Organizational mythopoeia and the spectacle in postfascist (dis)organization

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abstract

This article examines the process of organizational mythopoeia ('myth-making') undertaken as part of the repertoire of techniques used by the postfascist far-right to propagate and disseminate their ideology. The article examines the purchase of a car formerly owned by the now deceased right-wing British politician Enoch Powell, by a far-right group. What followed were a short series of events surrounding the purchase that saw attempts to transform the car's cultural, political and historical significance for their own benefit by attempting to project it ideologically into public consciousness, something that ultimately failed to occur. This is explored with reference to organizational mythopoeia and the spectacle. The central argument presented is that the postfascist far-right attempt to create their own reality through mythopoeia that is rooted in nostalgic visions of the past. This is undertaken to achieve cultural attrition, factual distortion, and a fundamental disordering of norms that opens the space for the communication of postfascism. Despite the seeming ephemerality of the events discussed here, we show how the inconsequential and often ignored can offer valuable insights into wider postfascist order/organization and disorder/disorganization.

Introduction

In May 2018, the far-right group Generation Identity announced via Twitter (#powellmobile) that they had bought a car formerly belonging to the deceased British politician Enoch Powell. What followed were a short series

of events surrounding the purchase that saw attempts to transform the car's cultural, political and historical significance for the benefit of the group by attempting to project it ideologically into public consciousness. These attempts ultimately failed and the event faded into obscurity. By analysing the story of the 'Powell mobile' this article examines the organizational disorder that emerged, paradoxically, through attempts to use the car and its story to create order. We explore both the mythopoeia (that is, the act of myth-making) and spectacle (the mediation of society by representation) that were at the core of the process of disordering within and by this postfascist organization. Postfascism here describes the phenomena whereby fascism has become transhistorical, existing as both a key part of historical consciousness and the contemporary political imaginary (Traverso, 2019). This article contributes to the critical study of organization within postfascist phenomena, building on work concerning populist victories such as Brexit and Trump (Kerr & Śliwa, 2020; Mollan & Geesin, 2020) as well as the wider success of far-right politics across Europe and the West (Mudde, 2019; Lennard, 2020). Given the entirely online presence of the *Powell mobile* spectacle, this article is also framed by the need to better understand the relationship between social media and postfascist organization(s) and organizing (Engesser et al., 2017; Gustafsson & Weinryb, 2020; Krämer, 2017).

We argue that it is in the realms of mythopoeia and the spectacle that postfascism has its organizational impact–one which disorders culture, and deracinates the past and objective truth, as part of its organizing process (Parker & Racz, 2020). We use the *Powell mobile* episode to identify, explore and critique the key elements of postfascist organization: the use of social media activism, the disordering of truth and intent through irony and mythopoeia, the use of a distinct aesthetic, the exploitation of nostalgia and an underlying message of ethno-nationalism and anti-immigration. We argue that although *Powell mobile* was ultimately a failure, it served as an attempted vehicle for communicating a message that within and throughout the wider far-right phenomenon is constitutive of the postfascist spectacle.

The first part of this article establishes organizational mythopoeia as a tool of organizational analysis and contextualises postfascism, spectacle and (dis)order/(dis)organization. The second part tells the story of *Powell mobile*,

detailing the sale of the car, the subsequent events and ultimate outcome. The third interprets the events as an act of mythopoeia and explores the meaning, significance and intention of the myth that was created. The fourth discusses the event in its relation to conceptions of the spectacle and its form in the postfascist spectacle. Through the framework of organizational mythopoeia, the article concludes how the *Powell mobile* episode serves as a mundane yet potent example of how the postfascist technique and effect of disorder can create a form of organizational and ideological order.

Organizational mythopoeia: Postfascist spectacle and organizing disorder

The *Powell mobile* episode allows us to examine far-right organizational mythopoeia, as an elemental part of the postfascist spectacle that creates order through disorder. Through the purchase of the car, Generation Identity attempted to create a spectacle around the enchantment of the car as an artefact, attempting to imbue it with mythopoeic legitimacy in order to mythologize both their ideology and themselves.

