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The construction of extremism in the ecology of language: A case of Great Replacement discourse

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Abstract

While Renaud Camus' "Great Replacement" (GR) theory demonstrates the profound power of language to affect human behavior, it remains unclear how the text constructs a weaponized, imagined environment that actors mistake for their physical, perceived reality. The paper focuses on this ecolinguistic effect of GR discourse. Using methods of a systems approach and critical discourse analysis, we examine the English edition of *You Will Not Replace Us!* The aim of the study is to trace how the text becomes embedded *within* a specific cognitive ecology, rather than functioning as a statement *about* an external world. We establish that this ecological embeddedness is both operational—where the narrative becomes integrated into certain cognitive processes—and orientational, guiding its readers toward a specific type of environment. The findings show that Camus' discourse provides both enablement and constraint for action in perceived and imagined environments. Regarding constraint, perception and imagination become bound by the zero-sum logic of a symbolic and metaphorical action—namely, replacement. Conversely, the cognitive enablers are four semiotic tendencies that structure verbal thought on an empirical level: tendencies toward repetition ("allness"), symmetry (imitation), identity ("sameness"), and stability ("stillness"). The narrative fulfills these tendencies by focusing on themes of pervasiveness, the loss and demise of values, the reversion of meaning, the separation of names and things, and an overarching sense of finality and determinism. Allowing for these four empirical "ways of meaning", the narrative leads to cognitive entrapment. Consequently, GR adherents confuse their perceived environment with an imagined one.

Keywords: *ecolinguistics; cognitive ecology; entrapped cognition; mimetic doubling; brain-body-environment system*

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Конструирование экстремизма в экологии языка (на примере дискурса Великого замещения)

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Аннотация

Хотя теория «Великого замещения» (ВЗ) Рено Камю наглядно демонстрирует колоссальную силу воздействия языка на человеческое поведение, до сих пор остается неясным, каким образом данный текст конструирует иллюзорную среду, которую радикализованные субъекты ошибочно принимают за физическую реальность. В фокусе настоящего исследования находится именно этот эколингвистический эффект дискурса ВЗ. В качестве материала исследования используется англоязычное издание манифеста “*You Will Not Replace Us!*”, анализируемое с помощью системного подхода и критического дискурс-анализа. Цель исследования — проследить, как нарратив «Великого замещения» укореняется в конкретной когнитивной экологии, а не просто функционирует как описание внешнего мира. Проведенный анализ показал, что эта экологическая укорененность носит как операциональный характер (когда текст интегрируется в сами мыслительные процессы), так и ориентационный (когда он направляет читателя к определенному восприятию среды). Дискурс Камю, открывая возможности для действий в воспринимаемой и воображаемой среде, одновременно накладывает на эти действия жесткие когнитивные рамки. В результате восприятие и воображение оказываются подчиненными одним и тем же паттернам интерморфного мышления, укорененного в логике «нулевой суммы». Согласно этой логике, две противоположности неизбежно исключают, то есть замещают друг друга, что является неотъемлемым свойством любого символического действия, коим и выступает «замещение». Напротив, когнитивными возможностями для действия становятся четыре фундаментальные семиотические потребности, структурирующие вербальное мышление на эмпирическом уровне: потребности в повторении («всечность»), симметрии (имитация), идентичности («одинаковость») и стабильности («статичность»). Нарратив удовлетворяет эти потребности, фокусируясь на темах всеобъемлющего присутствия, перевернутых смыслов, упадка ценностей и утраты связи между объектом и его названием, а также на общем ощущении предопределенности. Давая возможность реализовать универсальные способы эмпирического «поиска смысла», нарратив завлекает читателя в ловушку иллюзорной определенности относительно реальности происходящего. Таким образом, нарратив подкрепляет экстремистскую идеологию, заключая адептов в цикл, где они путают воспринимаемую среду с воображаемой.

Ключевые слова: эколингвистика; когнитивная экология; ловушки познания; миметическое двойничество; система «мозг-тело-среда»

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1. Introduction

Extremist ideological constructs often clearly exemplify the destructive environmental outcomes of language. The destruction is twofold: adherents translate extremist delusions into self-destructive action, while innocent people are targeted simply for their perceived vulnerability. The more destructive this practice is, the more effective and, importantly, widespread the theory becomes.

The Great Replacement (GR) conspiracy theory, articulated by Renaud Camus, is a critical case in point. Having transitioned from fringe subcultures to the political mainstream, this ideology has resulted in significant documented fatalities globally—most notably in Norway in 2011 (77 deaths), New Zealand in 2019 (51) and the United States in 2019 (23)¹. A more recent incident in Moscow (December 2025)², involving the targeted killing of a 10-year-old boy of Asian descent by a radicalized teenager, further demonstrates the theory’s expanding reach. In light of these escalating global atrocities, the central question of this study emerges: how does one become an avid adherent of this discourse, and why is such a weaponized, narrative-imagined environment of dehumanized substitutions so seamlessly mistaken for a perceived reality?

So far, these questions have been addressed only partially. The GR rhetoric is an example of extremist ideology (Dennison & Kustov 2025) because it dehumanizes specific demographic groups as ‘invaders,’ portraying an apocalyptic situation. Researchers have focused on particular discursive “alienation strategies for incitement” (Etaywe & Zappavigna 2023), as well as the semiotic practices of branding (Tebaldi & Del Percio 2026) and memeing (Hernández 2024). In a more holistic manner, the GR rhetoric has been approached as an affective grammar—an underlying emotional logic that normalizes radical ideas (Holzberg 2024). Yet, the question of why Camus’ narrative is perceived not as a work of affective fiction, but as an empirical “reality check,” remains unanswered. In this paper, we undertake an attempt to examine this extremist ideology from an *ecolinguistic perspective*: a multidisciplinary scientific project investigating language-environment interdependencies (Steffensen, Döring & Cowley 2024; Ponton 2024; Poole 2025; Kravchenko 2025; Steffensen 2025; Druzhinin 2025, 2026a).

The study thus aims to analyze the ecological effect that the narrative exerts on human cognition. We seek to achieve this aim by addressing the following research objectives:

1. To delineate the scope of cognitive ecolinguistics and clarify how language provides an ecology for human cognition.

¹ <https://csblab.com/2022/03/01/the-great-replacement-theory-violence/>

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/16/world/europe/russia-school-stabbing-attack-moscow.html>

2. To elaborate on the concept of cognitive entrapment through which humans enmesh and confuse their perceived reality with linguistically imagined actions and environments.

3. To examine the specific cognitive constraints and enablers provided by the GR narrative that facilitate this confusion.

