"Coming soon to a neighborhood near you...": The very real effects and great human costs of fake news

- A critical discourse analysis of Breitbart News Network's representation of Muslim and Syrian refugees in the weeks leading up to the 2016 presidential election

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze how a Breitbart News Network text represented Muslim and Syrian refugees in the weeks leading up to the 2016 United States presidential election. Using a methodological framework based on Norman Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis, the analysis seeks to reveal the linguistic semiotic choices made by the text producer in the representation of Muslim and Syrian refugees and to explain how these semiotic choices were used to achieve their effect. By revealing these linguistic semiotic choices, the beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies that are present in the text— but not necessarily easily seen— can be brought out into the open. Once out in the open, they can be critically questioned, contested, and they can be examined to find out how their beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies can be understood to have destructive consequences on the audience and the groups of people they represent.

Key words: 2016 United States presidential election, Breitbart, Breitbart News Network, Critical Discourse Analysis, Destructive discourses, Islam, Muslim refugees, National security, Syrian refugees, Syrian refugee ban
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1. Introduction

Scrolling through the hundreds of comments on the Breitbart News text selected for analysis, "Germany: Muslim migrant with four wives and 23 children receives $390,000 a year in benefits", one comment appears more than all others, and that comment is, "Coming soon to a neighborhood near you..." in all its slightly different variations (Williams 2016, AffanGul 2016). Seeing this comment appear over and over again signals the text's success in achieving a specific kind of effect on its audience, and the nature of that effect can be discerned, among other ways, from the nature of the comment itself. The aforementioned comment demonstrates a fear and loathing in an audience that is averse to what has become to them an all but inevitable, future reality that their communities will be overcome by outside, "others", i.e. Muslim and Syrian refugees, who will dramatically alter—for the worse—the landscape of their homes, unless, that is, something is done about it. This fear and loathing and this firm resolve to do something about this manufactured threat did not spring spontaneously from the hearts and minds of a public, independent of media influences, but, rather, is something that must be understood to have sprung from the media itself (Street 2001:70).

1.1 Purpose and Research Questions

1.1.1 Purpose and Goal

The purpose of my thesis will be to critically analyze the discourse of a news text from the far-right, political media outlet, Breitbart News Network. The object of analysis will be a news text that represented "Muslim migrants" and "Syrian refugees" in the weeks leading up to the 2016 presidential election. The focus will be on how "Syrians", "Muslims", broader categories of "refugees", "migrants", and more particular categories of "Syrian refugees" and "Muslim migrants" come to be represented and acquire meaning in the text in relation to the primary participant in the text.

The primary purpose of the research will be to denaturalize the news text in order to draw into focus the discourse and the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, or ideologies it promotes. Denaturalizing a news text starts from the assumption that unequal power relations, inequalities, and asymmetries may be present within a text but not necessarily noticeable to the audience; it presumes that the text producer has, either consciously or non-consciously, rendered overt markers of bias, presuppositions, and otherwise taken-for-granted judgments covert, and thus uncontestable. Naturalizing a news text, then, entails how certain semiotic choices are made by the text producer to mask unequal power relations by making overt bias, presuppositions, and taken-for-granted judgments less evident and more subtle in order to make its discourse more potent and thus more effective in shaping the discourses of its audience (Fairclough 1992:204). Therefore, in naturalizing a news text, a text producer is able to hide the knowledge they are producing, and the beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies that informed the production of the text, and by denaturalizing a news text we are able to find them.
In denaturalizing text, we seek to be critical and bring the implicit knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, or ideologies that underlie these discourses out into the open where they can be contested, subject to reflection, and critical questioning, so unequal power relations and their discourses can be challenged and effect less of an influence over us, which will be the task of our analysis and discussion section. Such an analysis will not only help us understand the nature and workings of the discourse and how it achieves its effect, but in doing so will also contribute to an emancipating understanding of how an "Other", such as Muslim and Syrian refugees, are alienated from "Us" and made to appear threatening without having us ever question the highly contestable claim (Cheney, May, & Munshi 2011:379). Another, broader purpose of the research will be to examine and trace connections between the news text's representation of Muslim and Syrian refugees and the discursive and social practices surrounding the text, including those destructive influences the discourse can be understood to have on the social world.

1.1.2 Research Question

- How were Muslim and Syrian refugees represented in the Breitbart News Network text?
  - Which linguistic semiotic choices were made in their representations?
  - What aspects of their representations are highlighted in the text?
- How can the discourse in the news text be understood to be destructive, i.e. hostile to peace and social justice?

1.1.3 Hypothesis

My hypothesis is that (H1) Breitbart News Network signifies and constructs a destructive discourse that is hostile towards Muslim and Syrian refugees which intensifies social cleavages between those groups and the audience. Furthermore, I posit that (H2) Breitbart News Network makes it appear natural and justified that we should treat with hostility Muslim and Syrian refugees through the semiotic choices they make which, among other ways, (H3) emphasizes the threat these groups pose.
2. Background

On August 17, 2016, Donald Trump appointed Stephen Bannon as his new campaign manager, or "chief strategist and senior counselor". Up until the date of his appointment, Bannon acted as the executive chair of the news website, Breitbart News Network. Following his appointment, Bannon took a 'leave of absence' from Breitbart News Network.

Breitbart News Network can be characterized as a far-right, political news website. In a July 2016 interview with Mother Jones magazine at the Republican National Convention, Bannon "proudly told" the reporter, Breitbart is "the platform for the alt-right" (Posner 2016). Alt-right can be understood as a rebranding of far-right politics in an attempt to distance itself from the stigma of the far-right while still peddling its ideologies. Far-right politics are often characterized by xenophobic, racist, nationalistic, chauvinistic, or other ideologies or views that emphasize social and cultural differences among people and groups of people (Gugelberger and Kearney 1991:3). These ideologies or views can be understood to have destructive consequences on the groups of people they depict as inferior or as a threat. Certain ideological, discursive formations assert some people or groups of people require domination, and the vocabulary that these texts make use of in their discursive formations can tip off readers, and cue them into the ideological work taking place within the piece of news text (Said 1994:35).

Such strategies as these employed by far-right media outlets such as Breitbart News Network should be interpreted, Gugelberger and Kearney write, as a push for political domination (1991:3). They assert that political domination depends on certain political groups, like the far-right movement, emphasizing social differences between people or groups of people. Without accentuating these differences, there would be no basis for distinguishing 'us' from 'them', distinguishing those who should wield power from those who should be subject to it (ibid 1991:3). Thus, power is attained, and political domination starts to be achieved, when groups of people unite or assemble in support of political ideas around these social differences. Political domination, which among other things includes winning elections, depends on politically-defined, perpetuated, and culturally accepted social differences.

On November 8, 2016, Donald Trump was elected as President of The United States of America, on a platform that largely emphasized social and cultural differences between people and groups of people, but especially differences between American people and people from other countries, such as Syria, and people of other faiths, such as Islam. On January 20, 2017, Donald Trump appointed Steve Bannon as White House Chief Correspondent and Senior Adviser to the President of the U.S.A. An anonymous source quoted by reporter Lloyd Grove in a March 3, 2017 article in The Daily Beast, said that Bannon, in conjunction with Breitbart News Network, had "achieved their goal to get into government and affect policy" (Grove 2017). Bannon's relationship with Breitbart News Network, even following the election and his official appointments, still remains unclear as claims of his official resignation from the news network has not been substantiated by formal proof, which implies that Bannon has not completely
severed ties with the media outlet and his relationships there, despite his new position (Singer 2017).

On January 28, 2017, about a week following Donald Trump's inauguration, Trump made true on his campaign promise to stop people from coming to the U.S.A. from Syria when he signed an executive order indefinitely banning Syrian refugees from entering the U.S.A. In order for this campaign promise to have appealed to his voters, and contribute to him being elected, thus allowing for the Syrian refugee ban to become a reality, an ideological foundation establishing the difference between Muslim and Syrian refugees and American citizens must have been laid in the majority of the discourses of Trump's base of supporters. It is of particular interest to this paper that we explore the ways in which Breitbart News Network's text has contributed to the construction and perpetuation of discourses emphasizing the differences between American citizens and Muslim and Syrian refugees which can be understood to have played a part in laying the foundation that saw large numbers of Americans supporting a Syrian refugee ban, and the candidate who trumpeted it.

Breitbart News Network has been credited with helping Trump get into office through their generous coverage of Trump during the 2016 election, including but not limited to reproducing and legitimizing Trump's discourse in their news. However, their relationship must be understood to be complementary, that is, Trump must also be understood to have picked up on, reproduced, and legitimized Breitbart's discourse during his campaign. Furthermore, since his election, Breitbart has been credited with helping push the agenda of the Trump administration (Viebeck 2017). Breitbart News Network has been granted special access to White House press briefings in spite of the fact Breitbart does not possess official, permanent press credentials (Gold 2017). While Breitbart has been granted special access, other news media outlets, such as the New York Times or BBC, which Trump has implied are fake news outlets, have been excluded. These news outlets can be understood to run news stories that run contrary to the Trump administration's agenda, and as such, his decision to bar these media outlets from press briefings, while privileging Breitbart, can be understood as a way the Trump administration has attempted to stifle the circulation of alternative discourses that may threaten its power while at the same time attempting to promote the circulation of those discourses that strengthen it.

In the months since the inauguration, Breitbart News Network has attempted to ascertain press credentials, and the media outlet's hitherto veiled and elusive institutional structure has had some light shed on it. In order to acquire press credentials, Breitbart News Network must meet certain requirements for editorial independence as stipulated by the Senate and House Press Galleries. Such rules governing these press galleries state that:

"The applicant... must not be engaged in any lobbying or paid advocacy, advertising, publicity or promotion work for any individual, political party, corporation, organization, or agency of the U.S. Government, or in prosecuting any claim before Congress or any federal government department, and will not do so while a member of the Daily Press
Galleries. Applicants’ publications must be editorially independent of any institution, foundation or interest group that lobbies the federal government, or that is not principally a general news organization. Failure to provide information to the Standing Committee for this determination, or misrepresenting information, can result in the denial or revocation of credentials” ("United States” 2012-13).

As a result of this application process, the ownership of the media outlet has been partly elucidated, and the three owners of Breitbart News Network were recently revealed to be Larry Solov, The Mercer family, and Susannah Breitbart, widow of the late Andrew Breitbart (Zuckerman 2017).

In 2016, the Mercer's were reported to have contributed a substantial sum of money to a super PAC that funded Donald Trump's push to the presidency (Singer 2017). The Wall Street Journal reported the Mercer's were the third largest campaign contributor in the 2016 election for the Republican party (Zuckerman 2017). Robert Mercer, who rose to prominence as a computer scientist, became one of two CEOs of the twenty-nine billion dollar hedge fund, Renaissance Technologies in 2010 (Ibid 2017). In 2015, Forbes reported Robert Mercer earned one hundred and fifty million dollars a year acting as one of two CEOs of Renaissance Technologies (Vardi 2016). Bannon has been called the Mercer family's close confidant (Zuckerman 2017). Bannon met the Mercer's through Brietbart News Network founder, Andrew Breitbart, when Mercer purchased an almost fifty percent stake in Breitbart News Network in 2011 (Ibid 2017). Upon Mr. Breitbart's death in 2012, Bannon was assigned as the executive chairman by the Mercer family and other power holders of the institution (Ibid 2017).

It is no surprise that since its inception and up until now, Breitbart's institutional structure has been a closely guarded secret. It has an established reputation as an anti-establishment, independent, alternative news source and these findings threaten their website's credibility. As we will discuss later in this essay, news outlets rely for their effectiveness on their plausible credibility, that is, they rely on the audience's assumption of their news source's impartiality. Once a news source's impartiality is brought into question, the effectiveness of their ideological work can be compromised. Perhaps this is one reason why, during his meeting with the Standing Committee in their assessment whether Breitbart should be granted permanent press credentials, Solov is directly quoted as saying that he wanted to "disclose as little as possible about financial and ownership structures" (Gold 2017). Another reason for their secrecy could be the apparent risk involved of being denied press credentials should clear enough lines be drawn between Breitbart's editorialship and its ownership's relations with special interest groups that have lobbied for the Republican Party, and specifically Donald Trump. This would result in a loss of power to more effectively steer the discourse of the public and their base of supporters. By disclosing financial and ownership structures, people would be able to draw a direct and complementary link between Mercer's Breitbart News Network to high ranking officials within the U.S.A. government, through Stephen Bannon, all the way to the President of the United States, Donald Trump.
Examining media institutions such as Breitbart, and the forces that influence them, enables people to "look behind the messages they receive, to uncover what, today, is a predominately secret world" of powerful actor's seeking to shape the discourses of their audience for special interests (Ewen 1996:413). It enables what was once an otherwise malleable, passive audience to actively question and think analytically about why the media would do things like attack solidarity and encourage social cleavages by dividing people up along lines of class, race, nationality, religion, etc, when people share far more in common interests than the differences emphasized in the media.

The late Olof Palme united people by emphasizing their commonality, such as our shared interests "to grow up and be educated; to find playmates and friends; … to find a place in working life and make our own living; to find somewhere to live and make it into a home; to form a family and bring up children;… to secure a decent living and preserve our dignity for the inevitable frailty of old age" (Palme 1990:80). Such a discourse as this rearticulates conventional discourses that emphasize our differences by instead emphasizing our commonalities thus bridging divisions by recognition of our shared ideals. To divide people who share the same common interests is to signal the work of powerful special interests who often stand to lose from the general population's pursuit of these shared ideals, and it is no secret, as we come to see in our analysis, Breitbart News Network has led a crusade of division. A crusade of division primarily against immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees— and particularly Muslim and Syrian immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees.
3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Social Constructivism

According to social constructivism, social reality is constituted and given meaning by human actors (McQuail 2010:90). Language is understood to construct our reality, that is, language constructs the way we understand ourselves, others, and the world (and its aspects and phenomena). Primarily, it is the structure of a language, including its divisions, categorizations, and the positioning of language's different signs that lays the foundation for how we experience and understand reality, but it is discourse that can be understood to ultimately construct language. Discourse structures language in such a way as to make things mean. Therefore it is discourse that must be understood to construct the way we understand ourselves, others, and the world (etc.) through language.

Language is made up of signs. A study of Saussure linguistics reveals the concept of 'sign'. Signs populate our mental life. Signs such as 'refugee' or 'immigration' or 'Syrian' for instance. They are the things we think about, talk to other people about, and try to describe (Burr 1995:25). They are not only concrete objects, people, or events, but are also abstract things such as 'peace' or 'love' or 'hate' that are not thought to have any concrete existence. Social constructivists posit that these signs have no intrinsic meaning in themselves. Rather, the meaning of these signs is understood to be socially constructed, and as such, can be constructed differently to mean different things. This begs the question of how meaning is produced and how signs are given meaning.

3.2 Hall's Representation and the Discursive

Representation is a meaning producing, or signifying practice that makes signs mean (Hall 1997:24). It is the primary way, Stuart Hall writes, by which we produce meaning and the primary way by which signs come to mean. We represent signs by how we talk about them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the stories we tell about them, the images we show of them, and how we use or incorporate them into our practices in life, etc. (Ibid 1997:3). A particular way of representing a sign by which a particular meaning is produced and given to the sign is called a discourse.

In a figurative sense, which is helpful for understanding discourse, Husserl conceived the image of a "horizon-forming context of processes of reaching understanding" about a sign that "shifts according to one's position" (Habermas 1985:123). Understood this way, discourse is conceived of as the context, disposition, or standpoint from which a sign is interpreted. Through discourse, different aspects are brought in and out of focus, different issues raised and others omitted, and ultimately a particular way of understanding and talking, writing, or otherwise representing ourselves, others, and the world (etc.) is established (Burr 1995:33).
Understood this way, each representation is dependent on discourse for producing meaning, and each sign is dependent on discourse for its meaning. Discourse theory explains that signs do not mean on their own, but as part of a network, or framework of meaning constructed around them (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:26). Meaning is produced and signs are given meaning, then, based on the framework of meaning to which the sign belongs, a framework that is derived from discourse. That is to say, signs are given meaning based on their positioning in relation to other signs, and it is through a particular discourse that signs are positioned (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:28). Certain semiotic choices in a discourse, i.e. the use of certain kinds of words the discourse uses in relation to other signs, can affect the framework of meaning surrounding a sign, which affects the meaning that is produced and given to a sign. Understood this way, each representation is dependent for its construction, and therefore the meaning it produces and gives to a sign, on discourse.

According to social constructivism, meaning producing, or signifying practices, such as representation, should not be conceived of as merely representing or reflecting a world 'out there', but actually constituting the world. According to Foucault, a sign, or object as he refers to it, "is constituted by all that is said in all the statements that named it, divided it up, described it, explained it," or otherwise represented it (Foucault 2002:32). Discourse, thus conceived, is not merely a particular way of representing the world, but a particular way of constituting and constructing the world in meaning (Fairclough 1992:64).

The study of the life of signs, which shows what constitutes a sign and what laws govern their constitution, Saussure writes, is called semiology (Saussure 2011:16). Discourse can be understood this way as a set of rules or laws governing language use, which, for all intents and purposes, close off and open up different possibilities for how a sign can be interpreted and constituted. Semiotic choices, therefore, refer to the choices a text producer makes in their discourse in order to constitute a sign and give it meaning and semiology the study of those choices. Fairclough writes there are always alternative ways of giving meaning to, or signifying, signs, which entails interpreting the sign in a particular way from a particular perspective, or discourse (Fairclough 1992:100). Fairclough also clarifies that by changing the wording of a representation, text, or as he refers to it, a discursive formation, the meaning of the sign also changes. Discourses should be understood as informing these semiotic choices that determine how signs, and the larger world, will be constituted, and as such, semiotic choices are the emphasis of our analysis so as to determine, among other things, what kind of world or representation a particular discourse is constituting and how it is constituting it.

3.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA) starts from the premise that discourse constitutes our world, that it constructs our social identity, social relations, and systems of knowledge and meanings but that it does so at the same time as it is being shaped by the social world (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:67). Another foundational premise of Fairclough's CDA is the
role discourse, and more specifically, discursive practice plays in sustaining or restructuring the social world, and particularly the power relations therein (Fairclough 2006:91). Critical discourse analysis is done with an eye on social change, so CDA is particularly concerned with unequal power relations between social groups in a society and how positive social change can be brought about through discursive change (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:3).

Where unequal power relations of domination exist in a society, discourse can be understood to produce and reproduce these unequal power relations. Discourses can be shaped by—and thus manifest and reflect—these unequal power relations explicitly or implicitly in the production and reproduction of discourse through communicative events, i.e. representations, or more specifically, text. In the communicative event, discourses that maintain unequal power relations can be reproduced by the audience which leads to the perpetuation and maintenance of unequal social structures in a society. That said, power is often more than simple domination from above, but jointly produced when people below reproduce, and thus legitimize, discourses that can be understood to have been disseminated from, and serve the interests of power holders above (van Dijk 1993:250).

CDA seeks to reveal these unequal power relations, and to draw links between the discourse of the text, discursive practice, and how power relations in social practice affected the discursive practice. In order to help us navigate these intricate, dialectical terrains and chart relationships between text as discourse, discursive practice, and the wider social practice, Fairclough has conceived of a three dimensional model of discourse which is explained below.

### 3.3.1 Fairclough's Three Dimensions of Discourse

In his model, Fairclough articulates three dimensions of discourse: text, discursive practice, and social practice. This model helps trace connections between the features of the text, how it was produced, distributed, and consumed, and the social practices surrounding these processes (Fairclough 2006:72).

**Text**

A text is a communicative event or representation. It is an instance of language use, written or spoken which can be understood to both signify and construct discourse. The phrase 'discourse as text' is a helpful way to conceive of text.

Discourse may make use out of any number of choices to structure the text and articulate its message. These include using certain words, phrases, or metaphors, making certain references, choosing certain pictures, giving examples, referring to certain sources, etc. (McQuail 2010:310). Though a more extensive analysis follows later, these textual devices and strategies provide a brief glimpse into some of the ways text is used by a discourse to bring itself to life and achieve
its effect. These devices and strategies are employed in order to construct a particular version of the social world, or, for instance, constitute a social subject, such as a Syrian refugee.

These choices may be made non-consciously or automatically, or these choices may be made consciously (Fairclough 2006:80). Where choices are made consciously, certain textual devices and strategies may, in the interest of power, be employed to conceal a discourse or naturalize a meaning it produces as a taken for granted truth when it is in fact "contestable and ideological" (Machin & Mayr 2012:137). Certain other choices may imply meaning and encourage the audience to interpret something in a certain way without overtly stating it. Furthermore, text producers may seek to intentionally limit the amount of meaning potentials of a text in order to encourage the audience to interpret it in one way and not another.

In any case, texts are inevitably influenced in the choices they make by the discourse of the text producer. The traces and workings of their discourse can be found in the positions expressed in the text, and especially in the many choices used by the producer throughout the text in an attempt to articulate their discourse and achieve their desired effect. CDA may look at the choices made in a text in order to, in some cases, clarify, or in other cases where discourses are deeply embedded and naturalized in the structures of the text, draw out discourses or ideologies at work within the text that are present, but pass by mostly unnoticed by many readers. By revealing the textual devices and strategies of the text producer's choices through textual analysis, we are able to better understand how texts achieve their effect, while also drawing out into the open the underlying ideas and taken-for-granted assumptions of the texts that steer reader's discourses (Machin & Mayr 2012:10-15).

