

# Prolific, Digital, and Violent:

## The Far-Right's Online "Republic of Letters"

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### ABSTRACT

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The publication of online manifestos has become a common element associated with far-right terrorist violence in the West. Perpetrators of extremist attacks produce and circulate written materials for inspiration, tactical instruction, and notoriety. This presents policymakers and media organizations with considerable analytical challenges. Each far-right text represents a constituent element within a growing body of extremist literature stewarded by a digitally interconnected community; situating texts in this way yields intriguing findings. This article examines the reception and circulation of four written texts, both printed and online, by the violent far-right: (1) William Luther Pierce's *The Turner Diaries*, (2) written works attributed to the White Wolves in Britain during the 1990s, (3) Anders Behring Breivik's 2011 manifesto, and (4) Christchurch attacker Brenton Tarrant's 2019 livestream and online manifesto. An analysis of contemporaneous responses to and critical examination of these four texts finds that the presence of undisputed authorship, extensive media attention, historical motifs, multiple references to other extremist works, and the use of creative literary devices all play critical roles in shaping how adherents to violent far-right ideology view the "success" of extremist texts. In light of these findings, this article concludes with recommendations for Western media organizations, policymakers, and the academic community to better address the challenges posed by the far-right's growing body of digital literature.

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### INTRODUCTION

Written manifestos have become increasingly characteristic of planned, far-right terrorist attacks. The authors draw inspiration from across a spectrum of far-right ideologies, and commit attacks around the world in various countries.<sup>1</sup>

Each piece of violent far-right literature presents media organizations and governments with a challenge. Perceiving these manifestos as individual written materials underscores the extent to which online far-right communities are interconnected.<sup>2</sup> Attackers who publish far-right texts in connection with acts of violence seek ongoing recognition even after their attacks have ended.<sup>3</sup> This article analyzes four case studies in far-right literature to identify key elements in an “influential” manifesto in light of the challenges that governments and media face. Finally, this article concludes with recommendations for better addressing and analyzing this growing corpus of violent literature.

## **DEFINING AND ASSESSING THE SUCCESS OF FAR-RIGHT MANIFESTOS**

The body of online far-right literature grows with the circulation of each new manifesto that is published in association with a violent far-right terrorist attack. Unlike filmed content that is occasionally produced by attackers, written materials feature the use of literary devices in addition to historical references, instructional elements, and detailed ideological declarations.<sup>4</sup> Since the internet has broadened, amplified, and accelerated existing systems of communication (a phenomenon described as the “digital republic”), assessing the “success” of far-right manifestos requires an accounting for each text’s ongoing influence among online communities.<sup>5</sup> The most “successful” far-right manifestos provide fodder for subsequent terrorist-authors to cite and draw inspiration, as well as attract media coverage. Over time, the violent far-right has successfully constructed a violent republic of letters, and these shared citations and references can reflect patterns of influence and inspiration. Furthermore, the scale of media attention to a particular manifesto in the aftermath of an associated attack constitutes an additional measure of that document’s success, even as media coverage is a clear goal of many far-right terrorist-authors. Subsequent portions of this article use four case studies to identify several interchangeable features of influential far-right manifestos: (1) clear authorship, (2) media attention, (3) historical motifs, (4) multiple references to other far-right works, and (5) creative literary devices. Importantly, many influential pieces of far-right literature may feature only a few of these elements, but not all. Analysis of the case studies finds that instructional material contributes to the impact of far-right literature, but only to the extent that it may stimulate increased media attention. For this reason, instructional elements do not receive consideration as a primary source of success.

