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Published online: 11 Oct 2019.

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The Racial Politics of Circulation: Trumpicons and White Supremacist *Doxai*

This article presents the racial politics of circulation *as a critical concept for elucidating how whiteness, nationhood, and* doxa *intertwine to reinforce and amplify white supremacy within a context of white nationalist postracialism. As a case study, the authors investigate how two popular slogans associated with Donald Trump drive the production and circulation of digital doxicons called Trumpicons and how such Trumpicons, in turn, feed back into a socio-political loop of white supremacist logics. In studying how Trumpicons become embroiled in such racial politics of circulation, the authors disclose how new media images contribute to an affective economy of whiteness in contemporary American culture.*

In the 2005 special issue of *Rhetoric Review*, the symposium on whiteness studies emphasized why rhetoric and composition studies should engage more deeply with whiteness studies (Kennedy et al., 360).[1] Kennedy et al. argue that "whiteness studies moves discussions about race (including whiteness) in the academy beyond isolated stories or anecdotes and into serious critical work with historical and theoretical analytical tools" (367). While scholars in this symposium take different approaches to study whiteness, nearly all of them call for making visible the invisibility of whiteness, particularly its power as a rhetorical trope for social domination and privilege. Since this symposium, Kennedy et al. edited *Rhetorics of Whiteness* in 2017 to extend this conversation by studying the trope of and oxymoronic function of whiteness in popular culture, social media, education, pedagogy, and academic theory. Kennedy et al. note that "twenty-first-century functions of whiteness take on new permutations because of new cultural groups, sites, or texts and technologies" ("Introduction" 8). For instance, scholars demonstrate how social media such as Twitter and Facebook provide mechanisms of white antiracism while other platforms such as eHarmony reify whiteness. In that same year, Carstarphen and Welch edited a special symposium of *Rhetoric Review* where scholars investigate the connections between social media, whiteness, rage, and racial resentment. McVey, for instance, examines how tropes of blackness in both anti-Obama and pro-Obama memes rhetorically function for racialized policing. In this article, we contribute to such efforts to study the links between social media, whiteness, and racialized power

by demonstrating how digital doxicons (*doxa* laden digital pictures) are designed and produced to recirculate and amplify white supremacist fantasies tied to the nation-state.

Extending Dana Cloud's work with doxicons and Sara Ahmed's work with emotions and cultural politics, we specifically discuss the role that circulating Trumpicons play in promulgating whiteness in an era of white nationalist postracialism—an era in which "white racial resentment seeks to reclaim the nation for white Americans while also denying an ideological investment in white supremacy" (Maskovsky 434). Trumpicons are digital doxicons depicting Donald Trump that are produced in the style of Shepard Fairey's iconic *Hope* poster that surfaced during the 2008 presidential election.[2] Trumpicons actually began circulating on blogs, e-purchasing sites, and various social media platforms as early as 2011, but they gained momentum in 2015 when Trump announced his presidential campaign and have since circulated widely across both the U.S. and the world in protests, on magazine covers, and in other rhetorical contexts. Trumpicons certainly forward a wide range of beliefs and opinions related to Trump's affairs with business, women, and fame. From *dope* to *grope* to *shame*, Trumpicons have functioned to make both suspicions and criticisms about Trump clear, particularly in relation to gender. We zoom in here, however, on how Trumpicons reproduce and recirculate white supremacist *doxai* that have surfaced in Trump's unofficial campaign slogans, speeches, and tweets. We are primarily interested in how whiteness—as "a way of being and seeing the world from a position of dominance that seeks to maintain dominance"—fuels the circulation of Trump's discourse and how white supremacist *doxai* gain momentum and amplification through digital-visual production and circulation (Monzó and McLaren xv).

White supremacist doxai are emotionally laden opinions and beliefs that accumulate as collective fantasies, circulate with affective intensity, and contribute to systems of white dominance through a spectrum of overt and covert actions. White supremacy, as James Baldwin emphasized more than sixty years ago, has always been wrapped up in illusions, fantasies, and perceived threats to white people that promulgate through circulating discourses (127). Yet, perhaps never before in recent history have racial presidentialities functioned so transparently to circulate and fortify white supremacist fantasies. Rhetorics of presidentiality, T. Parry-Giles and S. Parry-Giles explain, use the president and the presidential office as referents or signs to construct broader ideologies and myths about the culture of the nation and its identity. With the term *racial presidentiality*, Cisneros builds on their work to refer to those political and cultural discourses that use the presidency to "construct broader meanings about racial politics and the role of race in U.S. national identity" (511). Since Trump came into the oval office, rhetorics of racial presidentiality have certainly materialized in and circulated across various media—op-eds, graffiti, political commentary, and others. Yet as digital rhetoric scholars who are actively anti-racist, we believe it is important to expose and elucidate how social media artifacts use the presidency to accelerate the rhetorical velocity of white supremacist beliefs and fantasies—a scholarly move that is imperative during this arguably unprecedented time in which the U.S. president's own discourse is fueling the rhetorical circulation of white supremacist *doxai* (Ridolfo and DeVoss). Here, we thus trace how emotions and fantasies linked to whiteness stick to Trumpicons, drive their digital-visual production and circulation, and both perpetuate and amplify already circulating white supremacist *doxai*.

