The Language of Outrage: Defining and Communicating Outrage and Incivility via Social Media during the Charlottesville Protests

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Media are often expected to be forums for open discussions about matters of public concern; new media, such as Facebook, are increasingly perceived as spaces for those conversations. However, social media have also come to be seen as a space of negativity where the language of anger and outrage dominates. This paper studies the nature of the outrage language used on Facebook during the Charlottesville rally and protests during the summer of 2017. Platforms like Facebook have become places for open expression of extreme political ideologies with the very nature of the platform perpetuating the development and growth of insular feedback loops that present very narrow feeds of information.

Outrage language permeates these loops enhancing polarization, creating conversations where only those with whom we agree are allowed to express opinions, and the rest are marginalized, insulted, or shouted down (Berry & Sobieraj, 2014). This paper will conclude that involvement with outrage media neither leads to an omnivorousness about all media, but, rather, media that think and speak like us, nor does it lead to more democratic engagement.

Keywords: protest, polarization, outrage language, online hate, Facebook, social media, racism, United States, Charlottesville

M edia are often expected to be a forum for open discussions about matters of public concern; new media—such as Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and Snapchat—are increasingly perceived as spaces for those conversations. Research has suggested several means by which social media can influence collective action, such as providing mobilizing information and news not available in other media, facilitating the coordination of demonstrations, allowing users to join political causes, and creating opportunities to exchange opinions with other people (Alaimo, 2015; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012). Globally, social media has come to denote "liberation technology"; by giving examples from China, Egypt, Malaysia, and Iran, Diamond (2012) suggests that social media can be a profoundly empowering way to "report, expose, organize, and protest outside of the normal authoritarian constraints" by

focusing on state corruption, human rights abuses, ethnic discrimination, and police brutality. However, social media have also come to be seen as spaces of "muscular negativity" where the language of anger and outrage dominates (Bruni, 2017). In a *New York Times* opinion article titled, "I am OK, you are pure evil," Bruni (2017) writes, "For more and more Americans, the other side is not merely misguided in the extreme. It's evil in the absolute, and virtue is measured by the starkness with which that evil is labeled and reviled. There are emotional satisfactions to this." Bruni argues that the language of anger, and its dissemination via social media, is now an industry and that "we are in a dangerous place as to how we view, treat, and talk about people with whom we disagree." This anger is particularly true when it comes to conversations on Facebook. This paper will study the nature of the outrage language used on Facebook during the Charlottesville rally and protests during August 2017.

Platforms like Facebook have become places for open expression of extreme political ideologies. The lack of rules or gatekeepers has discouraged active mediation and has created polarization among users. This polarization leads to the inability for users with different viewpoints to communicate with each other. Research has shown that the very nature of the platform perpetuates the development and growth of insular feedback loops, which can be defined as a place where users feel supported by others with similar political identities (Khosravinik, 2020). Outrage language infiltrates these insular feedback loops where only those with whom we agree are allowed to express opinions, and the rest are marginalized, insulted, or shouted down (Berry & Sobieraj, 2014, p. 212). Involvement with outrage media neither leads to an omnivorousness about all media but, rather, media that think and speak like us.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Social Media and Racism

Scholars agree that social media are not value-neutral spaces; they are laden with the baggage of cultural and social norms. As Petray and Collin (2017, p. 2) suggest, this baggage includes race and racism; they write, "Racism is a form of symbolic violence which is prevalent on social media platforms, assisted by the ease of anonymity." Social media platforms allow for citizen journalism addressing protests as they unfold, without the lag

and editorializing of traditional media, as exemplified by #Ferguson and #BlackLivesMatter protests (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015; Pitman et al., 2017). Social media provide a platform for users to have ongoing discussions that contribute to their sense of identity as members of a community (Florini, 2014), and they can be sites where self-expression most commonly occurs (Zhao et al., 2008). However, it can also be a place where the harsher tides of identity politics can define an "us" versus a "them" (Brown et al., 2017). For instance, boyd (2011, p. 204) found that white teens fled MySpace in the early 2000s for Facebook in an instance of white-flight when African American teens started to join the service. Those white teens felt that MySpace became a "virtual ghetto" because of the influx of profile pages belonging to African American people (p. 204). Similarly, a study by Stevens et al. (2017, p. 954) found African American disadvantaged youth frequently visited "hood and whore pages" on Facebook, which ended up mirroring the harsh social realities of their own communities. There was little evidence that Facebook was viewed as a place of refuge or supported positive community mobilization for these young people (Hampton et al., 2011). Facebook as the "ghetto news center" was, in part, a reflection of occurrences in the real community (Stevens et al., 2017, p. 955). Stevens et al. conclude, "If there were no violent crimes, shootings, or premature deaths, there would be no resulting Facebook posts. Facebook not only mirrors the challenges and dangers of life in a disadvantaged community but also amplifies the most negative aspects of the community" (p. 958).

