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When the Medium Is Not the Message

Breivik, Tarrant, and the Conceptions of History of Contemporary Right-Wing Extremist Lone-Actor Terrorists

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Abstract

While much academic effort has been devoted to exploring various aspects of right-wing extremist lone-actor terrorism, little attention has been devoted to establishing how the terrorists create meaning by locating themselves within a larger narration of history. This article tries to fill this gap, by analysing the conceptions of history and the historical narratives evoked in the manifestos that the right-wing extremist perpetrators uploaded online in relation to the terrorist attacks in Norway on July 22, 2011 and in Christchurch, New Zealand March 15, 2019. Employing a combination of discourse and narrative analysis, the article argues that a shared fascist 'regime of historicity' may be identified in the manifestos. Furthermore, it places the narratives found in the manifestos in relation to different right-wing extremist virtual communities.

Keywords

right-wing extremism – terrorism – fascism – conceptions of history – Anders Behring Breivik (1979–) – Brenton Tarrant (1990–)

In recent years, we have witnessed a recurring formula in relation to terrorist attacks committed by right-wing extremists lone-actor terrorists.¹ In several

¹ This article adopts several elements from an earlier paper published in Norwegian: Fredrik Wilhelmsen, "I forkant av angrepene lastet den antatte gjerningsmannen opp et manifest": Om de nye høyreekstreme terroristenes manifeste, in *Meningsdanning, deltakelse og*

cases—such as the terrorist attack on 22 July 2011 in Norway and the assault on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2019—right-wing extremist lone-actors have uploaded a manifesto online, just before committing terrorist acts. As Graham Macklin has pointed out, a particular “‘cultural script’” appears increasingly evident within the digital demimonde of the violent extreme right. This script, Macklin argues, began with Breivik and 2011, yet ‘few militants sought to emulate his actions, at least not until the Christchurch attacks’, which became ‘a catalytic’² event for a new wave of right-wing lone-actor terrorists who has followed a similar *modus operandi*. While much academic effort has been devoted to exploring the behavioral underpinnings of such acts of lone-actor terrorism, far less attention has been devoted to establishing how the terrorists locate these elements within a larger historical narrative. Yet, as Tore Bjørgo has pointed out, right-wing extremists often use history and historical events as a ‘mythological justification of their political messages and as legitimation of the use of violence against immigrants and political opponents.’³

With this as a lens, I will therefore delve deeper into the ‘manifestos’ that the perpetrators uploaded online in connection with the terrorist attacks in Norway in 2011 and in New Zealand in 2019. Drawing on the cultural sociology of Jeffrey C. Alexander and Philip Smith,⁴ as well as the theories of generic fascism put forward by Roger Griffin,⁵ this article examines the historical narratives and the conceptions of history that were deployed by these right-wing extremist perpetrators to present their terrorist attacks as legitimate rational strategies to address alleged growing social problems ignored by the ‘system’. Focusing on how these manifestos situate the present in relation to a notion of the past and a prophecy about the future (forming what we with reference to François Hartog calls a ‘regime of historicity’⁶) I ask if there is a common dis-

kommunikasjon i demokratiske samfunn, ed. Per Bjarne Ravnå et al. (Stamsund: Orkana forlag, 2020), 249–277, <https://doi.org/10.33673/OOA20204>.

2 Graham Macklin, ‘The El Paso Terrorist Attack: The Chain Reaction of Global Right-Wing Terror,’ *CTC Sentinel* 12, no. 11 (2019): 3.

3 Tore Bjørgo, *Racist and Right-Wing Violence: Patterns, Perpetrators, and Responses* (Oslo: Tano Aschehoug, 1997), 219.

4 See for instance: Jeffrey C. Alexander, *The Meanings of Social Life: A Cultural Sociology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) and Philip Smith, *Why War? The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

5 Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1991); Roger Griffin, *Fascism* (London: Polity Press, 2018); Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Roger Griffin, *Terrorist’s Creed: Fanatical Violence and the Human Need for Meaning* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

6 François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2016).

cursive and narrative pattern, a common way of situating oneself within the unfolding of history, to be inferred from the manifestos published by the perpetrators of these terrorist attacks.

While the main emphasis will be on Tarrant's manifesto and Breivik's compendium, the article also make use of three similar texts: the manifesto posted in relation to the racist terrorist attack at a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas in August 2019 (Patrick Crusius' *The Inconvenient Truth*), the letter published to accompany the terrorist attack on a synagogue in California in April 2019 (John T. Earnest's 'An open letter'), as well as the case of Philip Manshaus, the twenty-one year old Norwegian terrorist and murderer who—inspired by Tarrant, Crusius and Earnest—wanted to ignite a 'race war' by murdering his stepsister and attacking a mosque outside Oslo in August 2019. These five examples are chosen not only because they can highlight how similar narratives and conceptions of history have been mobilised by several lone-actor terrorists across the globe. They also highlight how these lone-actor terrorists are inspired and shaped by each other's words and actions. While Breivik inspired Tarrant, the latter inspired the three others. Yet, these cases also allow us to grasp elements of both continuity and contrast. They highlight how a new far-right online ecosystem has emerged in the last decade, a culture that has created shared points of reference.⁷

Both the approaches drawn upon in this article (those of Alexander/Smith and Griffin) share the fact that they do not reduce cultural codes, narratives, myths and speech acts either to window dressing or as a dependent variable that can be explained 'by something else entirely separated from the domain of meaning itself'.⁸ Rather, culturally constructed myths, narratives and tropes are viewed as something that possess 'a relative autonomy in shaping actions and institutions, providing inputs every bit as vital as more material or instrumental forces'.⁹ Hence, discourse and narrative analysis is utilised in the following, in order to provide an analysis of the significance of the manifestos that the perpetrators posted online to justify the terrorist attacks.

This article will first review existing research before providing a brief overview of the terrorist actions conducted by Tarrant and Breivik, an overview which also describes how the perpetrators disseminated their manifestos online. This is followed by an analysis of the texts, identifying the most important codes, narratives and temporal orders that can be inferred from them,

7 Maik Fielitz and Holger Marcks, 'Digital Fascism: Challenges for the Open Society in Times of Social Media,' *CRWS Working Papers*, 2019, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/87w5c5gp>.

8 Alexander, *The Meanings of Social Life*, 12–13.

9 *Ibid.*, 199.

while at the same time discussing the connection between them, and which virtual communities may have shaped or inspired the perpetrators.

Existing Research

As mentioned in the introduction, much academic effort has been devoted to explore various aspects related to lone-actor terrorism: Paul Gill has for instance analyzed the behavioral underpinnings of lone-actor terrorism and the life trajectories of the individual terrorists.¹⁰ Ramon Spaaij, Tore Bjørgo and Cato Hemmingby, on the other hand, have shown how ideology can provide terrorists with a sense of ‘justification’ for—and ‘moral authority’ to conduct—acts of violent terrorism.¹¹ In another approach, Katie Cohen, Lisa Kaati, and Amendra Shrestha have turned their attention to the manifestos of lone-actor terrorists, analysing the frequency of certain types of words in order to ‘create a profile of the person who wrote it.’¹² However, far less attention has been devoted to establishing how the terrorists locate themselves, their justifications for violence, and the words they use to describe contemporary societies, within a larger historical narrative.

While the question of the overarching temporal orders that lone-actor terrorists evoke are significantly under-researched, the approach of this article is not without precedent. Sveinung Sandberg has for instance conducted a narrative analysis of Breivik’s compendium, based on a similar point of departure as the one applied here. In his analysis of Breivik’s sprawling text, Sandberg for instance claimed that it provides ‘invaluable data for understanding why he committed his crimes’ since it ‘presents the life-story he lived by, and the symbolic, semiotic and imaginary universe within which he forged his crime.’¹³

10 See for instance: Paul Gill, *Lone-Actor Terrorists: A Behavioral Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2016) and Paul Gill and Emily Corner, ‘Lone-Actor Terrorist Target Choice,’ *Behavioral Sciences and the Law* 34, 2016: 693–705, <https://doi.org/10.1002/bsl.2268>.

11 Cato Hemmingby and Tore Bjørgo, ‘Terrorist Target Selection: The Case of Anders Behring Breivik,’ *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, issue 6 (2018); Cato Hemmingby and Tore Bjørgo, *The Dynamics of a Terrorist Targeting Process: Anders B. Breivik and the 22 July Attacks in Norway* (London: Palgrave, 2015); Paul Jackson, *Transnational Neo-Nazism in the USA, United Kingdom and Australia: Program on Extremism* (Washington D.C.: George Washington University, February 2020), 24; Ramon Spaaij, *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism: Global Patterns, Motivations and Prevention* (London: Springer, 2011).

12 Lisa Kaati, Amendra Shrestha and Katie Cohen, ‘Linguistic Analysis of Lone Offender Manifestos,’ 2016 *IEEE International Conference on Cybercrime and Computer Forensic (ICCCF)*, 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICCCF.2016.7740427>.

13 Sveinung Sandberg, ‘Are self-narratives strategic or determined, unified or fragmented?’

However, the approach utilised in the following differs from Sandberg's, in the sense that although we apply similar methodology, Sandberg's focus was on how Breivik presented his own 'life-story', while the present article probes deeper into the 'macrohistory' Breivik 'lived by'—and, tragically, acted in accordance to.