## **FAR-RIGHT MANIFESTOS AND THE MEDIA**

Similar to written materials produced by violent adherents from other extremist

movements, manifestos have presented media organizations with considerable ethical challenges in the wake of far-right terrorist attacks. Many terrorism experts have expressed concerns that media outlets may inadvertently facilitate future acts of violence by publishing far-right manifestos and thus providing their authors with larger audiences. As a result, some experts call for publishers to exercise greater caution when considering whether to post these texts online.<sup>6</sup> The 2014 case of Elliot Rodger, represented an inflection point in this debate. Rodger's violent acts resulted in the deaths of six people, and his 141-page manifesto helped provide the so-called "involuntary celibate" (or "incel") movement with newly-written underpinnings.<sup>7</sup> In response to widespread controversy following The New York Times' publication of Rodger's manifesto and filmed content, Margaret Sullivan, the outlet's public editor, wrote that "the idea of playing down a killer's 'manifesto' is, at the very least, worth consideration, on a case-by-case basis."<sup>8</sup> Amid contemporary debates about how media outlets can contextualize texts' ideological elements without including instructional components, the scale and rigor of press coverage remain crucial determinants of far-right literature's "success."

## **FAR-RIGHT MANIFESTOS AS INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

The incorporation of instructional elements into extremist manifestos long predates the beginning of the age of the internet and transcends ideological motivation. Since before the twentieth century, written materials produced by organizations and individuals have contained detailed information about how to commit acts of violence in service to a variety of extremist causes, including attacks within the United States.<sup>9</sup> Jihadist publications produced by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria have also drawn attention to their inclusion of violent instructional content.<sup>10</sup> However, the authors of violent far-right literature, who are often attackers themselves, have combined the speed of the internet and the inclusion of detailed instructions in their written works to achieve new levels of notoriety. Contemporary far-right manifestos often contain information about assembling explosives, selecting targets, and even acquiring requisite financial support for attacks. Notable scholar, J.M. Berger, describes Norwegian white supremacist Anders Behring Breivik's manifesto, as combining "operational and ideological elements" and thus being capable of producing "a much longer and more intense news cycle."<sup>11</sup> Therefore, including detailed instructions about committing future acts of ideologically motivated violence can play a key role in the "successful" dissemination of far-right literature.

## THE FAR-RIGHT'S VIOLENT "REPUBLIC OF LETTERS"

The past several decades have witnessed the rise of a violent far-right corpus using the internet as a preeminent medium for content-sharing and communication.<sup>12</sup> Digitalization demonstrates that extremist literature has evolved significantly from William Luther Pierce's *The Turner Diaries*. The *Diaries* are texts attributed to the White Wolves, a supposed far-right group suspected for a series of bombings in Britain during 1999. From Pierce's *The Turner Diaries* to Christchurch attacker Brenton Tarrant's 2019 online manifesto, works of far-right literature have become a contributing factor to and a result of violent far-right extremism. Considered together, *The Turner Diaries*, Anders Behring Breivik's 2011 manifesto, and Tarrant's 2019 live stream and posted manifesto, provide critical examples of the factors that contribute to far-right writing's "success" or "failure." The ambiguity surrounding the actual authorship of writings attributed to the White Wolves consigned those works to relative obscurity. Meanwhile, clear authorship, media attention, historical motifs, multiple references to other far-right works, and creative literary devices all ensured that texts produced by Pierce, Breivik, and Tarrant became a part of the canon of influential far-right literature.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF *THE TURNER DIARIES*

Long before the popular use of the internet, *The Turner Diaries*, a 1978 far-right dystopian novel by William Luther Pierce, achieved remarkable heights of influence for both the violent and nonviolent far-right. It remains one of the most successful works of far-right literature in history. While individuals like Anders Breivik and Brenton Tarrant published their works in direct connection with violent attacks, Pierce became a leading organizational figure for the far-right in the latter quarter of the twentieth century. Still, *The Turner Diaries*, an anti-Semitic fictional portrayal of a white supremacist group's violent overthrow of the U.S. government, continues to be "a hit with the U.S. violent right," as well as far-right attackers and their manifestos around the world.<sup>13</sup>