This research might be best described as studying the *racial politics of circulation*, by which we mean the ways in which public discourse and race are caught up in a dynamic, recursive loop of (re)production and (re)circulation. As an analytic, the racial politics of circulation draws attention to how race, as a socio-rhetorical construct, drives public discourse which, through

various channels, simultaneously feeds back into culture and interlocking logics and discourses of race. Recently, among other efforts, scholars have investigated the racial politics of Trump's circulating discourse by examining how Trump attempts to redefine racism on Twitter so he can use it against political enemies and how Trump legitimizes xenophobia and white nationalism through his strategic use of populism (Cummings; Young). Here, we study how digital doxicons contribute to the white supremacist politics of circulation operating in our contemporary cultural-political climate. We specifically highlight how Trumpicons contribute to an affective economy of whiteness by (re)producing and (re)circulating white supremacist beliefs and fantasies. We thus begin by first discussing the relations between doxicons, affect, circulation, and white supremacy in order to tease out our governing methodology. We then rhetorically analyze two Trumpicons: "Build the Wall" and "F**k your Feelings." We illuminate how *white supremacist doxai* drive the production and circulation of digital doxicons, and how such doxicons, in turn, feed back into a socio-political loop of white supremacist discourse and logics. We contend that these Trumpicons rhetorically deploy Trump and his slogans to promulgate beliefs in white nationhood, escalate the fear of white dominance's decline, and reassert a white (hyper)masculinity of U.S. identity through political incorrectness. Ultimately, we argue that in an era dominated by digital participatory culture, white supremacist beliefs and fantasies are finding circulatory paths in new media that maximize their visibility and amplify their affective intensities, paths that—in functioning as rhetorical mechanisms—come to uphold an affective economy of whiteness and structure contemporary political and public discourses on nationhood and race.

Doxicons, Affect, Circulation, and White Supremacy

The concept of *doxa* dates back to ancient Greek rhetorical thought with Plato who associated *doxa* with common opinion or belief in opposition and inferiority to *episteme*. Suggested as a key Sophistic tool, *doxa*, for Plato, is positioned as mere appearance rather than reality and, as such, has potential to mislead, confuse, and shroud people in darkness (Flakne 159). As Sundvall has recently argued, however, even if *doxa* is equated with appearance, "appearance (*doxa*) does not provide a *duplicitous* character so much as a multiplicative one, as a condition of meaning-formation (significance) and executed by rhetoric" (231). Indeed, for Isocrates, *doxa* is less a means of persuasion than it is a means of establishing social relations, constituting identities, and confirming already held beliefs through identification (Poulakos 64-69). According to Isocrates, if one "can succeed in guiding [an audience] to see the new situation as confirming their traditions and as validating their familiar notions of self, then there is hardly any need for persuasion" (Poulakos 69). Because of its power for cementing commonly held beliefs, opinions, and identities, politicians, activists, and everyday citizens alike often turn to *doxa* to sway their various audiences.

In recent years, *doxa* has frequently been studied in oral and written contexts in relation to politics, democracy, and U.S. culture. For instance, Thimsen, who shares an interest in circulating slogans, suggests that in functioning as both common sense and the appearance of things that go unnoticed, *doxa* works to sustain and exploit U.S. democracy and law (486). Scholars have also explored how *doxa* functions in digital and visual contexts toward democratic participatory aims. Drawing on Dana Anderson's work with *doxa*, Alford argues that "digital situations stretch doxic territory, making room for more everyday rhetoricians to harness doxa's dynamism, putting themselves and their voices on the map." Alford focuses on hashtags in activism, illustrating

that social media discourses work through *doxa* to make space for democracy within our digital environment—at times, of course, productive and other times failing. Cloud, on the other hand, discusses how *doxa* functions within visual rhetoric, remarking that in the U.S., "public iconic images generally are doxastic, that is, capable of establishing, reinforcing, and deploying naturalized common sense about the world in the service of power" (233).