However, such an approach is not without its predecessors either. Tore Bjørgo has also paid attention to the role of ideological narratives for Breivik, suggesting that we can see narrative frameworks as a rhetoric form that tells basic ideologic doctrines through a 'story'—with the purpose of communicating central ideological content,¹⁴ as well as justifying violent acts.¹⁵ Another similar example is Alejandro Beutel's analysis of the key narratives and tropes in Tarrant's manifesto, which pays attention to the 'overarching narratives' in the text, including ideas of 'race war'.¹⁶ As mentioned in the introduction, Graham Macklin has also provided important insights into the ideological narratives and online ecosystems that has shaped lone-actor terrorists like Tarrant, Crusius, Earnest and Manshaus.

What this current article offers in relation to the analyses of Bjørgo, Macklin, Sandberg, and Beutel, is that it probes even deeper into an often-overlooked question: the way the construction of enemies and the use of conspiracy theories, tropes and narratives in these manifestos is linked to a sense of 'historicity'. By applying a research strategy that tries to grasp how 'the categories of past, present, and future give order and meaning'¹⁷ and how terrorists 'situate themselves . . . in time',¹⁸ we may get a better grasp of how the narratives and conspiracy theories evoked by these lone-actor terrorists is linked to a specific way of situating oneself within the flow of time. Beutel and Bjørgo touch upon these issues, while both Mattias Gardell and Cynthia Miller-Idriss have placed a central emphasis on them. The former has for instance argued along similar lines as this current article. Analysing Breivik's compendium, Gardell has argued that

Reading Breivik's Manifesto in light of narrative criminology,' *Acta Sociologica* 56, no. 1 (2013): 73.

14 Tore Bjørgo, 'Højreekstre voldsideologier og terroristisk rationalitet: Hvordan kan man forstå Behring Breiviks udsagn og handlinger?' *Social kritik* 121 (2012): 25.

15 Bjørgo, *Racist and Right-Wing Violence*, 219.

16 Alejandro Beutel, 'The New Zealand Terrorist's Manifesto: A Look at Some of the Key Narratives, Beliefs and Tropes,' *Start: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism*, April 30, 2019, <https://www.start.umd.edu/news/new-zealand-terrorists-manifesto-look-some-key-narratives-beliefs-and-tropes>.

17 Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity*, xvi.

18 *Ibid.*

the 'yearning for a national rebirth is at the heart of Breivik's vision.'¹⁹ Similarly, Miller-Idriss has recently drawn attention to how the extreme right both nurtures nostalgic myths of the past, violence inducing 'crisis narratives' about the present, and utopian desires for the future.²⁰

However, the added value of this current article, is that it puts the question of temporality, narratives and conceptions of history at the center of the analysis. While the research mentioned treats these questions more briefly, this current article uses the articulations of past, present, and future as the main research strategy to understand far-right ideology. It also contributes to the research field by setting lone-actor terrorists in relation to the scholarly tradition of comparative fascist studies. While much research on the contemporary far right has a more 'presentist' approach, and often restricts itself to concepts such as 'the extreme right' and the 'far right', this current article argues that there are valuable insights to be gained from applying the concept of 'fascism' as well. While key traits of interwar fascism, such as the *Führerprinzip* and the mass party with a paramilitary wing, are obviously missing in the cases of Breivik and Tarrant, I argue that they can still be viewed as 'fascist' in accordance with the ideal type model provided by Roger Griffin. While not denying the important differences between contemporary lone-actor terrorists and militarised fascist parties of the interwar period, Griffin's ideal type is based on an analysis of the 'key utopian myths'²¹ informing fascist ideology. One of the benefits of this approach, is precisely that it draws attention to how this form of right-wing extremist ideology is strikingly temporalised—a perspective lacking in other conceptual frameworks, which often have an implicit 'synchronic' approach (such as Cas Mudde's focus on 'nativism' and 'authoritarianism').²² Griffin's core thesis is that the ideological core of fascism is a ultranationalist desire to turn 'degeneration into regeneration'.²³ Emphasising that fascism has

19 Mattias Gardell, 'Crusader Dreams: Oslo 22/7, Islamophobia, and the Quest for a Monocultural Europe,' *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 1 (2014): 148, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2014.849930>.

20 Cynthia Miller-Idriss, *Hate in the Homeland: The New Global Far Right* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2020), 15.

21 Griffin, *Fascism*, 46.

22 Cas Mudde, *The Far Right Today* (London: Polity Press, 2019).

23 Fernando Esposito, 'Era Fascista: Italian Fascism's New Beginning and Its Roman Past Future,' in *Beyond the Fascist Century: Essays in Honour of Roger Griffin*, eds. Constantin Iordachi and Aristotle Kallis (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 204. See in particular: Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*; Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism*; Roger Griffin, 'Fixing Solutions: Fascist Temporalities as Remedies for Liquid Modernity,' *Journal of Modern European History* 13, no. 1 (2015): 5–23; Fernando Esposito, *Fascism, Aviation and Mythical Modernity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

a paradoxical relation to time—it is utopian and future-oriented, yet anchors its futural utopia in myths of the past—Griffin argues that fascism is best described as ‘a revolutionary form of [ultra] nationalism’.²⁴ While fascism in its classic form celebrated violence and war as means of purifying and regenerating the nation, recent studies of comparative fascism, for instance provided by Paul Jackson, underline the way contemporary fascism has jettisoned its inter-war manifestations, yet continues to pursue the vision of total national/racial rebirth through innovative forms of organisation, communication, ideology, and tactics—including lone-actor terrorism.²⁵

The Atrocities

Just hours before Breivik parked a white rental van, containing explosives, in the centre of the Government District in downtown Oslo ten years ago, he sent out a ‘compendium’ to the e-mail addresses of over a thousand selected recipients, entitled *2083: A European Declaration of Independence*.²⁶ Despite the fact that the term gives a misleading idea of the content, form and sheer size of it, the document quickly became referred to as a ‘manifesto’ in the press. Even though ‘compendium’ is a less misleading term, the term ‘manifesto’ is—for reasons of simplicity—used alongside ‘compendium’ in this article. The document (which was uploaded together with a short YouTube video) consisted of a badly edited body of text, running to a sprawling 1,518 pages in total, made up of his own writings and journal entries, as well as a wide range of articles and blog posts that he had borrowed and plagiarised from different far-right and Islamophobic websites.

A major purpose of the compendium was to explain the ideological motivation he had for killing a total of seventy-seven Norwegian people—mostly teenagers—in downtown Oslo and at the summer camp of the Labour Party’s youth wing, AUF, on the small island Utøya. He argued that the victims were ‘traitors’ and that his terrorist attacks would be the birth pangs of a Civil War that would put an end to what he described as ‘the Islamic colonisation and Islamisation of Western Europe’.²⁷ It was in this context that he intended the ‘manifesto’ to play an important role. During his trial, the Norwegian mass mur-

24 Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, xi.

25 Jackson, *Transnational Neo-Nazism in the USA, United Kingdom and Australia*.

26 Sindre Bangstad, *Anders Breivik and the Rise of Islamophobia* (London: Zed Books, 2014), 7.

27 Anders Behring Breivik, *2083: A European Declaration of Independence* (2011), 4.

derer stated that he considered his crimes to be ‘fireworks’ that only served the ‘real event’: the launching of 2083.²⁸ This line of reasoning was echoed several places in the manifesto, where the acts that would lead to the killing of seventy-seven people were grotesquely described—with a smiley—as a ‘marketing operation;’) for ‘the distribution of this book’.²⁹

But what did the manifesto actually consist of? In the introduction and in the first part, the Norwegian terrorist tried to give a potted history of the background for the present state of decay that he imagined Europe to be in. Partly by writing his own texts, partly by reproducing other people’s (without consent), he traced the origins of what he thought to be ‘our’ predicament to two events: the emergence of ‘political correctness’ or ‘Cultural Marxism’ on one side, and the invasion of Europe by the religion of Islam on the other. In the second part—entitled ‘Europe Burning’—he tried to describe Europe’s crisis as the result of Islamic colonisation, before adopting in the third and final part, ‘A Declaration of pre-emptive War’, a more ‘strategic’ and ‘advisory’ posture.³⁰ Here, in a section that in contrast to the others seems to have been written primarily by the perpetrator himself,³¹ he provided practical advice on how to plan terrorist acts, descriptions of an ideal, future society, marketing strategies on how to make far-right ideology more palatable for a broader public, and even a Q&A section, in which the perpetrator interviewed himself and revealed autobiographical information.