Facebook the Private-Public Sphere

New technologies help individuals to expand the range of their social activity, adjust the connectivity of their social networks, enable mobility within communication, and redefine boundaries between public and private spaces (Papacharissi, 2013). Papacharissi suggests that online technologies provide us private and public spaces, rather than a singular public sphere; spaces presented by convergent technologies are hybrid public and private spaces: "New technologies create a new civic vernacular for individuals, allowing an actualization of civic identity in tropes distinct from the deliberate model of the public sphere" (p. 130). Papacharissi locates this new civic vernacular in the private sphere, where the citizen is alone, but not lonely or isolated. They are connected, discussing political issues related to personalized content. The

personalized content provided by online media fits well with citizens' private sphere, where self remains the point of reference, but these private spheres are a part of the larger public network. It is this intertwinement of personalized information with the ability to engage with both like-minded and individuals with opposing views that create areas for tension between users and a breeding ground for outrage language on social media platforms.

In the past decade, Facebook has become one of the most popular venues to share information, entertainment, and news. Facebook is one of the largest social media platform with 69% of American adult web users using Facebook compared with much smaller shares that use Twitter (22%), Instagram (37%) or SnapChat (24%) according to 2019 data collected by the Pew Research Institute (Perrin & Anderson, 2019). A growing body of literature has begun to study the importance of Facebook as social networking capital and in maintaining and establishing relational bonds. Research shows that Facebook interaction primarily represents an offline to online communication trend (Ross et al., 2009) in which users form Facebook networks to interact with members of their existing offline social network as well as to develop new personal and professional connections (Gross & Acquisti, 2005; Lampe et al., 2006). While users report primarily using the site to look up people they had lost touch with and maintain contact with members of their social network, they also describe an extremely large number of acquaintances whom they have met once or twice offline but whose interaction was primarily limited to Facebook use such as monitoring each other's profile updates. While more research needs to be conducted on how users communicate in public Facebook forums, it is important to note that relational rules on Facebook are different from face-to-face ones. Many users report a lack of intimacy in Facebook chats and posts and do not believe that Facebook strengthens their sense of community or increases their offline friends circle. Facebook, nonetheless, has become an important forum for expressing political opinion. Bimber et al. suggest that social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, enable users to weave their private and political life together more efficiently by making public users' personal political expressions (Bimber et al., 2005).

The Language of Outrage

This research focuses on understanding the language of outrage in social media. Studying political discourses of television cable news and radio talk shows, Berry and Sobieraj (2014), coined the phrase "outrage media industry" as a type of media saturated with highly emotional, partial, and antagonistic talk. This kind of talk worked in opposition to non-outrage discourse which they describe as "deliberate, rational, inclusive, non-judgmental, unbiased, and fact-based." According to Berry and Sobieraj such outrage talk has particular and recognizable attributes of being emotionally charged, uncivil, confrontational, non-compromising, and negative. Unlike conventional news which, historically, has been considered to be dispassionate discourse between open-minded participants with the goal to identify the best solutions to issues of shared concern, outrage talk gives viewers the space to hear perspectives on politics and current events that reflect only their own values with little or no dissent. While political mudslinging is not new, they write, outrage has grown exponentially because of "proliferation of infotainment, niche markets and segmented formulas for segmented audiences" and media's voracious appetite for profits (Berry & Sobieraj, 2014, p. 25). In studying the landscape of 24-hour cable news and talk radio, Berry and Sobieraj argue that outrage talk can be engaging because it attracts viewers and listeners; yet, it is not meant to be rational or constructive but personality-centered, sensationalistic, and signified by ideological selectivity. As the success of 24-hour cable news wanes and as more users shift to online social networking sites to obtain information, this paper attempts to map and analyze the language of outrage on social media to measure its pervasiveness and analyze the nature of the outrage as it relates to discussion surrounding the rally and protests over the removal of Confederate statues in Charlottesville, Virginia, during the month of August 2017.

