—particularly fathers and brothers—in the process by which women choose suitors and husbands."⁷⁵

If the yin of restoring order focuses on women, the yang is all about men. The alt-right drinks at a deep well of male narcissism, and thus it is not surprising that its men devote extensive energy to proposals for

rebuilding manhood. Jack Donovan, author of *The Way of Men* and three other books on masculinity, carries the flag on this issue. His profile is similar to McInnes's; Donovan has been at the forefront of the men's rights movement, an early adapter in the manosphere, and a dependable amplifier of anti-feminism and anti-womanism.⁷⁶ Espousing male primitivism, he calls himself not a white nationalist but a "Wolves nationalist," referring to the Wolves of Vinland, a neo-Völkisch, neo-pagan survivalist group founded in Virginia that is listed on the Southern Poverty Law Center's hate map.⁷⁷ Donovan runs a Wolves chapter in Oregon. This band of brothers trains, strengthens, and perfects its outdoor skills in the rugged terrain of the Pacific Northwest.⁷⁸ Donovan espouses an exclusive homosociality that privileges bonds, including intimate and erotic ones, between men, as the quintessence of human communion. Donovan is open about his same-sex orientation, though, in his eyes, that does not make him part of the LGBTQ community, which he loathes for its political and moral relativism. Rather, he sees himself as a man's man who prioritizes rough-and-tumble maleness.

For Donovan, "above all things, masculinity is about what men want from each other."⁷⁹ Like other alt-right and alt-light thinkers, he views gender differences as "basic and biological." For Donovan, bodies naturally sort us into categories, and women's bodies are not hard-wired to complete the same tasks as men. Biology makes men "more daring, probably more mechanically inclined, and generally better at navigating. Men are hard-wired for aggressive play." *The Way of Men* is both a manifesto for crystallizing gender differences and a manual for how to reorganize masculine society into small units of men called "gangs." According to Donovan, the gang is the most basic unit of survival and male bonding; it is the "kernel" of society and of "ethnic, tribal, and national identity." If modern men are going to survive in a hostile, hazardous world, they must group into tribes to gain physical and mental prowess, and build endurance and stamina. Donovan's gangs operate according to a zero-sum logic, where there is heavy competition for limited resources and a constant threat of attack and deprivation.

Like other alt-righters, Donovan blames feminism, globalism, and liberal values of diversity and equality for bludgeoning men into sipping weaklings, slaves of a system over which they have diminishing control. Men are trapped in "caged manhood" and feminism has taken the key. The

unfulfilling options left for men are to simulate masculinity through video games, pornography, and over-managed activities. This can only produce incels and betas, and dreary lives of clericalism and masturbation. Masculinity will be squelched; there will be no opportunities for risk-taking and masculine prowess. Donovan has no shortage of examples of what cramps male style; the astonishingly long list he recites in *The Way of Men* includes "more examinations, more certifications, mandatory prerequisites, screening processes, background checks, personality tests, and politicized diagnoses" and "more helmets and goggles and harnesses and bright orange vests with reflective tape," as well as "more counseling and sensitivity training." In sum, men are being bled dry of their masculine vitality by "more micro-managed living, pettier regulations, heavier fines, and harsher penalties."

Hypermasculinity is idealized by the alt-right, and its popularity can help to explain the alt-right's equivocal relationship to homosexuality, which, being male-centric, focuses almost entirely on gay men, not on lesbians. Some alt-righters countenance if not celebrate male homosexuality as the pinnacle of the twenty-first-century *Männerbund*. For example, author James O'Meara, in *Homo and Negro*, published by Counter-Currents, juxtaposes white American men's deficit of masculinity with excessive "Negrofication." For O'Meara, the country needs a heavy jolt of masculinization, even if it verges on homoeroticism, and an attenuation of black cultural influence, which, he claims, engenders decadence and submission. O'Meara asserts that it is time for white men to become "possessed of a heathen morality and thus certainly open to homosexuals," which would bring forth a "culture of excellence, creativity and active participation in all aspects of life."⁸⁰ This glorification of male bonding, as well as the fact that several of the alt-right literati purportedly are gay men, provides clues to why, in some formulations, gay people would be admitted to the white ethnostate, although without the option of same-sex marriage, since unions in the homogenous homeland exist for the purposes of procreation.⁸¹