The depiction of a fictional diary, a literary device that Berger describes as "epistolary fiction," constitutes one of *The Turner Diaries*' most distinguishing textual features and a compelling element behind its enormous success.<sup>14</sup> That vehicle, Berger writes, allows readers to "attribute awkward or crude language to the narrator rather than the author, and the lack of polish can even enhance the feeling of authenticity."<sup>15</sup> Even mainstream works of literature employ this method, including Jack London's *The Iron Heel* (which may have even inspired Pierce to write *The Turner Diaries*), C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. In addition to its unique literary scope, *The Turner Diaries*' dystopian aesthetic also helps to explain its influence

for the violent far-right.<sup>16</sup> To this end, Berger argues that “dystopian fiction is a natural vehicle for political and especially extremist propaganda.”<sup>17</sup> Pierce, of course, wrote prolifically following the publication of *The Turner Diaries*.<sup>18</sup> The creative literary elements in that particular work, however, made it a unique source of ideological and textual inspiration for violent far-right figures past and present.<sup>19</sup>

The publication of *The Turner Diaries* represented a turning point in the history of violent far-right literature. The book has inspired readers that are responsible for dozens of far-right terrorist attacks and hate crimes. Most notable might be Timothy McVeigh, whose 1995 truck bombing in Oklahoma City killed over 150 people.<sup>20</sup> In some cases, an alleged attacker’s possession of *The Turner Diaries* has even helped identify or establish the suspect’s ideological motivations.<sup>21</sup> While William Luther Pierce does not fit the conventional mold of a far-right terrorist, his written work merits consideration as an impactful piece of literature for the violent far-right due to its clear authorship and particularly creative literary elements.

## **THE WHITE WOLVES: A CASE STUDY IN “UNSUCCESSFUL” FAR-RIGHT LITERATURE**

A 1994 “blueprint for terror” allegedly circulated by the White Wolves represents a case study in “unsuccessful” far-right literature. This work’s relative unpopularity stands in stark contrast to the widespread circulation of *The Turner Diaries*. The fifteen-page document included recognizable thematic elements from the far-right’s broader body of written texts, most notably an emphasis on historical motifs.<sup>22</sup> The group’s writings even reflected a transatlantic consciousness regarding far-right figures and activities, as manifested by the dedication of one particular document to American neo-Nazi Robert Jay Matthews.<sup>23</sup> However, the written materials attributed to the White Wolves receive hardly any attention from violent far-right figures and texts today, especially when compared to *The Turner Diaries* or Anders Breivik’s manifesto.<sup>24</sup>

Three elements contributed to the failure of the White Wolves’ writings to inspire subsequent acts of far-right violence or literature. First, the writings themselves did not actually describe the authors in explicit ideological terms like “fascist” or “neo-Nazi.”<sup>25</sup> Second, while many contemporary observers attributed a collection of far-right writings in 1990s Britain to the White Wolves, experts have failed to conclusively determine the authorship of the materials. Finally, the very existence of the White Wolves organization remains contested, thus complicating any subsequent efforts by the violent far-right to situate the texts attributed to the group within a firm interpretation.<sup>26</sup> The ambiguity surrounding the writings’ exact authorial and ideological origins has constricted subsequent attention to these texts in violent far-right literature.

From this case study, it becomes clear that far-right writings require distinct attribution and near-explicit ideological expression to shape subsequent literature. Furthermore, these texts highlight the importance of exercising caution when making real-time attempts to connect new far-right writings and suspects in violent attacks.<sup>27</sup>

## **ANDERS BREIVIK AND 2083: A BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESSFUL FAR-RIGHT MANIFESTOS**

If *The Turner Diaries* represented a turning point in the history of far-right literature, the 2011 online publication and subsequent ideological influence of Anders Behring Breivik's *2083: A European Declaration of Independence* signified the beginning of that history's digital chapter. Breivik, a militant far-right chauvinist, committed a series of bombings and shootings in Norway that resulted in the violent deaths of over 70 people. While his attacks prompted widespread condemnation, Breivik's 1,500-page online manifesto has become a potent source of inspiration for subsequent acts of far-right violence.<sup>28</sup> In fact, before committing his attacks, Breivik stated that he intended such acts of violence to bring attention to his written work.<sup>29</sup>

