Performing Fragility and Masking Hate: Women's White Supremacist Rhetoric

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ABSTRACT: By examining several prominent extremist women, this essay explores the rhetorical maneuvers of female rhetors who espouse supremacist views and promote extremist political platforms, particularly how they seize social media avenues to promulgate their extremist arguments. At the intersection of hegemonic white femininity and white supremacy, these female rhetors perform an assertively defended, yet fragile white womanhood that is enacted in a complicated space of misogyny that denies their agency.

KEY WORDS: affect, argument, performance, rhetoric, white supremacy, women

1. INTRODUCTION

Discourses of white supremacy have surged internationally as extremist movements experience renewed prominence amidst political polarization. For many, white supremacy is a masculine enterprise dominated by the angry voices of men who stoke fears about white genocide. Over twenty years ago, Blee (2002) noted "Today, women are estimated to constitute nearly 50 percent of new members in some racist groups . . . yet this new group of racist activists has been ignored, as researchers have tended to view racism as male-dominated and racist women as more interested in domestic and personal concerns than in its politics" (p. 7). Contemporary scholars also have argued that little attention is given to how women sustain white supremacy because these female participants have been framed as insignificant, lacking agency, or victimized, and "female extremists are also routinely presented as either atypical, abnormal, unnatural, or deviant" (Kisyova, Veilleux- Lepage, & Newby, 2022, p. 37; Skjelsbaek, et. al., 2020). Clearly, there is a pressing need to understand the rhetorical strategies used by women in extremist movements and their role in perpetuating hate and white supremacy.

The rhetorical maneuvers of white supremacist women are explored specifically in this essay at the nexus of performance, emotion, and argument. Female rhetors who espouse racist views and promote white supremacy serve as what McRae (2018) referred to as "the constant gardeners" for these movements (p. 4), and as the "organic intellectuals" who are influential in everyday life and "appear as actors who seek to normalize the ideas and principles of the far right in wider society" (Worth, 2012, p. 517). Women's influence is central to the "labyrinth of networks" that promulgate right-wing ideas across social media and populist movements because they use their rhetoric to "intervene and work with dominant gender, sexual, and cultural norms to produce a nationalist, antifeminist, gender/heteronormative, xenophobic, and antiminority majoritarianism" (Graff, Kapur,

and Walters, 2019, p. 547). White supremacist women are dangerous precisely because their rhetorical tactics belie their motives by cloaking racial hatred in the language of family, heritage, and nationalism.

2. PERFORMANCE, ARGUMENT, AND AFFECT

The rhetoric of women advocates for white supremacy is constrained within the misogyny of the movement's principles and male practitioners. Llanera (2023) describes the situation for women in racist groups as a "curious and ambivalent" position in which, because they are white, they "are indispensable to the overall success of the racist patriarchy. But as women, they are ranked as subpar and are expected to submit to white men" (p. 9). Women who seek to express their white supremacist views must navigate the "misogyny paradox" (Llanera, 2023) that simultaneously places them on a pedestal while erecting seemingly impenetrable parameters for their submission.

Yet, these women white supremacists largely draw their rhetorical resources from conservative patriarchal ideology to construct a seductive narrative "in which women find liberation in a committed, inspired and harmonized alt-right identity which encapsulates femininity, traditionalism and reverence for gender complementarity" (Kisyova, et. al., 2022, p. 37). Significantly, women are "soldiers at the front line of right wing organizing" who are engaged in battles in which "women's role in home and family is reframed as combat" (Tebaldi, 2021, p. 74). Women provide the rhetorical appeals that suture extreme white supremacist ideology with imagery that evokes a nostalgic myth of heart and hearth. To disentangle these threads of advocacy and masking requires an understanding of how the rhetorical performance of women who espouse white supremacy intersects with argument and emotion.

First, "performance" is a rich concept that evokes an engagement with an audience, as well as conveys a dual meaning encompassing both strategic staging and the achievement of outcomes. To "perform" entails the adoption of a "persona" in concert with the enactment of a set of ideas to achieve a set of objectives. As Proctor (2022) noted, personas "are tactical in nature, not merely being people, but crafting negotiated identities to perform personhood in specific contexts with explicit aims" (p. 12). As white supremacist women engage in activism, "these women proselytize the performance of a gendered role as a way to achieve security in a fast-paced, unpredictable and racialized world" (Kisyova et. al., 2022, p. 41). Performances necessarily occur in spatial and temporal planes, factors both enhanced and complicated by the social media mechanisms that contemporary white supremacist women utilize.