CHARLOTTESVILLE CASE STUDY

Charlottesville, Virginia had been in a months-long battle over what to do with a statue of Gen. Robert E. Lee, who led the Confederate army during the Civil War. Many cities across the United States were grappling with what to do with their Confederate statues, as some feel that they are reminders of the historical racism in the U.S. and should be taken down. Earlier in 2017, the Charlottesville City Council had voted to

remove the Lee statue and rename the park where it is located. On Friday, August 11, 2017, a group of far-right White Nationalists led a torch lit parade to Nameless Field in Charlottesville that marked the beginning of a rally against the removal of confederate statues in the city. Saturday morning of August 12, 2017, the official rally began with counter protesters present. By 11:00 am EST violence broke out accumulating in the death of 32-year-old Heather Heyer and injury of 19 others (Lord, 2018).

METHODS

This paper will focus on answering two questions: How much outrage language was present on Facebook in discussions regarding the rally and counter protests? (RQ1); and what was the nature of the language associated with the outrage over the rally and counter protests? (RQ2)

Research Design

A descriptive research design method was applied that sought to describe the current way in which users communicate on Facebook in regards to racially related events in the United States. This project was designed to provide a glimpse into the conversational structure of users on Facebook and to determine the level and nature of outrage language present in conversations revolving around race related events. The data collected was analyzed to answer the two research questions provided above. Social media include a variety of internet-based tools that users engage with by maintaining an individual profile and interacting with others based on a network of connections; of those widely available to online users, Facebook was selected for analysis.

It was determined that gathering Facebook posts would provide both a wide range of users as well as the search filtering capabilities needed to gather conversations specific to the Charlottesville protests. The author selected four key terms and a five-day window to gather posts within. Key terms were determined by looking at the highest frequency words used by mainstream media outlets covering the rally and protests. To correlate with the author's previous research on outrage language the time frame for posts collected was kept consistent to what was used in previous studies. Although groups and individual users were checked for the presence of bots, no personal communication or contact were initiated with any of those who posted comments on public Facebook groups. When quoting posts and comments, names were gathered to be able to understand the back and

forth between users, but were later stripped from the data to maintain anonymity. Gathering the information posted and the names of those posting was not considered to be a violation of privacy since the data was used exclusively from public, not private, Facebook pages and pages that can be seen, read, and accessed by anyone with an internet connection and a Facebook account. The author aimed to gather between 800-900 pieces of content to analyze.

A total of 884 Facebook posts and comments of supporters and critics of the rally and protests were collected. The data collection focuses solely on posts and comments pertaining to Charlottesville events. When aggregating posts a dummy Facebook account was created, in a Private Browsing Window that held no stored user data, with no user preferences or engagement with content other than to perform the search and gather contents. Using Facebook's existing search algorithms posts and comments were accessed with the key terms "Charlottesville", "VA", "rally" and "protest". We narrowed the search results down to match the protest timetable and subsequent major news coverage (August 12, 2017 - August 16, 2017) and tabulated all relevant posts. The analysis includes both posts by individuals and media outlets as well as responses to those posts.

The author acknowledges that some comments and posts could be categorized in several of the categories listed below, for instance, name-calling was almost always accompanied by other insulting language and followed by extreme ideological attacks. However, no post was categorized multiple times and was categorized based on the most prevalent use of outrage language in the content. No memes, photos, and emojis which were used to highlight the language and words of outrage were analyzed though one could conclude if those had been counted, the instances of outrage would be even higher. Comments from posts were categorized individually with conversational context being considered.

Categories of Outrage Language

After a qualitative analysis of the posts and comment conversations by the author, all content was categorized as first containing or lacking outrage language. Posts and comments containing outrage language were then divided into groups: one being supportive and the other being critical of the far-right White Nationalists' rally. Users deemed supportive were those who showed sympathy or agreed outright with the actions

of the White Nationalist group that led the rally. Critics were those who used language in opposition to the actions and goals of the rally. Posts that held outrage content were then coded into one of five broad categories of outrage as defined below by Berry and Sobieraj, for both supporters and critics respectively.