**Discursive Practice**

Discursive practice refers to the processes of text production, distribution, and consumption (including interpretation) (Fairclough 2006:78). Discursive practice is often conceived as mediating the relationship between a text and social practice. In discursive practice people produce and consume texts, which can be understood to be shaped by, and at the same time shape, social practice (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:69).

**Production, Distribution, and Consumption**

Distribution of texts vary from a casual conversation, to storytelling, to a political speech given at a rally, to any number of different media that distribute text, such as a newspaper article, film, or video (Fairclough 1992:80). These different methods of distribution have their own particular discursive practices and rules governing the production and shaping of text, as well as different protocols for their consumption, for their reading, viewing, and interpretation (Ibid 1992:126).

In the process of producing text, the text producer can refer to one person or a collective of people, but text almost always gives the impression in its consumption that it was produced by a single person. The producer of text is responsible for the structuring of the text, often referred to
as text processing, which refers to all the choices made by a text producer in the structuring of the text. The textual structure and its features, i.e. the devices and strategies of the text affects the way the text is consumed (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:69). During text processing, the production of text can be intentionally or unintentionally influenced by a multiplicity of social, institutional, and other factors. Fairclough examines sociocognitive dimensions of production and consumption and posits that these processes are often influenced in ways people are unaware (Fairclough 1992:80). For instance, producers and consumers may non-consciously draw upon preexisting discourses to produce or consume a text.

Fairclough examines the ways in which people's discourses can be constrained by the social structures and relations of power in social practice which likewise constrain the ways text is produced and consumed. Discourses are socially constructed, which means that discourses are shaped by social situations, institutions, structures, and— of particular interest for the purposes of this paper— overarching power relations. In other words, the way of producing text and consuming it, is affected by the social structure one inhabits, and as a result, a wide range of societal conditions, such as economic, political, and institutional settings, i.e. member resources, can limit an actor's range of possible discourses when producing and consuming a text (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:54).

It is important to clarify, then, that in the production and consumption of a text, there are always several different discourses, or constructions, available through language to produce and consume a text, however, a subject can be largely restricted by the conditions of social practice regarding what discourses can be used in any given situation to produce or consume a text.

**Social Practice as Hegemonic Struggle**

Discourse is a form of social practice, and as such social practices are binding on discursive practices. This is to say social practices shape discursive practices which in turn shape text. The notion that texts can be shaped in the interests of power is of particular interest to CDA. However, it is an essential feature of Fairclough's theory to remember that there exists a dialectical relationship between discourse and social practice, which means text is shaped by social practice at the same time that it shapes it. This establishes discursive practice as a site of discursive struggle, where discourses compete to define social reality and achieve hegemony so their discourse can come to construct the social world and thus dominate social practices.

Where different discourses compete to fix meanings of language in their own way, there is a discursive struggle (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:7). Power holders may struggle to shape and transform the discursive practices of a society or institution by seeking to assert, legitimize, maintain, or naturalize a favored discourse, whereas others may seek to challenge dominant discourses, and thereby challenge established social practices (Fairclough 1992:36). This can be done by bringing other discourses to bear on a sign, or by rearticulating a sign in new ways during discursive practices thus challenging the acceptable way of defining the sign as
encouraged by the dominant discourse or dominant order of discourse. Order of discourse refers to the configuration of discourses within a social field or institution, whereby some discourses benefit from stronger influence over defining signs than others (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:67-74). However, due to unequal power arrangements in society, not all actors will have the same opportunity to say and do things in new ways that will pose a significant challenge to dominant discourses or a social field or institution's order of discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:54).

Areas where there is discursive struggle, and apparent heterogeneity in available choices used to represent a sign, are more open to change, however areas where discourses share the same 'commonsense' understandings are less open to change (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:142). The latter, homogeneous areas, denote spaces where hegemonic interventions have occurred and a discursive struggle has dissolved. In a hegemonic intervention, the meaning as given to a sign by the prevailing discourse comes to be fixed and define the sign across discourses. The fixation of meaning of the sign can become so conventionalized that it appears natural (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:26). When meanings become naturalized within and across discourses, we regard them as truth, and these meanings become the accepted way of understanding ourselves, others, the world, etc., so much so that Jørgensen & Phillips write, "we view them not as understandings of the world but as the world" itself (2000:178). Thus, these meanings come to construct our social world and become undifferentiated from reality.

It is significant for the purposes of social change that we realize different constructions of the world will lead to different social actions; to realize, in so far as our world is constructed through discourses, that each discourse opens up and closes off different possibilities for action. Each manifestation of a discourse brings with it the possibility of reproducing, maintaining, or naturalizing that construction of the world in others, thereby keeping the social world the same or making it even harder to change. On the other hand, each manifestation of a discourse also brings with it the possibility to challenge, transform, or evolve our construction of the world, thereby potentially changing the social world. Therefore, each manifestation of discourse must be understood to be engaged in a never ending discursive struggle to construct our world and determine our actions. Thus conceived, discourses and their meanings are constantly being produced, reproduced, exchanged, and circulated in our living in the world with other discourses, and, as such, we are more or less constantly constructing and reconstructing our discourses and so our construction of the world, and as a result we are constantly opening ourselves up and closing ourselves off to different possibilities of action.

This, among other things, emphasizes the importance of identifying the major producers and circulators of discourses within a society vying for control, as these major producers and circulators of meaning must be understood to assert more power over constructing and reconstructing our discourses, and so our construction of the world and our actions in it.
3.4 Critical Theory

Meaning is produced at "several different sites and circulated through several different processes or practices" (Hall 1997:3). One major producer and circulator of meaning is the media. In fact, media is such a major producer of meaning, Stuart Ewen calls it "the world's most penetrating and effective means of transmitting ideas. Every resident is constantly exposed to the impact of our vast network of communications which reach every corner of the country, no matter how remote or isolated. Words hammer continually at the eyes and ears of America. The United States has become a small room in which a single whisper is magnified thousands of times" (1996:375).

As a major producer and circulator of meaning, media establishes itself as a major actor in the shaping, or molding, of discourses and social structures. Media discourse may purposefully or non-purposively shape their discourses and privilege particular discourses in a society over others. However, critical theorists, such as Noam Chomsky, usually interpret media as purposefully taking advantage of the potential to shape their audience's discourse, and therefore construct its view of reality, by manipulating their text in such a way as to give signs meanings in a way that serves the interests of power holders in a society instead of— and often at the expense of— the general population. In general, this view of media coincides with the "dominance model" as laid out by McQuail that represents media as dominated by the elite and ruling class (2010:78). Chomsky’s notion of the propaganda model mirrors the dominance model and posits that the media produces and reproduces discourses that serve the interests of power holders in a society, while silencing, omitting, or delegitimizing other, alternative discourses that may produce meanings that threaten or weaken the potency of the discourses that serve their interests (Herman & Chomsky 1999).

3.4.1 The Media and its Power

Media's power rests first in its access to the masses through which it is able to circulate the meaning it produces to large numbers of people. As previously noted, the level of exposure, prominence, and power afforded by large media institutions is unprecedented, and its power must be understood to issue from this exposure. Due to its exposure, major media outlets are capable of producing and distributing meaning to such a pervasive extent that they are able to more effectively push for hegemony in order to contribute to an unquestioning, taken-for-granted view of the world by which the social is produced. Meaning production linked to power has the ability to shape the social (Hall 1997:48). Therefore, media's power is its power to produce the social.

Of particular emphasis here is the word 'production'. Media does not so much reflect reality in their representation of events and persons as much as shapes representations for ideological and other purposes (Machin & Mayr 2012:219). Fairclough uses the word ideology to refer to those meanings produced by text that seeks to transform or maintain power relations within a society (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:75). Of particular interest to Fairclough is the conception of
ideologies as constituting social subjects and fixing them in subject 'positions', which has its parallels to hegemony and reality construction (Fairclough 1992:30). These positions include the ascription of discursive formations, which can be understood as internalized social structures, norms, and conventions, that constrain the production and consumption of texts (Ibid 1992:80). These discursive formations play a role in determining—if not predetermining—how a text will be produced or consumed, which is to say ideology works to determine what can and should be said or understood about something, thus definitively shaping the social (Ibid 1992:30).

Ideological discourses as used by the media are seen as serving the interests of power rather than truth, and while media has the opportunity to produce meanings that could challenge and transform oppressive social structures—and the discourses that create and perpetuate them—in order to work towards establishing a more desirable social order, it often shuns, or at very least, neglects this opportunity. Instead, media discourses often shape representations ideologically in ways that seek to maintain, strengthen, naturalize, or, at very least, not undermine discursive formations that serve power holder interests. One kind of media discourse that is very effective in its ideological work is news discourse.

3.4.1.1 News as Discourse

News is a specific type of media discourse, which is often conceived of as the most widely consumed of media discourses. When referring to news as discourse, it is helpful to refer to Fairclough's notion of order of discourse, which refers to how discourses, and more particularly discourse types, which account for both discourses and genres, formulate themselves according to a particular social practice, which in this case is news media practice (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:67). This is helpful because news is a genre that will influence how language will be used in the discursive practice of our social field. Understood this way, the production of news text can be understood to be influenced in its production by at least two factors: first by the requirements set on the discourse by the genre, and then again by the discourse of the text producer. In general, however, an order of discourse refers to which discourses take precedent over others in a specific social field that determines the discursive practice of how text is produced, distributed, and consumed (Ibid 2000:67). Below we survey the discursive practice of news, and attempt to describe in some detail the forces shaping its practice.

The Discursive Practice of News

Using Fairclough's discursive practice as our theoretical framework, we will explore some of the factors, conditions, and constraints shaping how news text is produced, distributed, and consumed.

The news text is produced in specific ways according to a multiplicity of factors within the realm of social practice, but especially those practices and structural factors within the realm of the media institution itself. McQuail describes these influences as "a mixture of personal and
institutional choice, operational requirements, external pressure and anticipation of what a large and heterogeneous audience expects and wants" (2010:401).

To begin with, the text producer's selection and framing of news events will inevitably be influenced by their own discourse, either consciously or non-consciously, deliberately or by accident. Furthermore, institutional practices such as media rules, schema, genre requirements, norms, or values may affect the way news text is produced, imposing limits on the construction of the text and the meaning it produces. In addition, structural factors such as ownership, major funders, and the relationships sown between the media institution and power holders in a society may also affect the way news texts are produced.

It is the primary premise of Chomsky's propaganda model that the structural factors of media institutions "strongly and often decisively influence media behavior and performance" (1999:XLIX). However, Chomsky clarifies that it is unlikely there is ever much in the way of overt, "crude intervention" between power holders and text producers, instead, the intervention is more covert and starts with "the selection of right-thinking personnel," editors, and writers, who have internalized the same agendas, and particularly the same values that serve those agendas, as the power holders of the institution (Ibid:XLIX). Wolfsfeld conceives of four major news values that text producers often internalize that are problematic as it pertains to achieving peace and social justice, and these include: immediacy, drama, simplicity, and ethnocentrism, which are discussed in the following section (2004:15). These pervasive news values in media institutions dictate what is and is not considered newsworthy and must be understood to either purposefully or non-purposefully serve the agendas of power holders in a society (Ibid 2004:15).

However, to fully understand the production process of text within the discursive practice of news, we must should first discuss what the news actually does. The news reports on news events or issues. News is often understood in the popular imagination as the unbias and objective reporting of the truth, a window or mirror allowing us to see what is really there (McQuail 2010:75). News discourse does much to promote and sustain the illusion of truth—its power rests in its credible reputation as a faithful, un-bias transferor of truth—and, as such, the very subjective and bias practices inherent to news methods are often brushed over by news media outlet's outward promotion of its obligation and commitment to delivering truth (Cheney, May, & Munshi 2011:196).

In truth, what actually constitutes a news event or issue is left largely up to the discretion of the media institution. News text producers have the power to act as a gatekeeper, or filter, in the selection of newsworthy stories (McQuail 2010:75). As such, power holders within the media are able to "decide what the general population is allowed to see, hear, and think about" (Herman & Chomsky 1999:LIX). What any given news media outlet may deem as a newsworthy event or

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1 Undermining the public's confidence in alternative media outlets, and delegitimizing their discourses is a standard way to more effectively push for the hegemony of one's own discourse.
issue will vary depending in large part on how those events or issues fit or can be made to fit their agenda. News producers also have the power to spin, frame, or shape these events or issues according to one or more discourses that suit the interests of power holders. In each of these cases, truth may take a backseat to the story that the media institution wants told. In these ways, the production of news text seems to have become more of a practice in public relations than a practice in journalism; a theory substantiated by Mark Dowie who writes in his essay *Torches of Liberty* that "the media is becoming dependent on PR for more and more of its content" and is further evidenced by the fact there are more PR practitioners in the US than journalists (Stauber & Rampton 1995:2-3). Chomsky expounds that the PR industry is able to utilize the conventions of news to serve the purposes of power holders in a society, coupling with Dowie who quotes a PR slogan as stating "the best PR is never noticed," and further compounding this with a quote from a PR executive stating, "the best PR ends up looking like the news" (Herman & Chomsky 1999:XVII, Stauber & Rampton 1995:2). This is particularly implicative in regards to social change, because through the media's selective coverage of topics and the framing of these issues, media is able to constitute their audience's concerns and worries, and in doing so, keep them within the appropriate range of permissible ideas that do not upset power relations (Herman & Chomsky 1999:298). In these two very basic, albeit significant ways, media exerts power over shaping an audience's discourse and view of reality by providing a very selective, and doctored view of reality.

Media's power to shape the audience's discourse and view of reality ultimately rests in their ability to make things true. It is important to recall, however, that according to the constructionist approach, reality is socially constructed through discourse, and while discourse may give the impression it is representing a true picture of reality outside itself, it is only producing the effect of truth. This is to say truth is an effect of discourse rather than a true reflection of some external reality; it is only one discourse of many other possible discourses that could have been used to represent something and give the impression of truth.

It is the news media's most primary step towards achieving its truth effect, and thus power over the audience, that it is able to conceal all of the aforementioned influences that shaped the production of the news text. If the audience were to know about the aforementioned influences that shaped the production of the news, the credibility of the news text would be undermined, and it would become indistinguishable from any other text based on fiction and not fact (McQuail 2010:308). Therefore, news media's ability to achieve truth effects rests first and foremost in their upstanding reputation for providing their audience with an objective, un-bias, and undistorted view of reality. People will often resist engaging with texts they identify as bias and sermonizing (Mullin 2004:254). What makes news discourse particularly implicative in its power over the audience is that it does not appear to explicitly argue for a position or opinion, that is, it does not appear bias or sermonizing, which enables its audience's engagement, and makes them more susceptible to the text's ideological work, but—and often unbeknownst to its audience—news texts almost always presuppose a position or opinion (van Dijk 1988:179).
The nature of news seems predisposed to assist media institutions in their pursuit of un-seeming, ideological indoctrination, as truth effects are initially and naturally achieved in news texts based on the fact the news is anchored in a real-life setting (Machin & Mayr 2012:102). News stories are set in reality, though the real news event or issue often acts only as pretext for the subjective, bias, and very interested commentary that follows. Tuchman attributes news discourse's ability to achieve what she calls "facticity" to the fact that news reporting does not seem to affect the tempo of the event's natural timing and spatial arrangements in its reporting on the news (Tuchman 1978:109). As a result it does not appear to present interpretations of the event, let alone positions or opinions, but to present facts themselves (Ibid 1978:110).

Truth effects are further achieved due to the fact that news texts are often the only source or means readily available to the audience to learn about what is happening in other parts of the world, what other people are like, or any other experience that lies outside the remits of the audience's immediate environment and direct personal experience and observation (De Botton 2014:34). As Fairclough points out, where the audience's resources are limited, interpretations of texts are constrained (Fairclough 2006:80). For instance, contact between people that appear different than ourselves can be considered an audience resource, and this resource is a very important way of coming to understand each other as fundamentally the same (Staub 2004:28). If the audience were to have this resource, the news may be less successful in convincing the audience of the claim that refugees pose a threat to national security. The media can be understood to take advantage of an audience's lack of resources for their benefit. In this way, truth effects can be understood to be achieved when the information provided by a certain text doesn't conflict with audience's resources, including but not limited to the personal experiences of the audience. This is to say, media relies on achieving part of its truth effect based on their audience's lack of resources, or poverty of experience, surrounding the subject matter of whatever is being represented.

Truth effects can further be achieved in the textual structure of a news text whereby text producers can use any number of semiotic choices to shape a discourse to enhance truthfulness and credibility. For instance, news discourses use different forms of modality in their language in order to communicate different levels of certainty, and news discourses almost always use objective, non-subjective modalities in order to seem like an authority and reinforce their reputation as credible (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:84). Van Dijk also elucidates media's usage of what he refers to as "the number game" to signal credibility, achieve truth effects, and enhance its text's effectiveness (Van Dijk, 1988:179). From their use of numbers, to selective use of sources, from their use of specific scripts and schemata, to their selection of quotes by witnesses and other participants, from their selective uses of credible persons and institutions, to their framing of events into ideologically acceptable premises... there are a number of semiotic choices and strategies used by news text producers in order to enhance their text's truthfulness, plausibility, correctness, precision, credibility, and, as such, their overall effectiveness in shaping their audience's discourses (van Dijk 1988:93-94).
3.5 Towards Defining a Normative Theory

While media has the opportunity to produce meanings that shape discourses in a positive way that could challenge and transform oppressive social structures by reshaping the discourses that create and perpetuate them, there is often a large discrepancy between what the media often uses its power for versus what they ought to use it for. Thus, critical theory often presupposes a normative theory, or model for an alternative or better form of media practice, one that serves the best interests of a society rather than the powerful elite.

The news media and its code of ethics that informs its best practice almost always begins with some pledge to tell the truth (Downing 2004:23). This pledge often presumes that there exists some hard line between discursive representation and truth, that there exists a reality beyond the representation itself, and that the truth of any given representation can be evaluated according to how well it mirrors or reflects reality. It is important to recall, however, that according to the constructionist approach, reality is socially constructed through discourse, and while discourse may give the impression it is representing a true picture of reality outside itself, it is only producing the effect of truth. This is to say truth is an effect of discourse rather than a true reflection of some external reality; it is only one discourse of many other possible discourses that could have been used to represent something and give the impression of truth.

However complicated the relationship is between representation and "truth", not all representations should be considered equal (Senehi 2002:43). Some can be evaluated by a particular normative theory to be more "truthful," or constructive, than others according to the standards and expectations set forth by a normative theory. These standards and expectations establish what is good and bad in media discourses, and proves to be useful for analyzing media discourses and their representations.

3.5.1 Constructive and Destructive Discursive Qualities

It is reasonable to expect that media discourses do what they can to promote peace and social justice among and within communities, since these aims are in the best interest of societies, the world and its citizens. Peace and social justice, however, are not cut and dry concepts, and mainstream media outlets can certainly argue that they promote peace and social justice, albeit a very limited sense of peace and justice. Therefore, media's notions of peace and social justice should not be confused with a well-defined, properly established system of pursuing peace and social justice that serves the best interest of the broader public and not just a privileged and powerful class of people (Cheney, May, & Munshi 2011:269).

Those discourses that serve broader interests of peace and social justice are what Senehi refers to as a constructive discourses (2002). Media discourses often do not achieve this ideal, rather their discourses take on more destructive qualities. Jessica Senehi lays out a loose framework of components of discourses that factor into the peace and social justice process. These components,
and particularly their features, can help us determine the constructive or destructive nature of a discourse. In addition to the features Senehi populates these components with, I have taken the liberty of further populating them with features of other theories from Sontag, Coles, Chomsky, Ewen, Staub, and others that I believe complement and further substantiate Senehi's theory.

**Knowledge**

One component of discourse that can help us determine whether a discourse has destructive or constructive qualities is by examining the kind of knowledge or meaning it produces. In analyzing the knowledge a discourse produces, it is helpful to determine the information quality of the knowledge. McQuail states that discourses with high information quality avoid "lies, misinformation, propaganda, slander, superstition, or ignorance" (2010:166). McQuail further elaborates the benefits of high information quality, such as contributing towards an informed public that is able to participate more knowingly in decision making (Ibid 2010:166). A way to determine what kind of knowledge quality that a discourse produces is to look at whether the discourse expands our understanding of the subject or issue being represented, or if it tends towards hindering or even diminishing our understanding. Discourses often hinder or diminish our understanding of complex subjects and issues by simplifying them.

Wolfsfeld refers to the news media's predilection towards simplicity in their representations, which includes their tendency for simple story lines, ones that deal with opinions and not ideologies, ones that cover major personalities and not major issues, ones that are short, uncomplicated, and not complex; those that produce low quality information, and not high quality information (2004:16). It is appropriate to refer here to Ewen, who talks about the "attractive form" media often takes in order to accommodate the masses of people "who are too occupied with their daily lives to think analytically on their own account" (1996:389). Chomsky also discusses the problematic technical structure of media texts, their need for brevity and simplified sentence structures, their need to use familiar words and to take a conversational tone. These technical structures of media texts are often incompatible with improving the audience's knowledge and understanding. Instead, it "compels adherence to conventional thoughts," because nothing of any substance can be expressed in such brevity without the appearance of absurdity—an absurdity, Chomsky writes, that is all but impossible to avoid when one is challenging hegemonic discourses with no opportunity to develop their argument (1999:305).