2. Theoretical framework and literature review

2.1. Cognitive ecology and cognitive ecolinguistics

As part of an ecolinguistic project, cognitive ecolinguistics (Steffensen 2025) distinguishes itself as a non-representational and non-metaphorical approach to language and its ecology. As the etymology of the prefix “eco-” (“house(hold)”, “dwelling place”, “home”) suggests, language is not merely a description of or a narrative about how and where we live; rather, it *is* how and where we live. This is because linguistic behavior and ‘linguistically trained’ attention make our environment perceptible, actionable, and socially meaningful. In a Hallidayan sense, language provides resources for reality construal and reality construction; thus, what we perceive around us is “how we mean it” in language. In a more radical and literal sense, language—with its symbolic practices, artefacts, and patterns—provides an ecology for human cognition (i.e., for perception, action, and thought), effectively building “a house of our being” (Kravchenko 2025, 2026).

To explore these dynamics, cognitive ecolinguistics traces how humans and their environment constitute a single system through linguistic patterns of behavior and imagination. A robust body of empirical research supports this framework. For instance, a 2019 special issue of *Metaphor and Symbol* was devoted to ecological cognition, investigating metaphor as an ecological performance whose meaning emerges from projections of structure between a living organism and its perceived or imagined environment (Weben Jensen & Greve 2019; Gibbs Jr. 2019). Viewing language as an integral part of an extended human ecology and distributed cognition, Hutchins (1995) famously analyzed ship navigation as a network of people, tools, and environments operating beyond the local, here-and-now timescale. In a similar vein, Baggs and Steffensen (2024) explored aviation disasters through the lens of ecological psychology, demonstrating that group interaction is perceptually grounded in a task-based environment. By the same token, Trasmundi and Steffensen (2024) analyzed medical interactions in relational interdependency with both the unfolding situation and a history of knowledge, illustrating that the present environment extends far beyond what can be directly perceived. More recently, Druzhinin & Ramírez (2026a) focused on the “semiotic enmeshment” of perceived and imagined environments, further demonstrating the ecological reality of language and cognition on an operational level.

2.2. Cognitive entrapment

Language extends our ecological niche just as much as it constrains it. As Kravchenko (2024) notes, “it is a house of being that we cannot leave.” When we

interact with our environment linguistically—namely, through tongue-hand-eye coordinations and attentional movements—we learn a skill we cannot unlearn. This skill compels us to perceive, understand, and feel our surroundings through the prism of these very coordinations. Consequently, language becomes our dominant perspective—the locus from which we experience everything else. We humans do not merely live in the world *by knowing* it linguistically; rather, we live in the world *as we know* it linguistically (cf. Hayes, Strosahl & Wilson 2003: 182).

While the environment offers animals direct opportunities for action—affordances as immediate relations between the organism and its surroundings (Chemero 2009)—human linguistic relations are *derived*. In the human context, there is no clear boundary between what enables an action (an environmental condition) and what constrains it (a pattern of experience). In other words, an environmental condition gives pattern to our experience, while that experience simultaneously imbues the condition with meaning. Perceived and imagined environments thus become enmeshed, diffused, and, in more extreme cases, confused. This confusion gives rise to cognitive entrapment as an instance of dysfunctional brain-body-environment engagement.

The essence of cognitive entrapment can be captured by Abraham Maslow's famous adage: if the only tool you have is a hammer, you treat everything as if it were a nail. The environment is reduced to an imagined extension of a perceived tool use—a problem-solving shortcut for the agent, but a destructive imposition on the environment. The same holds true for human cognition, where linguistic behavior, perception, and thought dangerously blur together and fail to be environmentally adaptive. Consequently, cognitive entrapment manifests primarily under conditions of “perception-thought-behavior enmeshment”, making it applicable to analyses of modern media ecosystems, AI interactions, and highly influential conspiracy theories.

Druzhinin (2025) traces the roots of this entrapped cognition to certain structural invariants shared between actions performed in perceived versus imagined environments, or between empirical experience and verbal thought. These invariants are anchored in our embodied values and organismic needs, which persist across both the sensorimotor and semantic levels of our environmental interactions. If we accept that linguistic meaning does not reside beyond linguistic behavior itself (Steffensen & Harvey 2018), it follows that the physical properties of a linguistic sequence—how we coordinate gestures in speech and arrange marks in text—determine everything that semantically follows (Druzhinin & Ramírez 2025). By shaping our semantic reality, these physical properties transform into ‘*semiotic tendencies*’: the unconscious desires for a situation to unfold in a specific way, both (i) semantically, before we even speak about it, and (ii) empirically, before we are even physically present in it but are speaking or thinking about it.

For analytical purposes, we will identify these as the needs for repetition, imitation, identity, and stability, characterizing them as the traps of allness, symmetry, sameness, and stillness.

2.2.1. *Trap of allness*

Biologically, life regulation begins with homeostasis — recurrent stabilities that the organism achieves through “primordial feelings of being alive” (Damasio & Damasio 2023). Recurrence is akin to survival for the organism. Living is conservative, cognition is too: what happened once will occur again. States of neural activity are conserved in the memory of the body. Movements, actions, situations must be repeated to re-achieve these states. On the sensorimotor level, experiences are schematized by the principle of “good” repeatability (whatever is repeatable is good). The appearance of language does not change anything much. Schemes just become more complex and transformative, however, the main tendency for ‘againness’ remains. Vocalizations (physical expressions) are mere patterns of action, behavioral “repeatables” (Cowley & Gahrn-Andersen 2022), that indicate and induce recurrence. By the same token, verbal thought is dominated by generalizations. As a result, we get into the linguistic habit of ignoring individual items of experience because they conveniently fall within a larger boundary of category names or umbrella terms. This habit becomes a *trap of allness* as we unwittingly describe, and deal with, a part in terms of the whole, an item in terms of the collection, one in terms of all: we mean someone in particular, but say everyone; we mean ‘several’ or ‘indefinite number of times’ but say ‘always’; we mean ‘not this time,’ but say ‘never.’

2.2.2. *Trap of symmetry*

The so-called mirror neurons allow us not only to repeat but also to imitate someone (or something) to get what we want but do not have yet. This capacity to use objects as signs, or media, results in the “doubleness” of our perception: what is present shows something else hidden from view. That is how symmetry becomes a property of our perception and, later, thought: we tend to differentiate equal or similar parts against or around an (imagined) axis that separates them. Symmetry makes us want to search for matching items and ignore those that do not compare and contrast. Matching implies the existence of some model against which items are judged to be good or bad, right or wrong, true or false. Our language embodies symmetry as it brings out the “two-getherness” of similarity and difference.