To operationalize the language of outrage the 884 posts were categorized in the following five rhetorical categories:

(1) Insulting and emotional language - language that is insulting to a person, group of people, political party or an organization; this included insulting words such as "idiot", "asinine", and "stupid"; we also included in this category language and words which were meant to elicit anger toward other people or groups and words that indicated emotional drama such as all caps to indicate yelling or posts such as "I cried after reading this";

(2) Name-calling - often insulting language was used to name-call but it was coded only under name-calling when it went beyond words such as idiot and stupid to insults about political positions such as "Obamaturds" or "liberal hypocrites" or dehumanizing language such as "N----- lover";

(3) Character assassination - malicious language to describe a person's character with the intent of destroying their public reputation and their beliefs;

(4) Mockery - language which was indicative of teasing, making fun of a person, group of people, political party, views of a person, or an organization in the hopes of making the subject look bad or to rally others in criticism of the subject;and

(5) Ideologically extreme language - language and words which seemed least conciliatory or extreme in terms of political position and included direct attacks on liberal or conservative values.

To answer RQ1 a qualitative analysis of the posts and comments was conducted. The author coded and cross-checked the entries for each category to determine the presence and nature of outrage language used in content (see Table 1). To answer RQ2 a rhetorical analysis was conducted using Deuze's (2005) method of thematic analysis where presence and absence of language and words were categorized into themes or of similar repertoires. This analysis led to two dominant themes of "Reactionary Communication" and "Polarization" to be discussed in the following section. For Deuze (2005) online journalism, open publishing platforms, and the petit narratives of the blogosphere have

dominant rhetorical characteristics which must be studied to understand how people interact differently online than they do face-to-face. While qualitative analysis can give readers an immediate understanding of the breadth, scope, and frequency of the outrage, rhetorical analysis gives them the macro bird's-eye-view of the themes behind the language of outrage.

Table 1
Pervasiveness of Outrage in Posts and Comments

	Posts Analyzed	Total Posts
Indication of Outrage Present	673 (76.1%)	884
Neutral Posts	211 (23.9 %)	884
Supporters Use of Outrage	186 (27.6%)	673
Critics Use of Outrage	487 (72.4%)	673

ANALYSIS

Analysis of post/comment content revealed high pervasiveness of outrage language and words with 76.1% of posts and comments containing some or many forms of outrage language (Table 1). This figure correlates to the total pervasiveness found in a previous study (Rao & Haina, 2017) where 76.4% of posts/comments gathered pertaining to the student protests in 2015 over racial injustice indicated the use of outrage language. In this study the author was looking at the presence and nature of outrage language in 876 posts/comments made on Facebook in regards to the student protests over racial injustice in Fall 2015. In this study supporters were those who sympathized or agreed outright with the students protesting over systemic racism in higher education institutions. Critics were those who did not agree with the stance and actions of the protesters.

When comparing critics versus supporters' use of outrage language in the Charlottesville study it was found that use by critics (72.4%) of the rally outweighed supporters (27.6%). The figures collected again show a positive correlation to Rao and

Haina's (2017) previous study where critics' use of outrage language was more prevalent than supporters. In the previous study critics were right leaning in ideology, where critics of the Charlottesville rally leaned left ideologically, indicating that higher use of outrage language was not contingent with any specific political ideology.

Patterns of Polarization, Reactionary Communication, Mockery & Ridicule

Although it can be argued that these are obvious correlations, that when users are discussing a controversial subject like race and racism it is assumed arguments would be emotionally driven and could result in higher levels of use of outrage language. It may also be obvious that critics would use outrage language more than supporters. However, when looking at the presence and absence of language in content and the dynamics between critics and supporters interesting observations can be made. A look at the absence of language, in this case of mediation and moderate viewpoints, as an interesting phenomenon that is occurring on social media platforms like Facebook. Mediation is defined as any attempt to provide a logically constructed argument aimed at providing understanding and open communication about the topic being discussed (Rao & Haina, 2017). This lack of mediation indicates a high level of polarization between supporters and critics, and an argument can be made that the nature of the platforms themselves help to create a positive feedback loop where polarization occurs between users, which in turn creates reactionary communication patterns, which amplifies polarization, creating a vicious cycle that is hard to break. Khosravinik (2020) looks at how the corporate algorithmic manipulation of news feeds can create a fertile ground for polarizing perception and communication. Social media platforms like Facebook deploy a relevancy-based algorithm for the selection of content distributed into users' news feeds. By utilizing a relevancy-based model, over that of significance, platforms have given users a greater power to curate their own media landscapes in these social spaces. This personally curated landscape coupled with the lack of gate-keeper to the platforms themselves can give users free leeway to say whatever they feel, free from real-world consequences. Unlike traditional media publishers who have individuals in place to curate and cultivate content being published, social media platforms have given everyday technology users the ability to publish unfiltered, instantaneously around the globe. The United States' freedom of speech protections also protect individual users from consequences for using outrage