Virtual spaces lend themselves to stylized and heightened performances that also provide easy means for audiences to participate in the identity and affect being performed. As Rice (2008) argued, "Rhetorics emerge less from exigencies than from a kind of accretion of linkages (immigration job loss security loss danger crime) wherein an individual is only a single node. Therefore, instead of arguing that a person either buys these racist beliefs wholesale or has them imposed wholesale, we find that we are talking much more about the articulations that come to be stuck together in and through circulating discourses" (p. 206). This substantiation of racist ideology, via emotionally charged

articulations that become increasingly interrelated as they circulate, provides the essential foundation for the performances of white supremacist women.

The relationship between rhetorical performance and the emotional and affective dimensions of communication explains how and why white supremacist women's arguments have efficacy. Deem (2019) noted that the linking of emotion and race-based identifications creates "an affective economy of fear, which enfolds the emotional registers of love (of the White-national collective) and hate (of those that would threaten it), [and] continuously works to police and retrace the boundaries between the White self and racialized others" (3190). The gendered performance of women advocates for white supremacy thereby can be understood as grounded in the links between emotions and practice. Macagno (2014) underscored this relationship between emotion, practice, and context: "Emotions are described in terms of perception and experience. They are triggered by assessments of states of affairs and lead to an action" (p. 119). Indeed, it is in this "active doing," based in a contextual assessment, where performance via emotion meets argumentation and influence.

This performative view of emotion and argument indicates how white supremacist women build and maintain their spheres of influence. The performance of emotion produces "feelings of community" (Papacharissi, 2016, p. 4-5) as women enact their role as influencers to be admired, yet also entice their audiences to embrace and emulate their roles within traditional femininity. Performative rhetoric that is grounded in emotion has strong constitutive functions, particularly within a context that is perceived by the audience to be threatening. Further, the impact of such performative rhetoric cannot be underestimated related to how it both evokes and confirms ideology and action. Indeed, as Kisyova et. al. (2022) concluded in regard to women advocates for white supremacy, "They shape the ideological space of the extreme right for other women and spread their message by placing rhetorical emphasis on topics traditionally associated with lifestyle and well- being. By shaping the ideological space for other women, they become useful propagandists of white supremacist views" (p. 40). Specifically, this "propaganda" finds expression through women's performative rhetoric and incitement of emotion in three interrelated arguments: construction of feminism as the primary enemy, evocation of submission within white supremacist values, and elevation of protection of the family. These three arguments function as the linkages that draw in audiences, accrue ideological coherence, and constitute women's identity within the white supremacist community.

3. ANALYSIS: SUBMISSIVE SHIELD MAIDENS

The fundamental tenet of white supremacy is expressed in the "fourteen words" that guide their actions: "We must ensure the existence of our people and our future for White children." Consequently, fundamental to women's role in white supremacy is their responsibility to bear children above all else, and to engage in the fight against those who threaten their families. As Campion (2020) argued, "women in both the extreme and radical right interact in an ideological ecosystem which positions them as the key to racial salvation or endangered womanhood, legitimizes violent and non-violent action, and enables them to select and project an idealized and ideologically loaded expression of femininity" (pp. 14-15). Within the constraints of misogyny and the hegemonic masculinity that frames

their activities, white supremacist women have been able to forge a path to influence by harnessing the emotions of their female audiences and providing a seductive, albeit perverse, vision of women's agency.

White supremacist women strategically draw upon the "the archetypical roles of women as Mother, Whore, and Fighter that are widely shared inside organized racism and other extremist movements" (Latif, et. al., 2023, p. 416) to perform a persona of femininity that evokes power from the constraints placed upon them. In particular, I argue that their rhetorical performances engage three interrelated emotive arguments regarding victimage, submission, and protection to depict how women's roles properly are to be performed, as well as underscore the legitimacy and necessity for white supremacy. Excerpts from the discourses of several prominent white supremacist women are woven together to illustrate how these three arguments, articulated at the intersection of performance and emotion, constitute an integrative identity and bounded community for white women who believe that they are under siege.