2.2.3. *Trap of sameness*

No imitation and no semiosis are possible without identification — the acceptance of something as something else. Identification eliminates variables and reduces uncertainty. It is naturally heuristic to make things equal in order to think and act faster. If a trigger persists throughout multiple experiential situations, it is identified with one and the same experience. Language continues this tendency by providing us with labels that do not, and simply cannot, change every time we use them in multiple experiential situations.

Alfred Korzybski's favorite motto "The map is not the territory" (2023) basically means that our abstractions (maps) often make us unaware that they are abstractions from something else (territories). For example, when someone offers us cookies, we should remember that they offer us what they term "cookies," i.e., a private experience of a food and a knowledge of what this experience is called. While terms do not vary from person to person, the termed experiences do. That is why if we implicitly trust the apparent sameness of the word, we might expect the same experience that we have come to associate with this word. However, our expectations may be ruined as the offered cookies may taste bad or "uncookies-like". In the spirit of Korzybski, this example teaches us not to eat abstractions from food. One and the same word with which we operate on different levels of abstraction (e.g., on the level of eating and on the level of thinking about eating) leads us to identify and confuse things with names.

Yet, things are things, names are names. To believe that things are, or should be, names we know things by is a fallacy of identification, a failure to accept the changeability of knowledge and experience.

2.2.4. *Trap of stillness*

Processes (motor experiences) produce effects (sensorial experiences). Effects feel more real to us than processes because effects always stay while processes go (ahead). It is much easier and safer to deal with something stable, solid, and fixed. What has physical shape and boundaries is accessible to our body and more understandable to our mind. If an experience is fluid and has no shape, we give it this shape of certainty. We do so linguistically, by "cementing" a dynamic process with the help of its still-life version—a name, a noun that gives us a sense of control. Our linguistic preference for words of existence over words of happening (nominalism) accounts for our tendency to focus on objects, rather than on movements of thought. Entrapped in a world of *stillness*, we believe that what is happening should exist somewhere in some tangible and final form.

3. Data and methodology

In this study, we investigate cognitive entrapment by examining empirical data from a real-world case. Renaud Camus's Great Replacement narrative provides the material for our analysis; specifically, we critique his English-language edition, *You Will Not Replace Us!* (2018). The documented real-world impact of the GR conspiracy theory on its adherents—manifesting globally in mass shootings and violence—justifies treating this discourse as a stark instance of cognitive entrapment.

Distinct from traditional discourse analysis, our approach treats GR not merely as a narrative *about* an external environment, but as a narrative embedded *within* a specific cognitive ecology. In other words, this narrative offers opportunities for action across both perceived and imagined environments. However, GR adherents

conflate these two levels of abstraction, failing to distinguish between the two modes of experience. This confusion gives rise to delusion and a profound sense of entrapment.

We hypothesize that two primary factors account for this effect. First, the cognitive operations triggered by the narrative become constrained by the very language through which the narrative is constructed. Put simply, the uncritical reader becomes unable to achieve a transformative understanding of the subject and think outside the terms in which that subject is rendered. Second, empirical perception fails to provide negative feedback to challenge these thoughts, thereby sustaining an illusion of certainty. This enablement occurs because the reader's text-constrained verbal thought becomes structurally consonant with their physical, empirical experience. This consonance is realized precisely when their semiotic needs for repetition, imitation, identity, and stability are satisfied.

While these two entrapment factors can occur naturally in human cognition, we argue that in the case of GR, they are deliberately channeled by Camus. He systematically “manufactures” the cognitive ecology of GR by blurring the boundaries between *how* we think what we think and *where* we think it. This ecological effect is achieved through a structural congruence between the presumed act of “replacement” and its description—that is, between the assumed phenomenon and the ways of knowing and imagining it.

To evaluate these dynamics, we map the cognitive constraints and enablers of the GR discourse. Our cognitive ecolinguistic critique (critical discourse and cognitive analysis) focuses on the circularity between cognitive enablers (the structural invariants of perception and thought) and cognitive constraints (the patterns that channel perception and thought). Consequently, this investigation prioritizes the principle of mutual causation grounded in systems approach (Dávila & Maturana 2023), critical cybernetics (Krippendorff 2023), and the hypothesis of entrapped cognition (Druzhinin & Rakedzon 2024; Druzhinin 2025). In the following sections, we transition from this theoretical foundation to a procedural examination of the text, detailing the specific discursive steps Camus employs to create and sustain cognitive entrapment. By tracing his replacements of meanings and words, we illustrate how he carves a path that may direct the reader toward the blind acceptance of the GR.

4. Analysis and results

4.1. Cognitive constraint of the replacement conspiracy

This section examines the specific cognitive constraints that the GR narrative imposes on its readers' cognitive operations. The primary objective is to demonstrate how both perception and imagination become bound by identical patterns of reasoning rooted in the action that we describe as “replacement.”

4.1.1. Replacement as a figure of action

The action of replacement is not a directly observable physical action such as grabbing, turning, or pushing an object. Determining whether object A substitutes object B is problematic; empirical observation is limited to the movement of objects in space and their specific arrangement in time. In the empirical world, two objects merely alter their respective locations, which subsequently affects the chronology of observation. Consequently, replacement occurs conceptually rather than physically. For example, a skilled magician who replaces a ribbon with a rabbit does so in our imagination.

When we perceive two items as replaceable, it means that we have already established the relationship of similarity between them on the basis of function, appearance or structure. Their resemblance should be so strong that when one makes itself present, the other, absent, one is evoked instead. At the same time, they still need to be different, in a way that one item cannot be co-present with the other. One of them must sensorially “go” when the other “comes”. Camus defines this dichotomy in the following way:

“Being identical is being exactly *like* something or somebody else: that is, *not* being it” (Camus: 2018: 12, emphasis in the original).

Such an interdependence of two mutually exclusive, absent-present, items in our perception and thought is nothing more than a property of our perception and thought. We are wired to see how things are alike yet different, to compare the beginning with the end, to contrast the now and then of our experience, to feel what is absent in our present situation. In sum, we tend to construe the world as a *bipolar* affair along the lines of binary, either-or, logic: Something happens because something else, that its opposite, does not happen. This way of what Jean Piaget called intermorphic reasoning comes naturally, as a capacity for language and conceptualization, or grasping abstract (distant or absent) things based on concrete (perceptually present) processes.