language (Wolf, 2010). These abilities have allowed spaces like Facebook to become breeding grounds for online hate. This increased use of hateful language full of outrage can lead to the kinds of highly polarized, emotionally driven conversations we saw in the content gathered.

Polarization Post Examples:

"Democrats want to sanitize history. They are like the Taliban blowing up thousand year old statues in Afghanistan."

"Perhaps the United States should be split up---let these white supremacists have their own hell-hole country to live in,---let them have their white utopia---perhaps build a big wall and moat around it since they are so fond of walls----and let the rest of us who love diversity and freedom and people of all cultures have our own country"

Since the platforms are designed to curate content based on user's likes and dislikes you would expect like-minded individuals to view similar content; however, cross sections occur where users of different political backgrounds view the same content. This cross-sectional information consumption creates areas where outrage language can grow and perpetuate as logic and reason are stripped away from argument and replaced by emotionally driven sentiment that is reactionary in its essence. This reactionary kind of communication helps to enhance polarization of viewpoints, presenting two very strong sides of discussion but leaving very little space for moderate viewpoints and logical argument to exist.

Reactionary Post Examples:

"Sucks to be you protestors!!"

"Go back to Europe"

Although we found content that fit into each of the five categories of outrage outlined by Berry and Sobieraj (2014), users predominantly hid their outrage behind a veil of mockery (47.4% Table 2). This could indicate a level of consciousness by the users that what they are saying or how they are saying may not be acceptable forms of communicating. Hiding behind humor may make it easier for users to feel their language isn't that harmful or demeaning. It could also give them a valid excuse if someone in their

offline lives were to comment negatively on their content, allotting the user to use phrases like "I was just joking" to hide their true intentions.

Rhetorical analysis of the content led to the discovery of two dominant linguistic themes derived from the outrage language: one of a "loyalty to a romanticized history" among supporters and a "ridicule of intelligence" by critics. Those in supporters of the rally overwhelmingly spoke of the importance of preserving history and diligently defended the historical figures portrayed in the statues as being important heroes of our past that cannot and should not be removed from the public space. This romanticization of historical figures was also often paired with a dismissal of racism from being a problem in society, with supporters often dismissing critics' experiences with racism as not having happened or being as prevalent. Although it was not tabulated, future studies on a correlation between a romanticized understanding of history and the dismissal of present day racism could provide insight into whether these two linguistic patterns are intrinsically correlated.

Table 2
Differences in Pervasiveness Between Supporters and Critics

	Supporters	Critics	Total Posts
Insulting & Emotional Language	43 (22.8%)	146 (77.2%)	189 (28.1%)
Name Calling	33 (37%)	56 (63%)	89 (13.2%)
Character Assassination	19 (35.8%)	34 (64.2%)	53 (7.9%)
Mockery	81 (25.4%)	238 (74.6%)	319(47.4%)
Ideologically Extreme Language	10 (43.5%)	13 (56.5%)	23 (3.4%)

Mockery Post Example:

"Michael Sampson the only history you're erasing exists in your uneducated mind. Robert E. Lee lost the war but he was a great General."

Critics on the other hand predominantly used language meant to ridicule the intelligence of the rally participants or online supporters. Often using sentiment that questioned or outright attacked the supporters' overall intelligence instead of providing logical counter arguments. They also presented an overall sentiment of anger and resentment towards anyone or thing that they feel represents the systemic racism that is believed to be integrated into our societal and governmental institutions. One singular and important aspect of the use of outrage language is that it expresses anger, bitterness, and a sense of victimization. One may be "mad as hell" if s/he feels that the establishment politics and institutions do not give them a voice, marginalizes them, or they are worse off than those who they perceive as entitled or privileged (Rao & Haina, 2017). Similar sentiments of anger were found in critics posts and comments with many users focusing on referencing feelings of abuse and marginalization over the events surrounding the Charlottesville rally and counter protests.