3.1 Enemies and enmity

Rhetorical performances are staged in specific historical and cultural contexts that provide the foundation for appeals to emotion that will activate action. Because white supremacist women find themselves facing the "conundrum that the polar dictates of submission and action poses for women in the Far/Alt-Right" (Mattheis, 2018, p. 152), they must find a means to reconcile their subordinate status with a path that restores some agency to them. The principles of both theatrical performance and rhetorical influence prescribe that the formulation of an enemy against which one must act is the grounds for drama and a means for identification. As Kenneth Burke (1969) proposed, "identification is compensatory to division" (p. 22), hence identifications can be constituted upon antithesis. Significantly, because white supremacist women cannot both exist within the dictates of hegemonic masculinity and evoke men as the source of their anxieties and fears, they must seek enemies from without. Conceived both in the abstract sense of an animated force and as exemplified by specific proponents, "feminism" and its role in a conspiracy to undermine the white race supplies the necessary antagonist to engage white women's emotions in concert with a specific performance of femininity.

Labeling feminism as the source for the dangers and problems in the historical and cultural context engenders in particular the emotion of hate in the performance of femininity enacted by white supremacist women. In Book II of On Rhetoric, Aristotle (trans. 2007) described how hate functions rhetorically: "Now anger comes from things that affect a person directly, but enmity also from what is not directed against himself; for if we suppose someone to be a certain kind of person, we hate him" (p. 127). The emotion of hate therefore applies to kinds and classes, rather than offenses lodged against an individual, and as such, we can hate others solely for their perceived odious character and dark motives even without having directly experienced harm from them. In both the strain of white supremacy expressed in the "Tradwife" role as well as located in more aggressive social media personalities, feminism functions as the central scapegoat and target for hate and enmity. As Mattheis (2018) argued, "Far/Alt-Right women also want their participation in these movements to be recognized as an actively made choice and a pointed rejection of feminism" (p. 138). For example, Llanera (2023) noted that "Tradwives link

feminism to the deterioration of Western civilization, the core of which is the white nuclear family—making them, and people who venerate the vision of 1950s American family life with misplaced nostalgia, natural allies of the alt-right" (p. 7). Christou (2020) also described how the Tradwife discourse "brings together those who feel blindsided by the feminist movement and want to teach women how to take care of their man and give birth to more (white) babies" (n.p.). The performance of traditional femininity as a choice that is freely made is key to the constitution of identity for white supremacist women.

This rejection of feminism rhetorically pits women against women and identifies white supremacist proponents as the true heroes in their commitment to perform traditional femininity. As one female commentator stated on the website AltRight: "Rising from the shattered promises of feminism, they [Alt-Right women] have awoken to stand beside their brothers, partners, husbands, and children, to reclaim their destiny as women" (Davenport, 2016, n.p.). Explaining this alternative performative stance in opposition to feminism's promises of liberation, Kisyova et. al. (2022) noted that "far right women activists construct a narrative in which women find liberation in a committed, inspired and harmonized alt- right identity which encapsulates femininity, traditionalism and reverence for gender complementarity. Women's emancipation is presented as unnatural and constitutive of the crisis facing the white race" (p. 37). Moreover, for white supremacist women, feminism is akin to genocide because it is part of the larger conspiracy "to weaken the [white] race by producing lower birthrates, a more submissive workforce, and a more left politics" (Tebaldi, 2021, p. 78). Correspondingly, the proper role for white women is to accept that their destiny is to be the mothers whose mission it is to preserve the white race against these threatening forces.

3.2 Submissive reifications

The second argument underscoring the performance of femininity enacted by white supremacist women is the necessity of submission to hegemonic masculinity and the dictates of traditionalism for women, but this submission is redefined as the true courageous act. White women must persevere and prosper by finding their fulfilment in the domestic life and the roles of wife and mother. As Women's Frontier, a racist website stated, "When we women take care of our household tasks, we must respect that intrinsic value of this work. It is not demeaning . . . We regard such work a noble pursuit" (quoted in Darby, 2020, p. 141). The discourses of white supremacist women direct the emotions of anger at feminists and their conspirators who have destroyed the sanctity of the home and hearth, and in turn, engender pride and resolve in virtuous women who embody the traditional roles. As white supremacist personality Lacey Lynn stated, "You have to be honest with yourself and say, 'Okay, where did these things come from? Where did these problems come from?' . . . you have to be able to say, like, you know, first wave feminism was not okay. It was not okay. It was not the only good wave of feminism. It wasn't the good wave. It was communism. It was women seeking superiority. It was domestic terrorism. It was—oh, it was terrible. It was terrible" (quoted in Charles, 2020, p. 172). Feminists are the true "terrorists" threatening the livelihood of good white women; consequently, white supremacists women's hatred for their deeds must be turned to counteraction.