Such a symbolic replacement of one thing with another in our (verbal) thought and action can be elegantly described as *metaphor* — *the process of experiencing, understanding and, by extension, using one thing in terms of another*. For example, a round saucepan lid in the hands of a walking child is a good way for her to imaginatively re-enact the perceptual experience of driving. The lid perceptually replaces the wheel. The same goes for our gestural ways of expression. Any vocal, facial or manual gesture perceptually replaces another experience which is the semantic implication of this gesture. That is how our bodily movements become linguistically meaningful and turn into words, names, utterances.

Hence, in a broad sense, replacement is a *figure of action* rather than action itself. It is a metaphorical process that is not directly observable because it only structures what we (can) observe. For this reason, there is nothing unnatural in that we replace things linguistically: an experience with its memory, the explained with the explanation, a more abstract concept with a less abstract one. We live this way. We understand things by replacing them with names. Our life would not be

meaningful and our world livable if we could not operate with interpretations—reduced versions or impoverished substitutions—of our richer experiences. More than that, our culture as a domain of artefacts and tool-based interactions would not be possible without imaginative replacing.

4.1.2. “Replacement” thinking

Camus claims that our modern societies contribute

- (1) “to the covering of the world with eager signs of what is less and less- [...] the replacement of the thing by its name, by its designation, by an explanation about what it is, or was, or would like to be” (Camus 2018: 13),

In (1) he aggressively attempts to camouflage a universal cognitive pattern as a current affair of political origin. The wheel that Camus reinvents assumes the size of a wrecking ball when he admits that it is “one of the major minor problems” (ibidem). And the real problem here is that few would disagree with this contention, especially after reading a massive list of carefully cherrypicked the-more-controversial-the-better societal, civil and cultural replacements:

- (2) “Stone masonry is being replaced by ferroconcrete, concrete by plaster, marble by chip aggregate, timber by PVC, town and countryside by the universal suburb, earth by cement and tar, seaside by seaside resorts, mountains by ski resorts and ski lifts, paths by hiking trails, nature by land-use planning in expectation of economic spinoffs, real people by B&B hosts, clients by friends ...” (ibidem: 14).

As is known from the belief bias effect, by accepting some part of an argument, often the concluding one, we risk accepting the whole argument no matter how valid it is. Why could Camus so easily succeed in making his readers feel bad about cognitive acts of replacing, in other words, metaphorizing?

The answer is twofold. First, most of us simply are not aware of this pervasive habit. Replacing things conceptually and perceptually is an automated pattern of our behavior that seldom becomes an object of reflection. When Camus draws our attention to this pattern (under the guise of a certain left-minded policy), we turn more critical than before to people, events and places around us and begin to notice tendencies that used to escape our attention. This shift functions much like an eye-opening work of psychology: it equips the reader with a new conceptual framework, allowing them to retroactively recognize and label a phenomenon as a distinct problem.

Second, the symbolic action of replacement may appear ethically unfair, relationally insufficient or incomplete. Let us make it explicit why. In a cognitive sense, replacement represents a basic form of verbal thought. Choosing (or feeling like choosing) one item instead of another locks us into a binary, either-or understanding of the world where change *in* people means change *of* people. For

example, when someone starts behaving unusually, we often say that they are being someone else, they are not themselves, etc. This logic directly derives from sensorimotor intelligence and makes it hard to conceptualize the dynamics of living and change. However, developmentally, we are capable of more sophisticated thinking. At a higher, operational level of thought our logic becomes relational, systemic, or perspectival. We operate with hypothetical, i.e., reversible processes, that is why we conceptualize the world as a consequential, transformative affair: When I see my friend behaving unusually, it does not mean that *either* of us has been changed *by* someone else, it only means that certain changes have happened *in both* of us simultaneously.

Let us illustrate in Table the developmental stages of intelligence in the following table where “replacement mindset” takes an intermediary position between an infant’s solipsism and a maturing knowledge system of an adolescent:

Developmental stages of human intelligence

Stages / Milestones	Intramorphic	Intermorphic	Transmorphic
Manner of thinking	Polarized	Dichotomous (bipolar)	Relational (systemic, perspectival)
Mode of thinking	Sensorimotor	Verbal and sensorimotor	Formal operational and verbal
Method of thinking	Repetition (Schematization)	Comparison	Hypothesizing and deduction
Patterns of reasoning	<i>Something happens because nothing else happens.</i>	<i>Something happens because something else, that is its opposite, does not happen.</i>	<i>Something happens because something else, including its opposite, also happens.</i>

This suggests that individuals capable of advanced hypothetico-deductive reasoning—those used to analyzing multiple variables—may instinctively sense a flaw in the logic of ‘replacement,’ particularly when it is framed as a pervasive political force. Consider an adult’s reaction to a child swearing: it feels obviously wrong, yet that same adult may swear frequently without recognizing the irony or the ‘childishness’ of their own behavior. We are equally vulnerable to this lack of self-awareness regarding ‘replacement. We may criticize the concept while simultaneously using the same flawed logic to think about it. Consequently, we risk becoming trapped in a cycle of wanting to ‘replace everything back, unaware that we are merely repeating the very dichotomous patterns we intended to oppose.

In this section, we have shown that the GR narrative uses “replacement” as a cognitive constraint on its readers’ perception and imagination, creating an ecology of replaceable people, things and events. In the following section, we will examine why this constraint is effective and the empirical experience of GR adherents does not provide negative feedback to challenge this “replacement thinking.”

4.2. Cognitive enablers of the replacement conspiracy

In what follows we will examine the discursive exploitation of four cognitive traps in Camus' narrative discussed above. We will refer to them as cognitive enablers of GR conspiracy.

4.2.1. *The trap of allness*

Camus' discourse gets one into the trap of allness in two different ways. The first step is a category name used instead of specific appellations. To be global, "great" and all-around, the alleged substitutions of ethnic groups must be conveniently named. The name must apply to everyone without exception and evoke all the possible roles one could imagine in this situation. Camus is honest about his efforts to find such a relatable term of allness for the assumptive demographic revolution. The choice of the word "replacement" proved handy because "at least, in French it has a lot of very convenient derivatives" (ibidem: 20):

Replacers (Muslim population, mostly from Africa)

Replacees (indigenous population of Europe)

Replacists (those who "want the change of people and civilization")

Antireplacists (those who oppose replacement)

Antireplacism (the protest movement against replacists and replacement).

These category names have a very general appeal: they are meant for everyone everywhere. Their inclusivity is a recipe for conspiracy. If each of us now thinks about their role in the replacement narrative, they will most likely identify themselves with either one or even several names from this list. The reader is free to engage in thought experiments and imagine being a replacee and a replacist or antireplacist at one at the same time.

