

Anders Breivik's chilling anti-feminism

Jane Clare Jones

To Anders Breivik, the 'feminisation' of the European male corresponds to the 'feminisation' of Europe itself

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Following much of the media's initial **"fact-free conjecture"** about the origins of the atrocity in Norway, we have since had to reckon with Anders Behring Breivik's own account of his motivations put forward in his 1518-page manifesto entitled 2083: A European Declaration of Independence. Overlooked, however, in the focus on Islamism and Islamophobia's culpability for Breivik's pathology is the way his gargantuan manifesto presents multiculturalism as just one form of the "ideology" which "now looms over western European society like a colossus". This ideology, most often known as political correctness, has, Breivik tells us, several other names. One of them is cultural Marxism, and the other is feminism.

Breivik's introduction is entirely given over to a half-baked history of political correctness, "no aspect" of which, he tells us, is "more prominent ... than feminist ideology". The PC-project is bent on "transforming a patriarchy into a matriarchy" and "intends to deny the intrinsic worth of native Christian European heterosexual males". But more than that, it has succeeded. The "feminisation of European culture" has been underway since the 1830s, and by now, men have been reduced to an "emasculate[d] ... touchy-feely subspecies".

The antipathy to feminism - and women - threaded throughout Breivik's document is more than just incidental. The text is peppered with references to the pernicious effects of the "Sex and the City lifestyle, the propagation of sexual immorality (indexed by women's promiscuity), and the "erotic capital" women use to manipulate men. The degeneration of our civilisation is intimately linked to an epidemic of sexually transmitted disease and "emotionalism". Indeed, the danger of women's "unnatural" demand for equality is such that Breivik closes his introduction by claiming that "the fate of European civilisation depends on European men steadfastly resisting Politically Correct feminism".

A whole web of reasons are given for this conclusion, but two familiar constellations stand out. The first concerns feminism's purported sundering of the nuclear family and responsibility for a demographic collapse that opens Europe to Muslim colonisation. Too distracted by "having it all", western women are failing to breed enough to repel the amassing hordes. But, in their feminine naivety, they fail to realise that their comeuppance is on its way, their freedoms snatched by the invasion of the genuine oppressor. Barely submerged in this narrative - as in much cultural conservatism - is a profound anxiety about who controls women's bodies and reproductive capacities. In his concern to save us from ourselves, Breivik wants to drag us back to the 50s, limiting access to reproductive technology and discouraging women from pursuing education beyond a bachelor's degree. Alternatively, he suggests, we could "outsource breeding", and pursue surrogacy in low-cost countries or the development of artificial wombs.

This sci-fi fantasy of finally abolishing men's dependence on women's generative abilities is revealing. On the one hand, Breivik indicts feminism with causing our alleged "cultural suicide", both by encouraging reproductive treachery and also because women are apparently more supportive of multiculturalism. However, in another sense, Breivik's thought betrays an analogy between his monocultural nationalism and his veneration of a certain type of "warrior" masculinity, an analogy that revolves - as his manifesto's title implies - around the ideal of masculine independence. The "feminisation" of the European male corresponds to the "feminisation" of Europe itself. Our cultural purity is threatened by invasion from outside. Once proud, virile, and impregnable, Europe has been turned - Breivik suggests in Section 2.89 - into a woman, one who has submitted to rape rather than "risk serious injuries while resisting".

Unlike Breivik, we must resist the urge to make easy causal connections. No account of this man's background or beliefs about nationality, religion or gender can serve to explain his actions. His cool enumeration of technicalities about downloading the document, his careful inclusion of a press-pack of photos, the chilling reference to the sacrifices involved in its "marketing operation" - all this serves to exhibit an inhumanity which opens a chasm between ideas and action. Nevertheless, while the behaviour of Breivik must, and can, only be understood as insanity, we would do our understanding a disservice by accepting it as only that.



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Ideals of purity create misogyny

The disciplining and control of women and the feminine are intimately related to notions of cultural and racial purity. As a result, racist ideologies are almost always also misogynist and anti-feminist, says British philosopher Jane Clare Jones. She has analysed anti-feminism in the manifesto of Norwegian terrorist Anders Behring Breivik.

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On 22 July 2011 Norway was hit by two sequential terrorist attacks.

The first was a car bomb explosion in Oslo within the executive government quarter of Norway. The explosion killed eight people, wounded many others and caused severe damage to buildings in the area.