In the age of the internet, *2083* represents a clear example of "success" for violent far-right literature due to four factors that have contributed to the subsequent influence of Breivik's manifesto for far-right communities online. First, the author maintained a robust network of like-minded Internet users, many of whom received the document directly from Breivik in the minutes before his attack.<sup>30</sup> This method of transmission underscored Breivik's identity as the author of the text. Additionally, Breivik's manifesto included references to the works of other notable figures within the far-right community, as well as pseudo-historical motifs and literary devices familiar to many far-right readers.<sup>31</sup> Finally, *2083* contained a mixture of instructional and ideological elements that have proven compelling for subsequent readers, including would-be attacker Christopher Hasson among others.<sup>32</sup> These elements vaulted Breivik's manifesto and his deeds to such heights that many online users refer to the author as "Saint Breivik" and subsequent violent attacks as "going Breivik."<sup>33</sup> This durable ideological and instructional influence has ensured a place for Breivik's manifesto as a leading text among the violent far-right.

## **BRENTON TARRANT, *THE GREAT REPLACEMENT*, AND FAR-RIGHT LITERARY IRONY**

While Anders Breivik's 2011 manifesto represents a clear example of influential far-right literature in the Internet Age, the document does not constitute the only successful path for violent far-right writing online. In

early 2019, a gunman later identified as Brenton Tarrant, armed with lethal weapons and a Facebook Live connection, attacked a mosque and a Muslim community center in Christchurch, New Zealand. Tarrant killed over fifty individuals. Authorities and news reports subsequently attributed a 74-page white supremacist manifesto to the attacker. The online document, titled *The Great Replacement*, resembles other recognizable far-right writings in its ideological expressions, references to other far-right figures and texts, and contestable historical motifs.<sup>34</sup> However, widespread coverage of the text's highlighted the use of "shitposting," which is described as "the act of posting trollish and usually ironic content designed to derail a conversation or elicit a strong reaction from people who aren't in on the joke." This suggests that far-right literature's pathway to notoriety has widened.<sup>35</sup>

Tarrant's use of "shitposting" as a literary device within his manifesto merits further scrutiny as a textual element that may have contributed to its widespread circulation in the aftermath of the attack. Tarrant's references to controversial public figures such as Swedish online entertainer PewDiePie and American conservative provocateur Candace Owens reflects an apparent anticipation of the widespread attention that would fixate upon these seemingly tangential references.<sup>36</sup> *The Great Replacement* represents an early example of how digitally native literary methods like "shitposting" can position a far-right manifesto for widespread online circulation and amplified media coverage following a terrorist attack. In an increasingly digital future, observers should anticipate subsequent attempts by far-right attackers, perhaps as well as perpetrators with other ideological motivations, to replicate Tarrant's impact using a similar form of violent irony.<sup>37</sup>

## **ADDRESSING THE FAR-RIGHT'S ONLINE "REPUBLIC OF LETTERS"**

Today's growing body of violent literature- past and present, online and offline-present simultaneous opportunities and challenges for those who seek to better understand and prevent planned acts of far-right violence. The success of works with clear authors such as Anders Breivik and Brenton Tarrant shows how the authors of violent far-right texts can use contested historical interpretations and creative writing devices to considerable effect. These works can provide crucial insights into how violent far-right individuals draw inspiration, form communities of thought, share instructional information, and ultimately seek to shape public narratives in the aftermath of an attack. However, this article has highlighted the ethical dilemmas for media outlets when it comes to covering far-right manifestos, the difficulty in distinguishing between ideological and instructional elements in these texts, and the interpretive challenges posed

by the use of new literary devices. Concerned journalists, policymakers, and scholars can learn from past examples of both “successful” and “unsuccessful” far-right manifestos in order to better understand and address future products of the far-right “republic of letters.”