Through the combination of the first two, descriptive parts, and the last, more ‘strategic’ part, he believed that 2083 could trigger an open civil war in Europe.³² Furthermore, he conceived that his compendium—by providing a kind of pseudohistory of Europe and its enemies, and a detailed description of how he had planned and prepared for his terrorist attacks—would equip other potential far-right lone-actor terrorists with ‘the tools required to win the ongoing Western European cultural war’.³³ Breivik even claimed that he did not act alone but was part of a larger international network of terrorist cells. With bombast and pride he bizarrely referred to himself as ‘Justiciar Knight Commander for the Knights Templar Europe and one of several leaders of the

28 Sigve Indregard, Ingrid Wergeland, Bendik Wold, ‘Svar på tiltale,’ in *Motgift: Akademisk respons på den nye høyreekstremismen*, ed. Sigve Indregard (Oslo: Manifest forlag/Flamme forlag, 2012), 14; Bangstad, *Anders Breivik and the Rise of Islamophobia*, 9.

29 Breivik, 2083, 8.

30 Ingeborg Kjos, ‘Anders Behring Breiviks manifest: En idéanalyse’ (Master thesis, University of Oslo, 2013), 19.

31 Åsne Seierstad, *En av oss: En fortelling om Norge* (Oslo: Kagge forlag, 2014), 444.

32 Breivik, 2083, 803.

33 *Ibid.*, 5.

National and Pan-European Patriotic Resistance Movement'.³⁴ Apparently, a reborn version of the Medieval warrior-monks had been re-established in London in April 2002, a groupuscule consisting of around '15–80 Justiciar Knights in Western Europe', all working to 'overthrow all multiculturalist (cultural Marxist) regimes in Western Europe within the year 2100, and replace them with governments supervised by a "patriotic guardian tribunal" consisting of cultural conservatives/nationalists'.³⁵ However, the 'resistance movement' turned out to be fiction—a pipedream, a diversion, or a call on others to join in, perhaps, but not a reality.

Despite these bizarre claims, he did find support in some of the darkest corners of the internet, for instance from Russian neo-Nazi groups.³⁶ Even more disturbing, however, was the fact that, from early on, the mass murderer appeared to inspire others to act.³⁷ Within a year and a half after the terrorist attacks on July 22, 2011, intelligence agencies in countries such as Slovakia, Poland and the United States were able to prevent planned terrorist attacks where the perpetrators allegedly drew inspiration from the Norwegian mass murderer.³⁸ And that was not all: in 2019, for instance, a US Coast guard officer was arrested on gun and drug charges, and subsequent court documents revealed that, inspired by Breivik's compendium, he had been plotting to kill politicians and journalists in order to start a 'race war', drawing on the advice in 2083 on how to plan terrorist actions.³⁹

Not until 2019, however, were terrorist attacks actually carried out where perpetrator explicitly referred to Breivik when 29-year old Brenton Tarrant attacked two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand on March 15. The Australian terrorist streamed the attacks—in which fifty-one people died, while forty-nine were left wounded—on Facebook Live, and, in advance, teased the attacks on Twitter and uploaded a manifesto, entitled *The Great Replacement*,

34 Ibid., 9.

35 Ibid., 832.

36 Johannes Due Enstad, "Glory to Breivik!": The Russian Far Right and the 2011 Norway Attacks,' *Terrorism and Political Violence* 29, no. 5 (2017): 773–792, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2015.1008629>.

37 See also: Graham Macklin and Tore Bjørgo, 'Breivik's Long Shadow? The Impact of the July 22, 2011 Attacks on the Modus Operandi of Extreme-right Lone Actor Terrorists,' *Perspectives on Terrorism* 15, no. 3 (2021): 14–36, <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/customsites/perspectives-on-terrorism/2021/issue-3/macklin-and-bjorgo.pdf>.

38 Bangstad, *Anders Breivik and the Rise of Islamophobia*, 8.

39 Dave Philipps, 'Coast Guard Officer Plotted to Kill Democrats and Journalists, Prosecutors Say,' *The New York Times*, February 20, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/20/us/christopher-hasson-coast-guard.html>.

on the unedited message board, 8chan. Other users, without any relation to the attacker, then circulated both the manifesto and the actual footage of the attacks on YouTube, Twitter, and Reddit, as the platforms struggled to take down the video which surfaced endlessly.⁴⁰

In the manifesto *The Great Replacement*—which was shorter and easier to read than Breivik's enormous body of text—Tarrant expressed ideas that resembled those of the Norwegian. The Christchurch terrorist even claimed he had been in contact with 'Knight Justiciar Breivik, receiving a blessing for my mission after contacting his brother knights',⁴¹ but nothing suggests that this claim is any more true than the alleged existence of a supranational order of Knights Templar.

The Plots and Narratives of the Manifestos

A reader who delves into the 'manifestos', and reads them comparatively, will soon discover the value of studying them through the lens of Griffin's approach to fascism and Alexander and Smith's approach to cultural sociology who in different ways can draw attention to the 'historicity' and the 'Manichaeian' component underpinning ideologies of hatred, terror and revolution. Taken together they may highlight the way the manifestos are constructed around binary codes and cyclic temporal narratives, and furthermore around othering categories of human beings associated with the 'pure' ingroup to be defended from the 'impure' outgroup, and presenting aggression against the 'enemies' of the nation in the mythic tropes of apocalypse and palingenesis which dehumanise the victims and heroise the aggressors.⁴²

However, it should be stated that the narratives and conceptions of history that underpin the manifestos in question are incoherent and incomplete, and in no way represent a fully thought-through and cogent ideology or 'philosophy of history'. Yet, there are still several reasons to study them. First, the fact that these are incoherent and contractionary texts, is not really an argu-

40 Kevin Roose, 'A Mass Murderer of, and for, the Internet,' *The New York Times*, March 15, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/15/technology/facebook-youtube-christchurch-shooting.html>.

41 Brenton Tarrant, *The Great Replacement* (2019), 18.

42 See for instance: Jeffrey C. Alexander, 'Raging Against the Enlightenment: The Ideology of Steve Bannon,' *Section Culture*, August 18, 2017, <https://asaculturesection.org/2017/08/18/raging-against-the-enlightenment-the-ideology-of-steven-bannon/>; Alexander, *The Meaning of Social Life*; Smith, *Why War?*; Griffin, *Terrorist's Creed*; Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*; Griffin, *Fascism*.

ment against studying them. Instead, we must recognise, as Timothy Snyder has urged us to, that we are often confronted with a situation where the 'ideas that are most significant are *bad* ideas, i.e. ideas that are not interesting in and of themselves, but nevertheless exert psychological, sociological, and political power.'⁴³ The fact that the ideas under examination made terrorism and political violence not just thinkable, but heroic for the perpetrators themselves should be considerable enough proof that these ideas may exert influence on others. Second, even though the ideology may be illogical as a thought system, a narrative analysis can help us establish the narrative structure and employment of the ideology and see how templates and tropes are not simply inserted into a pre-existing ideology. But, rather, that templates and tropes also create the means by which a particular discourse interprets society.⁴⁴ Inspired by the cultural sociology of Smith and Alexander, we may say that a text has a narrative structure, not only when it places elements in a chronological structure of beginning, middle and an end, but also when its meaning arises from the construction of the following three elements: 1) a protagonist, 2) an antagonist, and 3) an object of conflict that the two struggle over.⁴⁵ Following Peter Brooks, we may also say that this struggle between the protagonist and the antagonist creates the 'plot' of the narrative, that it gives 'design and intention' to the narrative, and creates a sense of interconnectedness between the discrete elements that it is made up by.⁴⁶

If we turn to the 'manifestos' of Breivik and Tarrant, we soon recognise how the two evoked similar historical narratives in order to present their terrorist attacks as legitimate and moral. In both manifestos, four, closely woven narratives recur. These narratives state that: 1) the West is existentially threatened, that we are in a warlike situation, where Western countries are being 'invaded' by alien and hostile immigrants (especially Muslims); 2) low birth-rates among Western and white people, high birth-rates among non-Western and non-white people reinforces this threat; 3) Western leaders commit a deliberate betrayal of their own populations and cooperate with the enemy (the immigrants) to

43 Simas Čelutka and Timothy Snyder, 'Taking Bad Ideas Seriously: How to Read Hitler and Ilyin?' *Eurozine*, August 28, 2017, <https://www.eurozine.com/taking-bad-ideas-seriously/>.

44 Lois Presser, 'The Narratives of Offenders,' *Theoretical Criminology* 13, no. 2 (2009): 181; Lise Kjølrsrød, *Leisure as Source of Knowledge, Social Resilience and Public Commitment* (London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 11.

45 Smith, *Why War?* 21; Tore Witsø Rafoss, 'Kampen om demokratiet: 22. juli og konstruksjonen av et kulturelt traume,' in *Kultursosiologisk forskning*, ed. by Håkon Larsen (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2015): 197–212: 199.

46 Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 5.

replace the 'white' population with another; and 4) violent resistance is the only real alternative, since democracy is a corrupt, decadent system, facing an impending collapse.