The next stage of allness is relational. Category names give rise to Subject-Object relations that can contradict or compliment the category in an explanatory way. If relations are not contradictory, they are accepted as explanations of the category ("category accounts"): they are linguistic implications of this category in our perception and thought and serve as semantic guidelines by which we know the category and understand it better. For example, conversation analysts demonstrated that categories "mother" and "baby" both evoke and are evoked by the action of caretaking/caregiving—a linguistic relation that derives from the use of the words "mother" and "baby" in the first place, and accounts for what mothers and babies (should) do in our social reality. Yet, our expectations are not always met and this relation sometimes proves contradictory to the category name as not all mothers can or want to take care of their babies.

Camus makes his category perfectly consistent by allowing for all possible conceptual deviations. Consider the Subject-Object relationship between replacers and replacees: what justifies a replacer's ability to supplant replacees? There are three potential explanations.

First, there is the aspect of nature. One may argue that it is a Darwinian course of events: the replacer proves to be fitter than the replacee. Second, there is the element of force: the replacer may resort to aggression and violence. Lastly, there is the dimension of will, where the replacee seeks their own replacement.

Camus deftly integrates these three seemingly contradictory reasons. First, he suggests that immigrants possess inherent advantages over the indigenous population in terms of quantity, communal integrity and cultural identity:

- (3) And why should they, since they are numerous enough to create their own communities, use their own languages, pray their own gods, have their own manners of dressing, eating, loving, dwelling, working and behaving as citizens? The word integration has been abandoned, for all practical purposes. And for a good reason: if it were to apply to anyone these days, it should be to the indigenous population, the native French, summoned to join in a new multicultural and multiethnic society of which they are regarded only as *one portion*, not necessarily the *dominant* one (ibidem: 34, emphasis is ours).

Second, immigrants may also engage in criminal behavior and use force to achieve their aims (by being aggressive and violent, or in Camus' terms, nocent (ibidem: 51)). Finally, Camus portrays Europeans as passive, either silently acquiescing to or actively supporting replacement due to a globalist (replacist) agenda that is often accepted without question. He uses such terms as "Undifferentiated Human Matter" and "Davocracy" (ibidem: 114). When the notion of resistance to this agenda arises in the reader's mind, Camus swiftly reminds us that such resistance already exists and it is called "antireplacism" (ibidem: 22).

In sum, Camus creates the illusion of allness by circularity of derivative relations. Replacement as a term prompts connections that everyone relates to. The reason is simple: everyone has enough verbal knowledge and linguistic experience to make basic predictions about what people should do and how they should do it to be involved in what is termed "replacement." For example, participants are expected to oppose or help each other. However, replacement as a narrative may not resonate universally, as the relational dynamics between the assumed participants may evoke different conflicting emotions and experiences. What is told in the story of replacement may go against our linguistic expectations and life experience. The narrative can be easily denied or dismissed. Camus solves this problem: he loops the narrative back to the term itself and uses our verbal expectations as a scenario. He makes his reader believe that his narrative unfolds as it does precisely because the term implies it. As a result, the story becomes difficult, if not impossible, to deny or dismiss.

4.2.2. *The trap of symmetry*

Replacement is a symmetrical affair and Camus exploits semantic symmetry to show it. Because symmetry arises from imitation, he needs his readers to imagine

the opposites on the axis of some process. But opposition is not enough: the process should be conveniently reversible, allowing for the opposites to be expressed in a similar way—in terms of the process that brings them together. Thus, doubling should become a rivalry to make the clash, or replacement, inevitable.

It is noteworthy that the effect of symmetry pursued semantically by Camus is already well-known and was described by René Girard in his principle of *mimetic doubling*: the opposites tend to copy one another until any distance and distinction between them is lost, which leads to a violent clash. For example, a victim becomes the offender by imitating the latter just because they both want the same. Their shared object of desire is escape and liberation. The difference is in the nuance: while the offender wants to escape punishment, the victim wants to escape both the offender and the offender's escape. This nuance may get shortly lost in the mimetic game and another act of violence or aggression occurs.

Camus sets himself the task of reversing the victim-offender roles within two major historical processes. The first process is migration, or *fleeing*—an economic and social situation that is hard to control due to a number of unpredictable variables. The second one is *protection*—a policy that is initiated, carefully planned and conducted by a collective agent on various levels of political control. The chosen processes are already arrangeable in a perfectly symmetrical way. When one process can be viewed as the cause and/or effect of the other, a narrative of historical replacement is shaping up as if naturally. Yet, Camus takes this semantic replacement a little at a time, and he needs his reader, first of all, to fully appreciate the reversibility and invertibility of each process separately.

Let us begin with the core concept of migration. Migration is, basically, feeling *from* one place *to* another. People flee from danger and hardships to safety and comfort. These 'from' and 'to' are the opposites that can hardly be reconciled unless they are placed on some temporal, historical axis that unites them. Camus defines this axis of unity in the terms 'colonization', 'occupation', 'conquest' and 'invasion', making an unequivocal reference to European colonialism and imperialism between the 15th and 20th centuries. Those who migrate become a population formerly colonized, occupied, conquered or invaded. They flee from danger and hardships. Those who (have to) take them in is the former colonizer, occupant, conqueror, invader, enjoying the safety and comfort of their European way of life (ibidem: 144). What happens as a logical result of such a change is a renewal of colonization: the colonized continues the practice of colonization by getting closer to the former colonizer who re-enters into this practice but in a new status.

The juxtaposition of the two actors and their practices leaves the former invader no other choice but copy the status of the invaded. Thus, the former victim of invasion becomes a new invader; the reverse is also true—the former invader becomes the victim of a new invasion. The peaceful coexistence of the two is impossible and they replace each other in a violent clash. Safety and comfort turn into danger and hardships.

Camus entraps the reader in the disastrous effect of symmetry (or “mimetic doubling”) between immigrants and the European population, the two imaginary opposites on the imaginary axis, because he frames them symmetrically and grants them a symmetrical existence in the reader’s imagination. As a result, immigration is discursively visualized as invasion, living with migrants begins to mean ‘dying of migrants,’ where the only form of liberation becomes the linguistic reversal of migration, i.e., *remigration* (ibidem: 45).

Why does the former colonizer accept migrants so willingly, protesting against remigration? Camus argues that immigrants (i.e. the formerly colonized people) do not change directly into the proper colonizer, rather they become the colonizing people, a proxy of the colonizer. The colonizer is the bigger agent, a coalition of governments that self-dealingly engage in a global policy of replacement by protecting immigration and immigrants. Such an appearance of a third party, in the spirit of Girard’s so-called mimetic triangle, opens the way for new symmetries of values and beliefs.