To perform agency, even in the midst of submission, then, white supremacist women appropriate the rhetorical themes of liberation and choice, a performance that "ultimately reinscribes the notion of women's lost femininity and points to marriage and family as necessary goals for women to regain themselves" (Mattheis, 2018, pp. 11-12). Explaining this performance of traditional femininity, Tradwife proponent Alena Kate Pettitt proclaimed "We are very domesticated. We are here by choice. We are not here through oppression or control" (quoted in Sykes, 2023, p. 72). This "Tradwife" persona, in turn, upholds white supremacy in subtle but significant ways. White supremacist women forward their vision of heterosexual binary roles and relationships as universal and trans- historical; thus "by framing these particular formations of gender roles and identities seen in the white middle- class United States of the 1950s as traditional, the tradwife persona reifies them into natural fact for all humans" (Proctor, 2022, p. 9). This reification provides a convenient mask for deflecting charges of racism leveled at white supremacist women. Indeed, Ayla Stewart, the prominent tradwife blogger of "A Wife with Purpose," perfected such a persona in presenting herself as "the good white mother castigated as a hate monger simply for trying to protect her children from harm" (Darby, 2020, p. 134). Stewart's coy defense illustrates how emphasizing "tradition" functions as "one of the ways in which nationalist rhetoric claims an essentialized and largely a-historical version of culture" (Christou, 2020, n.p.).

In white supremacist ideology the preservation of the white race depends upon the actions of "good women" who will fulfill their central role in bearing white children, a mission that is especially crucial in a world that seemingly at every turn seeks to undermine this noble duty. The image of motherhood at the center of white supremacism is not new, as this role for women also was a central tenet for racist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan and the National Socialist Party. As Kathleen Blee (2002) observes, "Racist groups are obsessed with ensuring the purity of racial bloodlines, determining race from racial markings, and increasing white birthrates. To racists, reproduction can never be left to chance" (p. 154). Indeed, inspired by an anti-immigration statement by Republican Congressman Steve King that "we can't restore civilization with somebody else'sbabies," Alya Stewart of "Wife With a Purpose" issued a "white baby challenge," by throwing down the breeding gauntlet on her Twitter account: "I've made 6, match or beat me!" Stewart also proclaimed on a YouTube video that "Americans of original pioneer stock aren't having enough babies" (quoted in Darby, 2020, p. 160).

The white nationalist depiction of the "great replacement" theory warning of the eradication of the white population therefore "becomes more deeply tied into notions of fertility, purity, and anti-feminism. White genocide means that elites are conspiring to end the white race through immigration, miscegenation, feminism, and indoctrination" (Tebaldi, 2021, p. 78). For example, one visual meme was directly accusatory, wherein, underneath photos of white women participating in Black Lives Matter marches, welcoming immigrants, and protesting for abortion rights, the caption reads: "There is no white genocide. There's white suicide and women pull the trigger" (reproduced in Badalich, 2019, p. 50). Hence, white women must recognize their roles as mothers and traditional women and actively enact them to counter the dangers posed from without.

This image of the strong and devoted white mother and its performance in white supremist discourse evokes provocative emotions and strong identifications. As Katherine Belew (2018) concluded from her research about white power organizations, "the emphasis

on white women's reproduction was so powerful that it worked as a unifying force for activists with dramatic—perhaps otherwise insurmountable—cultural differences. Motherhood spanned the distance between housewife populism and paramilitary violence" (pp. 169-170). Feminism is to blame for luring white women away from their true purpose and undermining the "natural" patriarchal social structure; in essence, feminists are guilty of race suicide "for working instead of making as many white children as possible, dispossessing men of their social and racial birthright" (Tebaldi, 2021, p. 78). Indeed, as Andrew Anglin from the AltRight website "The Daily Stormer" underscored, the wombs of white women "belong to the males of society" (quoted in Darby, 2017). Linking motherhood with "tradition" renders the rhetorical performance of white supremacist women more powerful, fueled both by anger at those who demean them and underscored by pride in their traditional choices.