The second attack occurred less than two hours later at a summer camp on the island of Utøya. The camp was organized by the youth division of the ruling Norwegian Labour Party. A gunman dressed in an authentic looking police uniform and showing false identification gained access to the island and subsequently opened fire at the participants, killing 69 attendees and injuring many more.

The police arrested Anders Behring Breivik, a 32-year-old Norwegian right-wing extremist, for the mass shootings on Utøya and subsequently charged him with both attacks.

In the utopian world of Anders Behring Breivik, “politically correct feminism” has been combated and eradicated. Western women have reconciled themselves with their naturally subordinate role, given up the pursuit of higher education, and become sexually “pure” and completely dedicated to their true calling: reproducing Europe and the white race. Or – if gaining sufficient control over women has proven difficult – then breeding clinics based on egg donations and surrogates have been established to ensure Europe’s reproduction. In the long term, Breivik envisions the use of artificial uteruses to further reduce men’s dependence on women.

“Breivik’s anti-feminist views have been under-explored in comparison with his hatred of Muslims. But anti-feminism and misogyny are deeply implicated in everything he stands for,” says Jane Clare Jones, a British philosopher who is writing her doctoral thesis on feminist ethics at Stony Brook University in New York. Since the terrorist attacks on 22 July, she has spent a great deal of time studying Anders Behring Breivik’s manifesto.

Misogyny on two levels

Jones believes that Breivik’s misogynistic beliefs are manifested on two levels.

“The first aspect of his anti-feminism involves his belief that female emancipation is a direct cause of the degeneration of European culture. In the first instance this is because Western women’s focus on career has led to a demographic collapse which, in his eyes, opens Europe to Muslim colonization. Moreover, Breivik also suggests that female ‘emotionalism’ and ‘compassion’ leads women to betray Europe by making them more sympathetic to multiculturalism. When women gain social and political power, these values spread and thus, Europe becomes weak and ‘feminized’ – an easy target for ‘aggressive’ Islamists,” says Jones.

Jones believes, however, that Breivik’s supposedly “factual” reasons for why Western women are implicated in the Islamization of Europe are less interesting than the symbolic content of his ideas.

“The ‘factual’ account is problematic on so many levels that it’s hard to know where to start. However, more significant is what is happening in his thinking at a symbolic level: the series of connections and analogies which link the notion of sexual purity with the notion of cultural – read racial – purity.”

“Fundamentally, Breivik’s thought is structured around an ‘economy of purity’, an economy of ‘us’ versus ‘them’, or identitarianism if you will. This can only be maintained by rigorously policing the boundary between inside and outside, the boundary that Jacques Derrida calls the ‘matrix of all possible opposition’.”

Penetration is shameful

According to Jones, the feminine must be disciplined and controlled because it represents a continuous threat to the economy of purity.

“The feminine is a threat to this economy because it – both literally and figuratively – lets the other inside it, and thereby blurs the boundaries between the inside and the outside. In Breivik’s mind the connection is clear: Cultural degradation - or ‘contamination’ as he also calls it - is intimately linked with sexual immorality, construed principally in terms of female promiscuity (and also, not insignificantly, male homosexuality). Uncontrolled female sexuality is problematic to him, both because it purportedly leads to literal contamination in the form of an epidemic of sexually transmitted disease, but, moreover, because it is a deep source of shame in itself. An economy of purity - or identity - is deeply invested in keeping the outside out, and in such an economy, therefore, to be penetrated is inherently shameful. This relation between racial/cultural and sexual purity is made particularly explicit in the image of the feminized Europe penetrated – ‘raped’ he actually says - by the Muslim.”

Masculine invulnerability

At the heart of what Jones calls the “lie of the pure” is the ideal of the inviolate, independent and invulnerable self.

“It is about the construction of a certain type of patriarchal masculinity which is fixated on the necessity of its own impenetrability, its own invulnerability, its own independence. Women, who many men depend on for sex, reproduction and care, for example, represent a constant threat to this ideal. At base, this fantasy of invulnerability is about the desire to be fully insured against risk – and ultimately, against death. If you don’t need anyone, nobody can hurt you. You can have complete control.”

“Breivik describes himself as a kind of crusader, but killing women and children isn’t particularly heroic, is it?”

“It’s certainly not uncommon for the most ‘chivalrous’ men, - those most concerned with protecting ‘their’ women – to be also the most misogynistic. This is because they assume that ‘other’ men will regard ‘their’ women in the same way as they regard the women of ‘other’ men: as objects to be used in the scheme of masculine rivalry. It’s important to remember that masculinity, understood as invulnerability, is always under threat, not only from dependence on women, but also from other men’s violence.