Yet many other alt-righters wear unchecked homophobia on their sleeves, as witnessed by gazillions of bytes of rampant online gay-bashing. Fiery exchanges about the place of homosexuality in the movement erupt online periodically, often exposing cleavages between alt-right intellectuals, who are more likely to accept homosexuality, and rank-and-file

advocates, who express venomous homophobia. These countervailing sentiments have simmered under the surface since the movement emerged but have become more intense since the Charlottesville debacle, as white nationalists are consumed with policing the boundaries of alt-right belonging. In late 2018, the website *Occidental Dissent*, founded in 2008 by a neo-Confederate nationalist based in Alabama, published the post "A Call for Unity," which directly attacked, among others, Greg Johnson, who has all but come out as gay; Jared Taylor, for American Renaissance's refusal to condemn Jews; and Andrew Anglin, for being a "Nazi-sociopath."⁸² This shrill if convoluted blog post demanded more support for neo-Nazi groups like the anti-Semitic Traditionalist Worker Party and the secessionist League of the South, and less for white nationalist wannabes and "cucks" weakening the movement.

More revealing than this harangue itself were the nearly 150 comments it received, which mocked Richard Spencer for blowing up the alt-right with his recklessness, upbraided Taylor for being soft on the IQ, and both applauded and slammed Anglin and the Daily Stormer for their unabashed indulgence of neo-Nazi symbols and slogans. Nevertheless, the most pointed comments focused on homosexuality. Greg Johnson defended himself with this hypothetical scenario: "Let's say that a white homosexual becomes convinced that what is happening to white people today is the greatest crime in world history. Let's say he is intelligent, educated, possesses useful skills, and has money and social connections. He wants to contribute these to the movement."⁸³ Despite his attempt at logical reasoning to demonstrate his necessary inclusion in the alt-right, Johnson bore the brunt of homophobic remarks in the comments section. For example, Daniel Friberg, founder of Arktos media, with whom Johnson has been engaged in a protracted feud, wrote, "Greg Johnson is a perfect example of why tolerance of open homosexuals within the movement must come to an end." He accused Johnson of "naïve, petty, catty behaviour that is unbecoming of any man" and of being the ringleader of a "homosexual clique" whose membership was an open secret.⁸⁴ If this litany of comments is taken as a barometer of the alt-right's position, then, despite a few shrugs of indifference, Friberg's position prevailed, reinforced with expressions of disgust, hatred, and absolute intolerance; as one commenter wrote, "Faggots forcing association with us makes us look bad and deters serious people from taking us seriously."⁸⁵

Indubitably this raucorous discussion about the fate of homosexuality in the alt-right will continue to play out, reflecting profound agitation about the limits of masculine identity in a hypermale movement. These concerns are less pronounced among the alt-right, which either evinces little interest in gay issues or, in the case of the revamped Proud Boys, invites all races, all religions, and gay or straight men to join a chapter today.⁸⁶ What is resoundingly clear is that transphobia sits at the embroiled crux of the alt-right and the alt-light, a reflection of near pathological uneasiness with gender nonbinariness. The alt-verse wants nothing more than containment and order. Within a cisgendered system, at least gay identities and bodies are stable. The alt-verse can tolerate a person who is born with XY sex chromosomes and unambiguous male genitalia who can be considered 100 percent male, even if he prefers the company of other men. What most unsettles the alt-right and the alt-light are gender nonbinariness, gender fluidity, and transgender bodies.