These narratives follow a similar subliminal plot. The 'manifestos' of Breivik and Tarrant are characterised by a series of simplistic contrasts between good and bad, pure and impure, that creates an image of hordes of invading dangerous 'others' who threaten the continued existence of the 'real' Western people.⁴⁷ Speaking in somewhat larger generalisation, we may suggest that the plot that shapes the historical narratives evoked in the manifestos (the feature that gives the texts a direction and intent of meaning) is centered around this fantasy of an 'organic' people (the protagonist), conceived of either in racial, cultural, ethnic or religious terms, and its struggle to overcome decadence through coming together and combating the 'alien' and demonised culprits (the antagonist) that are said to be the cause of their decline, or their bio-cultural enemy, since they threaten both the right to a territory, and the cultural, religious and racial future of the organic community (the object of conflict). If or when these enemies are combated, or so the plot indicates, the people will once again rise to former heights, and reverse the decadence brought about by immigration, miscegenation, and/or the spread of alien, levelling and unpatriotic ideas.⁴⁸ Hence, the narratives are both directed towards the future and as an explanatory function in the present: they tell us who the 'people' are, why they are suffering, who their enemies are, how the 'people' ended up here, (diagnosis) and what they can expect in the future if they do not act (remedy). As such, the narratives not only frame the present as a site of decadence due to (Muslim) immigration. The narratives of the manifestos also rely on, to quote Cynthia Miller-Idriss, a 'sense of nostalgia (or faux nostalgia, based on a past that never was) and utopian desires for a better future, the restoration of a beloved homeland'.⁴⁹

Eurabia and the Great Replacement

Thus both Breivik and Tarrant were motivated by conspiracy theories that claimed that 'the white race' or 'the indigenous peoples of Europe' were about to lose their homelands as a result of a combination of low birth rates among

47 See also: Alexander, 'Raging Against the Enlightenment.'

48 Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, 37.

49 Miller-Idriss, *Hate in the Homeland*, 11.

the 'white', 'Western' or 'European' parts of the population, and a 'colonisation' and 'invasion' of immigrants in general and Muslims in particular.

In Breivik's compendium, this is expressed through his embrace of the so-called 'Eurabia theory', a conspiracy theory that serves as an important rationale for the 'counter-jihad' movement he tries to associate himself with. Although physical meetings and conferences have been initiated by its ideologues, counter-jihadism is more of a virtual community, centred around European and American websites such as *Gates of Vienna*, *The Brussels Journal*, *Jihad Watch* and *Atlas Shrugs*,⁵⁰ than a militant movement in line with similar Islamophobic phenomena such as the English Defence League. And it was from these websites that Breivik retrieved large portions of his apocalyptic understanding of the predicament of Western history. For example, Breivik reproduced as many as thirty-seven articles and blog posts—in total of 14.5 per cent of the word count of 2083⁵¹—from the Norwegian counter-jihad blogger Fjordman.⁵²

In his compendium, Breivik embraced—and radicalised—the Eurabia theory as it had been developed by Egyptian Bat Ye'or in the book *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*⁵³ and by Fjordman in a series of posts on *Gates of Vienna*.⁵⁴ The 22 July terrorist made it clear that what he wanted to fight was Muslim immigration to Europe—though in Breivik's paranoid and apocalyptic rhetoric, Muslim immigration to Europe was referred to as an 'invasion', as a form of 'demographic warfare', or as 'demographic genocide'. It was further argued that this 'invasion' could be traced back to a deliberate and covert plan in which the inner enemies of Europe, the 'cultural Marxists', and the external enemies, the Muslims, work together to replace 'the indigenous peoples of Europe' with Muslims, and integrate Europe into a new Islamic caliphate: Eurabia.⁵⁵ Furthermore, Breivik's prophecy about the impending collapse of Western civilisation (unless people take up arms and resist it) was plotted into a larger conception of history, where this 'Islamisation' was imagined to be part of a 1,400 year old

50 Øyvind Strømme, *Det mørke nettet: Om høyreekstremisme, kontrajihadisme og terror i Europa* (Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2011).

51 Paul Jackson, 'The License to Hate: Peder Jensen's Fascist Rhetoric in Anders Breivik's Manifesto "2083: A European Declaration of Independence"; *Democracy and Security* 9, no. 3 (2013): 247–269, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17419166.2013.802986>.

52 Strømme, *Det mørke nettet*.

53 Bat Ye'or, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006).

54 Fjordman, *Defeating Eurabia* (Lulu.com, 2008).

55 Breivik, 2083, 1235, 1210, 1367, 1368.

war between Islam and Christianity, a war that had functioned like the hidden motor of Europe's dealings with the Islamic world.⁵⁶

In Tarrant's manifesto we do not find the same references to the counter-jihad movement or to the Eurabia theory. However, he did provide support to the heroic narrative of the Knights Templar that Breivik tried to shroud his counter-jihad ideology in, for instance when he claimed he had been in contact with 'Knight Justiciar Breivik, receiving a blessing for my mission after contacting his brother knights'.⁵⁷ Furthermore, he also shared Breivik's understanding of the current predicament of the West and his conception of history. Both Breivik and Tarrant constructed a common regional or European past to signal resistance to what they perceived as an ancient threat to Europe: Islam. In particular, the Battles of Battle of Vienna in 1683 and the Battle of Poitiers in 732 were invoked in both cases. Both the Battle of Poitiers in 732, where Charles Martel (686–741) led a Frankish army that halted the advance of Islam in Europe, and the Battle of Vienna, where the King of Poland, John Sobieski (1629–1696) defeated the Ottoman siege of the town, represented a heroic watershed-moment in the conceptions of history evoked by Tarrant and Breivik. These battles serve the purpose of presenting Islam as an eternal enemy of Europe, as both make the claim that the struggle between Islam and the West is a driving force in history, and that this struggle has shaped history for over 1,400 years.⁵⁸ While the Norwegian perpetrator included repeated references to these battles in his compendium, Tarrant referred to the 'triumphant VICTORY' at 'Vienna in 1683'⁵⁹ in his manifesto and scrawled 'Tours 732', 'Charles Martel', and 'Vienna 1683' on the firearms he used in his terrorist attack (together with several other historical references to either fascism or battles or events that could be interpreted into the scheme of an eternal battle between the West and Islam).⁶⁰ As Mattias Gardell has highlighted in

56 In this narrative, the EU is portrayed as a hidden scheme where European elites work against its own people to destroy national sovereignty in Europe, thus laying the continent open for a Muslim take-over. See: Jackson, 'The Licence to Hate.'

57 Tarrant, *The Great Replacement*, 18.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid., 42.

60 For instance, many of the references pointed towards historical battles involving the Ottoman Empire. In addition, some of the scrawling's referred to neo-Nazi slogans and right-wing extremists convicted for murder and terrorism. For an overview, see: Chris Pleasance, 'New Zealand killer scrawled "inspiration" for his shooting spree on his guns—from far-right murderers and historical figures to sex scandals linked to Muslims,' *Daily Mail*, March 15, 2019, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6812729/New-Zealand-killer-scrawled-inspiration-shooting-sprees-guns.html>.

a seminal article on Breivik, the message communicated by evoking such historical imagery is clear: ‘once again, Christian Europe faces its transhistorical arch-enemy and desperately needs to rekindle the dormant warrior instincts inherent in the white Christian male to produce heroes of the same caliber in order to defeat the Muslim invasion.’⁶¹ As such, both terrorists used these battles completely detached from their specific historical context. Along with their references to the Christian Crusades, these battles rather served purposes in the present, as they helped create what Miller-Idriss has referred to as ‘a myth of survival’.⁶²

While drawing on some of the same historical narratives as Breivik, there were, however, other conspiracy theories than the Eurabia one that Tarrant explicitly referred to in order to provide an explanation for the historical significance of what was ‘really’ going on behind the scenes, allegedly ignored or covered up by official media: the so-called ‘great replacement’ and ‘white genocide’ theories. While the latter has its origins in the US white supremacist scene, the former was coined by the French far-right intellectual Renaud Camus in the book *Le Grand Remplacement* in 2011,⁶³ and has now become one of the leading far-right conspiracy theories in recent years, for instance representing one of the key ingredients in the ideology of the Europe-wide Identitarian Movement.⁶⁴ In structure and content, however, this conspiracy theory overlaps with the Eurabia theory. For Tarrant’s narrative was, basically, the same as Breivik’s. In both narratives, immigration was described as an ‘invasion’—lacking historical parallels—where ‘the state and corporate entities’ deceived the white part of the population, in order ‘to replace the White people who have failed to reproduce, failed to create the cheap labour, new consumers and tax base that corporations and states need to thrive.’⁶⁵

Tarrant and Breivik also shared an obsession with birth rates. Low birth rates among Westerners, combined with high birthrates among non-Western people, reinforced the existential threat that they believed the West was facing. For example, Tarrant’s manifesto opened with repeating ‘It’s the birth rates’ three times.⁶⁶ This understanding of the current predicament of the West, which not only has clear racist and xenophobic underpinnings, but also reflect an

61 Gardell, ‘Crusader Dreams,’ 147.

62 Miller-Idriss, *Hate in the Homeland*, 36.

63 Renaud Camus, *Le Grand Remplacement* (Chez l’auteur, 2011); Miller-Idriss, *Hate in the Homeland*, 9.

64 Rasmus Hage Dalland, *Identitær: En reise inn i Europas nye høyre* (Oslo: Solum Bokvennen, 2020), 17.

65 Tarrant, *The Great Replacement*, 5.

66 *Ibid.*, 3.