Interestingly, Cloud introduces the notion of *doxicons* to indicate the link between *doxa* and images, a connection that is particularly relevant to the Trumpicons under examination here. While Cloud draws on Bourdieu to note that doxicons can function as hetero-doxy and/or ortho-doxy, Cloud largely focuses on orthodoxicons, which "work in the context of established enthymemes, or to follow Aristotle, a set of premises that are taken for granted, shared in common, and thus [need] no explicit articulation" (234). Cloud emphasizes, in fact, that orthodoxicons primarily rely on "enthymematic reasoning that may bypass logical reasoning in favor of resonance with common sense" (235). While we agree that orthodoxicons do depend on enthymematic reasoning, we bracket explicit attention to enthymemes in order to emphasize how doxicons also rely heavily on emotion, narrative, and affect to amplify already circulating arguments and beliefs. In our current political situation in which racial presidentiality is so emotionally laden, teasing out the affective dimensions of white supremacist doxicons is especially necessary to elucidate how white supremacist fantasies are being accelerated and amplified by digital visual artifacts such as Trumpicons.

One way to understand the triangulation of *doxa*, emotions, and narrative at work in white supremacist doxicons is by drawing on Ahmed's work with emotions and affective economies. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Ahmed emphasizes that emotions and meanings intertwine with beliefs and opinions, both of which stick to cultural artifacts that give rise to impressions left on both the individual and collective body. Emotions are impressions that shape and produce "the very surfaces and boundaries that allow the individual and the social to be delineated as if they are objects" (10). That is, emotions are relational; they involve reactions of "towardness" and "awayness" in relation to various objects and/or bodies and through such reactions, we come to differentiate ourselves from others (8). In one sense, emotions circulate among bodies entangled in various relations. Ahmed, however, notes that emotions also "stick" and attach to both bodies and objects, instructing us where we are, what other bodies we align with and do not, and how we are oriented in the world (11). Over time and through circulating discourses and artifacts, emotions generate affective economies that produce and reinforce not only cultural narratives but also, we contend, collective fantasies that guide, inform, and shape politics.

Fantasies, as we understand them, are imagined narratives that direct an individual or collective to solidify and materialize desires.[3] In fantasies, *doxa* plays a powerful role. Herschberg-Pierrot draws on Barthes to note that *doxa* functions as "an enunciative force with an insidious power, insinuating itself into everyday speech, exerting the imperious strength of well-established accepted ideas, like a fantasy that one cannot shake off" (440-41). In regard to white supremacy, *doxai* are particularly insidious forces that accumulate and circulate as commonplace fantasies that structure unquestioned systems of power, forces that play an integral part of both nation-building and preservation. According to Richards à la Althusser, national *doxai* are often ideological fantasies that are reinforced as interpellated citizens gain and sustain recognition and power from the fantasy's circulation and perpetuation. Circulating as ideological fantasies about the nation-state, *doxai* also enable citizens to imagine themselves as part of a stable and eternal socio-political system, a fantasy that fortifies static and imagined national identities (Richards 13).

Carrying this line of thinking further, we highlight that in the U.S. context, white supremacist *doxai* circulate to augment collective fantasies of white nationhood, fantasies through which white people come to imagine, believe, and feel themselves to be carrying on an eternal tradition of white rule, and thus feel motivated, if not obligated, to fight for its survival.[4]

In our current political landscape, a variety of ideas and unofficial slogans from Trump's 2016 campaign circulate and contribute to such an affective economy of whiteness. Trumpicons, we argue, amplify the emotions stuck to such slogans, promulgating collective fantasies of white identity and the preservation of white nationhood. In the first digital doxicon we analyze, for instance, we can witness a narrative in which the U.S. nation—read as a white social body—is under threat by swarms of foreigners/non-white bodies.[5] When such narratives are constantly repeated within an affective economy, associations between bodies and assumed identities are very difficult to break because certain emotions such as fear, which historically has worked to build, sustain, and expand whiteness as "a trope of domination," intensify as they latch on to circulating discourses and artifacts (West 385). As Ahmed contends: "The more these signs circulate, the more affective they become" (*Cultural* 45). We add that the more affective these signs become, the more cemented the beliefs, opinions, emotions, and narratives become and the more they, in turn, circulate—creating a feedback loop that perpetuates, in this case, white supremacist *doxai* and actions. Chaput argues that "[t]h[e] increase in affective energy of signs results in the habituation of beliefs and behaviors, a habituation that overrides fitting responses, individual interests, and ideological encoding or decoding" (14). We agree, but when it comes to white supremacy, affective intensities actually feed into and reinforce ideological encoding and decoding, specifically collective fantasies regarding the nation-state. By aggregating *doxa* as well as emotions and narrative, circulating Trumpicons especially function to intensify the collective fantasy of a pure white nation.