3.3 Fearful maidens

The rhetorical performance of white supremacist women culminates in the persona of a good woman who is strong and unbowed in her determination to fulfill her destiny as a mother, wife, and traditionalist. Especially, it is the most virtuous and submissive of good women who must serve as protectors of their families and their country against feminists and their conspirators. Key to this third argument that undergirds the rhetorical performance is the emotion of fear, and the corresponding posture of defense, in the face of danger. In Book II of On Rhetoric, Aristotle described fear as "a sort of pain and agitation derived from the imagination of a future destructive or painful evil," and explains further that "such things are necessarily causes of fear as seem to have great potential for destruction or for causing harms that lead to great pains. Therefore, even the signs of such things are causes of fear; for that which causes fear seems near at hand" (trans. 2007, pp. 128- 129). This definition captures the affective impact of white supremacist discourse that builds conspiratorial and paranoid visions of the burgeoning threats against the white race upon fragments of "evidence" and the imagined machinations of evil others. As Kisyova et. al. (2022) noted, "Far-right recruitment campaigns strategically tap into women's anxieties and grievances about safety and security" (p. 40). For women white supremacists, summoning fears about the destruction of traditional femininity provides the gateway to other supremacist beliefs, particularly related to the horrendous dangers posed by non- white men.

Performing white supremacist womanhood in the face of imagined dangers requires a model for how to behave and what to believe. Hence it is not surprising that the imagined destruction of the white race often is expressed via archetypes of goddesses and women warriors. For example, in a widely circulated speech delivered to the racist gathering at the Ninth Identitarian Ideas Conference, then later posted on the white supremacist YouTube channel Red Ice TV, Lana Lokteff summoned the mythic image of Norse women who were ready to serve and defend: "Let's not forget about Freya, the archetypal beauty. That's, that's what women want and that's healthy and we should have that. But they also honor family and home but occasionally we have to pick up a sword and fight in emergency situations" (Lokteff, 2017, 9:36-10:37). The image of Freya, the Norse goddess of fertility who also is associated with prophecy and battle, is employed by Lokteff to provide an

emotional analogue for her audience. The image serves an assurance that the dual roles of domesticity and fighter are not contradictory.

In her speech Lokteff also filled out the connection between the mythic women called to act and the contemporary need for women to protect white supremacy. She argued that: "The shield maiden, the Vikings right, like today women of the right, would love to simply tend the home and make their surroundings beautiful - and I wish that's all we have to do. And, I know our ancestors worked to the bone in order for us to be able to have that luxury, but many women such as myself are realizing that this is an emergency situation. Our countries are being destroyed by leftists and anti-Whites. And, the future for our children is looking gloom[y]. Although, I think women are too emotional for leading roles and politics, this is the time for female nationalists to be loud" (Lokteff, 2017, 9:36-10:37). The image of women's power in this statement is striking, but for Lokteff this power only is demanded in an emergency, as women must not overstep their proper submissive and quiet role in ordinary times. As Mattheis (2018) argued, "her rhetorical use of the 'shield maiden' and the linkages to the broader non-feminized concerns of Far/Alt-Right ideology allows Lokteff to 'perform' – to show rather than tell – how to be a proper woman in the movement (p. 151). Indeed, as Lokteff proclaimed, "In these times, us women must multi- task and rise to new heights as the enemy strikes on every level. We have to be lovers, mothers, friends, teachers, and now, shield maidens ready to go to battle" (Lokteff, 2017, 13:17-32). This persona of the traditional woman as shield maiden provides a foundation for drawing women audiences further into the white supremacist community.

Stoking fears that good white families are under siege opens additional pathways to identifying imagined forces marshalling against them. The rhetorical performance of the shield maiden role within a context that heightens threats from every unknown and different force in turn "positions the Alt-Right as a locus of white women's comfort, safety, and protection in a dangerous world" (Mattheis, 2018, p. 154). In this way, the tradwife turned warrior provides the bridge between insular discourses about femininity and family and externalized racist ideologies that demonize the other. Among the racist tropes summoned in the call to action for women is the recycling of myths of sexual violence at the hands of vicious non-white men. For example, in a video entitled "Welcome Refugees?? I Blame Feminism and Here's Why," Ayla Stewart echoed the racist myths about violence against women, this time admonishing white husbands: "You would do anything to keep her safe, but are you really keeping her safe if you allow hordes of violent third-world immigrants into your nation?" (quoted in Darby, 2020, p. 157). Similarly, in a broadcast on Radio 3Fourteen, a white supremacist podcast site, Lana Lokteff focused on the victimization of white women: "Muslim men raping them in Europe, black men raping them in South Africa" (Darby, 2020, p. 208). The victimization of women, and by extension the victimization of the white race, here is articulated by the women themselves. For Stewart and Lokteff, white women's enemies and white people's enemies are the same: They are "degenerate groups with a coordinated agenda to destroy all that was good, white, and American" (Darby, 2020, p. 176).