anti-feminist and misogynist mindset, was shared by Breivik. In both *The Great Replacement* and 2083 women were first and foremost associated with reproduction, sex, and child upbringing, not with work or participation in the public sphere. In both manifestos, the sexual revolution and the dissolution of the traditional nuclear family, in favour of a value-set more oriented towards individual self-realisation, were also evoked as something which had left Western countries open and vulnerable for foreign ‘invasions’.⁶⁷

A Fascist Myth of History

Yet, a key division between Tarrant’s manifesto and Breivik’s compendium concerns the question of fascism. Tarrant openly embraced fascism in his manifesto. He labeled himself ‘eco-fascist’,⁶⁸ referred to the leader of the British Union of Fascists, Oswald Mosley, as ‘the person from history closest to [his] own beliefs’,⁶⁹ and reproduced images of *Die Schwarze Sonne*. The latter is not only a symbol associated with fascism; the reproduction of it in Tarrant’s manifesto can also be read as a reference to Heinrich Himmler and the occultist racism of the SS.⁷⁰ Breivik, on the other hand, seemingly rejected fascism and Nazism in his compendium, calling them—together with communism and Islamism—‘hate ideologies’.⁷¹ Yet, his compendium can still be seen as an attempt at reviving fascism by distancing it from interwar fascism (and the most toxic ideas associated with it), while reviving ideas and values that are part of the heritage of the far right from the interwar period (yet is not so closely associated with Holocaust, Hitler, and biological racism). This claim is for instance supported by the fact that Breivik referred to the German terror group NSU, the Swedish lone-actor terrorist Peter Mangs, and the Norwegian neo-Nazi activist Erik Blücher as examples of other ‘militant nationalists’⁷² in

67 Stephen J. Walton, ‘Anti-Feminism and Misogyny in Breivik’s “Manifesto”’, *NORA—Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 20, no. 7 (2012): 7, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08038740.2011.650707>; Andreas Önnersfors ‘“The Great Replacement”: Decoding the Christchurch Terrorist Manifesto’, *Insights—Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right*, March 18, 2019, <https://www.radicalrightanalysis.com/2019/03/18/the-great-replacement-decoding-the-christchurch-terrorist-manifesto>, accessed April 4, 2019.

68 Tarrant, *The Great Replacement*, 17.

69 *Ibid.*, 16.

70 Roger Griffin, *Fascism: A Quick Immersion* (Tibidabo Publishing, 2020).

71 See Breivik, 2083, 565.

72 Hannah Gitmark, ‘Salig suppe av ideologisk inspirasjon’, *Dagsavisen*, April, 19, 2012, <https://www.dagsavisen.no/nyheter/innenriks/salig-suppe-av-ideologisk-inspirasjon-1.474357>.

court. In jail, he has even tried to foster a new fascist party, 'Det norske fascistparti og den nordiske liga' [The Norwegian Fascist Party and the Nordic League], meant to facilitate a 'democratic fascist seizure of power'.⁷³

It should also be recognised how Breivik and Tarrant's fantasies of a utopian restoration of Western homelands feeds of a myth of 'national' rebirth of the kind identified by Roger Griffin as the 'ideological core' of fascism. Tarrant's and Breivik's 'manifestos' are shrouded in the fascist rhetoric of apocalypse and palingenesis, in 'the sense of living through an imminent turning-point in contemporary history' where 'the recourse to organised violence [is seen] as both necessary and healthy' to combat the decadence and 'loss of racial vitality'⁷⁴ that the enemies of the organic community have brought over the people. For instance, Breivik rejected democracy and saw violence as a legitimate way of restoring what he projected as past European greatness. In this context, he fantasised that his actions would trigger an open civil war—a civil war that he believed could lead to a cathartic 'second cultural European Renaissance' where 'Europe will be reborn as strong as it once was.'⁷⁵

Tarrant embraced similar ideas. Although he admitted that he was not a Christian, his manifesto was still a syncretic hodgepodge where Christian imagery was activated alongside things drawn from a vast variety of sources, including internet memes, British fascism, occult Nazism, US white supremacy, and European Identitarianism. On one page, for instance, he reproduced excerpts from a speech ordering the first Crusade by Pope Urban II in 1095,⁷⁶ and called for the conquest of 'Constantinople' (Istanbul) where 'Hagia Sophia will be free of minarets and Constantinople will be rightfully christian [sic] owned once more.'⁷⁷ Tarrant wrote that his goal was to take revenge on 'the invaders',⁷⁸ i.e. 'the Muslims', who he claimed were behind hundreds of thousands of killings of Western and white people. On the other hand, however, he also referred to so-called 'accelerationism',⁷⁹ the idea that an alleged inevitable collapse of Western democracies can be accelerated by inflaming tensions,

73 Henning Carr Ekroll and Karen Tjernshaugen, 'Anders Behring Breivik vil starte norsk fascistparti,' [Anders Behring Breivik wants to establish a Norwegian fascist party] *Aftenposten*, May 10, 2013, <https://www.aftenposten.no/norge/politikk/i/8mm3E/anders-behring-breivik-vil-starte-norsk-fascistparti>, accessed September 8, 2020.

74 Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, 44.

75 Breivik, 2083, 653.

76 Beutel, 'The New Zealand Terrorist's Manifesto.'

77 Tarrant, *The Great Replacement*, 26.

78 *Ibid.*, 5.

79 *Ibid.*, 66.

something which again will create a 'revolutionary' situation.⁸⁰ This mentioning of accelerationism reflects the high level of ideological syncretism involved in Tarrant's manifesto. While the idea originates as a strategy for the radical Left, accelerationism has now become an important idea in a newly emerged global right-wing extremist internet culture, due to the influence of the violence inciting book *Siege*, written by James Mason, a former member of the American Nazi Party in the 1960s. Originally penned in the 1980s, Paul Jackson has shown how the book remained in obscurity until a violent US groupuscule founded in 2015, 'Atomwaffen Division', rediscovered it, and launched a webpage (siegeculture.biz) to promote its ideas about how a revolutionary storm will occur at some undisclosed point in the future.⁸¹ Steeped in the tropes of decay, rebirth and apocalypse, Mason envisioned in *Siege* that the West currently found itself in a 'liminal time', but that the motors of history worked towards ending 'this current epoch of dystopia': 'This present Ragnarök/Apocalypse/Kali Yuga⁸² time frame is pre-ordained, set to burst forth in a cataclysm that will advertently necessitate a healthful catharsis of all undesirable elements. From chaos comes rebirth and order.'⁸³ After Atomwaffen Division rediscovered him, Mason and his ideas became frequently referred to on image-board sites such as 8chan, with the meme 'Read Siege' going viral.⁸⁴ Referring to Mason's concept, the Australian terrorist imagined that by inflaming tensions he could create 'an atmosphere of fear and change in which drastic, powerful and revolutionary action can occur'.⁸⁵

Tarrant also placed his violent actions in relation to the past, the present, and the future. As highlighted in New Zealand's royal commission report on the Christchurch mosque shootings, a 'nostalgia for a pre-immigration past' was a key driver behind the terrorist attacks.⁸⁶ 'The present is a gift from those in our past', he for instance proclaimed in his manifesto:

80 Rob Waugh, 'What is "Accelerationism", the Belief Followed by New Zealand Terror Attacker?' *Metro*, March 18, 2019, <https://metro.co.uk/2019/03/18/accelerationism-belief-followed-new-zealand-terror-attacker-8930673/>.

81 Jackson, *Transnational Neo-Nazism in the USA, United Kingdom and Australia*, 7.

82 This seems to be an allusion to Julius Evola's *Revolt Against the Modern World* (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions International, 1995).

83 Quoted in Jackson, *Transnational Neo-Nazism in the USA, United Kingdom and Australia*, 19.

84 Andrew Thompson, 'The Measure of Hate on 4Chan,' *Rolling Stone Magazine*, May 10, 2018, <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/the-measure-of-hate-on-4chan-627922/>.

85 Tarrant, *The Great Replacement*, 6.

86 Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Attack on Christchurch Mosques on 15 March 2019,

Your ancestors did not sweat, bleed and die in the name of a multicultural, egalitarian nation. They built homes for their children to live in, they built communities for their people to thrive in, they built nations for their people to survive in. They slaved for a better future for their people . . . We must strive to create a nation worthy of our ancestors, that we give our people the very best lives, and nations that are worthy of them. A nation that venerates its ancestors, but lives for its offspring.⁸⁷

While key traits of interwar fascism are missing in the cases of Breivik and Tarrant, what these examples highlight is how they still see history in accordance to the old fascist narrative of past greatness in primordial purity (when Europeans were Europeans ‘for real’, with no miscegenation with other cultures, and with a high level of internal national homogeneity combined to belonging to a ‘European nation’), decline/decadence (multiculturalism encouraged through ideological enemies) and coming rebirth (the coming liberation of the White/European people through civil war). This threefold structure identified by Griffin, which configures the historical imaginings of both Breivik and Tarrant, comprises what, with reference to François Hartog, we may call the fascist ‘regime of historicity’,⁸⁸ i.e. the way fascist movements organise their ideology by linking together the categories of the past, the present and the future. Well-known examples of the fascist triadic ‘regime of historicity’ are the Nazi visions of an idealised ‘Aryan’ past, or Mussolini’s movement idea of present-day Italians as the ancestors of the late Republican and early Imperial Roman Empire.⁸⁹ Lesser known examples, that follow the same regenerative structure, can be found in the way figures like Vidkun Quisling and the Norwegian fascist party, *Nasjonal Samling* (1933–1945), split Norwegian history into three phases, summarised in Quisling’s own words as ‘past greatness, national decay in the present, and new greatness in the future.’⁹⁰ Furthermore, we may also recognise it in the romanticising of the Norse past flourishing in Northern European Neo-Nazi Movements from the 1970s onwards; in their description of how their

November 26, 2020, <https://chchroyalinquiry.cwp.govt.nz/the-report/firearms-licensing/general-life-in-new-zealand/>, accessed January 21, 2021.