Mythopoeia (from the Greek 'mythos'/myth, and 'poiein'–to make) originated as a term for a narrative genre of creative myth-making within literary fiction, notably in the work of J.R.R Tolkien (see Tolkien, 1964). As a tool for analysis it has been widely applied in political studies, where exploring political myths is a long-established phenomenon (Flood, 2002; Tudor, 1972). What makes a myth political or not is dependent on its reception as much as its production. At an extreme, state mythopoeia, such as in totalitarian regimes, is employed for the ideological control of the people. However, in any political society, 'political myths represent the basic symbols of the political elite' (Bocarnea & Osula 2008: 198). For the far-right this is often seen in the transformation of the past to suit present needs. In this article, mythopoeia is an act and process of myth-making (Bocarnea & Osula, 2008) that seeks to provide significance to the ideological conditions and experiences of a social group (Bottici & Challand, 2006). The insidious deployment of mythopoeia within postfascism is achieved through its capacity to condense and convey myths through multiple and fragmentary references combined into a new formulation (Bottici & Challand, 2006). As a tool, or technique, organizational mythopoeia

is a form of self-representation in which organizations can elicit and legitimate their own ideological image for both internal and external consumption.

Debord's notion of *spectacle*, understood here to mean 'the dominant form in society where the real world is replaced and mediated by images that become regarded as the epitome of reality' (Debord 1967: 14) has been critically re-engaged for the age of information capitalism and digital labour. Spectacle 2.0, as it is known, is the 'historicized continuum of the Debordian spectacle that has transitioned through digital capitalism and new media' (Briziarelli & Armano 2017: 34). It differs, however, from its original conceptualisation in that the passive spectator who once only consumed the cultural products that constituted the spectacle is now the 'interactive subject who socialises through these new digital technologies' (Briziarelli & Armano 2017: 34). Spectacle 2.0 therefore creates an 'extended integration of both the production and consumption' of the images that mediate society through the digital labour that sees us produce the spectacle that we also consume (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). The postfascist spectacle is made up of mythopoeia, commodity fetishism, the seeing of 'difference' and post-truth phenomena, all of which can be found in the organization of *Powell mobile.*

The spectacle in organization can be found in the 'spectacular' as well as the mundane creation of 'dramatized representations of reality' the production of which lies at the 'heart of which most organizations do and most organizing is about' (Flyverbom & Reinecke, 2017: 1626). This opens up the question of what it means when the process of organizing creates representations of reality that could constitute the spectacle (Flyverbom & Reinecke, 2017) and if 'organizational controls in an era dominated by the spectacle' can be resisted or in the case of *Powell mobile,* co-opted (Gabriel 2008: 311). Despite the failure of the event, the *Powell mobile* represents something interesting within the postfascist phenomenon. Through the fetishization of an arbitrary object the far-right reveal themselves as myth-makers and although this attempt resulted in disorder, it contributes to the wider postfascist spectacle, in which disorder becomes part of the organizational order itself.

Both order and disorder may arise through the process of organizing whereas organization itself may be seen as the 'appropriation of order out of disorder'

(Cooper, 1986: 328), but disorder can also result from the expectation of order (Munro, 2001). The result of this paradox is that order and disorder sometimes can be parasitical upon one another (Knox et al., 2015; Serres, 1982). In the *Powell mobile* story and event, this parasitical relationship becomes further distorted by the postfascist tendency to glide between distortion and mis-representation. As we shall see, the locus of disordering can be found here in the act (or event) of communication, through which meaning is subject to the ordering and disordering of interpretation and representation (Vasquez et al., 2016). In this case, the car itself became the 'vehicle' in which the organization of communication took place, creating a continuous form of the opening and closing of meaning through mythopoeia.