One technical example of how discourses hinder or diminish our understanding of a participant of a text or issue is by reducing or simplifying them to essentialist arguments that make use of dualistic polarities, such as good or bad, right or wrong, to explain the problem or issue (Lederach 2005:62). Essentialist arguments often serve to simplify complex issues and conceal the information that has contributed to certain social problems by, for instance, blaming the issue on a person's character or personality rather than looking at the conditions or circumstances that have created such characters (Tolstoy 1999:133). Media's other predilection with immediacy and reporting on the here and now as opposed to processes and overall trends can be understood to
exacerbate problems of simplicity in news text (Wolfsfeld 2004:17). Immediacy inhibits the audience from taking on a wider perspective by making events appear unfounded or random instead of the result of social factors. These kinds of simplified discourses do not permit the audience to understand or identify the root causes and real solutions to issues by, for instance, presenting context, background, and historical perspective (Cheney, May, & Munshi 2011:198). Much rather, they can be understood to prevent or even distract the audience from understanding the depth and nuance of participants and issues represented which may have otherwise enabled the audience to identify the root causes and real solutions to the issues affecting their lives (Ibid 2011:197).

A good indication that the knowledge produced by a discourse tends away from simplistic formulations of knowledge is to examine whether those participants represented in a text are given an opportunity to represent themselves and co-create knowledge. Marginalized members of a society are often denied a presence in mainstream media discourses and the opportunity to voice their own opinions and views in a text. They do not have shared power in the production of knowledge— even when that knowledge is about them. When critical discourse analysts refer to discourses in which power relations are unequal, they are often referring to these inequities and asymmetries in the production of knowledge. Fairclough's notion of "democratization of discourse" can be understood as the process of eliminating these inequities and asymmetries from discourses in order to make them more constructive and fulfill what he calls the "discursive and linguistic rights and obligations" due to the participants in the text, namely, the fundamental human right to be given the opportunity to define themselves so as to make themselves fundamentally understood (Fairclough 1999:201). As such, rather than the creation of knowledge being dominated by power holders in a society who get to shape the representation of others—a task that is often undertaken with some ulterior motive in mind—the power to produce knowledge should be shared with those voices that are often denied a presence in mainstream media. In societies where peace and social justice prevail, Senehi writes, "all feel their story is told and heard" (2002:47).

**Emotion**

Another component of discourse that can help us determine whether a discourse has destructive or constructive qualities is by examining the emotional content of a discourse. Discourses have the ability to incite violence or build peace, to incite fear, hatred, and anger, or hope, and love. Discourses can do this by the emotion a particular discourse elicits. Of particular interest is how these different discursive emotions can morally inspire us to act compassionately towards each other or lead us towards acting in morally reprehensible ways.

Wolfsfeld distinguishes the news media's predilection for drama, which he says runs counter to peace and social justice processes (2004). Drama as a news value refers to the selection of news stories and processing of news text to excite and entertain an audience. These stories are often grounded in violence, extremism, and general conflict as opposed to calm, cooperation, and
general harmony. Such a predilection as this focuses its attention on threats and danger which can often serve to generate anger and inflame situations (Wolfseld 2004:19). It can also lead to cultivating a general view of the world as frightening (Ibid 2004:19). The emotional response a discourse may engender varies, but, in general, the audience is often led to feel empathy for a member of one's own group and to feel outrage towards "Others". Determining the emotion a particular discourse engenders towards a participant can signal either a positive and constructive relationship or a negative and destructive relationship with the participant.

Chomsky theorizes that power holders deliberately seek to weaken our ability to inclusively care and feel empathy for certain people or groups of people, as the solidarity it brings about can pose a threat to the perseverance of power structures (Herman & Chomsky 1999:148-150). Susan Sontag echoes this point in her book, *The Volcano Lover*, when she refers to "a fear of minding too much—of unappeasable feelings, feelings that would cause an irreparable rupture of protest with the established social order" (1992:296). Therefore, discursive emotions in media discourses that are produced in the interest of power holders are more likely to engender emotions in their audience that divide, not bind, so, Ewen writes, they can more effectively rule (1996:414). Furthermore, Ewen also writes that power holders in a society may deliberately seek to engender strong emotions in their audience so the public is driven by its emotions and are less capable of critical reasoning (1996:172). According to Ewen, emotion can be operationalized to confuse and confound an audience from identifying the fundamental issues negatively affecting their lives.

Emotion, thus conceived, is politically and morally neutral, and it must be guided by moral principles in order to achieve a positive effect (Coeckelbergh 2007:30). It can be used to educate our sympathies and promote solidarity and inclusive caring for certain people or groups of people, or it can withhold these emotions, or worse, engender strong, negative emotions for an alienated person or group of people.

**Identity**

Another component of discourse that can help us determine whether a discourse has destructive or constructive qualities is by examining the personal or group identity it creates or gives expression to (Senehi 2002:48). The construction of some personal or group identities depend for their construction on the emphasis of social differences. Some personal and group identities are created, and a sense of identity is negatively established in contrast to an inferior 'other' who is often alien, subversive, dangerous, dirty, sick, etc. These discourses can encourage the audience to see themselves as fundamentally different as the subject being represented, and even make these differences appear natural and justified by appeals to essentialism (Gugelberger and Kearney, 1991). However, personal and group identity could have been constructed differently, and the audience could have instead been encouraged to see themselves as fundamentally the same as the subject or subjects being represented.
The last news value Wolfsfeld demarcates as problematic to peace and social justice is ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism refers to news stories that are almost always about "us", and about what is happening or could happen to "us", and, on the off chance there are news stories centering on "others", it almost always focuses on how they are adversely affecting "us" (2004:22). The brutal acts of "others" is news, not our acts of brutality (Ibid 2004:16). Our suffering is news, not their suffering (Ibid 2004:16). Ethnocentrism is perhaps the most troubling of the destructive news values as it will prevent the audience from imaginatively entering into the position of the other and forming an identity like other people, as opposed to an identity as fundamentally different from them.

It is helpful then to consider if a discourse promotes claims of a shared vision, of an identity "as a human being like all human beings" that would build solidarity and not thwart it (Staub 2010:40). Constructive discourses often express ideals and emphasize the possibility for people to live better lives in the face of difficult life conditions, but they also include all groups in a society in these aims, and do not discriminatingly elevate narrow self or group interests over the interests of the general public; they also do not scapegoat enemy 'others' who supposedly stand in the way of these aims, but promote solidarity and discernment of the real problems facing a society (Staub 2010). Constructive discourses thus emphasize these shared beliefs, ideals, histories, and other commonalities, while destructive discourses often alienate subjects from sharing in these commonalities and a shared group identity.

Destructive discourses do not promote an identity of unity among the audience, but, instead, often construct representations in terms of 'Us' versus 'Them' dichotomies, which creates arbitrary boundaries that divide the audience. Those included in the construction of 'Us' may be afforded respect and be humanized in words, while certain other people or groups of people may be devalued and deprived respect and humanizing qualities. Staub emphasizes the importance of discourses "humanizing the 'other' through words," by helping the audience see themselves as essentially the same as others with the same hopes, concerns, and needs in order to lead the audience to recognize their shared humanity with those being represented by which a shared identity in constructed (2010:27, Coeckelbergh 2007:200-210). Destructive discourses may, however, withhold information, such as personal information, in order to prevent us from identifying with certain others. Such strategies as these often determine who belongs and does not belong in the 'Us' category, thus determining who we extend our empathy to, and to whom we deny it, and, more importantly, who we relate to, who we classify ourselves as a part of, and who we identify with.

How identities are constructed in a discourse can align the audience alongside or against each other, and produce either constructive or destructive consequences (Mancin & Mayr 2012:12). Discourses can formulate antagonistic othering, and intensify social differences, or they can bridge these differences by emphasizing our similarities and fostering "an identity as a human being like all other human beings" (Staub 2010:40).
Morality

Another component of discourse that can help us determine whether a discourse has destructive or constructive qualities is by examining the moral of the discourse. If discourses do not explicitly state how things should be, they almost always imply it (Senehi 2002:53). They imply what kind of society and what kind of world the text producer has in mind. Gillespie writes that stories, and for the purposes of this paper, news stories, "are nearly always about the projects or goals of individuals or groups, the obstacles they face, and the detours they must take to achieve their ambitions and desires" (2006:85). Stories not only imply how things should be, but also imply what we ought to do in order to achieve those projects and goals. Thus, analyzing the morality of a discourse includes looking at the projects or goals it expresses as desirable, what can be understood as standing in the way of those goals, and how we can overcome these obstacles in order to achieve our goals.

There are many ways of living, that is, there are many life projects and goals to pursue, but some are morally right and some are morally wrong. Constructive discourses can be understood to promote notions of a better, morally right society, such as one where inequalities have been erased, differences bridged, and egalitarian, humanitarian values established. Destructive discourses, however, can be understood to conceal shared visions of a better society, and to conceal the important issues standing in the way. Particularly destructive discourses may not only conceal these visions of a better society and the real issues standing in the way, but may even misinform the audience and mislead them into believing a morally wrong vision of a society is what is desirable, or by misleading the audience to believe some contrived issue is standing in the way when it really is not.

Coles conceives of the term "moral drift" in his book The Call of Stories: Teaching and The Moral Imagination (1989:116). Moral drift can refer to the process by which an actor comes to pursue morally wrong goals, instead of morally right ones. As used in Coles, moral drift specifically refers to losing track of what is morally right. It refers to a characteristic indifference to others, a purposeful or non-purposeful forgetting of the harm our actions may be causing in our living in the world.

Destructive discourses can be understood to mislead us in our goals, and help us rationalize actions that may violate our moral constitution. Constructive discourses, on the other hand, can be understood to remind us of our higher ideals of peace and social justice, and call us towards fulfilling those morally right goals. They nurture, attract, and stir our morality with compelling stories of goodness in order to win us over to getting on in the world and with others in morally inspired ways (Coles 2000). They may introduce moral truths, or reintroduce moral truths that the audience may have forgotten over the course of their living in the world.
Summary

The preceding discussion on discursive components and their potentially problematic features highlights the importance for media discourses to be guided by a principled normative theory in order to help, not hinder, society's pursuit of peace and social justice. Wolfsfeld points out that, at current, there is a fundamental contradiction between the nature of the news, and the process of pursuing peace and social justice (2004:15). A normative theory rooted in a moral principle like cosmopolitanism, which helps its audience see all "humans beings as moral equals," which helps us recognize the shared humanity of all those represented, which helps us see we all share the same underlying aspirations, concerns, and needs for peace and social justice, which helps us avoid the trap of partisanism and other divisions that cause us to lose track of the pursuit of our shared interests, and which helps us bridge differences and connect in the pursuit of the creation of a just and peaceful world, is necessary if news text is ever to become a constructive force in the pursuit of peace and social justice (Coeckelbergh 2007:210-215).
4. Critical Discourse Analysis as Method

In conducting a critical discourse analysis according to Fairclough's three-dimensional model, there are three-dimensions of discourse an analyst can select for their analysis: social practice, discursive practice, or text. For the purposes of this research the primary focus will be text analysis, though this process is never far from some reference to the discursive and social practices that shape the text (Fairclough 2006:73). As such, during the textual analysis, I will draw connections between the news text and elements of discursive and social practices when and where it is applicable, but the primary focus will be textual analysis.

4.1 Textual Analysis

Text analysis focuses on the linguistic features by which discourses and discourse types are realized (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:69). Discourses are realized linguistically through different semiotic choices made by the text producer in the production of the text. There are always a number of choices available to the text producer in their construction of discourse through text. Text producers are often faced with decisions about how to interpret something, and are faced with making choices about how they wish to phrase, word, or otherwise represent something. Each choice a text producer makes about the wording of a representation has the potential to change the entire meaning of what is being represented.

Where semiotic choices and decisions are made non-purposefully by the text producer, the notion of choice and decision become antithetical, for "to choose is to choose something in which freedom sees," and in this case, no other way of seeing, interpreting, or representing something ever occurs to those producing the text (Ponty 2002:508). In these cases, text producers utilize linguistic features unintentionally, and text analysis can help to reveal the rules, or semiotics, governing ideological formations of discourses that are determining what is seen and what can and should be said about something within certain social fields. Where choices and decisions are purposeful, text producers may utilize linguistic features intentionally, like strategies, allowing them to shape texts and conceal the personal, political, institutional, or ideological goals that shaped them.

The process of conducting a text analysis with CDA involves looking at the linguistic features of a text in order to determine the semiotic choices made by the text producer, which can provide insight into how the discursive formation is constructed, how the text was produced, and how the text is able to achieve its effect and influence audience discourses. By analyzing the linguistic features of a text, the choices that were available to the text producer become more apparent, and questions concerning how certain effects were achieved, why certain choices were made and not others, and what goals these choices might serve can be attended to.

Text analysis can be conducted on any number of different linguistic planes, with attention shown to any number of a text's various linguistic features. Fairclough explicates a few main
aspects and linguistic features that should be taken into account during a text analysis. These include interactional control, wording, grammar, cohesion, politeness, and text structure (Fairclough 1992:234-237). Using a set of tools as set out by Machin & Mayr in their book, *How to do Critical Discourse Analysis*, I will attend to some of these various aspects and linguistic features. The aspects and linguistic features I will be analyzing the text for are detailed below.

4.1.1 Wording/Lexical Choices

One kind of linguistic analysis carried out by CDA is the analysis of word choices. Discourses are almost always identifiable, yet are rarely if ever clearly defined by the text producer, therefore certain norms, identities, values, and ideologies are present but need to be explicated (Machin & Mayr 2012:208). Van Dijk writes that "lexical choice is an eminent aspect of news discourse in which hidden opinions or ideologies may surface" (1988:177). Studying the word choices can help us identify the kinds of norms, identities, and values underlying the text which can help us reveal the hidden positions, opinions, or ideologies of the text producer. These word choices signify different discourses, so by examining these word choices, we can reveal meanings not made explicit in texts, thereby helping us more clearly define a discourse (Machin & Mayr 2012:11-30).

Studying word choices deals primarily with looking at what kinds of words there are in the texts, that is what vocabulary an author uses, however the focus of analysis of word choices can vary. Machin & Mayr explore the word or lexical choices we can look for in an analysis which include alternative lexis (or word choices), over lexicalization, suppression or lexical absence, word connotation, structural opposition, and lexical choices and genre of communication.

**Alternative lexis/word choices**

Fairclough writes that "as one changes the wording" of a text, "one also changes the meaning" (1992:191). Therefore, rewording a text is an act of discursive restructuring (Ibid 1992:194). Different lexical choices construct different discourses, therefore it is fruitful for an analysis to practice putting alternative words in the place of the words already chosen by text producers in order to determine how the discourse as text could have been constructed differently, and studying the ideological consequences these different choices may have.

**Over lexicalization**

Overwording or over lexicalization refers to the over presence of repetitious, synonymous, or quasi-synonymous terms in a domain (Fairclough 1992:193). The predominance of certain kinds of words over others can alter the meaning of a text. Overwording can signal an "intense preoccupation" on behalf of the text producer which can indicate their interest to persuade or otherwise mark the occurrence of ideological work taking place (Ibid 1992:193).
Suppression or lexical absence

Suppression and lexical absence refers to the absence of terms or information we might have otherwise expected to find (Machin & Mayr 2012:38). Machin & Mayr state that "what is missing from the text is just as important as what is in the text" (2012:85). In the analysis of texts, we can ask what is missing, and, moreover, how the meaning of the text has changed due to lexical absences, and how meaning would have changed if certain lexical items were included. Furthermore, we can ask what ideological work is served by these choices.

Structural opposition

Word choices can set up structural oppositions in texts that can align the audience alongside or against those being represented through the structuring of elements (Machin & Mayr 2012:39). For instance, text producers may not explicitly state who is good and bad, but through certain lexical choices, they can clearly indicate how a participant or event should be understood without ever overtly stating it through a process called 'ideological squaring' (Ibid 2012:42).

Word connotation

Word connotation is the association the use of a certain word or words can bring to the meaning of a text. Word connotation is another method that can be used by text producers to imply meaning without explicitly stating it in the text. Therefore connotations "can be deeply ideological" (Machin & Mayr 2012:219).

Lexical choices and genre of communication

Lexical choices in text can realize and indicate different discourses, but also set up different lexical fields, and different genres of communication (Ibid 2012:30). A set of lexical resources, or a lexis, such as street vocabulary or military slang, can be used to achieve a certain effect with the audience and in doing so realize a genre. Some genres of communication can create the sense that the text producer is on an equal playing field as the audience using phatic communication by which an informal lexis is used to realize a conversational genre that communicates sociability more than information. Other genres of communication can create the sense that the text producer is a specialist by use of a more formal lexis by which technical language and the communication of facts, statistics, and information are used. The genre of communication can be indicated by lexical choices, and the text can be analyzed for genre indicators.

Foregrounding and backgrounding

The practice of foregrounding and backgrounding refers to how different semiotic choices, including lexical and wording choices, are used in general to foreground, or draw attention to certain things, while silencing, or backgrounding others (Ibid 2012:153). These choices are used to foreground and background certain meanings. We can ask how certain lexical and other semiotic choices help to foreground and background certain meanings (Ibid 2012:131).
also ask why a text producer may choose to background certain information and foreground others (Ibid 2012:219).

### 4.1.2 Grammar

The main aspect of grammar is the clause, or sentence, and deals with how words are combined into sentences or clauses (Fairclough 1992:75). Fairclough explicates three dimensions of grammar: transitivity, theme, and modality (Ibid 1992:235).

#### 4.1.2.1 Transitivity

Transitivity is studying how participants are "represented as acting or not acting," or "who does what to whom, and how" (Machin & Mayr 2012:104). When analyzing transitivity, we analyze agency, or who does what to whom, and action, or what is being done (Ibid 1992:105). In a transitivity analysis, we concentrate on identifying three aspects. First we identify the participants, or who is doing the process or having the process done to them. Next, we analyze the text for the process itself, and, last, the circumstances detailing where, when, and how the process took place (Ibid 1992:105). Transitivity plays a key role in meaning making, and shaping how we perceive people (Ibid 1992:105). Analyzing transitivity, and in particular which process types have been chosen by a text producer to signify something and how clear these processes are, has cultural, political, and ideological significance (Fairclough 1992:179-180). Therefore, analyzing for transitivity can help us work out how these factors influence their choices.

Machin & Mayr provide us with an interpretative framework in the form of a set of categories for analyzing action processes (2012:136). These categories allow us, Machin & Mayr write, "to break down actions in ways that permit us to observe more precisely who has power and who does not, who is humanized and who is not, and a number of other issues that point to the ideology buried in the text" (Ibid 2012:136). Two features, or categories, of transitivity that they set out for us, which will by the primary focus during our analysis, are different verb processes and nominalization.

**Transitivity and verb processes**

Transitivity of a text can refer to many types of processes incorporated in clauses that participants are involved in (Fairclough 1992:178). Machin & Mayr use Halliday to categorize these different process types: material, mental, behavioral, verbal, relational, and existential (2012:105). Though first a broader categorization overarching these different action processes are called directed action and non-directed action (Fairclough 1992:180). A directed action is a type of action where "an agent is acting upon a goal" (Ibid 1992:180). Fairclough explains that the agent and goal can be discerned by looking at "what did x (= the agent) do?" and "what happened to x (= the goal)?" (Ibid 1992:180). For example, in the sentence 'the police arrested the protestor', the police are the agent, arrest is the action, and protestor is the goal. In non-
directed action, there is an agent, an action, but no explicit goal (Ibid 1992:180). Moreover, we may analyze the nature of the goal, in that the goal may be a transaction between people, or an interactive transaction, or the goal may be a transaction between things, or an instrumental transaction (Machin & Mayr 2012:112). Another way of analyzing these broader types of verb processes is by looking at whether participants in a text are 'activated' or 'passivated' (Ibid 2012:111). Being active in a text includes doing things and making things happen (Ibid 2012:111). Machin & Mayr state "action processes foreground agency" (Ibid 2012:111). Passivated processes often have no goal or outcome (Ibid 2012:111). Passivated participants often have things done to them and are controlled by others. We can ask many questions in regards to transitivity of text in our analysis, and these are some of them, but, in general, asking if participants are represented as goals or actors, asking if some participants are represented as engaged in actions, or passive, and, if engaged in actions, which actions they are engaged in and the goals towards which they strive are fundamental.

In the following review, we pay closer attention to which kind of verb processes the participant may be engaged in, and, whether it is, for example, a material process, which has a physical or material result, or a mental process, like cognition or affection. These verb processes are very revealing in terms of the underlying discourse and the ideology buried in the text as these different action processes cast participants in a certain light and bring with them different interpretative possibilities (Ibid 2012:105). As such, in our analysis of the Breitbart news texts, we may ask which of the following processes are used most in the representation of participants (Fairclough 1992:236).