87 Tarrant, *The Great Replacement*, 41.

88 Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity*.

89 Jan Nelis, ‘Back to the Future: Italian Fascist Representations of the Roman Past,’ *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 3, no. 1 (2014): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22116257-00301001>.

90 Vidkun Quisling, *Quisling har sagt: For Norges frihet og selvstendighet: Artikler og taler 9. april 1940–23. juni 1941*, vol. 3 (Oslo: Gunnar Stenersens forlag, 1941), 74. All translations from Norwegian are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

countries now were declining as a consequence of immigration and evil 'Zionist Occupation Governments', and in their promise that a coming 'race war' will resurrect past Norse greatness.

But it is this regenerative structure that also shapes Breivik's and Tarrant's ideology, and shapes their way of reimagining the boundaries and identity of the organic community as 'European', 'Western', 'white' or 'Christian' in response to immigration from Muslim countries to the West. In this context, what Griffin calls the 'ultra-nation' is also an 'imagined community'⁹¹ not necessarily identical with either the nation state or the historical nation, but can also be other organically conceived entities, such as an ethnically based culture or 'the white race'.⁹² The rebirth of an organic community of this kind is precisely what is envisioned in their manifestos. For instance, a regenerative structure obviously informs Tarrant's fantasies of 'white rebirth'⁹³ in 'a nation worthy of our ancestors'.⁹⁴ There is an unspoken premise—a built-in regime of historicity, so to speak—within this narrative reversing decadence and saving 'the West' from 'spiraling into decay and eventual death':⁹⁵ a myth of a past golden age in primordial purity and greatness where people were in contact with their traditions, culture and true inner essence. Though Tarrant portrays the present as a 'a society with no core beliefs, no purpose and no vision for the future', characterised by 'decay all around', such as 'rampant nihilism, consumerism and individualism'⁹⁶ as well as alienating architecture and 'a complete removal of man from nature',⁹⁷ he still believes that violent 'revolutionary change' can re-embed people within their true cultural and racial community.

The regenerative structure transposed onto a pan-European (or pan-Western) level is even more obvious in Breivik's case. In his palingenetic narrative, Breivik wanted to retrieve the values from an imagined and idealised European, Christian, white and monocultural past in order to construct a future, ethnically cleansed utopia.⁹⁸ With the title of his compendium—2083—Breivik tried to tie together the past, the present, and the future in a man-

91 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Books, 1983).

92 Griffin, *Fascism*, 130.

93 Tarrant, *The Great Replacement*, 39.

94 *Ibid.*, 41.

95 *Ibid.*, 3.

96 *Ibid.*, 34.

97 *Ibid.*, 35.

98 Øystein Sørensen, 'Ideologi og galskap: Anders Behring Breiviks totalitære mentalitet,' in *Høyreekstremisme: Ideer og bevegelser i Europa*, ed. Øystein Sørensen et al. (Oslo: Dreyer forlag, 2012), 27. My translation.

ner that connected his fantasies of a future violent cleansing of Europe with a heroic image of the past. The title refers to what will be the four hundred year anniversary of the Battle of Vienna in 1683. Breivik prophesised that this anniversary would become a historical turning point: 2083 was not only the year he imagined that Muslims would reach a majority in Europe; it also represented the year when his imagined civil war would be won.⁹⁹ As such, in the chimerical narratives of a coming European civil war that informed his compendium, 2083 marked the year when the past, the present and the future of Europe would be reconciled: the year when Europeans would once again reconnect with its own heroic past, revive its Christian identity and regenerate itself. In 2083, Europe would be purged of Muslims, Marxists, feminists and multiculturalists, and the continent would rise back to glory by installing a monocultural and patriarchal societal form.¹⁰⁰

These narratives stand within a fascist tradition. Yet, whereas interwar fascist movements represented full scale attempts to change history by forcing structural change on society on par with the mass violence of the French Revolution, these terrorists operate within the narrative that their acts will have massive consequences when history reaches a tipping point, and that by 'destabilising' and 'discomforting' society by 'attacking, vilifying, radicalising [sic] and exaggerating all societal conflicts',¹⁰¹ time may move in a different direction.

Transnational Inspiration

Neither Tarrant nor Breivik have been part of any fascist or right-wing extremist groups, although Breivik is a former member of the Norwegian right-wing populist party, the Progress Party, and Tarrant has donated money to Generation Identity. Yet, their significance lies elsewhere: in how their narratives and actions may provide inspiration for others to conduct lone-actor terrorism. While it took several years until someone (i.e. Tarrant) carried out a terrorist attack with reference to Breivik, Tarrant's actions would soon inspire a wave of terrorist attacks in 2019. Already a month after the Christchurch shootings, nineteen-year-old John T. Earnest uploaded a similar 'manifesto' to Tarrant's (with Jews replacing Muslims as the demonised 'Other') on the same online message board as the Australian, namely Schan, before he sought out a synagogue in California, where he killed a woman. In this text, Earnest wrote that

99 See for instance: Breivik, 2083, 929.

100 Gardell, 'Crusader Dreams,' 131; Breivik, 2083, 969.

101 Tarrant, *The Great Replacement*, 66.

he was inspired by Tarrant, and claimed that ‘the Jews’ were responsible for a ‘meticulously planned genocide of the European race’ through their alleged roles in mass immigration, ‘cultural Marxism’, communism and feminism. He predicted a future revolutionary war and wrote that ‘The Day of the Rope is here’¹⁰²—a reference to William Pierce’s neo-Nazi novel *The Turner Diaries* (1978). In this novel, Pierce had depicted in cinematic detail the scenario of a global, racial apocalypse, that would spread from the US and to the entire world, exterminating all non-white people in the process. In this context, ‘The Day of the Rope’ referred to simultaneous mass executions of ‘race traitors’ in the apocalyptic war that he portrayed as pre-dating the ‘great dawn’¹⁰³ when white people were left alone on the planet.

Then, on 3 August 2019, twenty-one year old Patrick Crusius from Texas also found inspiration in both the killings and the manifesto of the Australian mass murderer, and sought out a local *Walmart* store in El Paso, Texas, where he killed twenty-three people. Also referring to Tarrant, Crusius uploaded a right-wing extremist ‘manifesto’ on 8chan in advance of the attacks, and in this text, Crusius outlined an explanation of the terrorist attacks, grounded in a similar narrative of population replacement that Breivik and Tarrant had used. The manifesto also included an invitation to 8chan’s users: ‘Do your part and spread this, brothers!’¹⁰⁴ The El Paso terrorist opened his ‘manifesto’ by referencing the Christchurch terrorist as a source of inspiration. Reading it, we can infer that Crusius had embraced the Australian terrorist’s belief in the existence of a plot to replace the ‘white’ population of the West with Muslims. Yet he had also modified Tarrant’s narrative: Muslims were no longer singled out as constituting the main external enemy by the El Paso terrorist. Instead, he recontextualised the narrative of the struggle between the organic community (the protagonist) and the invading enemies (the antagonist) over territorial domination and the racial and cultural future of the organic community (the object of conflict), onto Mexican immigration to the United States—which, in line with Breivik’s and Tarrant’s line of reasoning, was referred to as an ‘invasion’.¹⁰⁵

Following the terrorist attack in El Paso, the unedited imageboard site 8chan was de-platformed. Yet, another imageboard site, Endchan, was soon to wel-

102 John T. Earnest, ‘An Open Letter’ (2019), 1.

103 Andrew Macdonald [William Pierce], *The Turner Diaries* (National Vanguard Books, 1978), 290.

104 April Glaser, ‘8chan Is a Normal Part of Mass Shootings Now,’ *Slate Magazine*, August 4, 2019: <https://slate.com/technology/2019/08/el-paso-8chan-4chan-mass-shootings-manifesto.html>.

105 Patrick Crusius, *The Inconvenient Truth* (2019), 1.

come ‘Schan refugees’.¹⁰⁶ Just a week after the terrorist attack in El Paso, a twenty-one year old Norwegian right-wing extremist, Philip Manshaus, announced a new terrorist attack on Endchan, accompanied by a meme depicting Tarrant, Earnest, and Crusius. While not posting a manifesto, Manshaus published a text where he (falsely) claimed he had been selected by ‘saint Tarrant’ to start a ‘racial war’ ‘irl’ (i.e. in real life). Inspired by Dylann Roof, Anders Behring Breivik and Brenton Tarrant¹⁰⁷—whose manifesto he read only eight days earlier—Manshaus also referenced Mason’s ideas, and imagined that he could ‘accelerate’ what he saw as an inevitable historical development and ignite a ‘race war’ by killing his seventeen year old stepsister of Chinese descent and attacking a mosque outside Oslo.¹⁰⁸ Shortly after entering the al-Noor Islamic Centre, however, Manshaus was overpowered by a sixty-five year old member of the mosque.