The IQ and DNA of Racial Essentialism

Just as sexism and transphobia serve as a conduit between the alt-light and the alt-right, so too does racism, propelled largely by the discredited tenets of biological determinism. Stefan Molyneux is one of the most popular alt-lights on social media, and he produces a lot of content propagating theories of innate racial difference. He is fond of interviewing psychologists and scientists who do research on the relationship between heredity and social groups. Two of his highly watched YouTube interviews are with Charles Murray and Linda Gottfredson, both of whom have had long academic careers dedicated to demonstrating the putative heritability of intelligence and its uneven distribution across racial and ethnic groups.⁸⁷ In prefacing his conversation with Gottfredson (which, typical of his posts, has over 200,000 views and 2,500 comments), Molyneux advises viewers that "once you really start to understand intelligence and its bell curve distribution across the populations," it is hard not to reassess society, seeing problems with greater accuracy and compassion.⁸⁸ Molyneux has described waking up to the reality that genetics drives intelligence, a truth he finds sobering and liberating, insofar as it suggests that social interventions cannot be premised on universal equality but rather are informed by the undeniability of a natural hierarchy. In an interview on the Rubin Report, Molyneux describes this revelation as "heartbreaking."⁸⁹ It

is the truth, he says, that no one wants to accept: "The most recent data I've seen is that by the time you're eighteen, 80% of your IQ is genetic."⁹⁰ For Molyneux, absorbing the findings of researchers such as Murray, Gottfredson, and the Danish psychologist Helmuth Nyborg prompts a mental paradigm shift: "A mind once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original shape."⁹¹

Jordan Peterson shares Molyneux's interest in pontificating on the fixity of intelligence, which he usually refers to as IQ or the G Factor, which stands for "general intelligence." In Peterson's view, omnipresent political correctness makes it impossible to acknowledge this plain truth.⁹² Peterson's assumptions about genetics and intelligence are integral to his assertions about dominance hierarchies and humans. Unraveling the distinction between the seemingly generic phrases "equality of opportunity" and "equality of outcome" is telling in this regard. For Peterson, "equality of opportunity" is acceptable and allows all members of a society to pursue careers and life paths commensurate with their inherent abilities. This means that someone destined to be a janitor will be the world's best janitor and that someone wired to be a consummate business leader will become wealthy and successful. "Equality of opportunity" thus represents an organicist vision of social stratification in which people are ascribed functions they are capable of performing—nothing less and certainly nothing more. Conversely, "equality of outcome"—"equity" in shorthand—involves nonsensical overreach and inevitably will create scenarios in which egalitarianism is imposed through affirmative action, diversity training, and special programs for immigrants and other freeloaders who will be placed in roles that they, as limited human organisms, are unable to perform.⁹³ Wife with a Purpose sums up this idea succinctly in one of her vlogs: "People are different. We're not going to have equality of outcome for everyone because we are different."⁹⁴

The alt-right and alt-light rely on the same baseline of ideas about human capacity and heredity, often extended to ideas about gender, race, and intelligence. Unlike Molyneux and Peterson, white nationalists do not employ these ideas to convey smug compassion about individual and group limitations but to vilify blacks, immigrants, and multiculturalism. The network of bloggers and speakers affiliated with American Renaissance, for instance, are well versed in cherry-picking scientific studies in an effort to show that human beings organize themselves into racial

groups, that cross-racial mixing produces disharmony in social interaction and offspring, and that diversity can produce nothing but conflict. In *White Identity: Racial Consciousness in the 21st Century*, Jared Taylor asserts that since 1965 America has endeavored to build a cohesive country out of disparate groups, an experiment he believes has floundered miserably. Taylor sees the wreckage all around him, of an Orwellian society in which Americans are being force-fed diversity, on television, in political rhetoric, and especially in universities and other educational institutions.⁹⁵ This path is not just leading to social strife; it portends white extinction. As Taylor recently told the audience at the ethnonationalist Scandza Forum, held in Copenhagen in fall 2018, "You must fight these ideas absolutely tooth and nail" because "we really are fighting for our lives."⁹⁶

In this alt-right equation, "diversity" is a euphemism for white genocide and is catalyzing the transformation of whites in America from an empowered majority to a spurned minority vulnerable to persecution and marginalization: "The demographic forces we have set in motion have created conditions that are inherently unstable and potentially violent."⁹⁷ George Shaw, who edited an anthology by and for the alt-right, reiterates these concerns, writing that "'diversity' and 'multiculturalism' do not ultimately enrich white lives, but rather, tend to make white societies poorer, more dangerous, and finally unlivable for whites."⁹⁸ With their backs against a demographic wall, in the alt-right mind-set, the only viable option is for whites to reclaim their own tribal identity and struggle to form themselves into a homogenous community ordered by the biological truths of racial difference and gender essentialism.