Material processes are those which I have just alluded that have a physical or material result (Machin & Mayr 2012:106). These processes, like most verbal processes have actors, goals, but may also have beneficiaries, such is the case in the following sentence, 'The immigrants were permitted into the country.' Mental processes involve processes of sensing, and can be classified into three categories: cognition, affection, and perception (Ibid 2012:105). Cognition, Machin & Mayr explain, are those verbs related to thinking, knowing, and understanding, such as 'I think the immigrants are dangerous' (Ibid 2012:105). Affection, includes those verbs related to liking, disliking, or fearing, such as 'The prisoners hate the food' (Ibid 2012:105). Perception, involves seeing, hearing, or otherwise perceiving (Ibid 2012:105). Machin & Mayr explain how these types of verbal processes can encourage readers to empathize with those whose internal point of view the audience is granted access and invited to be a part of (Ibid 2012:108). In this way, through the use of affection verb processes, the text producer may "prescribe feelings" to their audience (Ibid 2012:108). A kind of mental process, Machin & Mayr refers to, are called 'reactions', which are mental processes that come as a response to something else, such as 'The child was startled by the sudden boom.' This way, participants can be represented as provoking or producing an action (Ibid 2012:109).
Behavioral processes is another one of the verb processes that, Machin & Mayr write, "denote psychological and physical behavior" (Ibid 2012:109). Behavioral processes are called a cross between material processes and mental processes (Ibid 2012:109). They are partly action, such as looked at or smelled, and the action— unlike material processes— are experienced by a person (Ibid 2012:109). Behavioral processes may lack strong agency, a goal, or beneficiary (Ibid 2012:109). Verbal processes are those 'to say' verbs, and their synonyms such as assert, guess, allege, declare, etc, and can significantly transform the representation of the 'sayer'. Verbal processes, Machin & Mayr elucidate, include sayer, receiver, and verbiage (Ibid 2012:110). The sayer does not necessarily have to be a human; the sayer can be inanimate, such as 'The order says no one who has visited Somalia is allowed in the U.S.A.' The receiver is the one that the verbal process is directed towards, and the verbiage is the nominalized statement that follows the verb which actualizes the verb process (Ibid 2012:110). An analysis may look at how some participants are represented as doers, others as thinkers, and in this case, talkers (Ibid 2012:110).

Relational processes refer to states of being, becoming, or having, and state things exist in relation to other things (Fairclough 1992:180, Machin & Mayr 2012:110). To have, or to possess something, is a common manifestation of relational processes. Machin & Mayr aver relational processes are able to present as fact what may otherwise be deemed an opinion, as is the case in the following sentence, 'Most people have cheated the system.' Last, existential processes posit that something has happened or that something exists, such as in the following examples, 'There is an immigration crisis,' 'A dangerous situation arose during the protests,' 'There exists jealousy between the haves and the have-nots.' (Ibid 2012:110). Existential processes often use 'to be' verbs, are often set off by 'there is', and more times than not refer to a nominalized action (Ibid 2012:110). As we shall examine next, nominalization is the process by which these processes and their components are obscured.

Nominalization

Nominalization can involve making vague, or altogether omitting, participants, agents, actions, and goals from a text (Fairclough 1992:182). Nominalization can include giving the agent a passive voice or omitting the agent altogether, and can also include the conversion of verbs into nominalized forms, which often entails replacing the verb processes from the preceding section with nouns (Fairclough 1992:182). There are a variety of motivations for nominalizing text, but it can be used as an effective linguistic strategy to background or obscure who did what to whom while obscuring agents, causality, and responsibility (Machin & Mayr 2012:13). In general, what was actually done, who carried out the action, who was affected, how they were affected, where and when the action took place, and other such details are not made explicit. As such, nominalization lends itself well to educing simplicity, ambiguity, and abstraction, rather than clarity and understanding. In our analysis, we can identify the kinds of participants, agents, and actions that are omitted or concealed through nominalization as well as those that are made explicit, and ask ourselves what purpose or function do these choices appear to serve (Fairclough
1992:236)? Additionally, we can ask questions as laid out by Fairclough such as, "How significant is the nominalization of processes?" and "Are passive clauses and nominalizations frequent?" (Ibid 1992:236).

4.1.2.2 Theme

Theme is the underlying supposition of the text producer which the formulation of the text depends. Theme can be understood to lay the foundation of a text, and at times create the basis of what can be said (Machin & Mayr 2012:156). Theme, Fairclough calls a textual dimension of grammar that is concerned with how elements of the text are positioned that reveal what the text producer has established as 'given' or known (Fairclough 1992:183). Analyzing the text for theme is a way to reveal what the text producer takes for granted as commonsense (Ibid 1992:183). These presuppositions, as Machin & Mayr elaborate, may serve to naturalize ideological and otherwise highly contestable information (2012:153). Machin & Mayr also emphasize how presupposition is a very useful method allowing text producers to avoid having to be explicit about what they mean (Ibid 2012:156). Text producers are able to use presupposition to form the basis of their argument in order to try to persuade without having to qualify themselves. Text producers are rarely held to account to specify what they mean in any given formulation, which is highly implicative, as those things that require specification and definition are those things that are likely to be acting ideologically (Ibid 2012:153). In analyzing theme as presupposition we should therefore ask, "What is the text setting out as 'the known'?" and we should also analyze the implications these presuppositions have in aligning the audience for or against someone or something (Ibid 2012:153).

4.1.2.3 Modality

Modality, according to Fairclough, expresses a text producer's level of certainty, personal opinion, and/or degree of commitment (1992:159). Modality has been traditionally associated with modal auxiliary verbs, such as 'must', 'may', 'can', 'should', and modal adverbs and adjectives, such as 'probably', 'possibly', 'definitely', or 'necessary', 'essential', 'vital', and others that Fairclough say help realize a text's modality (Ibid 1992:159). In addition to modal verbs, adverbs, and adjectives a text producer may use hedging as another way to express commitment to something. Hedging is often used to avoid commitment or directness in statement and proposition (Machin & Mayr 2012:192). Text producers may use hedging in order to 'pad' or moderate the intensity or bluntness of a message.

Machin & Mayr distinguish between three categories of modals in the analysis of texts: epistemic, deontic, and dynamic (2012:187). Epistemic modality expresses the text producer's judgment of the truth of any given proposition, such as 'I am going out tonight', where 'going out' is the proposition (Ibid 2012:187). Deontic modals express how the text producer seeks to compel, instruct, or otherwise influence others to do or believe something, such as 'You must go out tonight' (Ibid 2012:187). Dynamic modals "indicate an ability to complete an action or the
likelihood of events", such as, 'Yes, I'm free. I can go out tonight,' or 'It's going to rain' (Ibid 2012:187).

Modality may be subjective or objective. In subjective modals, the text producer's perspective is clearly being represented, such is the case in the following example(s) 'I believe/doubt/know it's going to rain' (Ibid 2012:187). In objective modals "it may not be clear whose perspective is being represented," such as if a text producer were to write, 'It's going to rain' (Ibid 2012:187). Modality can be analyzed for high or low affinity, where 'I know it's going to rain' signals high affinity, and 'I think it's going to rain' signals low affinity. Modals that express high degrees of affinity, certainty, or confidence, may be used to try to convince audience members (Ibid 2012:188). For instance, high modality or affinity words, such as 'is' or 'is not' or 'are' or 'are not', can create a sense of truthfulness and authority over a text producer's claims (Ibid 2012:190). Take for example the following false-claims made by Trump during the 2016 campaign trail, which were able to appear as if they were true despite their inherent falsehood: "Among Syrian refugees, there are not that many women, there are not that many children," as well as another false-claim, "there is no system to vet refugees from the Middle East" (Qui 2016, Gillin 2015).

Modals can also express the text producer's perception of their own power or lack of power, as well as express their quality of knowledge or lack of knowledge. At the same time, modals can serve an important interpersonal function, allowing text producers to express an identity and build a relationship between themselves and the audience through the careful use of language (Fairclough 1992:160). Fairclough makes an important distinction when he writes that certain modal choices may indeed signal a lack of knowledge or power, but may also signal the text producer's attempt to, for instance, build solidarity with the audience, or to portray a certain identity which may help the text producer fulfill ulterior motives.

Machin & Mayr highlight language's ability to deceive just as well as it can inform, especially as it pertains to modals (2012:191). For instance, certain modals can give the impression of authority, or even appear to inform and give a sense of addressing a topic, without actually substantiating its claims, as can be discerned in the previous examples from Trump. This is partially achieved through the use of ambiguity, which allows Trump to avoid making certain distinctions and directly addressing why he thinks "there is no system to vet refugees" by merely alluding to, or foregrounding isolated terror attacks, while backgrounding the hundreds of thousands of refugees that have been successfully vetted.

The aim of analyzing text for modality is to determine which kinds of modalities are most commonly used (Fairclough 1992:236). Are modalities mostly subjective or objective (Ibid 1992:236)? What are the modal verbs, adverbs, and adjectives, etc. or other features such as hedging used by the text producer (Ibid 1992:236)? By determining these things, the analysis can start to reveal the degree of modality or affinity in the text, how strongly the text producer
commits to certain truths, or how the text producer hedges their commitments to other claims (Machin & Mayr 2012:205). Analyzing these things, and understanding the significance of modal features as semiotic choices, can help to reveal the kinds of identities and values the text producer is communicating and the representation of reality they are promoting (Ibid 2012:206).

4.1.3 Metaphor and rhetorical tropes

Metaphor refers to the process of representing or explaining something through reference to something else. Lakoff and Johnson conceptualize metaphor with the terms 'target domain', which is the thing "we want to describe through metaphor," and 'source domain,' which is the thing "we draw upon in order to create the metaphor" (1980:176, Machin & Mayr 2012:165). Fairclough calls metaphor "a basic part of the way we describe and think about the world", and as such is highly implicative in the way we come to understand and structure reality, how we act, and how we build institutions and organize society (1992:194-195). This emphasizes the importance of considering the choice a text producer makes in signifying things using one metaphor and not another, and the effects that these choices have on the way we think about and structure reality.

Furthermore, Machin & Mayr expound that metaphor can be employed by a text producer to avoid or conceal certain kinds of details that may undermine the coherence and saliency of their position while highlighting other aspects that may serve to strengthen their position. The act of concealment of details is often masked itself by the fact the metaphor is also revealing details, and, in this way and others, metaphors can appear as Fairclough writes, "profoundly naturalized" to the point we are unaware of them so that no other way of thinking about the target domain—other than through the metaphor being used—ever occurs to us (1992:195). The discrepancy that is likely to result between the concrete thing itself, or target domain, being replaced by an abstraction, or source domain, is highly significant as we do not want our understanding, actions, and structuring of institutions and society based on a misrepresentation.

Hyperbole is a rhetorical trope that refers to the use of exaggeration by the text producer in order to achieve a certain effect. It is helpful to analyze a text for the use of hyperbole and to ask how it is representing people, places, and events, and how it may be affecting the way we think about what is being represented. Personification/objectification is also a rhetorical trope Machin & Mayr demarcate, and refers to giving human qualities or abilities to inanimate objects (2012:171). Metonymy is another method which refers to "replacing one thing for another with which it is closely associated" (Ibid 2012:172). The last rhetorical trope or device Machin & Mayr demarcate is synecdoche, which is where "the part represents the whole," or for instance, if a text producer were to write 'America won gold' (meaning 'the United States women's hockey team'). In the following analysis we will seek to identify these rhetorical tropes, and identify what has been abstracted or concealed. Moreover, we will also analyze the significance the use of these semiotic choices has on the meaning of the text, how they may assist the text producer.
from having to be specific, how they may assist in concealing processes, causes, agents, and actors, and what factors may have determined these choices.

4.1.4 Representational Strategies

Representational strategies refer to the general use of semiotic choices like strategies by text producers in order to form a certain representation of individual people or groups of people so as to achieve a desired effect. These strategies foreground (highlight, draw attention to, etc.) or background (conceal, mask, or altogether omit) certain characteristics or qualities of a person's identity or existence. In general, these strategies allow the text producer to classify, or "place people in the social world" (Ibid 2012:77). These strategies and classifications have ideological effects, which, among other things, include encouraging the audience to empathize, alienate, or otherwise feel and think about people or groups of people in a certain way. Some representational strategies and how people are classified are described by Machin & Mayr below.

One strategy a text producer can use is to either personalize or impersonalize the person or groups of people to which they are referring. To personalize a participant is to refer to them directly by name, or some other personal details, such as being a father or mother, that reveals something about who they are. To impersonalize someone is to refer to them in a broader context such as using their institution, organization, or group to which that person belongs in order to represent them. Impersonalization can be used to add weight or authority to a statement, to conceal agency or whom may be responsible for something happening. Moreover, impersonalization can be used as a strategy to conceal who actually believes what has been stated. A strategy associated to personalization and impersonalization is the strategy of nomination and functionalization. Nomination refers to representing a participant in terms of who they are, and functionalization refers to representing them in terms of what they do. Machin & Mayr refer to how functionalizing can result in dehumanizing participants by emphasizing what they do and not, for instance, highlighting who they personally are, but functionalizing can also "connote legitimacy", as the role they are highlighted as doing, might have high social value (Ibid 2012:81). Furthermore, using functional honorifics is a way text producers may dress-up what people do, by emphasizing the high social value or importance of role the participant assumes (Ibid 2012:81). This can serve the purpose of strengthening the case that legitimacy or respect is due to a participant.

Another strategy we will look for is the way text producers represent participants as individuals or as a part of a collective. The more 'referential information' we are given about a participant by the text producer, the more personalized and individualized their representation is likely to become. As is the case for personalization, individualization can help bring an audience closer to the individual being represented, allowing them to feel empathy for those represented, which can help the audience act towards them in a more humane way (Ibid 2012:80). To collectivize participants is to place them into a larger group or category, such as 'The passengers died in the crash' versus 'Two passengers, Mark and Nancy Merchand, newlywed, died in the crash' which
individualizes and personalizes the passengers. Along this same line is the strategy of specification versus genericization, which refers to placing participants into larger, but this time even more generic groups, such as man or woman, or Muslim man or Christian woman, which implies they are representative of these generic groups. The use of generic categorizations such as these can signal the racial slant of a text producer, especially if these genericizations towards race or religion are impertinent or made out of context to the news event that took place which they almost always are. Specification, or referring to a specific individual, can help the audience avoid reaching a misunderstanding about the event that took place, or those religious or ethnic groups being represented, which is the case in the following example: 'The passenger, John Hussein, refused to get off the airplane' versus 'The Muslim man refused to get off the airplane.'

Other, more general strategies are also used in the representation of participants, such as objectivation, which describes people only through the use of a feature, which is reductive and dehumanizing, as this feature comes to define who the person or group of people are (e.g. blacks, to describe a group of African Americans). Machin & Mayr detail how another strategy, anonymization, can be used to "conveniently summon arguments" or prove a point as is the function in the following example, 'Some people think you shouldn't do that' (Ibid 2012:83). Anonymization can also be used to avoid having to specify or substantiate an argument with concrete information, thus lending itself well to a text producer hoping to keep a certain information unclear. Aggregation is a popular method used by text producers which replaces actual numbers of people with abstractions (Ibid 2012:84). Aggregation gives the impression that text is credible or objective, and involves quantifying participants in terms of 'many', 'few', 'a ton', or 'several thousand' and treating them like numbers (Ibid 2012:83). This is a strategy that also lends itself well to text producers wishing to remain unclear while at the same time making information fit and service their argument. Pronoun use in exchange of the use of nouns is yet another strategy text producers can use to align the opinion of the audience alongside or against participants or ideas (Ibid 2012:84). Use of 'we', 'us', and 'them' create artificial divisions which can rationalize differences and even intensify social divisions. Finally, the last representational strategy we will survey is one we have already mentioned but return to here in order to emphasize its importance. It cannot be overstated that what is missing from the text is just as important as what is included (Ibid 2012:85). Suppression can include the omission of agents, which can create a sense that whatever is being represented is a piece of unalterable fact, masking, for instance, the person, people, or process responsible for the event (Ibid 2012:85). Exclusions, or ways of not representing something or others, is a pervasive strategy in the formation of discourses, and as such is a significant way to draw into focus the discourse, and how it is able to achieve its effect. Consequently, asking questions such as, 'Why aren't we being informed?' 'What is the reason for not being informed?' and 'What if we included this excluded information, how would the meaning and discourse change?' are integral questions to ask during an analysis (Ibid 2012:84).
Each semiotic, representational choice, as Machin & Mayr write, is psychologically, socially, and politically significant and can be revealed to serve the purposes of the text producer (Ibid 2012:77). Van Dijk writes that "a large part of the hidden point of view, tacit opinions, or the usually denied ideologies of the press may be inferred from the lexical descriptions and identifications of social groups and their members" (1988:177). Therefore, determining how ideas and people are represented and the words used to represent them can go a far way in revealing these hidden points of view and usually denied ideologies that fly in the face of our basic, human values, and in the following analysis, I will attempt cast light on these discourses and the strategies they operationalize that contribute to inequality and injustice.

4.2 Selection of Research Objects

Muslim and Syrian refugees were selected as a research object, because they are marginalized and misrepresented social groups, mostly because they are not being given the right and opportunity to make themselves heard and to define themselves so as to make themselves fundamentally understood in American society. As a result, these groups have been subjugated to suffering by a society that could have otherwise chosen to alleviate their suffering if it were not for a concerted or un-concerted effort by media outlets to propagate an inadequate representation of Muslim and Syrian refugees.

Breitbart News Network was selected as the media outlet, because it mass produces and reproduces discourses and its news texts as discourse are mass consumed, thus establishing it as a major actor in the shaping of discourses. Breitbart was also demarcated because it produces discourses that are believed to be typical of the kind of destructive discourses or ideologies that contributed to the ban on Syrians seeking safety and security. The discourses as signified and constructed by Breitbart representing Muslim and Syrian refugees are believed to foster deep, however implicit, prejudices towards the religion of Islam and both Muslim and Syrian refugees, which can be understood to intensify social cleavages. Therefore, the ban on Syrian refugees, and the inevitable suffering that results from such a ban, is understood as a manifestation of the destructive discourses and ideologies that are produced and reproduced by far right media outlets such as Breitbart News Network and their base of supporters. As such, these discourses make themselves the perfect candidate for critical discourse analysis' aim to combat social inequality and injustice by, among other things, analyzing and delegitimizing discourses that perpetuate these ills.

Last, the text itself was selected because it is politically interesting, and because it is deeply implicative in its signification and construction of a social world where an inhumane stance towards the suffering of others has taken precedent over a more compassionate approach. Finally, the news text was selected due to its politically significant timing, as it was published in the weeks leading up to a presidential election in which immigration was a main issue the candidates diverged on.
4.3 Research Considerations

Critical discourse analysis is not a value neutral affair. As stated, CDA is committed to eliciting social change and as such it "takes the side of oppressed social groups" (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:64). In the following investigation on how Muslim and Syrian refugees are represented in the far-right media outlet, Breitbart News Network, it is my position that Muslim and Syrian refugees are oppressed, and that unequal power relations play a role in the maintenance of their oppression and discrimination (Ibid 2000:117). The notion that Breitbart's descriptions are oppressive, inadequate, or generally misrepresentative of Muslim and Syrian refugees implies, as Jørgensen & Phillips note, that the researcher claims to have privileged "access to a more adequate description of reality than the people he or she is studying" (2000:77). Throughout the course of this essay, I have argued that there is a better, more insightful, coherent, and compassionate way of representing Muslim and Syrian men, women, and children— husbands and wives, sons and daughters— seeking safety and security, and that this representation is available to the text producers in their construction of Muslim and Syrian refugees. It will be my prerogative in the following analysis to show that my interpretation is consistent with the features of their texts, and this position, of course, will play a part in determining what I see and present as results (Ibid 2000:22).

A researcher's analysis of text is like any other discourse. It is a discursive practice and as such is inextricably and dialectically linked to the discourse of the text producer and the social practice and structures to which it belongs (Fairclough 1992:199). It is, like most other discourses, involved in a hegemonic struggle to define the world, and, as such, should be understood as politically and ideologically invested. Consequently, it is best practice for the researcher, recognizing their bias, to be as reflexive, or as self-conscious, about their "interpretative tendencies and the social reasons for them" as possible (Ibid 1992:35). It is with this in mind, I attempt to clarify the political and ideological investments of the following analysis.

The following analysis is treated as a kind of "political intervention", which seeks, first, to uncover the discourse, as discourses are almost always identifiable, yet are rarely clearly defined until an analysis is undertaken (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:49, Machin & Mayr 2012:208). Next, the analysis seeks to critically challenge the legitimacy of the discourse of the Breitbart News Network text in order to undermine its discourse's efficacy and ability to influence the construction of its audience's discourse and social world.

Thus the analysis is done with its sights set on serving the interests of the emancipatory project, which posits that discourses, i.e. consciousnesses and constructions of the social world, may come to be shaped in ways that mask the true interests of a society. Social practices, such as reading Breitbart News Network texts and more, may condition delusive discourses through the internalization of particular norms, values, and ideologies which can appear so natural and credible that we may not question their legitimacy, nor see any alternatives to their representations. Analyzing text enables us to reveal these underlying, concealed, or implied
norms, values, and ideologies by denaturalizing the text and drawing attention to the strategies used to conceal these taken for granted norms, values, and ideologies (Machin & Mayr 2012:208). In analyzing the text, we no longer allow ourselves to be steered by the discourse of the text, but enable ourselves to scrutinize and question the construction of the social world that the discourse provides, and as a result enable ourselves to dismiss it as potentially flawed or misrepresentative (Alvesson 2009:150). In analyzing the text, we open up the possibility of seeing alternative ways of constructing the social world as, in analysis, we are made to imagine how the text could have been written differently, and how things could have looked from another perspective.