The Powell mobile story

Value is created and added through the movement of things, through their social lives (Appadurai, 1988). The monetary value of the asking price for the 1994 Honda Concerto purchased by Generation Identity was only slightly above an average asking price for a comparable car of the same age and model. In 2020, Auto Trader listed a 1994 Honda Concerto of the same registration year, 0.1 litre smaller engine, 20,000km lower mileage, but without a previous famous owner, for £1,495 (AutoTrader, 2020). Whereas the asking price for Powell's car was £1,600, albeit with higher mileage and a larger engine, the difference of £105 is hardly reflective of any significance of ownership or its assumed social life. Yet its social and perhaps political value was considered far greater by Generation Identity who attempted to engineer a manipulation of the car's value by re-defining its cultural significance in relation to that of its former owner. Enoch Powell himself remains one of the most divisive figures in British political history, perhaps most notably for his 'Rivers of Blood' speech made in opposition to the *Race Relations Act 1968*, in which, through violent imagery and rhetoric, he set out how he had come to perceive immigration as a threat to the foundations of British social and cultural life (Kenny and Pearce, 2019).

Powell's Honda was manufactured and purchased by him in 1994. The details of his purchase of the car are unknown; however, Powell was 82 at this time. Having been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease two years earlier, he was in

declining health, though he continued to speak out against Europe, writing in the Daily Mail 'Britain is waking from the nightmare of being part of the continental bloc, to rediscover that these offshore islands belong to the outside world and lie open to its oceans' (Heffer, 1998: 942). He was still politically involved at the time, speaking for Alan Sked of the anti-federalist league (soon to become UKIP) and later the Bruges Group campaigning against the Maastricht treaty. In 1993, Nigel Farage allegedly drove Powell to an early UKIP event as a speaker and later asked Powell to stand as an electoral candidate, as Alan Sked had before him, which he declined on both occasions (Hope, 2014). Powell continued with writing and speaking engagements until his death in 1998, at which point the ownership of his Honda Concerto passed to his wife.

It wasn't until 30th March 2017 that the car came back into public consciousness. The first reappearance of the car is in a tweet from the railway historian and presenter of BBC's *Trainspotting Live* Tim Dunn who posted 'Would you like to buy Enoch Powell's 1994 Honda Concerto? Yours for £1,600' (@MrTimDunn, 2018) and provided the link to carandclassic.co.uk, where the car was being sold. The tweet was retweeted eight times and received mostly sarcastic comments suggesting the car should be called 'Rovers of blood' and that it probably 'keeps veering to the right'. The Tweets however also contain a few warnings 'to be aware' this vehicle is on the market and forebodings that 'UKIP or BNP may snap it up'.

The car was presumably not sold through carandclassic.co.uk as on 25th May 2018 a twitter user provided the information and link to the car being sold on eBay – 'Enoch Powell's Cat C Honda Concerto is currently on eBay' (anonymous, 2018). Again, this was mostly met with posts about the irony of Powell owning a Japanese car, albeit one that was manufactured by the Honda-Rover joint venture in the UK in Longbridge, Birmingham (manufacturing came to an end in 1994 after sale to BMW) (Pilkington, 1996). On the 1st May 2018, the car was sold for the price of £1200 following 20 bids. The eBay advertisement tells us that the car was owned from new by Enoch Powell, his wife owned and used the car for some period after his death, and the owner at the time had the car for only two years. The rest is detail of the car's condition, mileage and so on; however, there is one line that speaks of the car's potential social value and meaning. The seller expressed the view

that they would like to see car 'go to a enthusiast as it's been well looked after' (ebay.co.uk, 2018). It is unclear whether the seller is seeking an enthusiast of old Hondas or of Enoch Powell himself. The information about the ownership, with documents to prove such, as well as the title of the sale 'Honda Concerto (Owned by Enoch Powell)' (ebay.co.uk, 2018) indicates the seller is aware that its previous owner may add some value to its exchange.

