



## Deconstructing persecution and betrayal in the discourse of Anders Behring Breivik: A preliminary essay

Patricia Cotti<sup>1,2</sup>

Department of clinical psychology and psychoanalysis, University of  
Strasbourg, 12, rue Goethe, 67000 Strasbourg, France  
– pat-ricia@wanadoo.fr

(Accepted for publication 9 July 2014)

*On 22 July 2011, a 32 year-old Norwegian launched two planned murderous rampages claiming the lives of 77 victims. Shortly before his attacks, Anders Behring Breivik uploaded to the internet a self-styled compendium written in English in which he explained the motivation for his attacks. By deconstructing this text and the documentation contained in the first [court-ordered] psychiatric evaluation of Breivik, we can undertake to analyse his sense of persecution. In pursuing this analysis, we start with Breivik's description of his personal concept of contemporary European history and politics, and then proceed to the autobiographical and phantasmic aspects of his discourse. The analysis reveals the transformation of love into hate, the original persecutor, the installation of a projection mechanism, notions of betrayal and their subsequent development into an ideology. With Breivik's conceptions thus revealed, we conclude by comparing different psychoanalytic hypotheses which deepen or challenge the Freudian thesis of a defence against a feeling of homosexual love in persecution, and which to the contrary favour the importance of the relationship with the mother, anal sadism or the 'narcissistic rage' behind the genesis of these ideas. We leave open the question of whether there is a constant relationship between feelings of persecution and the tendency to commit criminal acts.*

**Keywords:** Anders Behring Breivik, case history, terrorism, persecution, feminization, projection, ideology, infantile sadism, sexual identification, narcissistic rage

### Introduction

On 22 July 2011, the Norwegian, Anders Behring Breivik<sup>3</sup> aged 32, perpetrated a bomb attack near a government building in Oslo and shortly afterwards, that same day, he went to the island of Utøya where he opened fire on a crowd of young people belonging to the youth league of the Norwegian socialist party. Not long before these criminal acts in which 77 people

<sup>1</sup>This article is dedicated to Dr Erik Monduit de Caussade, chief psychiatrist, and to his team of the 27e secteur – Hôpital de Maison Blanche, Paris (France) – with whom I share most of my clinical experience.

<sup>2</sup>Translated from French by Anne-Marie Smith-Di Biasio, Ph.D.

<sup>3</sup>In this article Anders Behring Breivik will be referred to by his last name – Breivik – even if Norwegian law generally names an individual using both his mother's family name (Behring) and his father's (Breivik). When referring to Breivik as a child I sometimes use his first name, Anders.

lost their lives, while hundreds of others were injured and traumatized, Breivik had sent a “compendium” of 1518 pages entitled “2083. A European Declaration of Independence” to a few hundred people through Facebook. Arrested without resistance by the Norwegian police, having immediately admitted to being the author of the crime, Breivik was finally condemned to 21 years in prison after legal proceedings involving two contradictory psychiatric assessments and a trial lasting four months during which he pleaded not guilty, claiming his acts were motivated by legitimate self-defence.

The number of victims (dead or wounded), of people left bereft and the extent of damage caused, the horror of the crimes committed by a man who the day of his arrest was able to say “. . . today I am the greatest monster since Quisling, and it’s okay somehow” (Husby and Sørheim, 2011, 2.4.1, p. 10), make the attacks of 22 July 2011 a nationwide trauma for the Norwegian people.

The Breivik case poses many questions, to the psychiatrist, the criminologist and the psychoanalyst. I will nonetheless only consider one of these, the question of persecution. What may a psychoanalytic approach to Breivik’s verbal or written pronouncements teach us about the origin of his ideas of persecution and betrayal?

Since Freud’s (1911) study of Schreber, the notion of a link between ideas of persecution and the defence against homosexual fantasy has been questioned. Influenced by ego psychology and by Kleinian psychoanalysis, English-speaking analysts have demonstrated the importance of the child’s early relationship to the mother and a paranoid–oral stage of development (Rosenfeld, 1949), the ambivalence of sexual identifications or even the fixation to the anal–sadistic stage as motivating ideas of persecution. Quite recently in their collective study, Strozier, Terman and Jones (2010) have underlined the importance of ‘narcissistic rage’ (Kohut, 1972) and of strong feelings of humiliation in the paranoia of fundamentalists. The study I propose of Breivik’s case addresses the heart of this debate and will lead us to question the pertinence of the link between persecution and violence.