According to Camus, if migration turns into settler colonization, it means it is ideologically encouraged. People should believe that it is fair, socially just to protect immigrants. The concept of race comes to the fore. Along the lines of the binary logic of replacement, ideological protection is presented by Camus as a reversible affair polarized by a belief in racial diversity. Our common sense suggests that those who respect racial diversity should be protected *against* those who hate racial diversity. At least, and Camus points this fact out repeatedly, it aligns ideologically with the lesson that humanity took away from the Nazi Occupation. People who hate racial diversity were labeled as racists back then while people who respect it are none other than people of diverse races themselves, races that exist. The opposition becomes explicitly aggressive after Camus adds that, semantically, racists are hostile towards existing races. According to the rules of Girard’s game of imitation, existing races should return this hostility. Camus makes it happen by substituting the term ‘existing races’ with the term ‘anti-racists’, i.e., those who are hostile to racists. This is where conceptual distinction becomes dangerously vague: if anti-racists maintain that races should be equal (should not exist in people’s minds ideologically), racists are convinced that races exist and are real. The semantic controversy is obvious because races that exist cannot deny the existence of races; by the same token, it is rather illogical for people who hate races that exist to support the existence of races. To resolve this controversy, Camus uses a trick of linguistic symmetry and makes a semantic reversal (replacement) as if by magic:

- (4) “The meaning of the word antiracism has itself taken such a sharp turn that it is almost as if it was totally reversed. It used to mean hostility towards racism; it has come to mean <...> hostility towards (the existence of) races. <...> But if the meaning of antiracism has changed radically, and it has, the meaning of racism should also change symmetrically. It should be the doctrine of people who love races, all of them, and pray for their equal preservation” (ibidem: 81–84).

So, nothing is strange now that racists have become those who love and respect races, while anti-racists should be treated in a reverse, hostile manner. The ideological order, inverted in 1945 by the “absurdly narrow sense” of the words ‘racism’ and its derivatives (ibidem: 78), is now back to normal thanks to Camus’s semantic replacement. What is mimetically expected from the reader is to continue this practice by copying it behaviorally, i.e., by engaging in racist behavior justified by fears of ethnic elimination.

Another type of protection is civil. On a citizenship level, people who abide by law should be protected from delinquents. With immigration in the picture, law-abiding citizens are those who do not feel safe and complain about immigrants. Immigrants are potential delinquents because they feel safe and even superior, carrying on with their invasion at liberty and complaining about nothing, having few laws to abide by and a lot of freedom to enjoy. Yet, an act of complaining about immigrants is an act of discrimination, selective attention to people of different races. As the reader already knows, in our modern society discrimination is a crime, which inverts the process of protection and transforms law-abiding citizens into delinquents:

- (5) “If you want to be left alone you had better be a delinquent. Police officers prefer to control honest citizens, who show them some respect, are afraid of them and will not shoot them at the first vexation” (ibidem: 121).

As a result, it is not ordinary citizens but immigrants, invaders who are protected from any possible danger. The process of *protection* turns into the process of *destruction* as governments that should be there to protect people “are in fact very determined to destroy them” (ibidem: 122). The proclaimed motto of the modern western world —*living together* (with immigrants)—is revealed to mean quite the opposite —*dying from* (immigrants).

Summing it up, symmetry structures our thought, language and perception. Experientially, we are made of symmetry, and we search for symmetry, we create things symmetrically and we create symmetry. We are seldom aware of our symmetrical view of the world. It often escapes our attention that we understand one thing in terms of its opposite just because they are two poles of one and the same process reversible in our imagination. When we think about something that is reversible, invertible and is characterized by two poles, we anticipate our living better. It is remarkable how Camus mobilizes symmetry as an ecological resource in his replacement discourse.

The feared “ethnic substitution”—the replacement of one people with another—is actually a self-fulfilling act of semantic replacement. Camus triggers this in the reader’s mind by exploiting a need for symmetry, presenting ideas as if they were reflected in a mirror. By presenting a reversible, back-and-forth process—a “vestibule” where entrance and exit flip based on the observer’s direction—he makes the transformation of terms feel inevitable. Within this logic, immigration easily becomes invasion, remigration turns into liberation, and racism

is rebranded as a “love of races” while protection of races transforms into their destruction. By simply shifting the direction of the reader's perspective, Camus flips the poles of victim and offender.

4.2.3. *The trap of sameness*

While things change—alongside our experiences and knowledge of them—the language we use to label them remains the same. These rigid labels are meant to guide us, but they instead become a trap. Under their immutable lens, we identify a thing with its name and understand transformation in the following way: *if a thing is not the same, it must disappear just because the label by which we know this thing cannot change*. Because our verbal intelligence resists the very change we experience viscerally, a perceived change *in* something becomes an imagined change *of* something.

Camus adeptly employs the trap of sameness to explore the theme of change, weaving a subtle reasoning pattern into his discourse: “*X is not X anymore*.” He highlights a traditional, familiar, or timeless issue and juxtaposes it with the way it is termed, confronting readers with the unsettling notion of irreversible change in what is supposed to be stable and fixed. This discomfort colors the perception of change, casting it in a negative light and often leading to feelings of frustration or even “daze”. As Camus notes,

- (6) “Things, beings, feelings have totally changed or have been turned into their contrary, but they have kept their old names, the name of what they are no more... thus creating a lot of confusion and adding to the general sense of daze” (ibidem: 149).

In essence, it is Camus who creates confusion by prompting readers to transition between two levels of abstract thought: the essence of the thing and its name. This transition, based on the flawed assumption that the map is the territory, leaves readers feeling uneasy—if not anxious—when they realize that the map is diverging from the territory. Let us break down Camus’s “X is not X” discourse into its distinct components.

1. Refugees are not refugees anymore.

Every individual can connect with the concept of refugees through both linguistic and personal experience. When this comparison is taken a step further, it often leads to contrast or opposition, particularly when guided by a masterful orator like Camus. He utilizes the term “refugees” in two distinct ways: first, as a relatable term recognized and understood by all language users; and second, as a relative item of knowledge and experience that may or may not resonate with others.

Camus describes the term as a gesture of seeking asylum: “Welcoming a refugee is offering him a place to rest for a given period, a chance to escape persecution, and an opportunity to reconstitute his forces before going back to his fight for liberty, dignity, and a normal life in his own country” (ibidem: 145). However, in the description of his subjective experience, refugees also become a

symbol of invasion—individuals who appear to make their homes rather than seek asylum on European soil:

- (7) “In truth the huge majority of migrants are not refugees at all<...>. They find it easier to go and take advantage of more comfortable civilizations, while not realizing, apparently, that that well-being and that relative order they envy is the result of long collective efforts, constraints, self-denials, and will be reduced to naught by their mere arrival, since they are not part of that history and have not been taught for generations how to behave in order to make that specific society last and thrive” (ibidem: 144).