In this scheme women become a currency that men use in their attempt to dominate each other – take wartime rape, for example. From this perspective there is really no incompatibility between Breivik’s view of himself as a ‘knightly’ warrior and the crime he committed. The women and children he murdered were not ‘his’. They were the enemy’s, and their loss is the price the enemy must pay in war,” explains Jones.

Paradoxes of right-wing extremism

Much of the anti-feminism that Anders Behring Breivik presents in his manifesto is taken from other voices on the extreme far right. According to Jones, the misogyny and masculine ideal Breivik stands for is widespread, including among more moderate right-wingers who dissociate themselves from Breivik and his actions.

“There is a difference in degree but not in kind. As I see it, misogyny is centrally implicated in any economy of purity,” says Jones.

Translated by Connie Stultz.

The Rape of Europe

On the afternoon of July 22, 2011, Anders Behring Breivik, a Norwegian man in his early thirties, set off an explosion in the government district of central Oslo, killing eight people. Within a couple of hours he had made his way to the small island of Utøya where the youth wing of the Norwegian Labour Party, the AUF, were holding their annual summer camp. In the course of an hour and a half Breivik shot and killed sixty-nine people – the youngest of whom was fourteen – and injured over a hundred more. On the morning of the attacks he had electronically released *2083: A European Declaration of Independence*, a fifteen-hundred page ‘manifesto,’ or rather, compendium, outlining his fervent belief in the need to defend the ethnic, cultural, national and sexual purity of European, an in particular, Nordic, civilization from the imminent peril posed by Islamicization. In the manifesto Breivik suggests to his fellow ‘resistance fighters’ that “[w]hen we blow up a building full of...traitors it is not only for the purpose of killing. An important part of the operation is to force awareness of our movement and our ideology” which “is the product we want to sell to the European peoples.” (Breivik 2011:1068) As indicated by the press-pack of swaggering photos included at the end of the manifesto, the murder of seventy-seven other human beings had been Breivik’s idea of a “marketing operation.” (15)

Writing in *The Guardian* that July, I suggested that what was most interesting about Breivik’s sprawling compendium of internet-culled conspiracy theory, apocryphal history and erroneous statistics, was its pungent mixture of racism and misogyny. (Jones 2011a) The way in which Breivik’s palpable anxiety about the penetrable borders of Europe, figured as the body of a pliable woman, revealed the delineations of the sovereign imaginary. As David

Gilmore documents – and our discussion of Christopher Lasch’s Freudian fears will evince – the disintegrating peril represented by woman reaches its most abstract form in anxieties about the very collapse of civilization. (Gilmore 2001:144) According to Breivik’s introduction to *A European Declaration* – a brief history of the pernicious influence of ‘political correctness’ or ‘cultural Marxism’ – the “feminisation of European culture” (28) has turned previously stalwart men into “a touchy-feely subspecies,” (29) incapable of the rigorous defense of European national borders or cultural values against the amassing barbarian hordes. “It is not only our right but...our duty...to preserve our identity...culture and...national sovereignty by preventing the ongoing Islamisation,” (8) Breivik writes. But be warned that if you “break down men’s masculinity, their...ability to defend themselves and their families” which is “exactly what Western women have done for the last forty years,” then “you destroy the country.” (343) Both “culturally and demographically,” he continues, “radical feminism has been one of the most important causes of the current weakness of Western civilization.” (351) As such, the “fate of European civilisation depends on European men steadfastly resisting Politically Correct feminism.” (31)

The notional reason for this feminist peril is, as Breivik intimates above, Western women’s failure to behave like good-little breeders. Seduced into thinking they can ‘have it all,’ European women have produced nothing but demographic collapse; a tide that must be turned by restricting birth control and abortion, and discouraging women from taking “anything above a bachelor’s degree.” (1181) But what really animates Breivik’s fears is the way the “weakness” of perceived feminization has opened Europe up to the “secondary infection” (337) of Islamicization. The once impregnable sovereign states of Europe have become a yielding body politic, easily penetrable by the foreign and the foreigner. Section 2.89, which decries the position once voiced by a “stupid blonde woman author” that it is

sometimes better to “accept submission” rather than “fight” (697) is entitled ‘The Rape of Europe.’¹ The feminists, Marxists and ‘suicidal humanists’ who have conspired, or rather, collaborated, in the project of multiculturalism are roundly indicted as ‘traitor whores.’