To avoid entering into an argument concerning the psychopathological diagnosis of Breivik’s case – which is nonetheless of the utmost importance – I will only talk of ideas or feelings of persecution and will not rely on the concepts of delusion, paranoia or schizophrenia in the two first parts of this article which present an analysis of Breivik’s discourse. My final discussion will, however, lead me to make a clinical distinction between ideas of persecution, such as those we find in schizophrenia and more systematized ideas of persecution (paranoia) and to question how we might distinguish the aetiology of each.

Furthermore, so as not to overload the presentation and analysis of Breivik’s pronouncements, but also in order to present a text of acceptable length, I have not introduced any major theoretical references in the first two parts of the article. The informed reader will however have no difficulty comparing Breivik’s case with others from his own clinical experience or psychoanalytic reading.

Finally, I will succinctly present the documents used for this study: my principle source is the piece Breivik (2011) wrote in English, which he called “compendium” or “manifesto”.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, I have made much use of material from the first psychiatric report written by Torgeir Husby and Synne Sørheim (2011) prior to the opening of Breivik’s trial. Whatever one might think of the pertinence of the diagnosis, this exemplary document is more than 140 pages long and includes the transcription of 13 interviews (each two or three hours long) during which Breivik spoke to psychiatrists. This first report also relies on numerous interviews led by psychiatrists or the police with Breivik’s relatives (his mother, stepmother, his childhood friends), as well as on documents provided by the social services and child psychiatric services.<sup>5</sup> I also refer, in a more minor perspective, to the second psychiatric report by Agnar Aspaas and Terje Tørrissen (2012). In the following pages I refer to the English translation of the psychiatric report published on internet. Please note that I have changed the name of a friend of Breivik who features in the compendium and who plays a specific role in his story.

### A world vision

In the preface to his “compendium” (pp. i–x), Breivik composes from the outset the idea of a “struggle” which would liberate Europe from the Islamization and “cultural Marxism” in which it is becoming suicidally embedded. Following a civil war the result of this struggle would lead to the inevitable victory of Christian, conservative forces in 2083 and a “Second European Renaissance” 400 years after the battle of Vienna of 11 September 1683, which signalled the hegemony of the Habsburgs and the fading of Muslim presence in central Europe (p. 226).

According to Breivik, the “cultural Marxism” he traces to the “Frankfurt School” acts “in disguise of humanism” in order to knowingly “deconstruct” “European identity” whilst favouring Muslim immigration (p. v). Faced with the emergence of “cultural Marxism” Breivik designates himself as the one who will re-establish truth and stop Islamization: “... the truth must be known... It is not only our right but also our duty to contribute to preserve our identity, our culture and our national sovereignty by preventing the ongoing Islamization” (p. viii).

---

<sup>4</sup>The pdf version of the compendium to which I refer includes a preface of 10 pages numbered i–x and a text of 1508 pages, numbered in roman numerals, including an introduction of 27 pages, and three books: Book 1: ‘What you need to know, our falsified history and other forms of cultural Marxist/multi-culturalist propaganda’, pp. 27–269; book 2: ‘Europe burning’, pp. 270–756; book 3: ‘A declaration of pre-emptive war’, pp. 757–1508.

<sup>5</sup>The first psychiatric report (Husby and Sørheim, 2011) is designated by PR1, the second psychiatric report (Aspaas and Tørrissen, 2012) by PR2. In the quotations extracted from the reports, the italics are those of the psychiatrists citing directly from witnesses or the accused, or referring to the documents included in the assessment. ‘Witness’ refers to an individual who answers questions from the police or the psychiatric experts. ‘The accused’ refers to Breivik. Both Breivik’s text (compendium) and the psychiatric reports translated from Norwegian are here cited verbatim with no modification to the English. For each citation of the psychiatric report, I provide the chapter as well as the page, as page numbering varies according to the published version.