In a period of increased debate over how media outlets should treat far-right manifestos in television, print, and online coverage, journalists and their editors must devote increased attention and resources to the online presentation of far-right texts. The sheer size and density of online far-right communities require that established media organizations exercise greater caution when publishing far-right writings online.<sup>38</sup> Some experts have argued that media outlets must never post attackers’ manifestos.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile, others have simply called for the press to “reconsider the standard” for publication.<sup>40</sup> Media outlets should ultimately distinguish between ideological and instructional elements in far-right texts and, where possible, publish excerpted manifestos which contextualize their ideological elements without providing their instructional components. The past several years have witnessed a veritable revolution in creative online storytelling, giving established media outlets considerable capabilities for discernment when presenting far-right manifestos.<sup>41</sup>

Published manifestos allow policymakers and counterterrorism experts a warped glimpse into the worldview of violent far-right attackers. The ideological and instructional nature of many far-right writings, can complicate Western governments’ efforts to prevent future attacks, respond to imminent threats, and erode violent extremism. Manifestos’ instructional elements can occasionally distract policymakers from the violent ideologies which incubate these texts in the first place.<sup>42</sup> When an individual commits an act of far-right terrorism and spreads an associated text, governments must pay heed to the manifesto’s instructional elements and still devote considerable resources to undermining the violent ideology at its roots.

To better understand the expanding universe of far-right literary devices, academic communities interested in terrorism and the far-right should create more opportunities for scholars from the humanities disciplines—especially English literature—to participate in research, teaching, writing, and conference presentations traditionally conducted by experts in terrorism studies and other fields. The impact of published manifestos by Anders Breivik and Brenton Tarrant, among others, demonstrates that the creators of violent far-right writings use both disputed historical interpretations and creative literary devices when crafting their texts.<sup>43</sup> While the number of undergraduate students studying in the humanities has declined considerably, especially at elite liberal arts colleges and leading research universities, scholars from the humanities disciplines could still wield sharp intellectual tools when attempting to understand the substantial and stylistic construction of far-right texts. Furthermore, identifying new areas in terrorism studies where the humanities

disciplines could make greater contributions may also broaden the appeal of those disciplines for future scholarship.<sup>44</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The most “successful” violent far-right manifestos have drawn from a variety of features: media attention, references to other ideological works, and creative literary elements, among others. Each new contribution to this growing body of violent literature presents media organizations and governments with interpretive challenges, especially when it comes to the far-right literature’s blend of ideological and instructional materials. Far-right attacker-authors do not only draw from past works when constructing their texts; as the case of Brenton Tarrant demonstrates, far-right manifestos today feature new—and even more challenging—literary innovations. In the end, media organizations, Western governments, and scholars should understand this far-right republic of letters online as such, and devote increased, nuanced attention to interpreting its most influential texts.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 This article will use the term “far-right” in reference to what the Anti-Defamation League describes as “political, social, and religious movements that exist outside of and are more radical than mainstream conservatism.” See Anti-Defamation League, “Extreme Right/Radical Right/Far Right,” accessed December 4, 2019, <https://www.adl.org/resources/glossary-terms/extreme-right-radical-right-far-right>
- 2 This article will consistently punctuate the term “success” with quotation marks, in order to clearly differentiate between the views of the author and those of the far-right community toward far-right manifestos.
- 3 J. M. Berger, “The Dangerous Spread of Extremist Manifestos,” *The Atlantic*, February 26, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/02/christopher-hasson-was-inspired-breivik-manifesto/583567>
- 4 Christopher C. Harmon and Randall G. Bowdish, *The Terrorist Argument: Modern Advocacy and Propaganda* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2018), 15.
- 5 Peter Burke, “The Republic of Letters as a Communication System: An Essay in Periodization,” *Media History* 18, no. 3–4 (2012): 395–6, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688804.2012.721956>
- 6 Ari N. Schulman, “What Mass Killers Want—And How to Stop Them,” *The Wall Street Journal*, November 8, 2013, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/what-mass-killers-want8212and-how-to-stop-them-1383957068?tesla=y>
- 7 Berger, “The Dangerous Spread of Extremist Manifestos.”
- 8 Margaret Sullivan, “Giving Killers Coverage, Not Platforms,” *The New York Times*, May 31, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/01/public-editor/giving-killers-coverage-not-platforms.html>
- 9 Kenneth Anderson, “The History of Do-It-Yourself Weapons and Explosives Manuals in America,” *Lawfare*, June 21, 2016, accessed October 22, 2019, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/history-do-it-yourself-weapons-and-explosives-manuals-america>; Alastair Reed and Haroro J. Ingram, “Exploring the Role of Instructional Material in AQAP’s *Inspire* and ISIS’ *Rumiyah*,” paper presented at the *European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) Conference on Online Terrorist Propaganda, The Hague, Netherlands, April 11–12, 2017*, 3, <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-documents/exploring-role-of-instructional-material-in-aqaps-inspire-and-isis-rumiyah>; and Blake Hounshell, “What Did