On the 20th May 2018 (then the active and named) Generation Identity UK & Ireland announced that they had bought the car:

> Some time ago, a supporter made us aware of a car being sold at auction. What was of particular interest was the car's former owner, #EnochPowell. So our activists chipped in the money, and we decided to buy it. May it serve us well as it served him. #PowellMobile. (GID_England, 2018)

Generation Identity UK were part of the wider pan-European youth movement collectively known as the Identitarian Movement. The movement is based on the supposed preservation and rights of culture and territory to those of white European descent, promoting 'white' ethno-pluralism at a Global level and ethno-nationalism at a European and local level. The movement are known for their media presence and adoption of stunts and events to draw attention to themselves. The UK branch's Tweet attracted 41 comments, 79 retweets and 341 likes, the post generated a spectrum of reaction, while the action gathered some support, mostly in the form of racist rhetoric and idolisation of Powell's anti-immigration position the post was also met with derision and parody. One Twitter user derided the potential purpose of the purchase: 'They bought Enoch Powell's old banger as if it's some magic chariot of bigotry' (anonymous, 2018).

The next day a YouTube video appeared on the group's website, titled *#PowellMobile*. This acted as a publicity piece to announce the car's purchase, with a recording of an excerpt of Powell's infamous 'Rivers of Blood' speech overlaying the soundtrack. The video was highly stylised and characteristic of the prevailing far-right aesthetic that borrows heavily from retrofuturism, an aesthetic mode and form of cultural production that uses previous iconic visions of the future that represent a nostalgic imagining for a present that never materialised, thus serving as a rhetorical and ideological tool for

creating visions of how things might have been and therefore might still be (Sharp, 2011).

This YouTube video acted as a piece of propaganda centred on both mythopoeia and aesthetic appeal. The short video (only 1:09) shows a neon grid landscape, with an ominous electro synth score from the far-right band Xurious's track 'Rivers of Blood'. This aesthetic is part of 'fashwave', a portmanteau of fascism and vaporwave. Fashwave forms a music and visual aesthetic (sometimes called 'art-right') that combines Classical motifs (Greek and Roman) with 'heavy layers of 1980's kitsch and digital synthetic gloss' (Hermansson, et al. 2020: 110) that has become a recognisable mimetic expression of the far-right for its blend of nostalgia and futuristic sound and imagery (Hann, 2016).

We see the car, parked in a nondescript suburban car park. Four Generation Identity members then appear from the left and approach the car in a blurred neon enhanced picture. An excerpt from Enoch Powell's 'rivers of blood' speech is narrated over as part of the music track. The four members enter the car, with the sound of the music, Powell and the gravel beneath them. The doors shut and as Powell's speech ends. The car begins to accelerate and the electronic beat crescendos into drums. As the car drives away, the camera pans into a clear blue sky where an image of Powell's face appears with the camera zooming in before fading to black. The stylised production of this video helps us to understand the desired identities and culture of Generation Identity. The video was an attempt to lend weight to their authenticity, as a cultural youth movement within the wider far-right spectrum while appealing to a young, modern, and educated political demographic within the UK. Their celebration of Powell and his infamous speech through the purchase of his car seeks to legitimise the speech itself as well as the vitriolic anti-immigration agenda behind it. Like the retro-futurist music and imagery of fashwave, Generation Identity themselves identify with those politics of the past while promoting themselves as the visionary movement and answer to the future. Here, mythopoeia is used to overlook the present and instead justify the actions of the future.