Viewing race as primarily biological has been a mainstay of white nationalism for decades. In the first half of the twentieth century, scientific racism was elaborated and expounded by Madison Grant, Lothrop Stoddard, and the standard-bearer of American eugenics, Charles Davenport. Eugenics theories of race and intelligence affected education, health, immigration, and social policies with far-reaching consequences. Yet biases related to human differences and intelligence did not disappear even when the eugenics movement lost credibility in the mid-twentieth century. They became baked into certain, and increasingly controversial, subfields of psychology and sociology, and emergent areas in behavioral genetics.⁹⁹ Although many academic and clinical researchers rejected biological reductionism, and the racism and sexism that often accompanied

it, the fame of eugenically motivated work was kept afloat financially by organizations like the Pioneer Fund. This foundation supported the work of psychologist Arthur Jensen, who published a lengthy landmark essay in the *Harvard Educational Review* in 1969 assessing the effects of educational programs designed to improve the performance of disadvantaged and minority children.¹⁰⁰ The takeaway from this synthetic review was that “compensatory and enrichment programs” had failed because intelligence, which he measured as the “g factor,” was hereditary and could not be modified by educational interventions. Moreover, this unchangeable trait was distributed unevenly among racial groups, such that “the intelligence of blacks was congenitally inferior to that of whites.”¹⁰¹

Jensen was one of over a dozen scientists funded by the Pioneer Fund. Others included Philippe Rushton, a longtime professor at the University of Western Ontario who developed the genetic similarity theory, or the concept that people are attracted to people like them, phenotypically and genetically; and that healthy partnerships, especially procreative ones, are rooted in biological similarity. In his quest to prove the existence of racial differences, Rushton employed an array of methods, including MRI, to measure brain size; he found that “Orientals have the largest brains (on average), Blacks the smallest, and Whites in between,” and surmised that “these differences in brain size probably explain the racial differences in IQ and cultural achievement.”¹⁰² Though Rushton’s work is both passé and discredited, white nationalists like Greg Johnson and Jared Taylor cling to his work, including his crude “R/A” theory of reproduction, which Rushton extrapolated from research on plants and animals. He applied the theory to humans, divided into racial groups, to contend that African Americans have more children and are worse parents (high R/low A), whereas Asians and whites have fewer children and are superior caregivers (low R/high A).¹⁰³ From its inception to today, the Pioneer Fund has bankrolled research projects big and small conducted by academics intent on demonstrating correlations between race, intelligence, and behavior. About twenty of the authors cited in Murray and Herrnstein’s *The Bell Curve*, received funding from the Pioneer Fund, including Gottfredson.¹⁰⁴ Tracing the money of the Pioneer Fund over the past eighty years reveals an enduring thread from the eugenics movement of the previous century to the alt-right today.

An interest in genetics extends to everyday online white nationalists, who are attracted to ancestry and DNA testing because they want to corroborate their white and European heritage.¹⁰⁵ They are pleased when they receive results that confirm this, but even if their ancestry is more complex, they have developed workarounds to ensure they remain in the tribe. Sometimes they question the validity of the tests, and the tests’ reference population sets, acquiring enough genetic literacy to push back against percentages that might identify them as less than 100 percent white. As Aaron Panofsky and Joan Donovan show in their study of Genetic Ancestry Testing discussions on Stormfront, unsatisfactory results can have the effect of expanding the boundaries of white belonging through references to shared culture and ideology, or the assertion of a primeval sense of identity. As a Stormfront commenter said, grappling with received genetic ancestry results, “I am white in body soul and spirit through and through.”¹⁰⁶ There are serious limitations to the kind of information that can be provided by commercialized ancestry testing, which is only as robust as the reference populations in the dataset; and, moreover, do not test long-history ancestry but rather one’s genetic proximity to individuals living today.¹⁰⁷ Alarmed by white nationalists’ use of ancestry testing to try to prove their racial purity, the American Society of Human Genetics recently denounced this trend and affirmed its commitment to “debunk genetics-based arguments promoting racial supremacy.”¹⁰⁸