Trumpicons

When it comes to Trumpicons' racial politics of circulation, race has always played a contributing factor in the design, production, and circulation of Obamicons, the predecessor to Trumpicons. Fairey's *Hope* poster was chosen as an official campaign device for Obama over other artists' designs that presented Obama's dark skin color because it was believed that the red, white, and blue palette in Fairey's design would increase chances for identification and circulation (Gries 249). Such erasure of race helped present Obama as a symbol of hope for "representing the depths of progressive change necessary to redefine America in a way that is consistent with its fundamental principles of racial equality and equal opportunity" (Mcilwain 141). In addition, Obamicons with overt racist inflections began to surface on a pro-white discussion board just weeks after Fairey's *Hope* poster emerged, designs that would continue to surface for years to come in other digital spaces. For instance, Obamicons with the n-word circulated early on as did one depicting Obama with a noose around his neck—two racist signifiers that are the most powerful for the dehumanization, intimidation, and control of African American/Black people as well as the continuity of explicit white supremacy. Both in its original and subsequent instantiations, then, the racial politics driving Obamicons' circulation were concerned with his Blackness existing within a white supremacy system.

With Trumpicons, in contrast, the racial politics of circulation take a noteworthy turn explicitly *toward whiteness* in relation to nationhood. This felt relationship is fueled and amplified

by Trumpicons that reproduce and recirculate white supremacist concerns about the loss of white political and cultural dominance—concerns that have either been circulated by Trump himself or become associated with his campaign and presidency. In contrast to Obamicons' overt racism, Trumpicons often function in a covert way, relieving those who circulate them from being labeled white supremacists. In doing so, Trumpicons participate in white nationalist postracialism, which seeks to reclaim white nationhood while simultaneously denying white supremacist investments. Maskovsky argues that white nationalist postracialism is a "new form of racial politics" that has emerged with Trumpism (434). It is also, we suggest, a form of circulatory racism that is gaining amplification as it becomes highly distributed across physical and digital contexts—a cultural-rhetorical, affective practice of white supremacy that is inherently linked to the white emotional politics and fantasies of the U.S. nation-state.

"Build the Wall"

Such circulatory racism is especially evident in the Trumpicons that regurgitate and recirculate Trump slogans. In March 2016, just a few weeks after the Republican presidential primaries began, a Trumpicon surfaced with Trump and his slogan "Build the Wall" (see Figure 1). First uploaded to DeviantArt in March 2016, then later circulated across social media platforms, e-commerce sites, and online forums, this design was created by Poppy, who identifies as an "[e]xtremely controversial artist" and "was for a time on the al-Qaeda 'crimes against Islam' hitlist" (Soundandlightstech). The composition of "Build the Wall," colored in the *Hope* poster palette, calls for a white collective to rally for political action on the U.S. southern border. Illustrated with a determined smirk, Trump is presented as a fearless leader and an icon for such a political and cultural project. Replacing the classic "Hope" is "Trump," suggesting that Trump embodies the hope for white Americans who desire to keep out Mexican migrants and immigrants. Below Trump's name are a cement truck, crane, and the silhouettes of workers laying the bricks for the wall. This imagery, drawn in a blueprint illustration to signify Trump's vision for the future of American infrastructure, is accompanied by the slogan "BUILD THE WALL" to make clear the activities of the workers and construction machines. By using the definite article "the," which packs more punch than the indefinite article "a," the slogan asserts a definitive, imperative tone. Below this mantra is the URL for Trump's official website for all to visit in order to learn more about this master of U.S. political architecture.