Five days later, through a piece on the group the *Daily Mail* mentioned the whereabouts of the car in an article called 'hipster fascists':

> Parked outside a block of flats in the leafy suburbs of North London yesterday was an old Honda Concerto. 'The former owner was Enoch Powell,' its new owner, Tom Dupré declared proudly after emerging from the building. (Bracchi, 2018)

YouTube comments and the attempted hashtag sensation *#PowellMobile*, quickly died down with the stunt fading into relative obscurity. In August 2018, the then co-leader of Generation Identity quit from his position and from the organization entirely. A *Guardian* interview states this was due to his realisation that individuals within the group had links to Neo-Nazis in Europe (Townsend, 2018). Information from the DVLA reveals that the car was subsequently not taxed when due, and that its MOT had expired by July 2018. It wasn't until the 23rd January 2019 that an image of the car being towed away was shared on Twitter by the group's former leader, having been in some minor collision. The nearside headlamp, nose panel and fender had been damaged and the passenger side door showed signs of heavy scraping. Covered in snow the vehicle was loaded onto a recovery tow truck. Its licence plate removed and with no comment or description, it is confirmed to a Twitter commenter that it is the *Powell mobile*. The *Powell mobile's* short revival as an object with supposed political significance had come to an end.

The UK branch (known as Generation Identity UK & Ireland) was disassociated with the wider European movement in July 2019 following an ignored request from the European leadership of Generation Identity not to invite an anti-Semitic conspiracy theorist to speak at an event. This led the European leaders to publicly denounce the UK leadership and demand its change of name and branding. From this, the UK activists for a short time re-branded and regrouped into the 'Identitarian Movement England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland'. In January 2020, the group formally dissolved, removing their online content including the #PowellMobile video, from YouTube.

Organizational mythopoeia

For postfascist phenomena–which are cultural and social, as well as political–myth becomes a means of invoking an entire ideology using a single image, gesture, symbol or in the case of *Powell mobile,* an old Honda. Postfascist organizational mythopoeia here resembles Barthes' understanding of *myth*

(Barthes, 1957). Barthes' *Mythologies* set to unmask the ideological impositions behind social stereotypes found in cultural objects and activities that are passed off and accepted as natural or normal. These ideological impositions were the 'myths' of modern society, which Barthes saw as delusions that needed to be exposed. *Powell mobile* is therefore an example of political and cultural mythopoeia, as the ideology of the far-right group is partially hidden within the cultural object: the stunt and its spectacle. Postfascism is highly networked. It disseminates ideology through its own cultural forms, producing its own art, literature and music. But also, in a wider conception of culture it has its own language, symbols, materials and forms of organization. It is mythopoetic in the myths it makes about itself, as well through the propagation of existing myths to provide significance to its political and social aims.

Organizational mythopoeia can provide an explanation of why Generation Identity paid £1200 for a car previously owned by Enoch Powell. The car itself held no significant value, it signified no prestige or inherent status, nor was the car connected to Powell during the height of his political fame. The car lacks both political and cultural relevance outside of the far-right's own mythopoeic construction. The purchase of the car by Generation Identity was an attempt to revise and revive the myths propagated by Powell while establishing new ones in order to legitimise themselves in the transhistorical order of postfascism through an event and an attempt at the 'spectacular'. This legitimisation is part of the wider postfascist phenomenon echoed in the European politics of far-right politicians, the rise of the 'alt-right', and Trumpism in the USA (Mollan and Geesin, 2020). The pervasive rhetoric of anti-immigration and 'taking back control' and persistent themes of national sovereignty, racially defined citizenship and anti-immigration narratives all appear within the *Powell mobile* through the invocation of Powell himself.

Although the 'rivers of blood' was a classical metaphor, it has become an iconic symbol of the meaning of the speech itself, isolated from the intellectual context from which Powell drew the phrase:

> As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding. Like the Roman, I seem to see "the river Tiber foaming with much blood". (Powell, 1968)

Powell's apocalyptic vision resonates in the ideology and rhetoric of the contemporary far-right, where although the 'matter of this imagining is historical, the *form* is still that of myth' (Nairn, 1970: 11). The modern idolisation of Powell draws on the same currents of mythopoeia, a yearning for the past and the manipulation and co-option of ideology, religion, and fantasy into openly racist and ethno-nationalist messages. The politics of the far-right are wholly reliant on the nostalgic and homogenous concepts of 'nation' and 'ethnicity' as primary non-changing entities. This nostalgic and mythic form of nationalism has come, here, to be intellectually represented through Powell. The idolisation is subsequently mythologized through the *Powell mobile.*