Breivik considers himself a patriotic “defender of justice”: “Justiciar Knight Commander for Knights Templar Europe and one of several leaders of the National and pan-European Patriotic Resistance Movement...” (p. ix). A politico-historical scene rapidly becomes evident with on one side the “cultural Marxists” and their “radical feminist” allies and on the other the nationalists who are made to look “ridiculous” and persecuted by the ambient ideology (pp. 1–37). In this persecuted vision of the world the question of sexuality is very quickly brought to the fore.

### **The golden age of the 1950s**

In the paragraph entitled “How it all began – political correctness is cultural Marxism”, Breivik describes the life of a family in the middle of the 1950s, a decade which according to him represents the height of familial harmony and equilibrium between the sexes. Thus the 1950s family lived peacefully, bringing up children in a stable household supported by both parents. The mother took care of the interior and was at home to greet the children on their return from school.

Yet when that idyllic family unit is suddenly transposed to the 21st century it must endure a swarm of dangers: “danger of getting mugged, car-jacked or worse...”. At school children are now offered “funny white powder” and are taught “that homosexuality is normal and good” (p. 2). Breivik explains these developments in terms of “political correctness”, an ideology of cultural Marxism, which in less than half a century has conquered Europe and which in favouring a classless society of victims and minorities, whilst demonizing Christians and nationalists, contradicts “human nature” (pp. 2–3):

It seeks to alter virtually all the rules, formal and informal, that govern relations among people and institutions. It wants to change behaviour, thought, even the words we use. To a significant extent, it already has. Whoever or whatever controls language also controls thought.

### **The destruction of white man’s supremacy**

Breivik exposes his conviction of persecution in describing a system of language and thought control which denies sexual difference. Such an “ideology is in fact deadly serious” says Breivik, who wants to show how such a system of thought seeks to kill (p. 2). He describes how the Frankfurt School wanted to overthrow social order by destroying the patriarchal system, replacing it by matriarchy and the belief according to which homosexuality is as normal as heterosexuality (p. 6). The “deconstruction of gender” is evidently a deliberate objective of cultural Marxism targeting the erasure of any distinction between masculinity and femininity. Breivik exposes a veritable cultural and political conspiracy (conspiracy theory). Feelings of persecution are acute and evident in the ideology aiming to destroy “the hegemony of white males” suffering hitherto from a “lack of cultural self-confidence (nationalism)” (pp. 17–21):

Laws and lawsuits, intimidation, and demonizing of white males as racists and sexists are pursued through the mass media and the universities. The psycho-dynamic of the revolutionary process aims for psychic disempowerment – decapitation – of those who oppose.

(p. 21)

Breivik is convinced of his people's loss of superiority and loss of power. We shall see, however, that this sense of loss, which first seems to correspond to a global narcissistic wound, is due to a sense of loss of sexual identity, a sense of the destruction of masculinity.

### **Emasculation of the authoritarian personality**

The “radical feminism” of the 1960s – which was responsible for a drop in the birth rate and in educational standards – is, according to Breivik, the principal ideological instrument of cultural Marxism. These two political movements are linked by common interests and their specific aim is to use pernicious propaganda to destroy “the authoritarian personality” at the foundation of any patriarchal, capitalist system:

The concept of the authoritarian personality [...] is a handbook for psychological warfare against the European male and values. In other words, the aim was to emasculate him. Undoubtedly the Institute for Social Research at Frankfurt University meant this, as it used the term ‘psychological techniques for changing personality’.

(p. 19)

There is no doubt in the media that the ‘man of today’ is expected to be a touchy-feely sub species who bows to the radical feminist agenda . . . .

(p. 19)

Evidence that psychological techniques for changing personality are intended to focus in particular on the emasculation of the European male has also been provided by Abraham Maslow, founder of ‘third force humanist psychology’ and promoter of psychotherapeutic techniques in public school classrooms. He wrote that ‘the next step in personal evolution is a transcendence of both masculinity and femininity to general humanness’.

(p. 20)

So Breivik traces the history of a psychological test aimed at detecting the authoritarian personality. First elaborated in the context of the struggle against Nazism, the test was then allegedly used to stigmatize any right-wing person and to include those corresponding to this profile in the category of unstable people. This is said to have led to the publication of Adorno's book *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno *et al.*, 1950, p. 23).