There are well over 150 references to rape scattered throughout the text – every one of which pertains to rape committed by Muslim men, mostly against Christian or Western women.

Reprising a common theme of the internet-based ‘counter-jihad’ movement, Europe is increasingly, Breivik contends, in the grip of Muslim rape epidemic. Because, according to the ethno-sexual logic of sovereign purity, rape within an ethnic group does not signify, Breivik’s position is predicated on denying that the majority of sexual crimes against European women are, and have always been, committed by European men. “The truth,” we are told, with scant regard for the statistics, is “that European men have treated women with greater respect than the men of almost any other major civilization on earth.” (343) By contrast, “the sexual harassment and rape of non-Muslim women” as “part and parcel of Jihad,” has led to a recent explosion in sexual violence. In a piece of rape-apologia which gives the lie to his concern for his country-women’s sexual safety, this tsunami of Muslim violation is one which, it is suggested, “Western women have to some extent brought upon themselves.” (343) Their “psychological warfare against the male gender role” has destroyed “every defensive structure of European society,” (30) and turned women “into a weapon of

¹ In *The Wound and the Witness*, Jennifer R Ballengee discusses the treatment of the myth of the rape of Europa in the Hellenistic novel *The Adventures of Leucippe and Clitophon*. The novel opens with a scene in which an unnamed narrator contemplates a painting of Europa riding on the back of the bull that depicts – as do many later portrayals – the bull being led by Eros. This scene establishes, Ballengee notes, “a pre-cedent of aesthetic enjoyment of the visual synthesis of beauty and violence that...echoes through the narrative.” (2009:75-6) The rest of the novel recounts the protagonist Kleitophon’s trials in love, beginning with his first meeting with Leukippe, whose face “flashed on my eyes like lightening.” (1.1.3; Cited 76) Kleitophon tells the narrator, “As soon as I had seen her, I was lost. For beauty’s wound is sharper than any weapon’s and it runs through the eyes and down to the soul. It is through the eye that the wound of *eros* passes.” (1.4.4-5; Cited 76) As Ballengee notes, Kleitophon’s description of his first encounter with Leukippe “draws an unmistakable reference to the appearance of Europa...in the previously described painting” and enacts the “motif of *eros* as physically wounding” (76), and “the painful experience of the penetration of the body by *eros*,” (77) which “occurs with overwhelming frequency in the Greek novels.” (76)

mass destruction against...civilization.” (343) But their comeuppance will come. Having “paved the way for the forces that will dismantle Western feminism” such women will “end up in bed, sometimes quite literally, with the people who want to enslave them.” (346)

Western women’s civilization-wrecking power is also attested to in Breivik’s long excursus into “the lethal and destructive societal force” of the “sex and the city lifestyle.” (1168) Sexual ethics, Breivik notes, with momentary neutrality, deals with “issues arising from *all* aspects of sexuality and human sexual behavior.” (1168) Its breakdown, however, is singularly “manifested through...young women’s susceptibility to have one night stands, pre-marital sex and the average amount of sexual partners for women during a lifetime.” He provides a handy chart, ranking European nation’s sexual ethics – that is, women’s promiscuity - on a scale from 0 to 100. The data for the chart, he explains without pause, is based “on the experiences of my network of male friends (my own included)” on “visit[ing] all these countries.” Some 50% of his female friends, he continues sadly, now fall “under the definition...female sluts” because they have had 20 or more partners, a situation that is, he argues, “clearly not sustainable.” (1170)

Quite why this should be so is never fully elucidated. It seems simply evident to Breivik that a chaos of undisciplined female flesh will inexorably cause “all social structures to completely deteriorate.” Rather unsurprisingly, however, this cataclysmic outcome is linked in his mind with the threat of contagion, the fact that “many people are suffering from STDs as a result of the current lack of sexual morals.” (1172) In the thought of sovereign integrity, allowing the outside, the foreign, to penetrate inside, is straight-forwardly synonymous with the corruption of both the individual body *and* the body politic. It is thus that we find Breivik, in an apparent non sequitur, moving within pages from a discussion of the “devastating”

economic impact of STDs in Western Europe to an account of the tragedy of the “rapid extinction of the Nordic genotype.” (1182) “Marxist procreation policies,” by which he means, he clarifies, “feminism,” are “deliberate genocidal practices.” They will lead inevitably to the “demographical annihilation of European ethnic groups” and the “destruction of European culture.” (1157)