- the Oslo Killer Want?," *Foreign Policy*, July 23, 2011, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/07/23/what-did-the-oslo-killer-want>
- 10 Reed and Ingram, "Exploring the Role of Instructional Material in AQAP's *Inspire* and ISIS' *Rumiyah*," 15.
  - 11 Berger, "The Dangerous Spread of Extremist Manifestos."
  - 12 The website Stormfront.org, which emerged as early as the 1990s and once boasted over 100,000 users, serves as just one example of the sheer size of the online far-right community. Harmon and Bowdish, *The Terrorist Argument*, 14.
  - 13 Ibid., 116.
  - 14 J.M. Berger, "The Turner Legacy: The Storied Origins and Enduring Impact of White Nationalism's Deadly Bible," *The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague* 7, no. 8 (September 2016): 14, <http://dx.doi.org/10.19165/2016.1.11>.
  - 15 Ibid.
  - 16 Ibid., 19.
  - 17 Ibid., 38.
  - 18 Ibid., 9.
  - 19 Notably, Anders Breivik's 2011 manifesto does not explicitly reference *The Turner Diaries*. However, *2083: A European Declaration of Independence* includes an 82-day diary which demonstrates the widespread influence of the epistolary form for far-right literature. See Berger, "The Turner Legacy," 32; and Will Englund, "In Diary, Norwegian 'Crusader' Details Months of Preparation for Attacks," *The Washington Post*, July 24, 2011, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/in-diary-norwegian-crusader-details-months-of-preparation-for-attacks/2011/07/24/gIQCAYnUXI\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/in-diary-norwegian-crusader-details-months-of-preparation-for-attacks/2011/07/24/gIQCAYnUXI_story.html)
  - 20 Berger, "The Turner Legacy," 3, 30.
  - 21 Ann Larabee, *The Wrong Hands: Popular Weapons Manuals and Their Historic Challenges to a Democratic Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 156.
  - 22 Paul Stott, "The White Wolves: The Terrorist Manifesto That Wasn't?," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13, no. 4 (2019): 57, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26756703>
  - 23 Ibid.
  - 24 Ibid., 59.
  - 25 Ibid., 57.
  - 26 Ibid.
  - 27 Ibid., 60.
  - 28 Berger, "The Dangerous Spread of Extremist Manifestos."
  - 29 Isaac Stanley-Becker, "'They Hate White Males': A Norwegian Mass Murderer Inspired the Coast Guard Officer Accused of Plotting Terror, Feds Say," *The Washington Post*, February 21, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/02/21/they-hate-white-males-norwegian-mass-murderer-inspired-coast-guard-officer-plotting-terror-feds-say/>
  - 30 Ibid.
  - 31 Ramon Spaaij, *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism: Global Patterns, Motivations and Prevention*, Springer Briefs in Criminology (New York, NY: Springer, 2012), 56–7.
  - 32 Stanley-Becker, "'They Hate White Males'" and Blake Hounshell, "What Did the Oslo Killer Want?"
  - 33 Berger, "The Dangerous Spread of Extremist Manifestos."
  - 34 Jane Coaston, "The New Zealand Shooter's Manifesto Shows How White Nationalist Rhetoric Spreads," *Vox*, March 18, 2019, <https://www.vox.com/identities/2019/3/15/18267163/new-zealand-shooting-christchurch-white-nationalism-racism-language>