While the idea of building "the" wall between the U.S. and Mexico began in the 1990s, and in fact several barriers were constructed as early as 1994, the slogan "Build the Wall" first began to circulate in Trump's initial announcement to run for president in June 2015. After descending the escalator in Trump Tower in New York, Trump set up his wall-building promise by positioning Mexicans as threats to the vitality of (white) America: "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you . . . They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people" (Trump). Toward the end of his speech, Trump offers his solution to the problem: "I would build a great wall, and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me, and I'll build them very inexpensively, I will build a great, great wall on our southern border. And I will have Mexico pay for that wall. Mark my words." Such a promise connects to other ideas in his speech, primarily the economic decline of the U.S. with
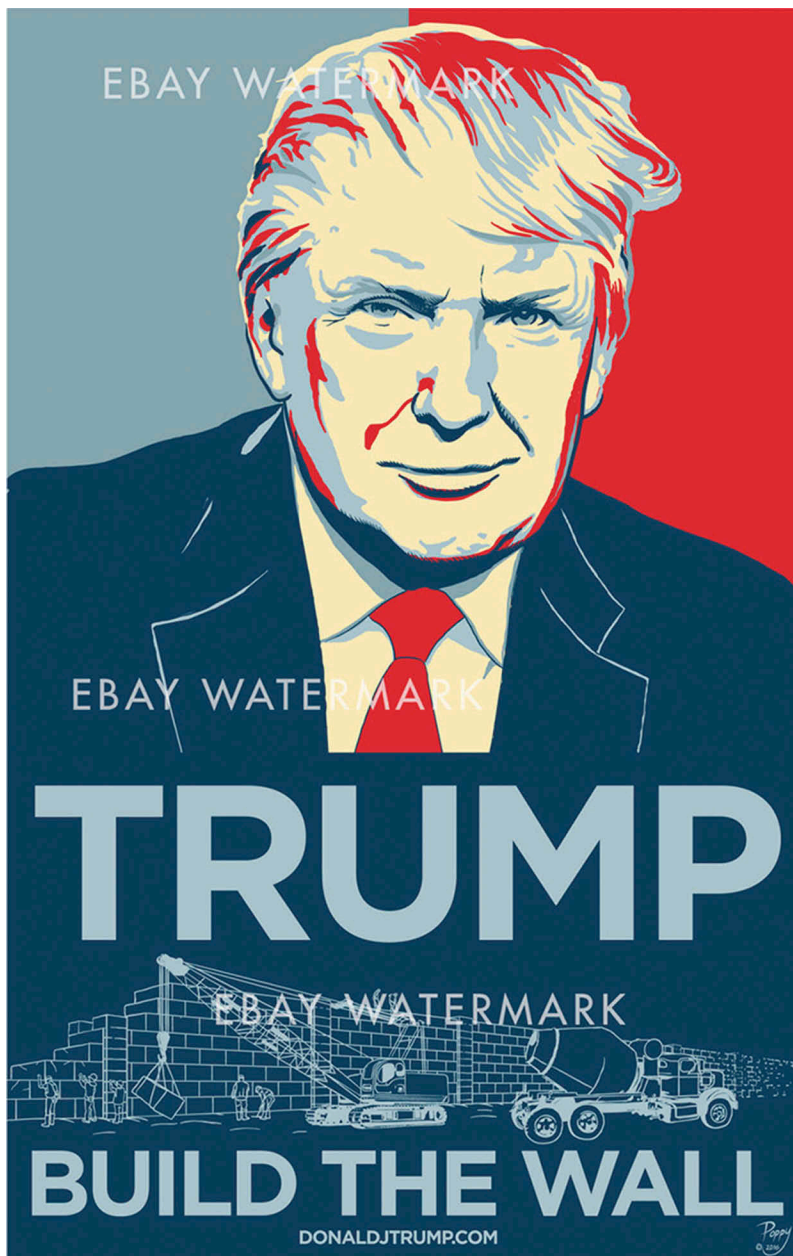
Figure 1: Trumpicon "Build the Wall." Designed by Poppy. Posted on eBay in February 2017 by Soundandlightstech.

manufacturing. "Mexico," according to Trump, "has our jobs." Of course, the wall between the two nation-states would hardly occlude multinational corporations from developing manufacturing plants in nearly whatever country they choose. But the wall becomes a symbolic force to conflate

human migration and the dwindling of job opportunities. Such an argument allows Trump to engage in dog whistle politics that call for "racial and social cleansing" and slip past any accusations of xenophobia and racism (Giroux). The wall becomes an economic issue, in other words, and not a racially motivated one built on a rhetoric of fear, and a prime example of how white nationalist postracialist discourse manifests in our contemporary context.

"Build the Wall" relies largely on the affective intensity of what Ahmed calls "the metonymic slide" in that as much as the slogan has become a demand and plan for future action, it has also become a mantra of divisiveness and alienation—a mantra that has been chanted not only at subsequent Trump rallies and across political paraphernalia to support Trump's architectural vision but also, as evident in Asha Sanakar's historical timeline of "Build the Wall," in Trump's tweets, television interviews, and congressional addresses. In many such circulating references, Trump no longer offers an implied economic justification for building the wall; instead, he claims that the wall is a matter of border security, specifically designed to help block the illegal flow of people and drugs across the U.S. border. In doing so, as John Leary notes, Trump "decries 'aliens' as powerful vectors of crime and terrorism, a 'clear and present danger' to national security" (146). This reference to danger and criminality works chiefly through metonymy and metaphor—figures of speech that Ahmed suggests "are crucial to the emotionality of texts" (*Cultural* 12). As far as the mantra goes, metonymy is especially forceful in that a metonymic slide occurs as the cultural signifier "dangerous criminals" latches onto the bodies of those who migrate and immigrate across the border as well as the identities shaped by the slide: asylum seekers, refugees, and others. Simultaneously, the slide creates boundaries, such as the U.S. (for example, whiteness and white world) as distinctly constituted by non-dangerous citizens in comparison to Mexico and South and Central American countries. In Ahmed's words, "[w]hiteness becomes what is 'here,' a line from which the world unfolds, which also makes what is 'there' on 'the other side'" (*Queer* 121). In effect of this circulating slogan and Trumpicon, Trump becomes the modern architect who is unabashedly willing to not just draw this line in the Sonoran sand but build it with a formidable cement wall.