Mobilising similar narratives as Tarrant and Breivik, Manshaus tried to justify his actions in court with reference to the conspiracy theory that white people were about to be displaced in Europe due to mass immigration and ‘harmful’ ideologies such as ‘cultural Marxism’. Immigration, multiculturalism, feminism, homosexuality, pornography, drugs, crime, and consumerism—everything was perceived by Manshaus as something that ‘Jews’ and ‘cultural Marxists’ had unleashed on the European people, designed, in Manshaus’ paranoid conception, to facilitate ‘a genocide of the European race.’¹⁰⁹ His ‘motivation’, he claimed in court, was to turn the tide of history and reverse decadence, protecting the racial and cultural heritage of the European and Norwegian people ‘who are today on the brink of extinction’.¹¹⁰ This could only be done, he fantasised, by accelerating the motors of history towards a full blown ‘race war’ that soon would ‘flood over the world’.¹¹¹

The examples above highlight how the new wave of right-wing extremist terrorists are steeped in a similar online far-right culture, and how terrorists refer

106 Miller-Idriss, *Hate in the Homeland*, 143.

107 ‘Rettsaken mot Philip Manshaus,’ [The trial against Philip Manshaus] *NRK*, May 7, 2020, <https://www.nrk.no/nyheter/rettssaken-mot-philip-manshaus-1.14656063>.

108 Jenny-Linn Lohne and Håkon F. Høydal, ‘Manshaus mente det ville skje en borgerkrig,’ [Manshaus Believed a Civil War Would Happen] *VG*, May 8, 2019, <https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/3J0z2A/manshaus-mente-det-ville-skje-en-borgerkrig>, accessed May 30, 2020.

109 Quoted in Harald S. Klungtveit, *Nynazister blant oss: På innsiden av den nye høyreekstremismen* (Oslo: Kagge forlag, 2020), 229–230. My translation.

110 Quoted in Klungtveit, *Nynazister blant oss*, 229–230. My translation.

111 ‘Rettsaken mot Philip Manshaus,’ *NRK*, May 10, 2020, <https://www.nrk.no/nyheter/rettssaken-mot-philip-manshaus-1.14656063>.

to each other and are inspired and shaped by each other's words and actions. The different terrorists share an extremist belief that the only way to avoid a displacement of the white Western civilisation is—in the words of Cynthia Miller-Idriss—through inciting 'an apocalyptic race war, which will result in the rebirth of a new world order and a restored white civilisation'.¹¹² As such, one could argue that the 'subterranean passions and emotions' that provides these lone-actor terrorists with meaning and motivation are somewhat similar to the 'mobilising passions' that historian Robert Paxton has claimed 'formed the emotional lava that set fascism's foundations' in the interwar period: a 'passionate nationalism'; a 'Manichean view of history as a battle between the good and evil camps'; 'the belief that one's group is a victim, a sentiment that justifies any action, without legal or moral limits, against its enemies, both internal and external'; a celebration of the 'beauty of violence and the efficacy of will'; and, finally, a desire for a 'closer integration of a purer community, by consent if possible, or by exclusionary violence if necessary'.¹¹³

Moreover, the perpetrators not only exhibit these 'mobilising passions' or subscribe to a similar Manichean view of history. They also explicitly build upon each other, on former right-wing extremist acts of terror, and the attempts at justifying them with reference to extraordinarily simplistic divisions between us and them, friends and enemies. Despite different points of reference, Crusius' construction of the Hispanic invader was—in structure—almost identical with Tarrant's construction of the Muslim, a construction which, again, was inspired by Breivik's compendium and acts of terror. The antisemitic conspiracy theory evoked by John T. Earnest, was also based on similar stories. He believed in the claim, widespread in neo-Nazi circles, that Jews were orchestrating mass immigration in order to destroy other 'races'. As such, his antisemitic attacks were motivated by a similar concept of 'destruction from within' as Breivik's attack on 'cultural Marxists'.

As Cynthia Miller-Idriss has emphasised, the 'fantasies' that underpin these actions—the great replacement, Eurabia, and white genocide—not only create 'a sense of urgency and call whites to action.' These 'fantasies' have also 'helped foster transnational inspiration and a sense of shared mission among the global far-right'.¹¹⁴ With that being said, however, it should still be stressed how Tarrant, Manshaus, Earnest, and Crusius were shaped by another extremist ecosystem than Breivik's. Whereas the latter received decisive impulses from the so-called 'counter-jihad' websites and comment sections, unmoderated,

¹¹² Miller-Idriss, *Hate in the Homeland*, 13.

¹¹³ Robert Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 41.

¹¹⁴ Miller-Idriss, *Hate in the Homeland*, 12.

free-for-all imageboard sites have since emerged as something of a haven for the new far-right terrorists. As highlighted by Miller-Idriss, the irony-soaked discourse on unregulated social-media platforms and imageboard sites such as 4chan, 8chan and Endchan have been successful in using humour, jokes, trolling, and memes to spread far-right frames of understanding.¹¹⁵ Unlike the counter-jihadist sites Breivik subscribed to, which were characterised by a dystopian ‘seriousness’ and where there was a clear distinction between the main post and the comments section below, the interaction on the imageboard sites, frequented by terrorists such as Tarrant and Manshaus, are instead characterised by immersing the far-right apocalypticism in sarcastic banter—in a dark, yet playful, game of words, opinions and symbols, in which one participant tries to outdo the other in anger, sarcasm, racism, misogyny, political incorrectness, rage, and hatred.

While far right content on YouTube may have played an even more decisive role in shaping Tarrant’s worldview, imageboard sites such as 4chan and 8chan still represented important sources of inspiration for the Christchurch mosque shooter.¹¹⁶ There are even many references to in-jokes from these sites in his manifesto, something which sets it apart from Breivik’s compendium. The compendium of the Norwegian terrorist was divided into three, and consisted of different types of text, but ‘humour’ was not one of the ingredients. Since Tarrant’s *The Great Replacement* is peppered with in-jokes and references to memes that can be difficult to decode for people who are not themselves part of this far-right meme culture, some have labelled the text as ‘a trap’, as a stumbling block for uninitiated scholars, journalists and security services.¹¹⁷ However, some examples of this irony-soaked discourse are easy to identify, for instance when Tarrant wrote that he had learned ethnonationalism from ‘Spyro the Dragon 3’,¹¹⁸ and, in a Breivik-like interview with himself, claimed that ‘recently I have been working part time as a kebab removalist’¹¹⁹—a reference to the so-called ‘remove kebab’ meme, which originated in a Serbian music video and has since become popular on extremist online forums (like 8chan), where it functions as an euphemism for ethnic cleansing of Muslims.¹²⁰

115 Ibid., 65f.

116 Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Attack on Christchurch Mosques on 15 March 2019.

117 Talia Lavin, ‘The Death of Fascist Irony,’ *The New Republic*, March 19, 2019, <https://newrepublic.com/article/153346/death-fascist-irony>.

118 Tarrant, *The Great Replacement*, 17; Lavin, ‘The Death of Fascist Irony.’

119 Tarrant, *The Great Replacement*, 5.

120 ‘Serbia Strong / Remove Kebab,’ *Know Your Meme*, <https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/serbia-strong-remove-kebab>, accessed March 2019; ‘Remove Kebab,’ *Urban Dictio-*

The influence of such online ecosystems on Tarrant also became evident at an arraignment hearing. Here Tarrant flashed what most observers would interpret as the o.k. sign, where the thumb and index finger meet in a circle, while the remaining fingers stand straight out. Yet, originating on 4chan in 2017, the far-right meme culture has now appropriated it. Rather than 'O' and 'K', the hand gesture here symbolises 'W' and 'P' for 'white power'.¹²¹ Tarrant's use of this greeting can be seen as an attempt to continue the irony-soaked trolling, to distance himself from his surroundings, and send out a hidden sign of belonging to an ideological community in which his actions are seen not as criminal but heroic.

The fact that Breivik's compendium needs be understood in light of international counter-jihadist web pages, while the new wave of right-wing extremists should be placed in relation to a new global online culture, rather than their respective national public spheres, has some interesting aspects to it. Miller-Idriss has emphasised the importance of 'the imagined territories and sacred geographies'¹²² in contemporary right-wing extremism. Miller-Idriss' argument is corroborated by the findings of this article. As she writes, the historical narratives of Breivik and Tarrant—as well as Manshaus, Crusius, and Earnest—all 'rely on a sense of white victimhood and are . . . tied to emotional appeals to protect, defend, and take heroic action to restore sacred national space, territory, and homelands.'¹²³ Yet, while the struggle over territories are the object of conflict between the protagonists and the antagonists in the conceptions of history and narratives treated in this article, these narratives can—with the exception of Crusius'—simultaneously be said to be characterised by the opposite tendency: by deterritorialisation. The concept—which was developed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari,¹²⁴ but later used by sociologist Olivier Roy¹²⁵ to capture features of today's globalised, radical Islamism—can help us conceptualise how this form of globalised right-wing extremism has a Janus-faced character. Despite their insistence on the utmost importance of the connection

nary, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=remove%20kebab>, last modified March 7, 2014.