The re-emergence or resurgence of anti-immigrant sentiment associated with Powell is exemplified by the social media hashtag *#Enochwasright*. Powell's rhetoric appeals to those who feel or claim that their culture, heritage and identity is under threat from high levels of immigration. The representation of Powell has provided succour to the neuroses of popular racism and white minoritisation, that has been justified with reference to nostalgic sentiments of English nationalism and patriotism (Kenny and Pearce, 2019). To Generation Identity, Powell offered a legitimacy to the 'alternative' voice in politics. Powell was, or is, an acceptable totem on the right, whose infamous speech that fuelled violent racist rhetoric forms a foundation for the contemporary rise of the far-right. It is clear to see how the purchase of the car was in itself political but it was also intended as a mythopoeic spectacle, where the car is nothing more than an ephemeral artefact that is intended to serve as a conduit channelling the ideological and rhetorical energy of Powell and his strain of ethno-nationalism back into popular consciousness (Gilroy, 2012). Here, the mundanity of an object is imbued with the symbolic and representative power of Powell's 'rivers of blood speech' that continues to cause controversy (Sweney, 2018). As Stuart Hall commented on the thirtieth anniversary of the speech:

> One of Powell's greatest gifts was a populist racist rhetoric which, in an era of pragmatism, spoke straight to the nation's fears, frustrations, to the national collective unconscious and its darkest hopes and fears. It was a torpedo delivered straight to the boiler-room of consensus politics. (1998: 15)

Generation Identity failed to deliver such a torpedo. The event lacked mainstream attraction, in social media terms it failed to go viral or pick up any cultural significance within the wider postfascist organization and, like Generation Identity, dissolved into insignificance. The car became an empty signifier and failed as a metonym for Powell. Yet, despite this, *Powell mobile* still somehow contributes to wider postfascist spectacle, and reveals something about it. Myth in itself is dis-organized, malleable and open to constant re-adaption, as are the stories that propagate dangerous myths. In some ways this disorder is part of the evolving tapestry and tactics of far-right mythopoeia, creating disorder using new forms of media manipulation, that paradoxically produces an ordered form of ideology. The myth of Powell's symbolic resurrection through the car potentially remains successful, as in the minds of its creators and followers is equated with both truth and as a successful version of their own reality (Bocarnea & Osula, 2008). Myths exist as narratives and stories that can replicate and reinforce themselves (Bottici & Challand, 2006). If enough people accept such a myth, then it can become ideology itself. Organizational mythopoeia can, then, be a process of ideology creation through the order and disordering of meaning. This then begs the question as to whether disorder and order are constituted by this same process in the context of postfascist spectacle. The next section addresses this paradox.

Postfascist spectacle

The concept of Spectacle 2.0 can be used to address the postfascist spectacle and the use of social media by the far-right as a form of ideological commodification and narrative that both colonises tropes of cultural hegemony but also competes amongst others for dominant hegemonic representation (Sutherland, 2012). The contemporary far-right have shifted to new forms of mass media to communicate to both themselves and the susceptible consumers of their ideology. Virtual means of communication allow for the avoidance of legal attention, encourage transnational solidarity and provide easily recognisable common identities within others (Caiani & Kröll, 2015). It also allows for the sharing of information and ideologies through a vast network of varying cells and factions. This fractured organizational network and ideology may in part have emerged through the

domain of cyberspace where the realisation and externalisation of extreme prejudices materialises in the un-subjectivised and anonymous fantasy of anonymous online avatars (Žižek, 1999). The postfascist spectacle thrives on the cultural images and narratives that construct differences among people. This not only reflects and reinforces existing prejudices, beliefs and power structures, but creates new ones (Kersten & Abbott, 2012).