In these ways and more, an analysis can serve the interests of the emancipatory project by allowing the researcher and readers of the discourse analysis to emancipate themselves, to undergo the process of conscientization (conscientização) by which people become aware of the power relations bearing down on their discourses, the abuses of power by text producers, and the role the audience themselves play in the reproduction, legitimization, and strengthening of these destructive discourses and the unequal social structures they engender (Freire 2005:177). Once aware, they can challenge these oppressive power relations, and produce a whole new discourse, one that uses this heightened sense of awareness of the forces affecting their lives as preamble to— not reproduce and strengthen oppressive power relations, but— produce, instead, a new, socially responsible, constructive discourse that can dissolve oppressive power structures and replace them with something better in order to actualize CDA's true potential to effect positive social change.

Moving forward, the following analysis should not be judged based on the merits of conventional science's demands for reliability and validity, but should be judged instead based on the merits of the discourse it produces, and whether the discourse maintains oppressive power relations in society, or seeks to reveal and challenge them. The research should be judged on how well the analysis defines the discourse of the selected Breitbart News Network text, and how well it reveals unequal power relations at play in the selected Breitbart News Network text. It is the case, however, that in the text I have selected, it is fairly obvious that it is anti-Muslim and anti-immigration, but what is ultimately more important than defining the ways the discourse can be understood to be these things, is understanding how the text producer is able to realize this effect without having it appear as fictitious and contestable, but rather true and well-founded. Therefore, in addition to justifying my interpretation that this Breitbart text signifies and constructs a discourse that is hostile towards Muslim and Syrian refugees by showing that my interpretation is consistent with the features of the text, and that the fundamental misrepresentation taking place, which sees the audience come to understand Muslim and Syrian refugees as a threat, likely functions ideologically, I will also shed light on how text producers are able to achieve these effects (Fairclough 1992:232).
5. Analysis and Discussion of Breitbart News Network Text

We will analyze the following Breitbart News Article entitled, "Germany: Muslim migrant with four wives and 23 children receives $390,000 a year in benefits" (Williams 2016). It is a short 386 word text.

A Syrian refugee who was granted asylum in Germany, along with his four wives and 23 children, is now reportedly receiving 360 thousand euro ($390,000) a year in benefits, sparking outrage among German citizens.

The 49-year-old Muslim migrant, identified only as “Ghazia A.,” fled his Syrian homeland in 2015 and is now based in Montabaur, in the southwest German state of Rhineland-Palatinate.

According to a report in the German newspaper Das Bild, Ghazia traveled along the Balkan route through Turkey along with his wives and children and eventually reached Germany. When he applied for asylum, since polygamy is prohibited in Germany, he had to choose which of the four women to become his “main” wife, in order to ensure to all his children social benefits that the state provides to refugees.

Ghazia chose his wife Tvasif as his official wife, along with the 5 children he had by her. According to German law, Ghazia’s other wives are classified as “partners” but the man insists that he treats them all equally.
“According to our religion I have a duty to visit every family in the same way and do not prioritize any of them,” Ghazia said, meaning that he often must leave home to “visit” his other wives, who all live within a 30-mile radius of the man. All of his 23 children but one—a daughter now married and living in Saudi Arabia—are settled in Germany.

A local official in the town of Montabaur described Ghazia’s benefit situation as an “exemption.”

Ghazia’s story has provoked a strong reaction among many Germans, who are protesting the level of benefits enjoyed by the refugee.

The estimated sum of 360 thousand euros per year comes from a German financial manager who posted the figure on the website of the “Association of Employers” as an approximative calculation of what the German state would be paying for the whole family.

For his part, Ghazia claims he would “like to work” but his familial burdens make it impossible. Back in Syria the man reportedly earned enough money with his car sharing and car service business to cover the expenses of his large family.

Now he spends his time visiting his various families, he says.

Follow Thomas D. Williams on Twitter

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Breitbart London, Immigration, National Security, asylum seekers, Europe Migrant Crisis, Germany, Ghazia A., immigration, Syrian refugees

Consumption

The preceding text was published on October 26, 2016. Conservative estimates put webpage visits to Breitbart.com between 75 and 80 million in the month leading up to the election, which is when this article was published, while other estimates put the number of website visits closer to 110 to 120 million page visits in the month leading up to the election (Breitbart.com n.d.a, Breitbart.com n.d.b). A page visit, according to Similarweb.com "refers to a visit that occurred within a 30-minute block of time. For example, if a user enters the same site multiple times within 30 minutes, it will be counted as one visit" ("Glossary" n.d.). This means that a community of habitual users can register dozens if not more page visits in a week or certainly a
month. However, during the month leading up to the election Breitbart was estimated to have 19 million unique visitors, that is Breitbart registered at least 19 million different visitors who visited the webpage at least one time (Bergen 2016). This establishes Breitbart as a major media outlet, circulating the meaning it produces to large numbers of people in order to more effectively push for the hegemony of its discourses and its representations.

The news text being analyzed was published under the location of Breitbart London. Using an internet webpage archive, Wayback Machine at Archive.org, I was able to pull up what Breitbart.com's front page looked like on October 26, 2016, and this article appeared on the home page of Breitbart.com as a 'National Security' feature despite being set in Germany and being categorized as a Breitbart London article (Breitbart.com 2016).

**Website Content and Initial Truth Effects**

Website appearance and its content influences the way the text is consumed. In this way, truth effects are achieved before the actual news text is consumed. They are initially achieved by the appearance of Breitbart's website as like other news network websites. Breitbart.com has listed four Breitbart News locations on its main page, 'Breitbart London', 'Breitbart Jerusalem', 'Breitbart Texas', and 'Breitbart California', establishing it as an international news agency (line b).

It is an interesting choice by the news network to organize news stories according to these four locations, and is meaningful to consider how this content may influence the way the text is eventually consumed. At first glance, these choices make Breitbart.com appear to have a more notable presence around the globe than it actually does. These locations establish Breitbart's authority to actually report on news stories outside the U.S.A. Furthermore, its choice of locations must be understood as a way to give the impression that the news they are delivering is high quality by appealing to the audience's presumption that the closer a news text producer is—or appears to be—to a news event, the more reliable the information they produce must be. However, upon closer examination we find that these different locations are not actually what they appear to be. Breitbart London, for example, conjures up ideas of an official office building in the business district of inner-city London that journalists operate out of, but investigative reporting has determined that Breitbart London's office is actually registered to a home address in a residential district of London, and there is no proof Breitbart London actually operates or conducts any business from that address (Walker 2016). Moreover, further investigation shows that only two of four authors of the most recent articles appearing on Breitbart London as of April 22, 2017, Nick Hallett and Liam Deacon, are said to reside in London (Breitbart.com/london 2017, Nick Hallett 2017, Liam Deacon 2017). The other two authors, Chris Tomlinson and Michelle Moons, reside in Canada and California, respectively (Chris Tomlinson 2017, Michelle Moons 2017).

Therefore, despite outward appearances, Breitbart London cannot and should not be understood as an actual international, satellite news branch that is used to provide high, 'on-the-ground'
quality information about news events happening in the region, but must be understood, rather, as a device that is used by Breitbart to enhance the credibility of the text in order to influence the way the news text is consumed. The most glaring example Breitbart London is being used as an instrument to influence how text is consumed is the fact that our news text is written on behalf of Breitbart London, takes place in Germany, yet uses U.S. dollars as currency in its headline. For example, this frames the news event in terms of a threat to U.S. national security and not, U.K. national security, the location you would think Breitbart London concerns itself with. This indicates that the text was produced for an American audience to consume, which further establishes Breitbart London as more of a device used by Breitbart.com to influence how their news texts from abroad are consumed by a majority-American audience than anything else.

This is of significance to the article being analyzed because our text producer, Thomas D. Williams writes for Breitbart London, appears to report from Germany, yet resides in Rome, Italy (Williams n.d.a). Williams, through a mix of linguistic strategies that we will later examine, is able to give the impression he is actually reporting from Germany and speaking with the participant himself, yet we have no reason to believe he ever travelled from his home in Rome, Italy to where this news text takes place, Montabaur, Germany— something that is all but implied by publishing under the guise of Breitbart London— in order to ensure the reliability of his information. What also strengthens Williams claim that his information is reliable, and, furthermore, that he is a reliable and credible author himself, is the use of honorifics in line 4 to highlight the degree of education, "PH.D", he has acquired. The use of honorifics here helps the text producer achieve a certain degree of credibility that gives the text a sense of precision, exactness, trustworthiness, and the general impression it contains high quality information— an impression not otherwise achieved by merely stating a text producer's name without honorifics. Furthermore, "Thomas D. Williams, Ph.D" is hyperlinked in line 4, and by clicking his name, you are taken to his Breitbart.com profile, the likes of which reads: "Professor of ethics, degrees in economics, philosophy and theology. Amateur mixologist and certified Sommelier. Permanent research fellow at the Center for Ethics and Culture, Notre Dame University. Breitbart Rome Bureau Chief" (Williams n.d.b). Implicative here is that if a reader were to decide to click Williams' name to learn more about him, credentials such as these, touting an ethics and theology background, may lead the reader to believe that Williams' perspective is even more credible and uncontestable by appearing, among other things, as morally, ethically, or religiously sanctioned. Additionally, further research of Williams shows he used to be a Christian priest, even preaching on TV, and that he still has strong, conservative Christian viewpoints, and harps regularly about populist concerns when it comes to morality on his Twitter page (Williams n.d.a, Thomas D. Williams 2017). Also, he has no formal journalistic training (Williams n.d.a). This situates Williams alongside Breitbart's news values and the ultimate agenda of its power holders, signaling that it is unlikely there was much in the way of overt, crude intervention between Breitbart News editors, its power holders, and Williams in the production of the text. Rather, Breitbart can be understood to have selected— more than a right-thinking text producer— a right-looking text producer in the form of Williams, who, it is clear, has internalized, if not the same
ultimate agenda as Breitbart, has at least internalized some of the same values that serves its agenda, and not, for instance, typical news values associated with journalistic integrity.

In addition to the chosen locations noted above, Breitbart.com also has eight categories or issues on its front page by which news articles are further categorized: 'Big Government', 'Big Journalism', 'Big Hollywood', 'National Security', 'Tech', 'Video', 'Sports', and 'The Wires' (line a). The issues chosen by Breitbart are significant because they appear to situate Breitbart's identity as some kind of watchdog providing a check and balance to the country's 'bigs', i.e. Big Government and Big Journalism, which, through the use of structural opposition to 'small', treats with suspicion whatever is 'big'. This situates Breitbart's political affiliation as in favor of small government. However interesting the inclusion of categories such as 'Tech', 'Video', 'Sports', and 'The Wires'—the likes of which may also be understood as a way to make Breitbart.com appear like any other news network while at the same time relieving any sense that they are too preoccupied or politically interested in sermonizing on these 'big' issues or national security—the most significant issue as it pertains to our text is it being categorized as a 'National Security' issue.

**National Security and Identity Construction**

The website for Breitbart's 'National Security' section is Breitbart.com/national-security, but it is also Bigpeace.com. Breitbart's national security section used to be titled 'Big Peace' as early as 2014, but instead of cancelling this site after its renaming or rebranding, it still owns the rights to the web domain, Bigpeace.com, which redirects to Breitbart.com/national-security (Breitbart.com 2014). It can be speculated that Breitbart made the choice to keep it because of the positive word connotation 'Big Peace' conjures. What can be taken by 'Big Peace' is that it is a peace that does not discriminate in its ambitions for peace, which is in stark contrast to what can be taken by 'National Security': a peace that clearly does discriminate, that prioritizes its own nation's peace and security over, and maybe even at the expense of, others. Ultimately, though, Breitbart did make the decision to transition to the more ethnocentric 'National Security', which may have purposed to rebrand its news network along more nationalistic and patriotic lines in order to signal to its audience it is specifically concerned for their safety, and not just anyone's safety. However, coupling it still with the contradictory notion of Bigpeace.com may serve to relieve any sense in its audience that Breitbart's notion of peace is too selfish, restrictive, or exclusive.

The national security genre of this text can be understood to have informed the spin or frame put on the story. National security is ethnocentric in its essence and as such we can expect the selection of the news article to revolve around "others" and the spin to frame those "others" in terms of the threat they pose to "us", or in other words, the threat they pose to keeping "our" nation safe, which can be understood as the goal of national security: keeping our nation safe. The first goal of national security is not, for instance, to promote inclusive, broader notions of safety, peace, or caring among and between nations and people, but, rather, to promote exclusive caring for one's own group or nation. For instance, the news events selected for national security
stories will not concern themselves with any broader notions of threats to peace, such as news stories about the much graver threats to peace the U.S. pose in other countries of the world.

A peculiar effect that selecting and framing news stories in terms of national security has on its audience is it inflates how the threat will be perceived by the audience, insinuating that the threat is not merely some unique or sensational case but that it is indicative of a broader threat that is likely to happen again and pose a threat to our safety and security. It is also unnecessarily alarmist in that it treats America as if it were one symbiotic organism by which it is presupposed that what poses a threat to one part, poses a threat to the whole. This instills irrational fear in its audience. It takes for granted that what may pose a threat in New York City poses an equal threat to a small family living in rural Wisconsin. Our text is no different in this respect except it even goes one step further in that it presupposes that what happens in a small city in Germany poses a threat, or is in some way indicative of what is in store for the U.S.A. should we adopt a similar welfare or, more specifically, a similar immigration policy. In brushing over all the differences and intricacies between these two countries: their tax and welfare systems, their immigration policies, and least of all the fact the countries are on two different continents, the text is able to make its audience believe that what happens in Germany poses just as much of a threat to the U.S.A.

Another peculiar effect selecting and framing news stories in terms of national security is the effect it has on its audience's identity construction. It encourages its audience to construct its identity in accordance with the national identity that it gives expression to within the text. National identity "typically contains beliefs and values pertaining to the meaning of human existence, the nature of social institutions, the conduct of human relationships, and the definition of the ideal personality" (Andrews 2007:196). The news text implores its audience's acquiescence to the taken for granted notion of national security it gives expression to in the text and encourages its audience to construct their identity in conformity with its notions, which in our case is Breitbart's exclusionary notion of national identity. Stories framed in national security terms become simplified matters of: if you are not against the "others" posing a threat to "us", you are against the entire United States of America, thus making conformity to its notions and arguments a more alluring option (or at least dissenting a more menacing one). In this way, national security news stories pressure the audience to construct their identity in relation to the national identity it gives expression to, in accordance with its apparently unison, homogenous beliefs, values, and interests, including its incontestable goal of achieving safety and security. However national identity is an inherently false notion; that an entire nation can have one, homogenous identity is itself unreasonable; rather, national security texts give expression to an inherently bias, interested, or subjective ideal, or moral, about how the nation should be, which can more reasonably be understood as national identity. Through the expression of this ideal national identity, national security stories set up their audience to construct their identity in contrast to those they depict as inferior, which in our case are those depicted as supposedly posing a threat to U.S. safety and security. However, what national security stories such as the text selected backgrounds is that what constitutes a threat to safety and security is highly
contestable, and, moreover, constituting and pursuing a supposed "threat" may not always serve the supposedly homogenous interests of the whole nation, but, rather, may even violate those interests due to the heterogeneity of beliefs and values about how society should be run and other such ideologies that go into a national identity. Nevertheless, the national security genre disregards and brushes over all such nuance, and presupposes everyone shares the same commonsense beliefs and values, and as such implores adherence to its taken for granted notion of national identity.

In general, the categorization of this text as 'National Security' is significant in that, by placing the news story in the frame of a threat to United States' safety and security, it presupposes there is something about the nature of the story that poses a threat, setting it up to demonize someone or some group. Thus, depending on the representational strategies used by the text producer, a threat in the form of a person and/or group will be realized in the text. This sets up the audience to see themselves as fundamentally different as those being represented as a threat in the text, and in as far as national identity is concerned, the audience will begin to form ideas about what is the ideal personality or the ideal conduct of humans in contrast to those represented as a threat. Consequently, certain groups become excluded and alienated, negative feelings are engendered towards those "other" groups for their threatening and subversive behavior, unequal treatment of these groups is perpetuated, and social cleavages between those who are represented as a threat to national security and those who are represented as part of the nation intensify.

Representational Strategies

Depending on the semiotic choices made by the text producer, the nature of the threat posed will be realized, and, perhaps more significantly, depending on the representational strategies used by the text producer, those who actually pose the threat will be realized and made to suffer the destructive consequences.

In examining a text's representational strategies, it is helpful to begin with identifying the participants of the text. The noteworthy participants of this article have been identified as follows. Individualized participants include "Ghazia A", who is the primary participant in this article, "Twasif", Ghazia's wife, "A local official in the town of Montabaur", "a German financial manager", and "a daughter". Collective participants include, "Germans" or "German citizens", Ghazia's "23 children", Twasif's and Ghazia's "5 children", and Ghazia's "four wives".

Ghazia's status as a man, Muslim, and an immigrant are foregrounded in the text. He is represented as belonging to generic groups "Muslim migrant" and "Syrian refugee", and more broadly comes to represent even more generic groups of "man", "Muslims", "migrants", "Syrians", and "refugees". For example, the genericization "the refugee" is used to refer to Ghazia, and the more particular genericization, "A Syrian refugee" is used to refer to Ghazia. "Muslim migrant" is also used twice to refer to Ghazia. Through these representational choices, Ghazia becomes a representative of these groups by his actions and how he is represented in the
article. As a result, these signs come to acquire meaning in relation to Ghazia's representation, and their representations are tarnished by their association with Ghazia's actions. Therefore "Ghazia" is not the only sign being populated with meaning, the other primary signs being populated with meaning in this text are the signs "Muslim", "migrant", "Syrian", and "refugee".

As previously stated, the most significant aspect of this article in terms of the construction of meaning surrounding these signs is the placement of these groups in the context of a threat to U.S. national security. The exact nature of the threat is scarcely explicated, but is largely implied, which serves to conceal the structural instability of the reality of the threat itself. However, through skillful use of semiotic choices, Williams is able to naturalize the appearance of a threat being posed, making it appear not only real, but natural, justified, and wide reaching. Below we will examine the semiotic choices used to realize Ghazia, and the broader groups Ghazia is said to belong, as threats. In examining the nature of the threats posed to the U.S.A. by these groups, it appears the threats posed by the participant are primarily monetary and moral in nature.

**Realizing a Threat**

On the way towards establishing Ghazia as credible threat, a framework is being set between the lines of the text that begins with the national security frame and ends with realizing Ghazia and the groups he is said to belong to as monetary and moral threats. For example, the first representational strategy used to refer to Ghazia is "Muslim migrant" in the title of the text. The text producer could have chosen to use "Syrian refugee" in exchange for "Muslim migrant", but by referring to Ghazia as a migrant and not a refugee, the text producer is able to conceal the reason Ghazia left his homeland, removing from the audience's immediate options for interpretation the possibility that he left due to insecurity and safety risks, and opening up, if not strengthening, the possibility for an interpretation more in line with the text producer's supposition that Ghazia came to Germany in order to "receive $390,000 a year in benefits". "Muslim migrant" also serves to highlight Ghazia's religion, and in this way, Williams is able to prey on the audience's preexistent fear, dread, and mistrust of Islam that characterizes western attitudes of the religion. In a way, Williams gets a gift when he finds out Ghazia is Muslim. Being Muslim is something that is already established in the minds of Williams' audience as bad, and all he has to do is utter the word, "Muslim" to square the audience against Ghazia and along with himself and whatever propositions he makes. This way, Williams is able to delegitimize Ghazia, and in doing so, strengthen the legitimacy of his claims against Ghazia, namely that he left in search of monetary gains, for 'the easy life', and more. In this way, "Muslim" can be understood to be used right away in line 1 to ideologically square the audience against Ghazia.

When Ghazia is not being genericized, he is being personalized. Ghazia is only personalized through use of his name, and not, for instance, by being referred to as a father. Twasif is also personalized according to her name, and not being a mother. The semiotic choice not to use "mother" or "father" to refer to Ghazia or Twasif is noteworthy in an article that refers so much to children, wives, and Ghazia being a husband. Furthermore, Ghazia and Twasif are peculiarly
the only two participants in this article who are ever referred to by their name. Personalizing participants by name is an otherwise ordinary news writing convention, but considering its discriminative usage in this text, it seems to be used as a strategy to highlight their "otherness" by emphasizing their un-western names, as "Ghazia" is overlexicalized, being used eight times, and "Twasif" is the only wife whose name is mentioned.

Other choices used to realize the general threat Ghazia poses can be found, for instance, in the lexical choice in the line 14 phrase, "based in Montabaur", used to describe where Ghazia lives. "Based in" is an unorthodox way to describe where someone lives, and can be understood as an instance of word connotation by which the text producer is able to imply meaning about, and project meaning onto, Ghazia without overtly stating it. "Based in" is a genre indicator, often used in military lingo to refer to a military fortification, "base", or a place where militants or an occupying force are stationed or base operations out of. "Air base" is a military airport, and "base camp" refers to a place temporarily used to store supplies or start or prepare for an activity. "Based in" can therefore be understood to summon many different, negatively-charged interpretations from an audience about the kind of person Ghazia is than the mere use of "lives in" would have elicited. The verb phrase in line 12, "identified only as" also uses word connotation to create the sense that Ghazia has, is, or is about to do something bad. It is an act and phrase often associated with criminalness and police procedures. Furthermore, Ghazia is passivated in the act of being identified, and the agent doing the identifying is unclear, but one can imagine the agent is either a police officer, border patrol agent, or an investigative reporter trying to investigate Ghazia, the very act of which implies Ghazia has done something wrong. Also, through use of the word "only", Williams is able to give the impression that the investigator wants to know more about Ghazia, but that they are being obstructed. This implies Ghazia is not identifying himself, or avoiding identifying himself clearly which raises the audience's suspicions about Ghazia, causing us to distrust him, and making it appear as though he is scheming or as if he knows he has done something wrong, or is about to do something wrong, and does not want "us" or the authorities to be able to fully identify him.