These competing descriptions generate differing understandings and experiences of what it means to be a refugee. The reason for this is obvious: these descriptions are abstractions from each other. Simultaneously, Camus creates an “identification in disguise” between these perspectives, implicitly equating them through the shared term “refugee,” whose sameness he consistently emphasizes. This approach evokes a sense of unease in the reader as they confront their disillusionment with the familiar word.

2. French people are not French anymore.

In his reflections on the national and ethnic composition of replacers and replacees, Camus observes,

- (8) “It is all very good that there are French people who are yellow, French people who are black, French people who are brown. They show that France is open to all the races and that it has a universal vocation. But this is only as long as they remain a small minority. Otherwise, France would not be France anymore. When all is said and done, we are a European people of white race, Greek and Latin culture, and Christian religion” (ibidem: 66).

Camus offers a traditional interpretation of ‘French’ as synonymous with a European culture rooted in a white racial identity. He contrasts this with the modern interpretation shaped by multiculturalism. The anticipated identity between the two descriptions that the term ‘French’ typically evokes fails to materialize, potentially instilling fear of something valuable being lost. The reader might feel hostile toward those who can be responsible for the alleged disappearance of French nationality.

3. Culture is not culture anymore.

The concept of culture becomes another misnomer in Camus’ exploration of the modern world. He delivers a poignant critique of society, asserting that “culture died or at least emptied of its meaning” (ibidem: 105). In the past, culture was “high culture”, reserved for the educated elite who possessed refined tastes in literature, music, and art. To participate in cultural activities was a sign of prestige. Engaging in cultural pursuits was a symbol of prestige; being cultured was a hallmark of aristocracy. Those in power were characterized by their intellect, sophisticated manners, and reverence for history and classical works. Camus suggests that strong

traditions of elitism once safeguarded genuine culture, delineating clear boundaries between social classes and preventing their erosion.

However, with the rising influence of the lower middle class (petite bourgeoisie) from Africa, Camus observes a troubling transformation: “culture and show business have become synonymous” (ibidem: 103) and “what used to be seen as culture is now considered as the rather suspicious hobby of an extinct social class” (ibidem: 104). He attributes this shift in meaning to the popularization of smaller and simpler genres that have democratized cultural engagement and made culture easier for the masses to understand. For example, he notes that when people refer to music today, they typically mean pop music; to invoke classical music, they must specify “classical” or “grande” music (ibidem: 100). He labels this (semantic) phenomenon as “infantilization” and “general deculturation” (ibidem: 102).

Camus supports his argument with observations from everyday linguistic practices, particularly in communication among various groups such as teachers and students or different generations. He argues that the use of first names, ‘bonjours’ in letters, informal language, over politeness (“babytalk”), and gender-neutral terms contributes to the removal of distance between people and a “deprivation of all social protections against global replacement” (ibidem: 126). What Camus’s linguistic analysis establishes is (a confirmation of) the flawed premise on which the analysis is based: the name should be the same and if it (or its meaning) is not, the named thing disappears. *Culture is not understood the way it was, so it is disappearing*. The asserted extinction of such a fundamental human value cannot but provoke worst human fears which Camus summarizes in the following way: “The worst changes are not the changes in names, the worst changes are the changes in contents when the old name is kept to create an illusion” of what is not there any longer (ibidem: 105).

4.2.4. *The trap of stillness*

Linguistic experience shows that while things *exist*, processes *happen*. Yet, a process can also take on existence simply because we have a name for it and a designated place where it should exist. Once localized and named, we accept its existence as an indisputable fact, no matter how imperceptible that process might be. Camus seems acutely aware of this phenomenon; consequently, he employs words and imagery imbued with finality to convey change on a deeply ontological level. He invents evocative concepts and neologisms that lend a tangible quality to what he describes. By doing so, he makes the effect of “replacements” feel real and enduring.

A prime example is the word “nocence”, which Camus creates to encapsulate the troubling experiences that indigenous populations endure in their interactions with immigrants on a civil level:

- (9) “There is no living together but permanent aggressiveness and repeated aggressions, violence, recurring massacres, terrorist acts, series of minor offenses and large-scale attacks which can be denoted by the encompassing term I have coined: nocence, i.e. the contrary of in-

nocence, or, to be more specific, that to which in-nocence is the exact opposite” (ibidem: 51).

In this context, crimes and offenses transcend mere instances of dysfunctional and maladaptive behavior; they become material objects—tools wielded by those who seek to replace the indigenous population, akin to soldiers on a battlefield. When the concept of “nocence” is weaponized like that in the reader’s imagination, it evokes an immediate thought: if this object exists, it serves a clear purpose that exists prior to this object. This automatic pattern of reasoning renders crimes and offenses ontologically preordained: they are designed (i.e., *they exist*) to make the lives of the indigenous population unbearable.

Camus further develops his ontolinguistic argument by asserting the existence of the evil prior to the good. His logic is that violence and aggression derive from peace and compliance just like the term “innocence” is derived from the term “nocence”: “Obviously, in language, and probably in time, chronology, logic, psychology, nocence, nuisance, the action of doing harm, of being harmful, comes first, is the primeval concept, with in-nocence being its opposite, a way to oppose it, to gain control over it” (ibidem: 52). Although he does not state it explicitly, he seems to imply that only violence can stop violence, and if European civilization is to preserve its cultural and ethnic identity, it must not let those who threaten this identity get away with their offenses and become innocent.

Camus proceeds to demonstrate how material, stable, and objective replacement is. He does so through the language of matter, stability, and objectivity. He creates the term “falseal”, a fancy blend of reality and falsehood, used to name a place where global replacement “resides”. This term evokes a sense of universality, ontology, and substance; its very existence compels readers to accept the existence of replacement as a given. As Camus himself points out, nominalism is essential to falseal in the sense that falseal is a home for “creative myths”, fiction, fake news, lies (ibidem: 146). In fact, falseal is an instance of nominalization itself. With (or better, *in*) this noun Camus localizes all the results of his own linguistic replacements presented as ethnic, cultural, and social substitutions—the reversed meanings of words as well as disappearing things and their names. This fake reality linguistically coined by Camus finalizes (i.e. nominalizes) the worst-case scenario for the European population. Falseal becomes an inescapable trap and feels apocalyptic: it is not just a name; it is the name of a place where all the ‘false’ names exist. It is a place where we live and it is “stronger than any historical reality that we have ever lived in” (ibidem).