121 Lavin, 'The Death of Fascist Irony'; Venessa Swales, 'When the o.k. Sign is No Longer o.k.,' *New York Times*, December 15, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/15/us/ok-sign-white-power.html>.

122 Miller-Idriss, *Hate in the Homeland*, 3.

123 *Ibid.*, 9.

124 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

125 Oliver Roy, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (London: Hurst & Company, 2004).

between a people and its territory—between blood and soil, so to speak—the ideology of Tarrant and Breivik is not integrated into the practices of any local community, not rooted in the traditions and customs of the family or their community. Rather, it is, as Olivier Roy argues is the case with radical Western Islamism, linked to a virtual community's fundamentalist search for meaning, identity, and belonging.¹²⁶ This deterritorialised character makes the right-wing extremism of Breivik and Tarrant Janus-faced and generic—in a double sense. As we saw earlier, Griffin uses the term 'generic fascism' in order to describe revolutionary movements of palingenetic populist ultranationalism, i.e. to capture the characteristics of various anti-democratic, ultranationalist movements that nourish an elitist, heroic, yet populist myth of national rebirth.¹²⁷ Mussolini's black shirts, Hitler's Nazi party, the Romanian Iron Guard—they all evoked rebirth myths, but these myths were tailored to the specific national mythologies of each country. Compared to these fascist mythologies, it is striking how Tarrant's and Breivik's ideology lacks this local tailoring of their utopian desire to restore the homeland. Rather, they mirror a significant tendency in neo-fascism, identified amongst others by Nigel Copsey: they retain the core fascist myth of revolutionary resurrection of the homeland (and as such remain fascist), but transposes it to the 'higher-level' of a pan-European or all-Western rebirth (cf. Breivik's vision of the 'second European Renaissance' and Tarrant's fantasy of a 'white rebirth').¹²⁸ Despite sacralising the homeland, the local is for instance only superficially represented in Tarrant's manifesto. In between pictures of the classical fascist symbol of *Die Schwarze Sonne* and armed men with camouflage gear, the last page of *The Great Replacement* was for instance illustrated with hackneyed images of a white mother and child, father and son, a hunter and his dog. These were perhaps meant to symbolise something specifically Oceanian, but first and foremost they were just kitsch images of the 'threatened' white homeland, set in some kind of indefinable rural landscape

126 Ole Jacob Madsen, *Generasjon prestasjon* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2018), 55; Roy, *Glob-alised Islam*.

127 Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism*, 199; Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism 1914–1945* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 460.

128 Nigel Copsey, 'Neo-Fascism: A Footnote to the Fascist Epoch?' in *Beyond the Fascist Century: Essays in Honour of Roger Griffin*, eds. Constantin Iordachi and Aristotle Kallis (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 107. With that being said, it should still be pointed out that the roots of the internationalisation of fascist or extreme-right ideology can be traced back to the interwar period. For instance, Mussolini initiated the establishment of a kind of fascist international, CAUR, which worked towards spreading the ideas of Italian Fascism around the world and help them assume 'a universal character'. Hans Fredrik Dahl, *Quisling: En fører blir til* (Oslo: Aschehoug forlag, 1991), 357.

that lacks the immediately local or geographical signals we often associate with right-wing extremist ideologies (such as the myths about the Nordic Viking ancestry, the Italian cult of *Romanità*, and so on).¹²⁹

In Breivik's compendium, this deterritorialised character was also reflected in several places, for example in the role Christianity played in his quest to re-calibrate what he called a 'conservative revolution' and make it into a pan-European project. He allegedly wanted to foster a totalitarian order that promoted 'the Judeo-Christian traditions in Europe with emphasis on Christianity'.¹³⁰ At the same time, however, he had no ties to Christian communities and had ever shown genuine interest in matters of faith. Christianity, instead, seemed to be less about actual faith, more about identity. But it was an identity that was no longer rooted in any local customs or living community; rather, the logic seemed to be quite superficial, as Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek has suggested: 'Christianity is for him merely a cultural construct to oppose Islam.'¹³¹

Concluding Remarks

This article has highlighted the similarities and contrast between the conception of history and the narratives and discursive codes used in the manifestos uploaded online by the perpetrators behind the terrorist attacks in Oslo and at Utøya in Norway in 2011 and in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2019. On the one hand, it shows how Breivik tried to justify his violence with reference to a larger conception of history. Drawing on a similar rhetoric as the one later used by Tarrant, Breivik wrote the history of the future. Depicting himself as some sort of unsung hero in an epic drama whose world-historical significance would only be recognised by distant future generations, Breivik prophesised that his own terrorist attacks would act as the catalyst for a European civil war that would purge the continent of Muslims, cultural Marxists and other humanist adversaries. Europe had lost touch with its cultural and ethnic roots, Breivik argued by copy-pasting texts from the online far-right activist cottage industry.

129 This line of reasoning is inspired by Fredric Jameson's analysis of 'nostalgia films'. See: Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983–1998* (London: Verso Books, 2009), 9.

130 Breivik, 2083, 1242.

131 Slavoj Žižek, 'A Vile Logic to Anders Breivik's Choice of Target,' *The Guardian*, August 8, 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/aug/08/anders-behring-breivik-pim-fortuyn>.

Yet the coming civil war would re-embed the continent in its traditions and values and help erect 'a permanent Christian cultural framework'.¹³² 'Europe will burn once again,' he predicted, 'people will die, but Europe will be reborn as strong as it once was.'¹³³

In his manifesto, Tarrant harked on similar ideas. Repeatedly hinting at a more glorious and pure past, Tarrant portrayed the present as characterised by 'decay all around' and shouted out that a 'WHITE GENOCIDE'¹³⁴ was taking place, due to Muslim immigration, low birthrates among 'white' people, and ideologies that allegedly tore the West apart and detached people from their roots. Yet, his manifesto also fantasised about a scenario where a violent revolution could regenerate Western societies and reconnect 'white' people with their true historical 'essence', stating that his aims could be summed up in the well-known neo-Nazi slogan 'Fourteen Words' (originally formulated by David Lane from the US white supremacist organisation The Order): 'We must ensure the existence of our people, and a future for white children.'¹³⁵

This present article also highlights how similar narratives were also referenced by the terrorists behind the attacks on a synagogue in California in April 2019, on a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas on 3 August 2019, and on a mosque outside Oslo in Norway on 10 August, 2019. Despite different points of reference, the structural similarities between the historical narratives that the perpetrators mobilised in order to 'justify' their heinous crimes are striking. In all cases, we find a narrative of how an internal and an external enemy works in concert in order to replace the Western or white parts of the population. Furthermore, the perpetrators do not primarily derive their narratives from the Norwegian, American or Australian public, but from new virtual communities with an international reach, a fact which gives the worldviews in question a Janus-faced character of both sacralising territories and nurturing nostalgic myths of the threatened 'homeland', as well as being exponents of a deterritorialised, globalised and generic ideology.

The overarching conceptions of history also allows these terrorists to imagine that—through their acts of violence—they don't just live in history, but that they play a decisive part in 'making' it. If we pay attention to the historical narratives that terrorists like Breivik and Tarrant—as well as Earnest, Crusius, and Manshaus—'lived by', we may recognise how they imagined that acts of violence would allow them to enter into history and live under the sign of eternity.

132 Breivik, 2083, 1220.

133 Ibid., 653.

134 Tarrant, *The Great Replacement*, 4.

135 Ibid., 7.

The act of terrorism and mass murder, though prepared within inner and virtual space, represents a crossing of the existential Rubicon that separates fascist fantasies of symbolic violence against a demonised enemy to actual violence against the embodiment of that enemy image. This is enacted in a ritualistic or choreographed scenario of mass murder that had been nurtured by myths of how such actions can induce historical change. Deluded by such extremist myths of history, the lone-actor terrorists saw themselves as people whose actions—although happening in ‘real time’—belonged to the future. Myths of martyrdom and heroism underpin the fantasies of how violent actions can trigger a race war, and such myths made Breivik draft bizarre ‘honorary tombstones’ for coming terrorists in his compendium, tombstones complete with inscriptions ‘marking the two most important battles of Europe (732 and 1683) and . . . a prophecy of the third (2083).’¹³⁶

By ferreting out the conceptions of history that underpin the narratives of a new wave of right-wing extremist lone-actor terrorists, and by highlighting how this form of right-wing extremism can be conceptualised as representing a form of ‘generic fascism’, this article hopefully contributes to the significantly under-researched topic of fascist temporalities. To understand how such conceptions of history provide its fanatic believers with an overarching frame of reference where the precarious nature of social reality is alchemically transformed into a more or less coherent narrative, may be part of the effort of preventing such violent and dehumanising ideas from spreading.

136 Breivik, 2083, 1098.