Countering fear of non-whites with a confident persona of superiority rooted in fantasies of heritage and entitlement is central in the performance of white supremacist women. In Book II of On Rhetoric, confidence was positioned by Aristotle (trans. 2007) as complimentary to fear; as such, confidence is a "hope of safety [that] is accompanied by an imagination that it is near, while fearful things either do not exist or are far away.

Dreadful things being far off plus sources of safety being near at hand equal feelings of confidence" (p. 131). When white supremacists embrace heritage as a justification for their actions, they summon familiar themes that are resonant and accessible in audiences, underscoring their "natural" superiority to others. The appeal to heritage is another way to constitute the white supremacist community and to close ranks against external threats. The intersection of the white supremacist as tradwife and shield maiden plays across this landscape of fear and confidence. As Darby (2020) noted, "When a tradwife mentions threats to 'European culture' and 'Western civilization,' she's borrowing euphemistic language from white nationalists. When she talks about protecting her children from multiculturalism and black-on-white crime, she's all but reading from the hate movement's proverbial handbook" (p. 156). Hence, it is not surprising that a white supremacist woman like Ayla Stewart decried multiculturalism as "propaganda" and admonished her audience of good, white mothers to remember that "Every choice we make for our child can either strengthen or weaken their sense of cultural pride and heritage" (quoted in Darby, 2020, p. 157).

As white supremacist women evoke confidence in their female audiences, they establish another constitutive means for creating community and modeling performance of the proper role for white women. Particularly potent in evoking affect are appeals to a white ancestry and white cultural practices as pure, and therefore, in need of protection. White supremacist women fundamentally are content to enact the traditional "normal" roles they embrace, yet in times of crisis when they are "terrorized," they must activate their inner shield maiden. Indeed, in the identity constituted for white supremacist women the fates of their families, their country, and the whole white race rests in their hands.

4. CONCLUSIONS: COUNTERING WHITE SUPREMACIST RHETORICS

White supremacist women perform a traditional femininity where emotion and affect activated through argument, constitute identity, community, and action. Ultimately, white supremacist women link three arguments about threats from enemies, traditional submission as action, and the necessity for battle to constitute both a sense of identity and community for their women audiences. Emotion and affect become the vehicles for framing the ideology and inspiring action; hence these arguments are activated in practice and promulgated in virtual spaces where the perception of an existential threat to the white race is rampant. Essentially, as Stern (2019) noted, these women position themselves as the new counterculture, pitting themselves against a more backward Left and functioning as handmaidens for extremist groups. Far from being passive in their performance of traditional femininity, women are active agents in promoting and sustaining white supremacy. Consequently, we must be careful not to dismiss the discourse of white supremacist women as simplistic and anachronistic. Rather, their performance of traditional femininity clearly connects with a broad swath of women, thereby serving as a powerful gateway to extremist views. By reifying whiteness as universal and traditional gender roles as the root of the civilized world, these women provide an ideological linkage that envelops a large swath of the population, and via the emotional connections, and constitutes a welcoming place within white supremacy for these audiences. Indeed, the spread of white supremacism, nationalism, and virulent anti-feminism is not surprising

when then the rhetorical appeals used by white supremacist women are unmasked. To counter the affective appeal of performative rhetorics used by white supremacists requires own reflexivity as scholars. We need to acknowledge our own roles in perpetuating ideas about extremist groups that insulate us, rather than acknowledge the thin threads of our own complicity. As Devin Proctor (2022) noted, for example, "Not all tradwives are white nationalist fascists, but some are. And unless we address that fact, every time we talk about 'traditional' lifestyles, family structures, or marriage dynamics, then we are complicit" (p. 22). Moreover, to break through the political polarization that currently engulfs democratic societies requires that we do more than merely depict these racist groups as dangerous subcultures: We need acknowledge that their continued success is attributable not to "the pathological individual but rather a pathological vein of racism, intolerance, and bigotry in the larger population that the movement successfully mines" (Blee, 2002, pp. 187; 192). Consequently, the first step to countering white supremacist rhetorics is to understand the complex ways in which they build upon these embedded veins of hate, then we must insistently, and unfailingly, work to disentangle those connections.

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