The Moral Threat

The primary participant is realized in the text as posing a moral threat in the sense that Ghazia is polygamous. The presumption being that if such a morally bankrupt individual as Ghazia were to infiltrate our society, he could morally corrupt it. This threat is made all the more imposing by the fact the text producer, as we will see in this section, represents Ghazia's children in a similar vein as Ghazia, which amplifies the threat Ghazia and his children presumably pose to the moral fabric of society.

The moral threat Ghazia poses is at first realized by appealing to the audience's deeply embedded value of monogamy, and in this way the text producer is also able to ideologically square the audience against the participant without ever overtly stating Ghazia is bad. Additionally, polygamy is not merely referred to in the low affinity, "not allowed" in Germany in line 18, but
the high affinity, "prohibited". The word "prohibited" signifies and emphasizes just how socially unacceptable Ghazia's actions are.

The genericization of "the man" is also used three times to refer to Ghazia, and there is an overlexicalization of pronouns "his" and "he" to refer to Ghazia, which are used 19 times altogether. The use of these pronouns serve to distance Ghazia from the audience, but also serve to emphasize his maleness, which is implicative in how "Muslim", "migrant", "Syrian" and "refugee" come to be thought about by the audience. It can be thought that these groups are not only disproportionately populated by men but also dominated by them, because, in the case of this article, Ghazia is overwhelmingly activated in verb processes while others, especially women, are always passivated, such as in the following excerpts from the article: "Ghazia chose his wife..." (line 21), "Ghazia traveled...with his wives" (line 16), "[Ghazia] treats them [his wives] equally" (line 23), "[Ghazia] must leave home to "visit" his other wives" (line 24-25), and "[Ghazia] spends his time visiting his various [wives]" (line 38). In these verb processes, Ghazia is the activated participant doing things and controlling others, and comes to appear as domineering and a kind of threat to not only 'our way of life' but to 'our women', which appeals to the conservative audience's view of women as vulnerable and in need of protection, which is characteristic of conservative discourses, and furthers Williams' stake that Ghazia poses a moral threat.

In essence, Ghazia is depicted by the text producer as a sexual deviant, and as a result of the text producer's representational strategies Muslims, migrants, Syrians, and refugees come to be understood in relation to such behavior. The text producer uses the highly-stigmatized plural of wife, "wives" five times to highlight Ghazia's promiscuity, and, alike, also uses the stigmatized families as opposed to the singular, family in line 38, "various families". Moreover, the text producer redundantly uses "various" as in "various families" as opposed to just "families" to emphasize the stigmatized plurality of "families". Furthermore, Ghazia's children are mentioned six times throughout the short text. The choice by the text producer to use Ghazia's total amount of children, 23, in his title, instead of the amount actually living in Germany, 22— which is more applicable information in terms of the news story as well as a choice used by other news networks covering the same story— is also worth noting as it draws into focus Williams' fixation on highlighting how many children Ghazia has, or, more likely, how sexually active Ghazia is ("Syrian refugee..." 2016). Aggregations of "all" are often used in place of wives as in the following excerpts: "...he treats them all equally" (line 23), "... who all live within a 30-mile radius of the man" (line 26). In addition to being uses of aggregations, which serves to add weight to the number of Ghazia's children and wives, Williams sometimes uses "all" repetitiously, using it unnecessarily in the following excerpts in line 26, "all of his 23 children" and "them all" in line 23. The use of "all" serves to highlight the plurality of Ghazia's children and wives, and ultimately highlight his "moral otherness" and the social malady of his lifestyle.

Williams' foregrounding of the amount of Ghazia's children also acts to give the impression to readers that their own country could be overrun by immigrants. This preys on the public's fear of home becoming "unheimlich", or unhomely, uncanny, or unrecognizable (Freud 2003:20).
Foregrounding Ghazia's 23 children as well as collectivizing the children as opposed to individualizing or personalizing them helps the text producer make the children morally indistinguishable from their father which suggests that the threat posed may also be a generational, sustained, and not easily reversible, which, also, as we will see later, situates this moral threat in a more essentialist vein. Furthermore, structural opposition is used in lines 26-27 in order to highlight the amount of children Ghazia has living in Germany by comparing the number to the small amount of one daughter not living in Germany. More interesting still, we are given personal information about this seemingly irrelevant participant, and that is she is married. This information is interesting in that it represents Ghazia's family members in the same vein as Ghazia, as only being engaged in activities with goals associated with mating— as I do not think it is Williams' intention to mention that Ghazia's daughter is married in order to emphasize her righteousness. It also serves to highlight how one of his daughters—the lexical choice of which connotes youthfulness—has already been taken as some, presumably Muslim (according to the word connotation of "Saudi Arabia") man's wife, which again preys on the conservative audience's fear that their women will become the conquest of Muslim men.

What is more is the sanctity of "5" of Ghazia's children's lives are taken aim at by Williams in the stigmatized verb phrase in line 21, "he had by her". "He had by her" is a patronization used to trivialize the act of having children or to raise doubt about the legitimacy of the children. It is mostly used informally to muddy, reduce, debase, or devalue the act of giving birth or having a child, which serves to constitute and highlight the disreputable character of Ghazia and Twasif.

Williams goes to even greater lengths to realize Ghazia as a moral threat when he twists Ghazia's own words following (what is allegedly) a direct quotation from Ghazia in lines 24-25 in which Ghazia describes innocently how he visits his families. Williams, however, summarizes this statement in the following line, and inexplicably uses quotations around the word "visit" to imply the "visit" is sexual in nature. Williams discriminately selects this word of Ghazia's to quote which radically alters the meaning of Ghazia's statement by not only placing the word, "visit" in quotations but by also replacing the goal of the verb process from the original quote, "family" with the new, stigmatized goal, "wives". This retelling by Williams of the original quote drastically misrepresents his subject, making Ghazia into someone more interested in visiting his wives than his children. This draws into sharper focus Williams' preoccupation with realizing Ghazia as a moral threat through his allusions to sex.

This is not the only highly questionable use of quotations in the text either, which, through Williams' selective use of what to quote, becomes used to voice in written word his ironic, snarky, sarcastic, and sometimes outraged tone more than to indicate what Ghazia actually said. Through the use of these quotes, Williams is able to engender an emotional response from his audience. For instance, quotes are used again in line 19 when "main" as in ""main" wife" is placed in quotations in a sarcastic, ironic way, which more than merely emphasizing Williams moral "otherness", engenders in his audience strong, negative emotions. These quotes seem to conveniently appear out of nowhere, and Williams seems guilty of summoning them whenever
he wants to make a point, and as such the context from which they are taken is lost and/or suppressed in order to better service his point. It is however clear that, far from letting Ghazia's own words speak for themselves, or at least letting them inform what Williams writes, he is actually using Ghazia's words as pretext for the subjective, bias, and very interested commentary that follows his quoting of Ghazia. However, since these words are set in reality, that is, since these are words Ghazia supposedly actually said, Williams is able to avoid giving the impression his formulation is indeed subjective or bias. These quotes, assuming they are actual words Ghazia spoke, seem to be taken from some longer interview, the likes of which is excluded. As in line 19, and elsewhere, there is no indication or proof that these are indeed Ghazia's own words, if he said he had to choose a "main" wife, or if it is just a stylistic device being used by Williams to achieve his effect of engendering a strong response out of the audience.

The Monetary Threat

In addition to being a moral threat, Ghazia can also be understood to pose a monetary threat in the text. The premise of this threat is that immigrants—should they continue to be granted access into our country—will take advantage of our welfare system until the economy collapses, but since this is a wholly indefensible claim, it goes wholly un-explicated, and is largely implied. In addition, by suppressing information about the economic growth immigrants bring to their new countries, as well as suppressing overwhelming evidence of the social advantages welfare also brings to societies, the text-producer is able to more effectively argue for his propositions that welfare, and, more particularly, all those immigrants who supposedly seek to take advantage of it, pose a threat to national security.

What the text does do, however, is highlight the amount of money the participant is receiving from the German government four times over in a short article of 385 words, in two cases spelling out "thousand" as in "360 thousand euro" to make the amount appear larger than '360,000', and in one case even spelling out "360 thousand euro ($390,000)" and then repeating the amount in USD following the first number. This count does not even include the amount of times this number is alluded to throughout the text through use of such words as "benefit/s" or "sum", "figure", etc., which quickly brings the count to over ten, signaling the text producer's preoccupation with emphasizing the monetary threat the participant poses. Furthermore, the text producer can once again be understood to ideologically square the audience against the participant by appealing to their deeply ingrained value of independence from state aid, aligning Ghazia with those who have low social status, worth, and/or credibility due to their lack of productivity and work.

Ghazia starts off in the first paragraph as being a passive recipient, or beneficiary, of a privilege by being "granted asylum in Germany". He is represented as being the recipient of a favor or gift of the goodwill of the German people and is represented as almost immediately taking advantage of this goodwill. As soon as Ghazia is "granted asylum" to the country, he is described as "now... receiving benefits", where "now" creates a link or sense of causality between being granted
asylum and receiving benefits. The use of "now" also creates a sense of immediacy of the act of receiving benefits, as if as soon as he was granted asylum to Germany he immediately sought to take advantage of the benefits offered by Germany. What is more, as soon as Ghazia is granted access to Germany, he is transformed by the text producer into an active agent engaged in directed actions in most of the verb processes that follow this passive verb process, most notably in lines 18-19 as in search of the goal, "...to ensure to all his children social benefits...". This complements and substantiates the previous sense of causality established in the first paragraph, and implies without ever overtly stating it that refugees, such as Ghazia, are interested, first and foremost with exploiting the system of benefits once they have been granted asylum. It is implied that this is their primary motivation for coming to the country and not, for instance, securing their safety and security. This effect is achieved by the casualty in the narrative of the news story, but also by the general exclusion from the text of all other motivations Ghazia may have had for coming to Germany. In addition to establishing him as a monetary threat, these semiotic choices can also be understood to engender strong negative emotions in the audience towards Ghazia and the groups he is said to belong.

Additionally, "benefits" is overlexicalized, used 5 times in the text, and is the only word used to describe the assistance Ghazia receives. The lexical choice of "benefits" and not, for instance, "assistance" or "aid" is implicative in the formation of the discourse, as "benefits" is a stigmatized word used to highlight the act of profiting or receiving an advantage while backgrounding the hardships, disadvantages, or reasons why Ghazia may need to receive assistance, the likes of which are alluded to through the use of words such as "assistance" or "aid". In line 30-31, "... who are protesting the levels of benefits enjoyed by the refugee", Ghazia is genericized here, instead of being individualized through use of his name, which serves to imply this is not an isolated problem with Ghazia, but is a broader "refugee" problem. This representational strategy proves to expose the theme, or underlying supposition of the text which the formulation of Williams' text depends and is later expounded upon in more detail. In this same line, however, Ghazia is also said to "enjoy" the assistance he receives. In this mental verb process, this supposed-affection for the assistance he receives is projected onto him, and there is no proof he actually "enjoys" receiving assistance. Furthermore, the act of "enjoying" benefits transforms "benefits" from a need or necessity that Ghazia has to have in order to survive into a want, or some novelty Ghazia does not actually need and could apparently live without. This makes Ghazia appear as if he is collecting aid, not due to any real need, but due to laziness, and this is a very effective tactic to not just demonize Ghazia, but to engender very negative emotions against him.

In line 35 it is again alluded that Ghazia enjoys not working when Ghazia is said to claim he would "like to work" with "like to work", as we see again, in quotations. In the following excerpt Ghazia is represented as not liking to work, "Ghazia claims he would "like to work" but...". The quotations cue the reader to be skeptical of Ghazia's "claim" that he would "like to work". Also, "claims" is a low affinity verbal process verb marked by a low degree of confidence or
certainness of the truth of the proposition 'likes to work' being spoken by the speaker. The use of quotes and the lexical choice "claims" are both used here by Williams to indicate Ghazia was insincere when he told Williams he would "like to work", but since Williams did not actually interview Ghazia and therefore could not know the affinity of his statement, "claim" must be understood to reveal more about what Williams thinks of Ghazia than it does about what Ghazia thinks about work. "Like to work" is also marked by the low affinity verb "like" as opposed to high affinity verbs, love or hate. Placing quotes around "like to work" and setting off the phrase with the low affinity verb "claims", serves to lower the affinity of the already low affinity verb "like". In addition, the word "but" in the excerpt acts as presuppositional trigger which cues the reader into the presupposition being made by the text producer that Ghazia does not want to work.

In line 36 Ghazia is genericized through rudimentary use of "the man" as in "Back in Syrian, the man reportedly earned enough money from his car sharing..." which sets the stage for delegitimizing Ghazia's ultimate assertion that he was self-dependent in Syria, a thought the audience is not permitted to entertain as true, as it would elevate Ghazia's reputation in the minds of an audience that values "self-responsibility". As such, the use of the low affinity modal adverb "reportedly" reflects Williams distrust of Ghazia's assertion, as well as constitutes distrust of Ghazia's assertion in the minds of Williams' audience. Casting doubt on whether Ghazia's car service business was able to support his large family implies that Ghazia could be lying, or that he has done something "bad", such as receiving aid in Syria or supplementing his income by questionable means. More importantly, casting doubt on Ghazia's independence in Syria keeps open the possibility for the interpretation that Ghazia did indeed come to Germany in search of "benefits".

In the final sentence of the text, line 38, Williams writes, as if in summary, "Now he spends his time visiting various families, he says". Williams is very effective in hammering home the premise that Ghazia poses a moral and monetary threat in this line. Ghazia is portrayed as not only leisurely "spending" his time, but using it on the immoral action of "visiting" families, which Williams has already skillfully established through word connotation means something sexual in nature. By making Ghazia an active participant in this verb process, Williams highlights Ghazia's physical capacity to work and be productive while at the same time highlighting Ghazia's unwillingness to use this capacity to partake in responsible tasks, which engenders strong negative emotions towards Ghazia. "Spends his time" is a metaphor which helps to achieve the effect of the sentence. The target domain is what Ghazia does with his time. The source domain turns time into a commodity that can be traded for or spent, which operates ideologically in the sense that it highlights the importance of using one's time for employment/work, profit, and general productivity. The taken-for-granted nature of this metaphor reveals the backgrounded capitalist motives and values not just expressed by this metaphor, but that run throughout the rest of text in its predilection with money and its skepticism of welfare. By using this metaphor, Ghazia comes to be known and judged strictly in terms of what he does with his time, but more particularly how monetarily-productive he is with
his time. He is judged according to his productivity in the marketplace, or lack thereof, instead of being judged by his own right, as a human being, which also serves to reveal another foundational theme of the text we will return to later on in our section on theme.

More implicative still in realizing Ghazia as a monetary threat is that Ghazia is represented in this verb process in line 38 as only visiting his families—this, according to the text producer, is all he does. He does not work, he does not do anything except visit his families, which is hyperbole, and serves to outrage the audience through use of exaggeration. This instance of hyperbole serves to cause the audience to almost erupt in anger, because this line compounds on what has already been a underlying theme and source of resentment running throughout the text. Throughout the text, Williams is able to prey on the public's anxiety and deep seated sense of justice that their tax dollars are being spent on unworthy things, or, in Ghazia's case, unworthy people, to incite anger by implying an injustice has occurred. Therefore, to draw attention back to this theme, but to do so now in an exaggerated way, incites not just anger, but outrage. When thinking about the emotion a particular discourse engenders towards its participants, it is clear that through Williams' mix of irony, sarcasm, and, even now, hyperbole, he is not just realizing Ghazia as a threat and engendering a negative view of him (and by close association, Syrians, Muslims, refugees, and migrants), but he is also inciting anger and hatred towards them as well, which can be understood to make this discourse all the more dangerous and destructive.

Modal Language and Truth Effects

Truth effects are constantly being achieved throughout the text, and in one very basic but significant way, the modal language Williams uses creates the impression what he is saying is unconditionally and irrevocably true. In the final sentence of the text, line 38, we see Williams paraphrase Ghazia, when he writes "he says" referring to Ghazia. Paraphrasing Ghazia was used to full effect by Williams to achieve truth effects in his writing and naturalize his representation of Ghazia. Williams paraphrases Ghazia several times without any evidence that this is what Ghazia actually said in the context Williams has written it. This is especially problematic seeing as if we recall Williams own drastic retelling or paraphrasing of what Ghazia allegedly meant by "visit" in line 25. Words such as "insists" (line 23), "claims" (line 35), the near verbal verb "reportedly", i.e. "reports" (line 36), and the more obvious "says" in this sentence, are all 'to say' verbs, which implies Ghazia himself has actually said what Williams claims he has said in the context Williams has written it, yet, troublingly, all these 'to say' verbs are used without the full, direct quotation or reference to some transcripts that would have otherwise confirmed Williams' retellings accurately represented what Ghazia actually said.

Furthermore, the time and place Ghazia said something, and, more importantly, the actual receiver of the statement, which is almost certainly not Williams, has been erased or nominalized. In their absence, Williams uses verbal processes almost entirely in the present tense whenever Ghazia is apparently saying something, which makes it appear as if Williams was himself there when Ghazia made these statements, anchoring the text in a real-life setting. By
excluding the time and place Ghazia said something, and alluding to the fact it is in the present through the tense of his verbs, Williams is able to achieve a natural tempo to his news text that can be understood to improve his text's "facticity". If he formulated the text in a different way that made clear he was not the actual receiver of Ghazia's statements, the "facticity" of the text would suffer and the way the text was consumed would be adversely affected. Instead, by suppressing who said what to whom and withholding information like who the real receiver of Ghazia's statements are, Williams is able to create the impression it is in fact himself, like he is in Germany speaking with Ghazia and other participants, which not only grants him some kind of license to interpret or paraphrase what Ghazia meant when he said something, but also adds a certain amount of credibility and truth to the representation of Ghazia that Williams paints, as if it were simply a natural representation of Ghazia.

The objective modality used by Williams does not appear to present interpretations of Ghazia's situation, let alone Williams own position or opinion, but to present facts. The objective modality by which his subjectivity is purposely and completely disguised or erased from the article makes us unaware whose perspective is being represented. This makes it appear as though the contents of Williams' text, which, to be sure, presents his own subjective opinions and findings, are uncontestable facts originating from some higher office of truth. For instance, the words "is", "was", and "are", as well as their negatives, are all high affinity words used to create a sense of truthfulness, objectivity, and general incontestability to the text producer's claims, such as when Williams uses "is" and "was" in line 9, "A Syrian refugee who was granted asylum... is now... receiving..." or "are" in line 30, "many Germans, who are protesting...".

Sometimes, the most objective, high affinity language is the kind of language laden with taken for granted assumptions that mark the text producer's unquestionable commitment to the truth of their propositions. The high affinity of these propositions is sometimes not so apparent, as it does not often occur to the audience to contest what is being presented as taken for granted truths. Such is the case in the headline of our text which immediately submerges the reader into presuppositions that are marked by such high affinity, it brushes over the contestability of the propositions that a) there exists a man who has four wives and twenty-three children and b) he is receiving $390,000 from the German government. The headline's high objective modality can be identified easier in the rewritten form of the headline, "[There is a] Muslim migrant [in Germany who has] four wives and twenty-three children [who is] receiving $390,000 a year in benefits." These propositions, despite being presented as uncontestable, as we will observe following the next section, are in fact highly contestable, and in the case of proposition B, utterly false.

**Realizing Ghazia as an Essentialist Threat**

High-affinity language is also used to achieve an effect of Ghazia as an essentialist threat, which helps the text producer realize Ghazia as a more imposing threat, one that will not go away easily, and that is unable and/or unwilling to change their ways. Ghazia is represented as using high affinity language in the relational verb process in line 24, "I have a duty to...". "I have a
duty to..." is marked by the high affinities of "have" and "duty", which serve to create the impression of him as very committed to not only carrying out this goal of visiting his families, but to also create the impression of him as being very committed to his religious lifestyle. Ghazia's high affinity language signals to the audience the unlikelihood that he will change or open his mind up to their way of life, creating the impression that their moral differences are irreconcilable and that he is set in his ways. Furthermore, Williams can be understood to use irony in his formulation of Ghazia by emphasizing Ghazia's strong commitment to, what is in the mind of the audience, a morally wrong behavior, as the duty to which Ghazia refers is by its premise immoral in the minds of the audience. This is a rhetorical trope he also used in his attribution of high affinity modal language to Ghazia in line 22-23, when he said Ghazia "insists" he treats all his wives equally, which yet again expresses a high degree of commitment to a behavior whose premise is immoral. The effect of this is that Ghazia appears unaware of the inherent contradictions of his actions, incapable of moral reasoning, and thus irredeemable.