White nationalists aren’t the only ones interested in biological essentialism. Millions of Americans of all political persuasions have sent their swabs to 23andme and Ancestry.com, hoping to learn about their racial and ethnic ancestry. Even Democratic senator Elizabeth Warren thought a DNA test could prove finally she is partly Cherokee in an effort to combat charges from President Trump that she has lied about her ancestry. Recent studies have shown that mere exposure to the idea of genetic ancestry tests increases “one’s belief in the essential differences between racial groups,” even if they don’t actually exist.¹⁰⁹ When it comes to recreational genetic testing, the alt-right is not inventing something new but rather augmenting and distorting more popular understandings of heredity and human difference that circulate in mainstream society. In a moment of excitement and trepidation about new gene editing techniques like Crispr, which one Chinese scientist allegedly used to create

genetically modified babies, and the growing currency of the field of sociogenomics, which offers up genetic determinism as an explanation for challenging social problems; a revamped brand of white nationalist en- genics can find multiple points of scientific inspiration.¹¹⁰

In *The Nature of Race*, her fascinating and sobering book on racial conceptions in American academia and public discourse, sociologist Ann Morning suggests that while phenotypical understandings of race are no longer popular, racial essentialism “is perfectly consistent with the claim that societal discrimination no longer exists, it is a helpful tool for explain- ing why race differentials still obtain in income, education, and just about any other measure of social status. In fact, it would be much harder to maintain that the U.S. is post racial if we did not have inherent biological difference to fall back on as an explanation for inequality.”¹¹¹ Disturb- ingly, this liberal line of reasoning is not that far afield from the precepts of “human biodiversity,” a pseudo-academic area popular among some alt-righters positing that if racial and population differences among hu- mans are written in DNA, then it’s nature’s hand at work.¹¹² Moreover, if organisms are unique, they should be protected from endangerment, a policy that alt-righters think should be extended to whites. Racial and gender essentialism is more accepted than anathema in American society, potentially making it easier for alt-lighters, and alt-righters, to dispense red pills.

CHAPTER 5

LIVING THE TRADLIFE

Babies, Butters, and the Vanishing of Bre Faucheux

FOR about one year the pseudonymous Bre Faucheux was one of the most active and visible alt-right social media personalities. She ran her own channel, 27Crows Radio, cohosted the YouTube show *This Week on the Alt-Right*, and appeared on episodes of Red Ice TV and other white nationalist programs. She interviewed the biggest names in the move- ment—Richard Spencer, Greg Johnson, and Lana Lokteff—and regularly collaborated with British nationalist Mark Collett. Yet in early April 2018, she fled the scene, abandoning these projects and her Twitter account, which had five thousand followers. Then, in a dramatic turn, Faucheux, her hairstyle changed and her appearance slightly altered, posted a grainy YouTube video from an undisclosed location announcing that she “had some personal things” to deal with and “wasn’t going to be home.”¹ Given these unforeseen circumstances, Faucheux said she would no longer host *This Week on the Alt-Right*. Several comments across alt-right social me- dia indicated that she had been doxed—her real name and home address divulged—in a news story and then hounded, most likely by the mali- cious misogynists associated with MGTOW (Men Going Their Own Way), who insist that women have no place in the alt-right.² A similar fate befell Tara McCarthy, who cohosted *This Week on the Alt-Right* be- fore Faucheux. McCarthy’s Twitter and YouTube feeds ended abruptly