This coinage feels apocalyptic. Apocalypse evokes the feelings of anxiety and fear because the word “apocalypse” is a noun that refers to a place *where* the worst that could happen exists forever. According to Camus, the worst that could happen to replaces is a denial of replacement. In falseal, people are made to believe that the Great Replacement is not happening. In this act of still-life objectification, Camus sets the acts of global replacement in stone, without leaving anyone the benefit of the doubt.

5. Discussion

The GR narrative relies on several major themes that deeply resonate with its adherents: pervasiveness, the loss and demise of values, the reversion of meaning, the separation of names and things, and an overarching finality and determinism. While these themes structure the narrative, they make it compelling to the point of blind acceptance. The reason is not in the specific arguments or alleged evidence Camus provides. Rather, it occurs because these themes are structurally consonant with everyday human empirical experience.

On a fundamental level of cognitive functioning, our perception naturally encounters things that recur, appear or disappear, rival and reverse, and stabilize. These properties of the perceived world are anchored in our embodied values and organismic needs. If an imagined world created linguistically provides fulfilment of these tendencies, it becomes a reality that enables action and decision-making without negative feedback. As a result, adherents fail to distinguish between their differing cognitive environments. Constrained by certain patterns of reasoning and understanding, they come to believe they are physically present within the very environment described to them. This confusion of environments is delusional, culminating in cognitive entrapment—an ecological effect Camus systematically achieves by locking his audience into a self-validating, self-reinforcing ideology.

The very concept of replacement is an effective cognitive constraint because it represents a method of reasoning about the world rather than the world itself. Replacement is not an action but an operation that takes place entirely within imagination. It owes its occurrence to language and manipulation of symbols and signs known as conceptual metaphor (Johnson & Lakoff 1980). This operation is grounded in binary (Druzhinin & Rakedzon 2024), intermorphic (Piaget 2001, 2013), or bipolar (Kelly 1991) reasoning. In other words, to replace is to imagine one thing instead of another. Such a cognitive action is so deep-rooted in our daily practices that we can hardly disentangle its linguistic ontology from our perceptual reality, where material things and people cannot replace one another; they can only change their position in time and space. Camus enforces the linguistic illusion of replacement and its inherent zero-sum logic by translating it into a literal, material threat: the systematic substitution of native European populations with non-European immigrants, which leads Europeans to lose exactly what non-Europeans gain.

To ensure that a GR adherent mistakes a linguistic illusion for an empirical reality, Camus mobilizes a number of structural congruences between verbal thought and perception: repetition, imitation (symmetry), identity, and stability. When fulfilled, these four empirical “ways of meaning” entrap one into a delusional certainty over the reality of the GR.

(i) In a perceived environment, human action is driven by a homeostatic need for repetition and replication (Johnson & Shulkin 2023). We instinctively expect that what happened once will occur again. This expectation makes the environment more manageable and predictable, allowing the organism to conserve its bodily resources. In the imagined environment of GR discourse, this need for repetition is

satisfied through labeling and categorization. According to GR logic, replacement is everywhere. Each individual is rigidly categorized as a replacer, a replacee, a replacist, or an antireplacist. Everyone is forced to play a pre-assigned, repeatable role that accounts for their emergent relationships and actions expected of them (Sacks 1995).

(ii) In a perceived environment, physical threats are averted through a negative feedback response. This involves repeating an action in an opposite direction, essentially acting against a counter-force. When this opposition recurs as spatial distance decreases, this natural tendency towards symmetry gives rise to rivalry as conflictual imitation (mimetic doubling) (Girard 2017). In the imagined environment of GR, this aversion—or rather, inversion—is realized by placing positive and negative values (e.g. safety and danger) on the opposing poles of a transitive, reversible (e.g. protection). As a result, the GR reader comes to believe that familiar things and traditional values are actively changing into their exact opposites.

(iii) Due to our natural cognitive constraints, humans can perceive only one item at a time. This limitation makes the perceived environment a sequential, linear affair of attentional objects. Once we focus on a specific object, we cannot perceive its alternative simultaneously. All other variables are temporarily eliminated. Consequently, a strict identification happens between the object and its other possible versions. Our semiotic activity works the same way by actively resisting alternative options. In the imagined, conspiratorial environment, this natural tendency for identity is reinforced in a negative way. A change in a name is treated as a destruction of that name. The disappearance of the name equates to the disappearance of the thing itself. When these names represent core cultural and moral values, their perceived loss feels dangerous.

(iv) Finally, in a perceived environment, stable and static experiences are safer and more meaningful. These experiences are usually associated with physical places and objects. We take these elements for granted as a stable background from which temporary figures emerge. In the imagined environment of GR, the names of how and where replacement happens serve to objectify the process. They produce a steady, localized effect of replacement. Names freeze the fluid process into something motionless, still, and real (Halliday & Martin 1993). They grant abstract concepts an artificial existence in time and space, enforcing the illusion of a pre-ordained background. According to Camus, this manufactured background is the very reality of substitutes in which we now live. He calls this reality “falseal.”

6. Conclusions

The main tenets of cognitive ecolinguistics can be summarized as follows:

- Our cognition is neither *inside* nor *outside* our organism, nor *in between*. It is everywhere, distributed *across* the brain-body-environment system. Therefore, cognition is systemic, or ecological.
- Language gives rise to and sustains our cognitive ecology.

- Language is a situated, orientational behavior that constrains (guides) our interactions with the environment.

- Language also becomes our dominant perspective, an experiential locus that enables (situates) our interactions with the environment. In a sense, language is our environment (the way we know it, or speak it, or think it “in words”).

At first glance, applying a cognitive ecolinguistic lens to Camus’ GR theory might seem unexpected. However, we argue that Camus—much like other influential conspiracy theorists—deftly exploits the eco-cognitive principle of constraint-and-enablement circularity. By reducing ethnic dynamics (a complex global phenomenon) to a zero-sum binary of demographic substitution, he creates a logical framework that enables replacement through the language of replacement. This language, in turn, effectively constrains the reader’s reasoning *about* replacement and its various political extensions. As a result, the reader may delusionally find herself *in* a world of replacement. The environment that the reader imagines by engaging in Camus’ discourse is confused with the perceived one, causing cognitive entrapment. This entrapment, in turn, may culminate in violence and hatred.

We have demonstrated that the power of any conspiracy theory lies in its ecological impact on human cognition. The study has presented a methodology for investigating this impact based on four experiential tendencies of verbal thought, which we classified as cognitive traps. Potentially, this analytic procedure can be applied to other pervasive and equally dangerous narratives that fuel extremism and terrorism.

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