In proliferating what Cisneros calls the "Latino threat" narrative, this Trumpicon's circulation helps to build Trump's brand as U.S. nativist, which arguably makes Trump's rhetoric so effective in rallying his contemporary base (511-23). In this context, the threat of violence and the belief in nativism evokes a number of white supremacist *doxai*. First, white America is reinforced as an innocent, naturalized, and law-abiding collective of people that needs protection from dangerous Others. Second, whiteness and white people are reaffirmed as dissolving cultural and political forces. Through U.S. history, whiteness has functioned as an invisible, universal, dominant norm—the baseline and center through which various values, beliefs, practices, and bodies are understood and valued (Dyer 46; Nakayama and Krizek 293). This invisibility, which constitutes white privilege, upholds a "white world" and allows white bodies to move freely, untethered, unobstructed. One of the main rhetorical functions of the "Build the Wall" circulation, we argue, is to make whiteness—as a normative standard, a more pronounced racial category, and a means of cultural and political power—highly visible and condonable. Trumpicons contribute to such visibility by fortifying the fantasies that white people are innocent and civilized, that white people are superior to non-white deviants, and that white men will not only be in charge because they "happen to be white; they will be governing *as* white, as taking America back, back to before multiculturalism" (Painter).

These fantasies (or imagined narratives) of whiteness and white domination require and are fundamentally undergirded with fear and anxiety—emotions that both stick to Trumpicons and are

exacerbated by them. As Ahmed reminds us, emotions that stick to circulating artifacts become "sites of personal and social tension" that are "saturated with affect" (*Cultural* 11). With the "Build the Wall" slogan, fear about dangerous criminals from south of the U.S. border work in tandem with anxiety-provoking-beliefs that whites are being victimized by Others, that racial hierarchy is threatening to dissolve, and that white power and control is declining. Working together, such emotions and beliefs produce affective intensities that are amplified and propagated by the "Build the Wall" Trumpicon. The affective economy of whiteness does not end there, of course. As this Trumpicon circulates across digital and physical settings, this rhetoric of racial presidentiality becomes recursively intertwined with other circulating discourses and artifacts that also reinforce white nationalist postracial logics. An affective economy of whiteness, it is important to note, does not operate on simple cause-effect; rather, it operates as a cultural-rhetorical feedback loop in which an unfolding, ever-shifting rhetorical ecology of cultural beliefs and affects entangle themselves with artifacts, institutions, and people to uphold fantasies of whiteness and churn affective intensities that bolster white national postracial logics. The "Build the Wall" Trumpicon evinces only one rhetorical mechanism within this unending feedback loop (which due to spatial constraints, we make more explicit below), but it is a galvanizing one that both regurgitates and emboldens already-circulating white supremacist doxa within contemporary culture.

"F**k Your Feelings"

While many might charge such white supremacist *doxa* with political incorrectness, political incorrectness plays a large part in the cultural-rhetorical feedback loop that constitutes white nationalist postracialism. Political incorrectness, in fact, has become a fighting agenda of Trump and many of his supporters to condone beliefs and opinions and simultaneously thwart critiques of inappropriateness. In Figure 2, for instance, this Trumpicon presents the phrase "F**k your Feelings" beneath the words Trump 2016 and Donald Trump, who is screaming, mouth angrily agape. "F**k your Feelings" is a phrase that has been identified as an unofficial campaign slogan for Trump, based on its appearance at Trump rallies in the form of chants and political para-phernalia (Ryan). This slogan did not emerge out of thin air. During his 2016 campaign, Trump railed against political correctness for the sake of "common sense" and safety, going so far as to declare that he refuses to be politically correct at a rally after the 2016 mass shooting at an Orlando nightclub. Trump has since espoused this idea on many different occasions. For example, during the first debate of the Republican Primary, he proclaimed, "I think the big problem this country has is being politically correct . . . I've been challenged by so many people, I don't frankly have time for total political correctness. And to be honest with you, this country doesn't have time either" (qtd. in Weigel). He later used the problem of political correctness as an excuse to justify both his reference to Mexicans as rapists and his accusation that judge Gonzalo Curiel is Mexican-American and, therefore, would be biased against him in the Trump University case. As Weigel reports, in doing so, Trump makes political correctness a "phantom enemy" to be waged against, a strategy that is particularly effective for rallying "a class of voters, largely white, who are disaffected with the status quo and resentful of shifting cultural and social norms." Political incorrectness, and the more vulgar yet more vernacular phrase—"F**k your Feelings"—becomes a mechanism for fantasies through which white supremacist *doxai* find a fitting home.

Figure 2: Trumpicon "F**k your Feelings." Posted on DeviantArt in July 2016 by Neetsfagging322297.