These media and political spectacles that present events to disrupt the ordinary flows of information have become the main form of postfascist communication (Edelman, 1988; Kellner, 2016). While some proliferate, becoming viral, others (such as *Powell mobile*) fade away, yet both constitute the order of the postfascist spectacle. The purchase of the car, subsequent video and attempted social media sensation can be interpreted as an attempted media spectacle and as a method of organizational attention-seeking. Whereas the political spectacle can be found in news reporting and traditional media, social media, as a highly toxic and influential form of culture, has perhaps played the most significant role in the mutation of this phenomenon of political spectacle in recent years. Even as mainstream digital platforms increasingly reject, ban, and censor far-right groups and individuals, existing and new alterative versions proliferate at their borders (Zannettou, et al., 2018). This has inadvertently led the far-right to still exist in traditional political milieus while also broadcasting to an unknown invisible audience, existing as 'boundaryless' organizational forms (Flyverbom & Reinecke, 2017). It is here that the far-right have been able to exert their greatest influence.

Debord talked of the loss of quality at every level of spectacular language and how the commodity form reduces everything to quantitative equivalence (Debord, 1967). This too can be seen in the spectacle 2.0, where in abundance voices become meaningless; instead of a democratic and equal platform of expression the virtual world offers only the representation of thought. As a venue for expression of all ideas regardless of their content or quality, social media especially grants attention to both the sensational and the trivial (Rosenfeld, 2014). It is in this sense that the success of *Powell mobile* becomes hard to determine, blurring the sensational and trivial as one. This leads to a distorting effect in which meaning can be inconsequential and only the representation of ideas matters. The postfascist spectacle finds

organizational ground in the rejection of objective truth and the preference and acceptance of illusion over reality (Flyverbom & Reinecke, 2017). Here, postfascism finds its most potent sense of order, emerging from the seeming disorder of social media. This is a form of 'aesthetic capitalism' where the spectacle merges with social culture. Individual experience of reality is filtered by the media, and reduced to simple narratives (Codeluppi, 2017). The far-right have used social media for their own mythopoeia, where aesthetic and culture go hand in hand with political and social ideology. Within the spectacle 2.0, the far-right have steered through both the public and private digital worlds, 'from the deep net to the surface web' as well as mainstream and alternative social media (Fielitz & Thurston 2018: 7). Postfascism is parasitical of the order created through social media as an organizing mechanism. It both feeds off and disrupts it, so that the 'movement' of postfascism can remain independent of any one dominant social media platform or mode (Shukaitis, 2014).

The stunt, video and the attempted spectacle of *Powell mobile* itself serves as the commodity with social media as its market place. It serves not only as a form of organization and recruitment but also for education, socialization and cultural production and exchange (DeCook, 2018). The ideological message within *Powell mobile* cannot exist on its own, it must take form within the wider cacophony of other messages. This chaos and abundance of messages, signals, myth and social hallucinations, combined with consumer paranoia, schizophrenia, social tensions and reliance on the virtual and fantasy worlds reduces things *only* to their representational form.

The *Powell mobile* video serves as Generation Identity UK's epitaph. Few now will see the video, but its ephemeral existence serves as documentation of the group's attempt to mythologize and themselves be mythologized within the far-right spectacle. The *Powell mobile* episode provides a snapshot of the far-right phenomenon that combines all the identifiable elements of the far-right and postfascism; organization through social media, irony and self-distancing, the capturing and use of a distinct aesthetic, mythic nationalist nostalgia and an underlying message of ethno-nationalism and anti-immigration. As a connective episode in the *longue durée* of fascism, this form of commodity fetishism was dominated by intangibility than the tangibility of the car, which became a vehicle for communicating a message. In itself, the

stunt was a failure; however, its existence was an attempt to produce cultural attrition, in which the innumerable messages of the far-right spectrum constitute the spectacle.