Realizing Ghazia as not just a moral or monetary threat, but as an essentialist threat raises the stakes of Williams' text. Realizing a threat in the minds of the audience engenders negative emotions, but realizing an essentialist threat in the minds of the audience engenders extremely negative emotions towards not just Ghazia, but those he represents: refugees, migrants, Syrians, and Muslims. Presumably, the more negative the emotions engendered for Ghazia and these groups, the more natural or justifiable their suffering becomes. As such, realizing an essentialist threat in his text has the wider reaching implication of increasing the audience's likelihood of going along with whatever unequal treatment these groups are subjected to.

**Presupposition and Hedging**

Some of most troubling aspects of this text are the presuppositions the text producer makes, conceals, and never questions which produces truth effects of their own. The most glaring presupposition that demands our attention is the taken for granted assumption that this sensational story actually constitutes a news event. The decision to broadcast such a defamatory story that places Muslim and Syrian refugees at its center certainly gives the text an anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant slant. In addition, and as previously discussed in the section on national security, the presupposition that this story constitutes a news event produces the peculiar truth effect that these groups actually pose a threat by merely enjoining them in this story.

Presuppositions taken for granted in the text itself are also rampant. For instance, in line 16, Williams reveals the indirect source of the information that forms the whole basis of the text when he writes "According to a report in the German newspaper *Das Bild*...". In this line, Williams is found out to be presuming the role of a summarizer, reproducer, or translator of a separate *Das Bild* news text, but Williams is able to conceal this fact, and appear as though he is the investigative reporter on-the-ground interviewing Ghazia and other sources or participants. What can be taken from this excerpt, though, is that Williams' investigative reporting is not the source of information in this text, as appears to be the case, but *Das Bild's* "investigative"
reporting is. This excerpt reveals a main presupposition underlying Williams' text which is the German newspaper, Das Bild is a credible source of information by which to reproduce information. Upon closer examination, however, we find Das Bild is a tabloid paper described as "notorious for its mix of gossip, inflammatory language, and sensationalism," with a reputation for featuring pictures of topless women in its publications which had discontinued in 2012 (Steininger 2012). Williams relies on his audience's ignorance of Das Bild's reputation in order to gain his truth effect, and make the proposition of his article appear legitimate. Wording and lexical choice may also signal Williams' attempt to make Das Bild appear more trustworthy than it actually is through use of 'report' instead of 'article'. "Report” makes the source appear more credible, seeming here to imply an official document of some kind, government or otherwise, published in Das Bild and not so much an article investigated, written, and published by Das Bild. Ambiguity in the use of "in" instead of "by" may also signal hedging by which Williams may be seeking to avoid commitment that Das Bild is the single, actual source of this information. Were his readers acquainted with German publications, we can guess the audience may have questioned the credibility of the source, and we can assume Williams would have excluded, or at least anonymized the information of his news source.

One of the other most troubling aspects in this article is the fundamentally flawed presupposition underlying the entire article that Ghazia is not only receiving assistance from the state, but that he is receiving the maximum allotment allowed by the state for each of his families. First of all, this information is wholly unsubstantiated by any concrete evidence. There is no proof Ghazia receives any money from the state for his children whatsoever. Second of all this is not how benefits work in Germany. According to a municipality spokesperson, German law does not allow a man receive assistance for multiple families (Domagała 2016). Rather, the only family to which Ghazia belongs, according to German law, would be the only one he would be eligible to receive social assistance for, and the other families would have to apply and receive assistance on their own (Ibid 2016). Therefore, the entire premise of the text is false. Ghazia does not receive $390,000 a year, if he receives anything at all. It is a number based on a false principle, yet presented as truth according to the selective evidence he presents, and the objective language Williams uses to present it.

Williams starts the text off with the immutable fact: "Muslim migrant with four wives and 23 children receives $390,000 a year in benefits." Later, he writes in lines 9-10, "A Syrian refugee... is now reportedly receiving...", with a peculiar mix of the high affinity modal "is" immediately followed by the low affinity modal adverb 'reportedly'. The coupling of a high affinity verb with a low affinity adverb must be understood as an act of hedging, signaling, what is in stark contrast to his headline, Williams' own low affinity or commitment to the truth or certainty of the information he is presenting. Reportedly means "according to what some people say", and Williams initially conceals who actually said that Ghazia receives this amount. We might ask why this information would be concealed if by including this information the text producer
would only strengthen the credibility of the text's proposition, unless, of course, the source were highly contestable and of suspect quality.

Hedging can be found in lines 32-34 when Williams addresses who actually said this information by trying to give the impression he is being detailed and providing high quality information in order to elevate the apparent credibility of his source and claim. When revealing his source he refers to the name of the website, "Association of Employers" which sounds official, and may even sound to the casual reader like a government website at first glance, which—to be clear—it is not. A hyperlink of the word "website" in line 33 takes the reader to the German organization's Deutscherarbeitgeberverband.de website, which is found to trumpet the same free market values and neoliberal ideology as Breitbart, namely that there should be less-government and fewer regulations on business, and that every man and woman is responsible for their own fate or "self-responsibility", however dismal their stock is in life. On the webpage is the post to which Williams refers to substantiate his proposition where a graduate in finance has calculated the purely hypothetical equation, yet even still does not reveal his formulations, but rather says the details of his calculations are available upon request. However, when Williams refers to this graduate in finance, he functionalizes the "German financial manager" in terms of what he or she does. This adds credibility to the figure he is said to provide, since the source is not merely "a man" or "a woman" or "Hubert Konigsstein"—the actual producer of the text in question—but "a German financial manager". This is what the "German financial manager" can be understood to do for a living: calculate things. Therefore, it can be presumed the number provided must be accurate. More interesting still, there is no indication of Hubert Konigsstein's standing in the organization on the website, which is to say that Williams may have chosen to refer to Konigsstein in the official role of "manager", despite the fact Konigsstein is not a manager, in order to heighten the importance, social standing, or apparent specialization and so heighten the credibility of the number he provides.

However, the most apparent act of hedging in Williams' attempt to heighten the credibility of his source and the premise of his article can be found in his attempt to give the impression of being detailed in his over wording of concepts and terms regarding the amount of money that Ghazia earns in lines 32-34, first referred to as an "estimated sum" then "a figure" and again "an approximative calculation" all in the same sentence. It can also be understood that there is hedging in the unnecessary defining of where the information came from and how, which is explained as "[coming] from a German financial manager who posted the figure on the website of the "Association of Employers". This paragraph is inundated with details and a clarity that is uncharacteristic of the rest of the text. Increasing the level of explanation and clarification here is suspicious and seems to indicate that Williams is attempting to obfuscate us with information—empty information, but information nonetheless in order to give us the impression his source and premise are credible.

What is more is Williams is able to use "German citizens" (line 11-12) or "many Germans" (line 30) to bear witness and add weight to the claims made in the article, primarily the proposition
that Ghazia is receiving $390,000 a year in assistance. The presupposition that Germans are actually protesting in response to Ghazia presupposes that Ghazia is in fact receiving a large sum of money in the first place, otherwise why would they be protesting? "Many Germans" are aggregated, which at once reveals the fact and attempts to conceal the fact that Williams does not know the actual number of Germans "protesting", which may signal he does not have any concrete proof that Germans are actually protesting Ghazia at all. Furthermore, the rhetorical device synecdoche is mobilized by the text producer as the part of the Germany citizenry that is actually "outraged" or "protesting" are anonymized and collectivized as representing all of Germany through use of "German citizens" and a seeming-majority of Germans through use of "many Germans". Coupled with the high affinity "are" as quoted in line 30 above, this adds an almost incontestable weight to the proposition that Ghazia is in fact a real person and that he is receiving a large sum of money in aid. However, that he is causing outrage to a large number of Germans is actually a highly contestable claim, especially if we consider it is untrue he is collecting a large sum of money in aid and that details which would substantiate Williams' claims of protesting, such as where they are protesting and who these people are, is excluded.

**Theme**

News texts almost always presuppose a position or opinion. In looking at the theme and moral, we can reveal more about the text producer's position or opinion, and the discourse's underlying suppositions that the formulation of the text depends. First, we return to the most recent example of theme uncovered in our text from line 38 in which Ghazia is said to only "spend his time" visiting his families. This line draws into focus a deep running theme throughout this text and that is, we should judge others, specifically asylum seekers, based on what they do with their time, particularly their productivity, and that we should value them based on how much they add or subtract monetarily to the economy. It can be assumed from this text that if asylum seekers subtract monetarily from the economy, which they are most assuredly represented as doing, they should not be valued and thus not be granted asylum, i.e. safety and security, which is an altogether inhumane, immoral precept that attempts to place conditions on providing fundamental human rights to human beings in need. The immoral precept being that, before we offer human beings safety and security, we should make sure they will not pose a monetary threat to "us" first, which elevates money over human life.

The most fundamental theme or underlying supposition on which the whole text depends, however, is revealed in the representational strategy used in lines 30-31. The lines read, "protesting the level of benefits enjoyed by the refugee". Ghazia is genericized here instead of being individualized through use of his name, a choice made in several other places in the text. This choice serves to imply this is not an isolated problem (collecting exorbitant amounts of "benefits") with Ghazia, but is a broader "refugee" problem. This representational choice uncovers how Williams is using argument by innuendo in his skillful semiotic choices, by which he is able to direct his audience into accepting the derogatory conclusion that Ghazia's actions
are somehow representative of the groups to which he is represented as belonging to, i.e. Muslims, refugees, Syrians, and migrants (Damer 2009:129). The foundational supposition, then, is not that Ghazia himself poses a significant threat to national security, because, in and of himself, he is neither an imposing threat or a relevant one. The foundational supposition is that his actions somehow indicate a much larger risk posed by the groups to which he belongs. The supposition is that there is a much larger threat posed by all refugees and migrants, and particularly Muslim and Syrian refugees and migrants, the likes of which are all like Ghazia.

This derogatory conclusion, i.e. theme or supposition, however, goes unasserted, but through representational choices is merely implicitly suggested. The theme and supposition help the text producer achieve their effect while helping them to avoid having to be explicit about what they mean. The supposition that Ghazia is representative of these groups is a fundamentally flawed and altogether prejudice and indefensible claim, because Ghazia's case is clearly a sensational one, an outlier. Williams knows this, and he knows that his text would gain nothing by the overt expression of this fundamentally flawed supposition. However, by merely insinuating this is the case, and not overtly stating it, he is able to avoid being dismissed outright, and yet still achieve the effect in the audience that Ghazia is representative of refugees, Syrians, and Muslims. This supposition is fundamental to the text, because it demonstrates Breitbart and Williams' joint proposition that this story does indeed pose a broader threat to national security. If it were to foreground the exceptional, isolated nature of Ghazia's case, the text would seize to achieve its effect and would fail to satisfy the necessary genre requirements for a national security story.

Williams is also able to achieve the effect that all Muslims are the same using the same method, argument by innuendo, which further serves the supposition of his text that Ghazia's story, far from being an exceptional case, reveals something about the fundamental nature of not just all refugees, but all Muslims as well. In line 24, synecdoche is used as a device to achieve Williams effect by making it appear like Ghazia is representative of a much broader "Muslim problem" when Ghazia becomes the spokesperson for all Muslims, everywhere. Williams allows Ghazia's interpretation of Islam to represent the whole of Islam when he quotes Ghazia as saying, "According to our religion I have a duty to visit every family in the same way and do not prioritize any of them." The presupposition or premise of this sentence is that polygamy is approved by all of Islam, and the supposition is that Ghazia's polygamy is not an isolated problem with Ghazia, but is a broader "Muslim problem". Furthermore, "According to our religion" is a presuppositional trigger, which indicates the presupposition that Islam is one, homogenous religion, implying everyone shares the same, commonsense understanding of the Quran, and that there are no differences in interpretation. These two presuppositions are, of course, fundamentally flawed, but Williams is comfortable with letting Ghazia's formulation speak for the entire religion of Islam. In general, this entire passage serves Williams' supposition wonderfully that, Ghazia, far from being the only Muslim polygamist with 23 children, is the norm, not the exception.
William's choice to allow Ghazia a voice in his text is at first surprising considering refugees, migrants, and especially Muslim refugees and migrants are normally denied a voice or opportunity to define themselves in conservative news texts, but we find that there is an exception to this rule in the formation of Williams' and Breitbart's discourse, and that is that they are denied a voice unless, of course, that voice serves the purposes of the text producer's agenda. By quoting Ghazia, Williams is able to give representation to a thought he is scarcely permitted to express without appearing as bias or sermonizing, and that is that all Muslims are the same: they are all polygamists with many children who do not desire to work, but through Ghazia he is able to imply this is the case.

Moral

Much of the moral of the text can be deduced from the preceding look at theme. As I have just noted, the discourse as formulated by Williams does not explicitly state what we should think about Muslims, Syrians, migrants, or refugees, but does much to infer what we should think of them. Just the same, the discourse does not explicitly state how things should be, but does much to imply it, and is worth repeating here, as it is particularly applicable in our conversation about the moral of this text, that each discourse opens up and closes off different possibilities for action.

The category of the text is national security, which does much to clarify what this text takes for granted about how things should be. It implies America should be safe, which, as previously discussed is ethnocentric and morally suspect in that its aim does not seem to concern itself with the safety of any other nation or their people. Now discourses also imply what could be standing in the way or, in this case, the obstacle to achieving safety in America. The obstacle, make no mistake, is not Ghazia A., but Syrian and Muslim refugees. Moreover, the discourse does not only imply how things should be, and what obstacles are standing in the way, but also implies what we ought to do in order to achieve the goal of keeping America safe. What we ought to do to achieve this goal is clear: keep Muslim and Syrian refugees out of America, and more particularly, if we take into consideration the political affiliation of the network that published this text and the political season at the time it was published, what it calls upon its audience to do is very clear: vote for the candidate who supports a refugee ban, or at very least: do not vote for the candidate who opposes it. The goal of this text starts at keep America safe, but through the process of transforming Muslim and Syrian refugees into threats who should be feared, the goal becomes: ban Muslim and Syrian refugees from entering America in order to keep America safe.

When we talk about the goals a certain discourse implicitly or explicitly promotes, we can ask ourselves if those goals are morally right or morally wrong, which, to be fair, is not always an easily navigable terrain. However, if we start from the principle that all human lives are inviolable, and that one's own protection should never come at the expense of another's suffering (a principle not exactly heralded by national security) then a Syrian refugee ban becomes morally problematic. Its immorality is drawn into focus in the aftermath of 2016 election, and the indefinite Syrian refugee ban that closely followed Trump's inauguration. The moral depravity of
the ban, and so, too, the argument, is drawn into focus when we consider the lives of the thousands of Syrian refugees, and perhaps even tens of thousands, of Syrian refugees that were set to enter the U.S.A. this year. Those are lives that were dramatically altered, and in some cases we can be most assured, cut short due to discourses such as these that argue fallaciously for destructive and immoral goals.

The goal as trumpeted by Williams' discourse is based on a fundamentally flawed argument. What this text implicitly argues is that Muslim and Syrian refugees pose a threat to American national security but this argument is flawed, first in its assumption that what is true of parts of a group (Ghazia) is therefore true for the whole, again in its insufficient sample, drawing conclusions or generalization from too small of a sample, and flawed once more in drawing a conclusion based on an unrepresentative sample, an extraordinary case to be clear. However, what makes Williams' argument so effective is that it makes the audience believe they have to choose between their security and Syrian refugees. Ultimately, what Williams' discourse has done so well is make the American public believe they have to choose between the two, which is to say the discourse is most effective in making the audience think in this binary that restricts other ways of thinking about the situation, which also conceals a vision of a better world. It feeds us this binary of either national security or Syrian refugees. In reality, however, the audience can have its national security and still put a stop to suffering by allowing refugees into their country; the two are not mutually exclusive, but the narrative is most skillful in making the audience believe the opposite: it is one or the other.

Williams' audience, however, seems ultimately unaware of these fallacies and its restricted perspective, perhaps in part because they have been driven to feel strong emotions which makes them less capable of critical reasoning. These emotions can be understood to confuse, confound, and even distract the audience from identifying the real, fundamental issues negatively influencing America's safety such as pollution, poverty (concentration of wealth and income inequality), and childhood obesity to name just a few. Furthermore, more than just confusing or distracting the audience, Breitbart can certainly be understood to be misinforming the audience and misleading them into believing not just that Muslim and Syrian refugees pose a threat to national security when they do not, but misleading them into thinking a morally wrong goal is what is desirable, something which is definitely caused by the low information, or knowledge, quality the text produces.

Knowledge

It is very clear that the nature of this text, and its technical structure is wholly incompatible with improving the audience's knowledge and understanding of the participants and those groups represented in this text. This is to say, the signs represented in this text are not being rearticulated in new ways. If anything, it compels adherence to conventional prejudices of Islam, Syrians, refugees, and migrants, producing and reproducing a discourse that must be understood to not only reproduce, maintain, and naturalize conventional power structures that perpetuate unequal
power relations in the social world the same, but can also be understood to worsen and exacerbate these unequal power relations, which may have even more destructive consequences for the groups of people they depict—unrealistically—as a threat.

The text is, after all, a short 386 words. It is a remarkably simplified discourse. Simplifying events and issues, such as those presented in this text like immigration and welfare, helps the text producer control the meaning they want to produce in the text. Williams' choice of a small word count, or, perhaps, Breitbart News Network's order for a short, 400 word or fewer text on the "news event", allows Williams and Breitbart to control the narrative and limit the amount of meaning potentials of the text in order to encourage the audience to interpret it in one way and not another.

These kinds of simplified discourses do not permit the audience to understand or identify the root causes and real solutions to issues by, for instance, presenting context, background, and historical perspective. For example, absent from our news text is any wider reference to the forces that led to the instability in Syria, potential U.S. culpability, and reasons why Syrians have had to leave their home country in the first place. Also absent from the text is any reference to the societal and environmental forces that may have led Ghazia to become a polygamist, instead we are fed some essentialist representation of Ghazia like he came out of the womb a polygamist. If Williams is as morally outraged as he appears to be about polygamy, then perhaps a broader discussion about the forces that create such characters is in order. Furthermore, if Williams is as morally outraged as he appears to be about the large sums of money received by welfare recipients then where is his outrage for corporate subsidies which are a form of welfare that costs tax payers far and beyond anything comparable to what is spent on welfare programs for civilians. Is the audience allowed to see, hear, and think about these things?

The simple answer is no. Such information as this is not permitted in this kind of discourse because it would dramatically alter the meaning of the text and the representation of participants, which would cause it to fall out of the far right social field and cease to be a Breitbart news text. Additionally, more information would complicate the text and make it more complex, threatening its high yield consumption. The attractive, simple form of the text serves dual purposes, first it encourages consumption, but it also encourages adherence to conventional prejudices towards Islam, Syrians, refugees, and migrants by feeding its audience this easy to consume image of all Muslims and refugees as bad, discouraging its audience from thinking critically about them. Furthermore, the text's dramatic, sensational story strengthens its readability. It is very clearly an extreme example, an outlier, which makes it all the more amusing of a text, yet at the same time all the more destructive of a discourse in terms of the knowledge it produces, because it does not permit its audience to better understand those represented in the article, but instead encourages its audience to come to learn about Muslims, refugees, migrants, and Syrians through this sensational story about Ghazia. This, to be sure,
works to the advantage of the power holders in society who seek to maintain these unequal power structures for political exploitation.

**Political Significance and Preservation of Unequal Power Relations**

The less context, background, and historical perspective, which is to say, the less knowledge a news text engenders in its audience, can work to the advantage of power holders in a society. The less information we are given about those represented in the text, Syrians, Muslims, and refugees, the less equipped we are to inclusively care and feel empathy for these groups of people, and certainly as a result, the more natural the idea of banning these groups becomes. The only information we are given about these groups is through the information we receive about Ghazia, which to be sure engenders a very negative view towards these groups, naturalizing even more the idea of banning them. Therefore, not only does this discourse tend away from providing very much knowledge of the groups they represent, the knowledge they do provide is knowledge that can be understood to engender negative feelings towards these groups.

We might then ask, why? Why engender negative feelings towards these groups? If we take into consideration the political affiliations of Breitbart, and the political climate at the time this article was posted, the decision to engender negative feelings towards these groups becomes clear. Syrian refugees were a hot-button issue during the 2016 election. Trump wanted to ban them and Clinton wanted to accept them. By producing a news text in which the villainous, primary participant is represented as being not merely a Muslim migrant, but a buzz word in the 2016 campaign, "Syrian refugee", does much to not only tarnish the reputation of Syrian refugees, but especially the candidate who is pro-Syrian refugees. Political domination relies on politically defined social differences, however contrived they may be, and this domination starts to be achieved when groups of people unite or assemble in support of political ideas. In this case we can understand our groups, Muslims, Syrians, refugees, and migrants were politicized, and in their politicization, they were demonized in order to assemble and unite more people around the idea of a refugee ban and onto the side of the candidate who trumpeted the idea.

The politically convenient timing of this piece is suspicious, and as such it would not be out of the question to doubt the legitimacy of its most taken-for-granted presuppositions, especially considering we have already proven one of them false: that Ghazia receives anywhere close to the sum of assistance the text asserts he does (if he receives assistance at all). Other presuppositions that could be false are: that a man named "Ghazia A." with 23 children and four wives actually exists, and that he is actually from Syria. Ultimately, though, what is more likely, is not so much this was a made up or implanted story, but that a negative story about Syrian refugees was sought after, perhaps even scoured for by Breitbart News Network officials in order to find a news story that could be made to serve their agenda.