Ridicule of Intelligence Post Examples:

"To every ignorant racist Trump supporter who wants to compare these inbred redneck racists to BLM ⋯ BLM is fighting for equality for all people. These racist Trump supporters are against equality for all people. See the difference?"

"As a result of this carnage…EVERY SINGLE CONFEDERATE STATUE AND MONUMENT IN THIS COUNTRY SHOULD BE TAKEN DOWN"

DISCUSSION

Scholars have written about how social media allows for "harvesting of indignation" and that Facebook and other such sites give people the venue to verbally vent, mobilize, and strategize civil disobedience (Gerbaudo, 2012, p. 76). This research has focused on the nature of the outrage language used on Facebook during the Charlottesville rally and protests during Summer 2017. Berry and Sobieraj's (2014) work on "outrage industry" was used to study Facebook posts and comments of supporters and critics about race and racism. We defined and divided outrage language into the following categories: insulting

language, name-calling, mockery, and emotional and inclusive language. Our research revealed a dominance of outrage language on social media posts and comments, with 76.1% posts and comments using more than one form of outrage language. Using Deuze's method of thematic analysis, dominant themes were derived from the language of the posts and comments about the rally: "polarization," "reactionary communication," "loyalty to a romanticized history," and "ridicule of intelligence."

Berry and Sobieraj assert that the outrage industry undercuts democracy because it increases intolerance for others' ideas, stigmatizes compromise and bipartisanship, and inflates our sense of moral righteousness. Outrage creates "insular feedback loops" where only those with whom we consent are allowed to express opinions, and the rest are shouted down (Berry & Sobieraj, 2014, p. 212). The explosion of outrage language on Facebook is possible in part because, unlike on cable network news and radio talk shows, there are no filtering processes in place—anyone can comment and post any of their opinions and thoughts with little explanation or context, using derogatory and dehumanizing language with impunity. As this research suggests, particularly disturbing is the prevalence of outrage language when it comes to racial concerns and conflicts. The stunningly vitriolic and vicious attacks against supporters and critics show the breadth and depth of racial polarization. It also suggests that there is a vast amount of misinformation about racism that escapes scrutiny and analysis in social media culture. Since the presidential election of 2016, there has been a marked increase in white nationalism, Neo-Nazi rallies, and hate crimes across the country and Bruni (2017) warns, "Our language is growing coarser. Our images, too. And even if they are only rarely [a] conduit to violence, they are always a path away from high minded engagement."

Combating Outrage Language & Online Hate

As extreme messaging finds a safe haven within the United States' freedom of speech the need to address users' understanding of misguiding information and blatant lies is dire (Wolf, 2010). Democratic practice requires access to good quality rather than inaccurate or deeply distorted information. More research needs to be done in order to determine if social media spaces are detrimental to democratic processes and to a society committed to civil and human rights. Focusing on government policy to combat online hate speech and hold those accountable who cause harm is one way to combat the issue;

however, due to the United States' rights to free speech it is up to the platforms to regulate users' content. Platforms like Facebook have functions in place for users to be able to flag hate speech and misinformation and regularly suspend accounts who engage in perpetuating that kind of content, however, regulation and censorship does not get to the root of the problem, media literacy, or a lack thereof. Connections between media literacy and the ability to participate within a democratic society must be explored. Media literacy, or the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms, builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy. Although there are numerous organizations that are working towards media literacy goals for adults, there is not a nationwide push or system developed to effectively educate the mass of citizens already operating within the various social media platforms in the United States. To be serious about combating outrage language and online hate speech requires reflection and acknowledging the illiteracy that is helping to create users who engage with these kinds of harmful communication patterns. Censoring may stop or slow down the spread of messages, but it does not stop their creation. To stop the creation of online hate and outrage language is the ultimate goal that could lead to the development of a more inclusive and enriching online social environment and can only be done through changing the ways users behave online.

Although this study is only a sliver of the greater picture on racial relations in the United States it provides a good case study into different patterns of rhetoric that are a part of the way users on these platforms are discussing and understanding racism in the United States. This insight into the use of mockery and hate allows us to begin to understand how racist messages continue to be perpetuated online and how certain systems may be helping to enhance racial division amongst users of Social Networking Sites like Facebook. While the rally and counter protests have ended, the need for research about outrage language, race and proliferation from social media spaces to offline settings remains urgent.

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