Although "F**k your Feelings" is arguably a relatively new slogan, political correctness and the oppositional challenges to it have lingered for over four decades.[6] Historically in the U.S., to tell someone they are politically incorrect meant asking them to consider the power of their words, chiefly in relation to marginalized and oppressed groups who would face (more) discrimination and prejudice because of their social identity. By the 1990s, a particular conservative backlash emerged as a means for those on the political right to argue that the political left was silencing them, suppressing opinions, and policing the language. This backlash is multifaceted, but it could be attributed primarily to the rise of multiculturalism (and with that, heightened globalization). The 2008 and 2012 election of Obama, arguably, intensified this backlash, perhaps providing public evidence that not only is white America losing cultural power but also political power. By the time Trump began his campaign, the disparaging of political correctness and the confidence to say "f**k your feelings" was ripe, ready to be devoured by his fan base. At numerous times during his campaign, Trump capitalized on this by remarking and condoning his use of politically incorrect utterances. For instance, at a rally in December 2015, Trump prefaced a part of his speech with: "I wrote something today that I think is very very [*sic*] salient, very important and probably not politically correct but I don't care" (Vitali). He then proceeded to read aloud a proposal which called for a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States . . . Until we are able to determine and understand this problem and the dangerous threat it poses, our country cannot be the victims of horrendous attacks by people that believe only in Jihad, and have no sense of reason or respect for human life" (Rafferty). Here again, Trump taps into the fantasy of a white nation-state and the fear of the decline and victimhood of the white race, offering a model for rage against those perceived as "culturally-sensitive language police."

This rage is embodied in Trump's facial gestures in the "F**k your Feelings" Trumpicon. The face, of course, is a common means of nonverbal emotional communication, especially anger and rage. With his sight line in the distance over the viewer's right shoulder, Trump appears to scream at an assumed crowd behind the viewer that is filled with "culturally-sensitive" people. Due to this Trumpicon's ability to capture and amplify Trump's rage against political correctness, it has been printed on a wide range of political paraphernalia (t-shirts, stickers, and so forth), which has only boosted the slogan's circulation as people have donned such garments at political rallies and adhered them to their automobiles to show their allegiance to Trump and his anti-political-correctness cry. In addition, this Trumpicon has circulated broadly on social media sites to amplify the war against political correctness. On Facebook, for example, The Alex Jones Channel uploaded the "F**k your Feelings" Trumpicon along with the words "Time to end this 'Politically Correct' bullshit!" This Trumpicon has also circulated in far-right online forums where participants use it not only as a profile picture to signal one's own affective identification with political incorrectness but also to show support for others' blatantly politically incorrect comments. Case in point, in one 2016 discussion about who would win the presidential Republican primary and whether Trump was racist, someone posted the "F**k your Feelings" Trumpicon and wrote: "Honestly at this point I don't even care if someone is a racist. The word is so overused and misused. In fact, it's now a compliment to be called a racist because it means you're actually saying something" (Object). In these various rhetorical uses of the "F**k your Feelings" Trumpicon, white supremacist doxai not only find passage into the public through political (in)correctness, but also amplification, by which we mean both the bolstering of content and intensification of affect.

This amplification is especially effective in diverting attention from and evading accusations of racism—a hallmark move of white nationalist postracialism. In the Trump era, political incorrectness, as Gantt Shafer notes, has become "a means through which *backstage*, or overt, racism and bigotry can be communicated with an illusion of subtlety by white citizens in the public frontstage of social media and political discourse" (1). Ironically, "F**k your Feelings" attempts to regulate discourse and evade racism at the same time as it creates an unfettered rhetorical ecology in which only certain bodies and voices can be heard. As such, with its profane command, the slogan becomes a vulgar euphemism for censorship, working affectively to silence bodies that object to political incorrectness. The profanity ("F**k") combined with the possessive pronoun ("your") in the Trumpicon amplifies the message's tone, signaling to bodies assumed to be white race traitors and people of color that their racial sensitivities do not matter. With "Feelings" as the rhetorical target, the Trumpicon screams harden and toughen up, suggesting a traditional (white) masculine nation led by a firm and fearless leader hellbent on no-nonsense talk.[7]

Working from masculine tropes, the "F**k your Feelings" slogan functions to link gender, nationhood, and whiteness. "F**k your Feelings" works from the belief and feeling that U.S. culture has become too riddled with identity politics and difference, making the U.S. economically and politically weak, a belief that Trump has tweeted many times. For example, in July 2016, Trump tweeted: "Look what is happening to our country under the WEAK leadership of Obama and people like Crooked Hillary Clinton. We are a divided nation." In such rhetoric, feelings are associated with the body, weakness, women, and non-whites, susceptible to uncontrollable outbursts and irrational thinking (ironic because the vulgar command is especially affectively loaded). Feelings are labeled as feminine, which means if the U.S. nation continues to obsess over how people are affected by social oppressions and tensions, or simply being offended by "basic ways of speaking" or "Trump telling it like it is," the nation will be feminized, relegated to a passive, "developing" nation. What we see here is how white supremacist *doxai* work not merely in a racialized and racist framework but in an intersectional one that integrates dominant beliefs about gender and sexuality into its structure. That is, white supremacist *doxai* evinces white supremacy as entangled with patriarchy, adding another layer that can work as diversion from racism.