As Debord wrote [of commodity fetishism] it:

> attains its ultimate fulfilment in the spectacle, where the real world is replaced by a selection of images which are projected above it, yet which at the same time succeed in making themselves regarded as the epitome of reality. (1967: 14)

So too does Enoch Powell's head, as it emerges projected above the sunroof in the video and image of the *Powell mobile* (https://images.app.goo.gl/sfXALNgKtP78jgjt5). The fetishization of this commodity as the signifier shows a factitious passion for the object (Baudrillard, 1981). Both the tangible vehicle and its intangible representation shows a delusion of spectacle, organized to serve as the epitome of their reality (Debord, 1967). For the *Powell mobile*, its self-referentiality and mythopoeic narrative are attempts to create authority and a representation of 'truth' (Falasca-Zamponi, 1997), as well as mythopoeic legitimacy and the 'hypernormalisation' of their ethno-nationalist and fascist ideology (Curtis, 2016). The *Powell mobile* was an organizational attempt at an illusionary representation of reality, and the creation of value through visibility (Flyverbom & Reinecke, 2017). Although arguably not achieving any significant impact, *Powell mobile* shows a concerted attempt to profit from the spectacle, by transforming an image and an event into something 'spectacularised'. *Powell mobile* therefore exemplifies a component of postfascist organizing, the ability to communicate an ideological order from the spectacle and the disorder it creates.

Conclusion

This article has discussed a mundane yet critical phenomenon–the use of mythopoeia by the far-right to attempt to construct and (to some extent, in this case) resurrect a voice, to organize, order, and convey legitimacy. As such, we have framed the *Powell mobile* as an episode of commodity fetishization, where value is perceived through imagined political and cultural significance.

We have interpreted *Powell mobile* as a media and political spectacle, that aimed to deracinate objective truth to create a new postfascist reality. This article therefore considers *Powell mobile* to be an example of organizational mythopoeia. It was an aesthetic propaganda exercise, designed to instil nostalgic sentiment and nationalist fervour as part of an organizational spectacle. However, Generation Identity instead organized a 'non-event', that failed to effervesce. The profound mundanity of *Powell mobile*—it's lack of impact, and its crassness–were followed by the eventual disbandment of Generation Identity UK. The literal and metaphorical 'crash' indicate disorderly organization, and an organization that was disordered.

Nonetheless, this reveals how far-right organizations such as Generation Identity attempt to achieve cultural attrition through the construction of a political and media spectacle. Their aim is to subvert and subsume culture to create a maelstrom of distraction and obfuscation within which the postfascist ideological core of the organization (and the event) can be disseminated and propagated. The mythopoeic invocation of Powell's anti-immigration politics–not uncommon in the British far-right–provides the supposed cause célèbre and the historic anchor to the nostalgic aspects of the wider postfascist spectacle. *Powell mobile* is therefore only inconsequential in and of itself, but not to the wider spectacle it draws from and feeds into. In this way, action that both appears and is inconsequential can be used to gather attention, and then dismissed as being without consequence when it *is* inconsequential. This routine technique of action, ephemerality, and inconsequentiality, is part of the repertoire of post-truth, where the past can be distorted, co-opted, misused, and then discarded, since the specific choice of what is, was––after all––without meaning. This technique allows the far-right to glide between misrepresentation and distortion, and then to disavow, dismiss and discredit the stunt or to minimise its importance–having benefited in-between from the spectacle. In this way the far-right manipulate the past and avoid accountability for their interpretations and their implications in the present. Through mythopoeia, the far-right can further benefit from this as myth remains also inconsequential, incontestable and irrelevant to objective truths. The far-right attempt to create their own reality through this technique of mythopoeic communication, and seemingly create order out of disorder, by constructing meaning that is both fluid, malleable

and open but also having the appearance of being fixed and immutable. By looking at these events and the use of mythopoeia by the far-right, we show how the inconsequential and often ignored can offer valuable insights into wider postfascist order/organization and disorder/disorganization.

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