Understood this way, Breitbart News Network would certainly appear to be seeking to shape the discourses of their audiences for political, and special interests. It would appear as though this
text is making a push for political domination by attempting to establish, or more firmly establish, the idea of Syrian refugees and Muslims as threatening in the minds of its American audience in the month leading up to the election in order to more securely situate them onto the side of Trump and his refugee ban.

However, the political significance of this text should not be understood to stop there. It also works to the advantage of American, international foreign policy directed at conflict with foreign, predominately Muslim nations to not just weaken our ability to inclusively care for and feel empathy for Syrian refugees, and Muslims in general, but to engender negative feelings towards them. Thus this discourse can also be understood to push for the hegemony of the idea of Muslims as an acceptable target for U.S. aggression, which can be understood to sustain unequal power relations in the U.S., including but not limited to America's vast and disproportionately large military budget in comparison to its education budget, and in the rest of the world in our affairs with Muslim nations and the injustices our military campaigns inflict.

The actual threat posed by Muslim migrants and Syrian refugees entering the United States is a threat primarily and almost exclusively posed to the special interests of the powerful and ruling people of the U.S.A. An increase in the population of immigrants from the war torn regions of the middle east would necessarily lead to an increase of exposure to these manufactured threats and enemies, and would necessarily lead to our prejudices being broken down, and lead to the ideological work of the powerful and ruling classes affecting less power over the public.

Thus the political significance of this text is not restricted to how its discourse influenced the election and paved the way for such executive orders as the indefinite ban on Syrian refugees, but its significance extends beyond that to holding up other unequal power structures in the U.S.A. and abroad. This text is characteristic of the type of discourse that reinforces unequal power relations by distracting and misinforming its audience that Syrian refugees and Muslims are the cause of the problems negatively affecting their lives. This text reproduces a discourse that perpetuates unequal power structures by portraying negatively Syrian refugees and Muslims which serves the interest of the preservation of existing power structures in that it deflects attention off of how the actions of power holders, and those who profit off of preexisting, unequal power structures in a society, are actually negatively affecting the lives of Americans. Instead, texts such as these not only draw attention to but legitimize and reproduce the utterly false notions that Syrian refugees and Muslims are negatively affecting the lives of Americans, which can clearly be understood to have destructive consequences on these groups.

**Summary**

In the preceding analysis, we revealed the wide range of semiotic choices used by the text producer to represent the primary participant, and the groups he is said to belong. These semiotic choices were found to realize the primary participant as a threat, but more than just that, we found out how, through these semiotic choices, the text producer was also able to realize a
greater threat—a national security threat—by implying a much broader threat posed by Muslim and Syrian refugees.

In realizing a threat, we first showed how placing this sensational story in Breitbart's national security category set up the audience to demonize someone, some group, or some groups depending on the representational strategies the text producer ultimately used. The genre requirements set forth by national security dictated realizing a broader threat in the minds of the audience. Therefore, realizing this broader threat was found to be the underlying theme by which the formulation of the whole text depended. Without realizing a broader threat, the text producer would not have been able to satisfy the genre requirements of a national security story, and the story would have appeared irrelevant and like an un-newsworthy event. As a result, the primary participant actually posing the threat, Ghazia, had to be enlarged so as to achieve the appearance of a greater threat being posed to national security, hence some groups were also implicated and realized as a threat alongside Ghazia.

We determined that, in addition to Ghazia, the following groups were realized as posing a threat through the text producer's representational strategies, "Muslims", "migrants", "Syrians" and "refugees". We discussed how setting the story in the frame of national security inflated how the threat would be perceived by the audience, which signaled to the audience that Ghazia's was not merely some sensational case, but that there was something about the nature of the story, or, rather, the nature of Muslim and Syrian refugees, that threatened the safety and security of the whole nation. In this way the genre encouraged its audience to come to think of those groups Ghazia was said to belong as also posing a threat. However, this theme of a broader threat was not only realized through the placement of this story in the national security frame, but through the text producer's other, numerous semiotic choices. One such semiotic choice used by the text producer was the one to highlight the amount of Ghazia's children, and, moreover, the representational strategy to collectivize the children, as opposed to individualizing or personalizing them, which helped the text producer make the children morally indistinguishable from their father, thus signifying and constructing the theme that inflated the appearance of a threat. Representational strategies such as genericizing Ghazia also served to inflate the appearance of a threat, especially when, in lines 30-31, instead of being individualized, Ghazia was genericized as "the refugee", which gave the impression that Ghazia represents a broader refugee problem of them exploiting state benefits. More than signaling to the audience that those posing a threat to them were merely refugees, the text producer was also able to realize Muslims as posing a threat when synecdoche was used when allowing Ghazia and his actions—a miniscule part of all Muslims and all actions taken by Muslims—to represent the whole of the Muslim religion. This made it appear that Ghazia, far from being the only Muslim polygamous with 23 children, is the norm, not the exception, thus representing the whole Muslim population as posing a greater threat to U.S. national security. Thus, in the process of realizing the specific threat Ghazia posed, the text producer was able to craftily direct the audience's attention towards the much larger threat the groups Ghazia is said to belong to supposedly pose.
The more specific threats they posed were determined to be monetary, moral, and, more broadly, essentialist threats. These threats were realized through a wide range of semiotic choices. The text producer initially realized a threat in the minds of the audience by ideologically squaring the audience against Ghazia and these groups. The text producer did this by, as before mentioned placing these groups in the context of a national security threat, but by also appealing to the audience's preexistent fear, dread, and mistrust of Islam in Ghazia's representation as Muslim, by appealing to the audience's deeply embedded value of monogamy in representing Ghazia as a polygamist, and also by appealing to the audience's deeply embedded value of independence from state aid in representing Ghazia as on benefits. In these ways the text producer was able to realize Ghazia and those groups as bad right off the bat, without ever overtly stating it.

More specifically, the text producer realized Ghazia, and the groups he is said to belong, as posing a moral threat, by, among other ways, depicting Ghazia as a sexual deviant. The text producer achieved this effect by emphasizing the amount of children and wives Ghazia has. Ghazia's maleness was also emphasized through overlexicalization of masculine pronouns. Furthermore, Ghazia was overwhelmingly activated in verb processes while others, especially women, were passivated, which presents him as dominating women. This can be understood to be very implicative in how Muslim and Syrian refugees come to be thought about by the audience. For instance, the text appeals to its conservative audience's view of women as vulnerable while engendering the thought that "their women" are in need of protection from these sexually deviant men.

The text producer also used many semiotic choices to realize Ghazia and these groups as posing a monetary threat. Most notably by creating a sense of causality between the act of immigrating and receiving benefits. For instance, in line 17 Ghazia "eventually reach[es] Germany", and in lines 18-19 Ghazia is activated in the verb process taking part in the directed action as in search of the goal, "...to ensure to all his children social benefits...". This was not the only time, either, that the text producer created a sense of causality between seeking asylum and receiving benefits, it was also done in lines 5-10, and must be understood as a strategy used to background the actual motivations these refugees had for coming to Germany, so as to imply, instead, they came to exploit the welfare system. Furthermore, we also examined that the semiotic choice of suppressing information about the economic growth immigrants bring to their new countries, as well as suppressing overwhelming evidence of the social advantages welfare also brings to societies, the text producer was able to more effectively argue refugees pose a monetary threat.

In analyzing the text, we also revealed how the text producer realized Ghazia and the groups he is said to belong to as posing an essentialist threat. One way this effect was achieved was by representing Ghazia as using high affinity language in reference to his actions, such as in line 24, "I have a duty to..." by which it was signaled to the audience Ghazia was very committed to his religion and unlikely to change or open his mind up to "their way of life", which served to make Ghazia appear as essentially different to the rest of "us". Moreover, through the use of irony the text producer was able to give the impression that Ghazia was incapable of moral reasoning by
attributing to Ghazia a verbal process verb signaling a high degree of commitment to a behavior whose premise was immoral as in line 22-23 when Ghazia is said to “insist” that he treats his wives equally. In this way, the text producer was able to further the effect of realizing Ghazia and the groups he is said to belong as being irredeemable and as posing an essentialist threat to the audience.

Establishing the legitimacy of the threats Ghazia and the groups he is said to belong to was fundamental to the effectiveness of this text. Through the semiotic choices just enumerated on here by which Ghazia was realized as a threat, and other semiotic choices in the text to be enumerated on now, a threat was not only realized, but a certain credibility was attributed to that threat. The text producer established the credibility of his text, including the legitimacy of the threats posed, through an assortment of semiotic choices. First, we discussed the semiotic choices made by Brietbart News Network and their choice to categorize stories according to different Breitbart locations, like ours, published by the deceiving front, Breitbart London. Then we discussed the selection of right-looking as well as right-thinking personnel to write this piece, like their text producer Thomas D. Williams. He presents quite the facade. He possesses a Ph.D, and is a "Professor of ethics", and teacher in dignity and human rights no less. These are honorifics that must be understood to make it appear like the public's criticism that Breitbart spews hate speech is completely unfounded. Williams is found, however, to be a derisive moralist, a conservative Christian who is apparently averse to the religion of Islam, which must be understood to have also added a certain bite and authenticity to a text that we can assume Breitbart wanted to be antagonistic towards Muslims.

Another important semiotic choice that also enhanced the credibility of the text was the choice to suppress the time and place Ghazia said something, and, more importantly, the actual receiver of the statement in order to give the impression it was actually our text producer, which it most certainly was not. Along this same line, the analysis revealed how the text producer made good use of objective modal language in that the information presented does not appear to offer interpretations of Ghazia's story or the opinions of the text producer, but to present facts themselves. Furthermore, the text producer, more than using objective, high affinity language, sometimes used language riddled with taken for granted assumptions and presuppositions that presented contestable propositions as unquestionable truths, thus rendering them uncontestable to the audience. For example, in the title it is taken for granted that Ghazia is receiving $390,000 a year in benefits. However, we later proved this was false, but observed that hedging was used to attempt to establish credibility to this proposition, or, more accurately, cover up its incredibility, when the text producer attempted to give the impression of being detailed while providing little in the way of detail when explaining the source that informed this text's primary proposition that Ghazia was actually receiving $390,000 a year in benefits.

Perhaps most significant were the destructive consequences these semiotic choices were examined to have on the audience and those they represented. The choice that this story even constitutes as a news event, let alone a national security news event, is a farfetched and, worse,
defamatory notion if we consider the highly negative views it is likely to engender towards those
represented in the text considering news like this is likely the only source or means readily
available to Breitbart's audience to learn about what is happening in other parts of the world
when it comes to immigration, and, more specifically, what Muslim and Syrian refugees are like.
Similarly, we examined how the choice to frame this story in terms of national security
encouraged the audience to construct its identity in contrast to Muslim and Syrian refugees. For
instance, the identity that this text gives rise to can be understood to contain the belief that the
ideal personality is being a human being unlike those "other", "bad", "subversive" Muslims and
Syrian refugees in the text. Furthermore, the knowledge ultimately produced by the text was
found to reduce and simplify Muslim and Syrian refugees. It did not permit the audience to
understand or identify the root causes and real solutions to the issues depicted in the text such as
immigration or polygamy by for instance, presenting context, background, and historical
perspective that led to instability in Syria or what has led to such an interpretation of the Quran
as Ghazia's. Instead, all the information the audience is given about Ghazia's actions that attempt
to account for his subversive behavior are his religion, nationality, and his emigrating. Using
these broad conceptualizations to account for Ghazia's behavior compels its audience to adhere
to conventional prejudices of Islam, Syrians, refugees, and migrants, which can only be
understood to have destructive consequences for these groups.

In addition, more than the negative feelings engendered towards Ghazia and these groups by
realizing them as posing a monetary, moral, as well as essentialist threat, the text producer also
exacerbated these negative feelings through a mix of irony, sarcasm, and, even, hyperbole. For
instance, the text producer used hyperbole, as referred to above, in leading the audience to
believe Ghazia came to Germany exclusively in search of benefits— not safety and security— and
that attempting to "ensure" benefits was the first thing he did when he arrived. Hyperbole was
also used in the final sentence of the text to make the audience believe that all Ghazia does with
his time is spend it visiting his families, which the text producer already skillfully established in
previous parts of the text through word connotation that visit means something sexual in nature.

Considering the very negative feelings this text engenders in way of emotion towards these groups
in compilation with the ethnocentric perspective and identity the text already engendered, the
audience becomes ever less likely to inclusively care for and feel empathy for these groups of
people. As a result, the idea of inflicting harm to these groups, or at least tolerating their suffering,
appears more justified and becomes more natural. In correlation, the more natural the idea of
inflicting harm to, or tolerating the suffering of, these groups becomes throughout the course of a
text, certainly the more dangerous and destructive the discourse can be understood to be.

The destructive consequences the semiotic choices of this text can be understood to cause also
extend to the audience. The sensational nature of the story and the sensational nature of the
threats can be understood to distract the audience from identifying the real issues negatively
affecting their lives. By misinforming the audience about the threat Muslim and Syrian refugees
pose, the text producer, and more broadly, Breitbart, and Breitbart's special interests, are able to
distract the audience's attention away from focusing on the real issues negatively affecting their lives, a focused attention that may have otherwise led to improving upon unequal social structures. Instead, discourses such as this one end up maintaining and even strengthening preexisting power relations, by, among other ways, helping an oppressive presidential candidate who maintains and strengthens unequal power relations, get elected into office.

Ultimately, the goal as revealed in the analysis of the moral of our text is most telling of the destructive nature of the text. We revealed the goal of the text to be: ban Muslim and Syrian refugees from entering America in order to keep America safe. This goal feeds the audience this fundamentally flawed notion of either national security or Syrian refugees. In doing so, it coerces the audience into supporting a refugee ban by concealing other options and concealing a vision of a better world, such as one where we can have our safety and security and refugees can have theirs, too. In the end, this discourse persuades its audience that it must do something to achieve this goal in order to preserve itself from the foreboding threat the text has realized Muslim and Syrian refugees as posing. How to achieve this goal and what it calls upon its audience to do is very clear: vote for the candidate who supports and will actualize the refugee ban. In conclusion, this discourse has the very disturbing, destructive consequence on first of all its audience by misleading them into thinking a morally wrong goal is what is right, but then again, and more troublingly still, on the groups who are subject and made to suffer due to its immoral nature.
6. Conclusion

At the start of this essay, we set out as our purpose to analyze how Muslim and Syrian refugees came to be represented in the selected Breitbart News Network text. In order to faithfully attend to this task, however, we had to denaturalize the text in order to bring to light the implicit knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, or ideologies underlying and constructing the text's discourse and its representation. By exposing and analyzing the linguistic semiotic choices made by the text producer, the analysis was able to denaturalize the text and bring these underlying parts of the text out into the open. Once out in the open, they were contested, subject to reflection, and critically questioned whereby the discourse's legitimacy ultimately faltered and the effect it was once able to have on its audience deteriorated.

In the analysis, we revealed some of the most significant linguistic semiotic choices made by the text producer. First and foremost was the semiotic choice by which the text producer chose to represent the primary participant, Ghazia, through genericizations such as "Muslim migrant", "Syrian refugee", and "the refugee," which caused these signs to acquire meaning in relation to Ghazia's actions. The representational choices made by the text producer must be understood to signal to the audience that Ghazia's story, far from being a sensational or exceptional case, represents a broader trend among Muslim and Syrian refugees. The pattern by which we see the text producer frequently refer to Ghazia through these genericizations, in addition to the placement of this story in the frame of national security, reveals the underlying theme that the formulation of the text depends. The theme being Muslim and Syrian refugees pose a threat to U.S. national security, the taken-for-granted assumption of which is that Ghazia's individual actions signify a broader Muslim and Syrian refugee problem. Therefore it was determined that the primary signs being populated with meaning were "Muslim", "Syrian", "refugee", "migrant" as well as the primary participants. The theme of the text enables—indeed encourages—the audience to populate with meaning these signs, and primarily "Muslim and Syrian refugees". Furthermore, it was determined that everything the audience comes to learn about Muslims, Syrians, refugees, migrants, and, more particularly, Muslim and Syrian refugees, it comes to learn through the sensational story about Ghazia; this is to say Muslim and Syrian refugees come to be represented and populated with meaning in terms of Ghazia's actions and his broader representation in this sensational news story.

In the course of the analysis we also revealed numerous, other semiotic choices, such as over-lexicalization, suppression, word connotation, and others through which the text producer was able to realize Ghazia, and the broader groups to which he is said to belong, as posing a threat. The most salient aspects of the representation that are highlighted in the text are the monetary, moral, as well as essentialist threats they are said to pose. In addition to revealing these semiotic choices, we also showed how they were used to not only realize a threat in the minds of the audience but to also naturalize the claim that Ghazia and the groups he is said to belong to actually pose a threat. For example, semiotic choices such as ideological squaring, objective
modal language, presupposition, and hedging were all demonstrated to render the contestability of the claim that there is actually a threat unimpeachable, imperceptible, or both, causing the discourse to become more persuasive, and thus more effective in shaping the audience's discourses.

More than this, we were able to consider some of the destructive consequences that these choices may have had on their audience, including preventing them from identifying the real forces negatively influencing their lives by misinforming them about the nature of the threat—or lack thereof—that refugees pose and by making a scapegoat out of Muslim and Syrian refugees. This strategy can be understood to maintain and even strengthen unequal power relations in a society by deflecting—indeed distracting—attention off of how the actions of power holders and those who profit off of unequal power structures in a society are the things negatively affecting the audience's lives, and, moreover, are the things that actually pose a threat to their safety and security. More than just using misinformation to distract and mislead the audience, semiotic choices such as structural opposition, hyperbole, and irony were used to engender strong emotions in the audience and exacerbate the effects of the text. Engendering strong emotions in an audience makes engendering a response more likely. Also, engendering strong emotions in an audience makes them less capable of critical reasoning, the likes of which could have otherwise been used to undermine the legitimacy of the text and its effectiveness in engendering a response out of the audience. Instead, the emotions engendered serve to not only further naturalize the proposition that Muslim and Syrian refugees actually pose a threat and are the ones negatively affecting their lives, but is also able to inflame the audience to try and elicit a response out of them.

The nature of the response the text sought to elicit became clear in our analysis of the moral of the text when we revealed the goal of the text to be: ban Muslim and Syrian refugees from entering America in order to keep America safe. How to achieve that goal becomes glaringly obvious to the audience when considering the political timing of the text. Therefore, more than serving the general interests of power holders in a society, this strategy can be understood to have more specifically served the interests of the power holders of the Republican Party, the Trump administration, and particularly their backers and special interests, who, in politicizing and demonizing Muslim and Syrian refugees, were able to more effectively rally the American public around their presidential candidate and his campaign promise to ban refugees in order to help them achieve political domination.

In addition to demonstrating the destructive consequences that these choices have had on their audience in America, we were also able to demonstrate the destructive consequences this discourse has had on the groups it represented. First of all, the discriminate selection of such a sensational news story as Ghazia's, and the semiotic choice to place Muslim and Syrian refugees at its center, sets this text up to have a destructive influence on its audience, but particularly on the groups it represents in that it compels its audience to adhere to conventional prejudices of Islam, Syrians, refugees, and migrants rather than improving or deepening the audience's understanding of them whereby the negative feelings towards these groups that contribute to
unequal power relations, such as fear, hatred, and prejudice, could have otherwise been challenged and dissolved. Furthermore, placing these groups in the frame of a national security threat, as well as exacerbating the threat they are said to pose by engendering strong negative emotions towards them, intensifies social cleavages between the audience and these groups. This runs counter to helping the audience to recognize their shared humanity and common interests. Instead, this not only makes feeling empathy for these groups less likely, it also causes the idea of their suffering to become more natural and justified, and in this way, the idea of banning these groups becomes more likely. Additionally, this problem of empathizing with the groups represented in the text was further obstructed by the text's ethnocentric perspective. The attention of the text focused almost exclusively on how immigration was going to affect "us", rather than focusing on how immigration affects— or how a refugee ban is going to affect— "them".

In the compilation of all of these semiotic choices, the Breitbart News Network text, " Germany: Muslim migrant with four wives and 23 children receives $390,000 a year in benefits," written by Thomas D. Williams, Ph.D, on behalf of Breitbart News Network, signifies and constructs a discourse that not only grossly misrepresents Muslim and Syrian refugees through its poor and unreasonable semiotic choices, but it can also be understood to have had destructive effects on its audience and those it represented, thus establishing it as a destructive discourse. By not only unrealistically depicting these groups as posing a deep threat to U.S.A. safety and security, but also engendering strong, negative emotions for these groups, Muslims, Syrians, refugees, and migrants were realized as a threat in the audience's imagination. The consequences of which can be understood to have misled the public from identifying the path towards improving upon an unsatisfactory reality, but more troubling still misled them into believing a morally wrong vision of a society is what was desirable. As a result, this mass distributed discourse ultimately helped pave the way for the Syrian refugee ban becoming a reality, the true destructiveness and great human costs of which can be measured by the real human suffering caused to these groups, both known and unknown, in the past since this text was published, in the future, and certainly, right now, in the present.
7. References


**News Articles and Website Documents**