In helping to recirculate such *doxai*, the "F**k your Feelings" Trumpicon amplifies the fantasy that the U.S. needs a (hyper)masculine leader to save the nation from a downward spiral into weakness, oversensitivity, femininity, and Otherness. Similar to the fantasy amplified by "Build the Wall," this fantasy also requires the sticky emotions of fear and anxiety to reinforce the image of Trump as the tough father-figure who will clamp down on threats and secure the (white) children of the (white) nation. In this Trumpicon, however, rage and aggression become mechanisms for re-establishing a strong white nation rather than engineering structural ingenuity. By emitting rage about political correctness while simultaneously aggressively championing political incorrectness, the Trumpicon covertly accelerates white supremacist *doxa*'s circulation in a cultural-rhetorical feedback loop of white nationalist postracial logics that denigrates Muslims, Mexicans, and Mexican-Americans and justifies covert racist behavior through the silence of political correctness.

Conclusion

In this article, we have introduced two notions—the racial politics of circulation and white supremacist *doxai*—as important foci for rhetorical studies, particularly during an inflammatory era when Trump works from, and functions as, the embodiment of a brand that greatly influences the course

of race politics in the U.S. To better understand how an affective economy of whiteness is fortified in a context of white nationalist postracialism, we have also illustrated how digital doxicons such as Trumpicons amplify and perpetuate already-circulating white supremacist *doxa* related to Trump and his campaign. In our tracing of Trump's campaign slogans and analysis of the Trumpicons, we specifically demonstrated how emotions of fear, aggression, and rage, as well as fantasies of white nationhood, glom on to digital doxicons and fuel the affective intensities of white supremacy. While Trumpicons are just one of many ways to study this phenomenon, we argue that they are an extremely useful site for learning about the racial politics of circulation, and, in this case, how whiteness, visual rhetoric, and digital culture are caught up in a feedback loop of white supremacist logics.

In drawing such attention to the racial politics of circulation, this study has been limited by only focusing on how white supremacist *doxai* get regurgitated, circulated, and amplified in digital contexts. We want to conclude, then, by iterating that when it comes to studying whiteness and digital culture, we might do more to build on the work of Kennedy et al. and others to also investigate how rhetorics of whiteness are being resisted. During our iconographic tracking of Trumpicons, we gathered a plethora of digital doxicons that resist white supremacist *doxai* and call out Trump's racism and xenophobia. For instance, one circulating Trumpicon depicts Trump with the remixed slogan "Make America White Again" to satirize his complicity in and propagation of white supremacy. We also noticed how rhetorics of racial presidentiality that appropriate Trump's slogans are surfacing in other digital artifacts and circulating broadly across platforms such as Pinterest, Facebook, and personal blogs. We call on scholars to research such rhetorics in order to better understand how resistance of dominant racial politics of circulation uniquely unfolds in participatory digital culture.

More broadly, we also need to investigate not only the (re)production and (re)circulation but also the digital infrastructures of other media artifacts that both make possible and limit the socio-technical dynamics of resistance. What other digital genres interweave *doxa*, enthymemes, emotions, and narrative to respond in productive ways to rhetorics of whiteness? How do the politics of social media platforms and algorithmic culture continue to factor (and morph) for citizens to expose white supremacy? What ethics must everyday citizens, and the researchers examining them, consider in their practices without falling into complicity with systems of domination? Addressing such questions about rhetorics of resistance are not only important for disclosing how digital cultural artifacts are "interrupting the operations of normative whiteness" but also challenging white supremacist culture in the contemporary U.S. (Kennedy et al. "Introduction" 7).

Notes

[1] We would like to thank Zosha Stuckey and Maria Novotny and her students for feedback on early versions of this article, as well as *Rhetoric Review* reviewers Hugh Burns and Barry Brummett for their generative reviews.

[2] Trumpicons could also be considered memes; yet while we agree that Trumpicons are part of Internet memetic culture, we consider Trumpicons as digital doxicons to tease out how *doxa*, emotions, and fantasy get stuck to them and contribute to an affective economy of whiteness.

[3] Rodríguez notes that "fantasy and desire . . . arise in coordination with power and domination" (95).

[4] As James Baldwin put it: "American white men still nourish the illusion that there is some means of recovering the European innocence, of returning to a state in which black men do not exist" (128).

[5] Similar to Ahmed's analysis of the Aryan Nation and hate in *Cultural Politics* (43-61).

[6] The idea of political correctness dates back to the late eighteenth century but common contemporary understandings can be traced back to the 1960s and 1970s, when U.S. left-wing movements used the term as a way to push against systems of power as expressed in our formal and informal discourse.

[7]In August 2015, Trump tweeted: "So many 'politically correct' fools in our country. We have to all get back to work and stop wasting time and energy on nonsense!"

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