- 35 While the long-term reception of Tarrant's manifesto remains unclear, the early reception of *The Great Replacement*, Tarrant's alleged use of Facebook Live to broadcast his attack, and the global media's intense attention to his methods all suggest that Tarrant's manifesto will shape future far-right attacks and writings. In the immediate aftermath of the Christchurch attacks, one 8chan user described Tarrant as "the next Breivik." See Robert Evans, "Shitposting, Inspirational Terrorism, and the Christchurch Mosque Massacre," Bellingcat, March 15, 2019, <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/rest-of-world/2019/03/15/shitposting-inspirational-terrorism-and-the-christchurch-mosque-massacre/>; For Lorenz's definition of "shitposting," see Taylor Lorenz, "The Shooter's Manifesto Was Designed to Troll," *The Atlantic*, March 15, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2019/03/the-shooters-manifesto-was-designed-to-troll/585058/>
- 36 For a thoughtful consideration of challenges "shitposting" poses for media coverage, see Evans, "Shitposting, Inspirational Terrorism, and the Christchurch Mosque Massacre." For analysis situating Tarrant's manifesto within the violent far-right's attention-seeking efforts online, see Coaston, "The New Zealand Shooter's Manifesto Shows How White Nationalist Rhetoric Spreads."
- 37 The future of online extremism does not belong to the far-right alone. According to Harmon and Bowdish, "in exploring the possibilities of the personal computer and the World Wide Web, ecology militants are blazing their own unique trails through the thickets of modernity." See Harmon and Bowdish, *The Terrorist Argument*, 109; and Coaston, "The New Zealand Shooter's Manifesto Shows How White Nationalist Rhetoric Spreads." The future of online extremism does not belong to the far-right alone. According to Harmon and Bowdish, "in exploring the possibilities of the personal computer and the World Wide Web, ecology militants are blazing their own unique trails through the thickets of modernity." See Harmon and Bowdish, *The Terrorist Argument*, 109.
- 38 Ariel Koch, "The New Crusaders: Contemporary Extreme Right Symbolism and Rhetoric," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 11, no. 5 (2017): 14, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26297928>; and Gabriel Weimann, "Lone Wolves in Cyberspace," *Journal of Terrorism Research* 3, no. 2 (2012): 76.
- 39 Schulman, "What Mass Killers Want—And How to Stop Them."
- 40 Berger, "The Dangerous Spread of Extremist Manifestos."
- 41 For an example of "bold" digital innovation by traditional media outlets, see Rebecca Greenfield, "What The New York Times's 'Snow Fall' Means to Online Journalism's Future," *The Atlantic*, December 20, 2012, <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2012/12/new-york-times-snow-fall-feature/320253/>
- 42 This particular challenge has received more attention in the context of written texts produced by violent Islamic extremists. See Reed and Ingram, "Exploring the Role of Instructional Material in AQAP's *Inspire* and ISIS' *Rumiyah*," 15.
- 43 Even contemporary far-right literature maintains a fascination with pseudo-historical motifs. For a thorough examination of how Anders Breivik's manifesto, for example, highlighted the online "revitalization of the crusader image," see Koch, "The New Crusaders."
- 44 As the number of conferred graduate degrees in the humanities continues to trend downward, increased interdisciplinary work between terrorism scholars and humanities scholars could yield broader benefits for both. See American Academy of Arts and Sciences, "Undergraduate and Graduate Education," accessed November 20, 2019, <https://www.humanitiesindicators.org/content/indicatorDoc.aspx?i=9>; and Benjamin Schmidt, "The Humanities Are in Crisis," *The Atlantic*, August 23, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/08/the-humanities-face-a-crisis-of-confidence/567565/45>
- Ibid.