### **Islam and the rape of Europe**

The question of Muslim immigration, also favoured by the alliance of “cultural Marxism” and “radical feminism”, will now be joined with the

planned persecutory feminization suffered by the European male as described above:

... the present-day radical feminist assault through support for mass Muslim immigration has a political parallel to their anti-colonial efforts. This current assault is in part a continuation of a century-old effort to destroy traditional European structures, the very foundation of European culture.

(p. 19)

So Breivik undertakes to depict a great historical fresco relating the conflicts between Christian Europe and Muslim powers, stretching from the Crusades – according to him a response to Islamic aggression and to the fact that the Christians “faced ... an escalating spiral of persecution” (p. 134) – right up to the Serbo-Croatian war, stretching from the struggles between the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, through to the Armenian genocide and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (pp. 127–37). One of the culminating points of that history is the description of the “Jus Primae Noctis – the institutionalized rape of Christians under the Ottoman Empire” (p. 147).

The compendium as a whole adopts this perspective and follows this dramatic development, culminating in book 2, ‘Europe burning’, there again in a fatal rape: “The Rape of Europe – emigration of indigenous Europeans” (pp. 686–8). This rape of Europe has allegedly been screened by a rewriting of history, and perpetrated under cover by the ideology of traitors, of which Breivik gives a detailed classification according to three principal categories (A, B and C).

To sum up, in Breivik’s historico-political discourse we can isolate three key points which enable us to understand his psychical functioning:

- 1 The feminization of European man is assured by the manipulation of political discourse and thought; it is directed at students and takes the form of stigmatizing or marginalizing those who think differently (pp. 13–16).
- 2 The attack against white European man is twofold: on the one hand he is feminized by cultural Marxism and radical feminism which remove his “self-confidence” in stigmatizing the “authoritarian personality”; on the other, by favouring Muslim immigration, “cultural Marxism” and feminism oblige European man, whom they have weakened, to submit to Muslims who are more certain of their masculinity.
- 3 The principal traitors are those who have the greatest political power and who are responsible for the propagation of the (Marxist and feminist) indoctrination which facilitated the colonization of Europe by Islam: those who are at the head of European states (category A), then the Marxists and multi-culturalists who have a strong network which they use to lobby those in power (category B) ... etc. But in this classification of traitors, those allegedly involved in murders or rapes are not mentioned (pp. 920–5).



### **Feminization and degeneration: An old debate**

In the compendium, Breivik presents himself as an opponent to political doctrine, relying extensively on many authors, he himself declaring 30% of his text to be composed of quotations. The myth of the 1950s is inspired by the film *Back to the Future* written by Robert Zemeckis and Bob Gale who wanted to show the birth of teenage culture and the way in which teenagers were beginning to impose their way of being and to lay down the law (p. 350).

In the same way Breivik quotes Martin Jay's (1973) book on the birth of the Frankfurt School and so considers, along with the author, that psychoanalysis counts among those factors which have favoured the deconstruction of European society in permitting freedom from sexual repression (pp. 6, 23). On the decline of Europe before the Muslim world Breivik mainly refers to Bat Ye'or (1996, 2001), which vulgarizes notions of "Eura-bia" or even of "dhimmitude", but also to the American writer and chronicler Diane West (2007) who stigmatizes the suicide of Western civilization, or to the British journalist Melanie Phillips, who in her articles pours invective upon the feminization of men, the break-up of families, multiculturalism and the perverse action of the welfare state (pp. 341–50). Breivik follows the arguments and sources of the Norwegian blogger Fjordman (pp. 270–97, 312–70) and refers to extreme right-wing sites such as: "The Brussels Journal. The Voice of Conservatism in Europe".

The compendium is a provocative piece, free from bizarre phenomena; it presents the clinician with the question of the limit between ideology and delusion which I will not be addressing here directly. The feminist argument of the compendium is not new and in certain respects it is only one more text in the long tradition whereby feminization poses a threat to male sex, proposing regenerative solutions to this with reference to Darwinism. Breivik refers to Nietzsche who, in his opinion, emphasized the inversion of morality implied in the privileging of the weak to the detriment of the strong (p. 381). Furthermore it seems to relate closely to that historical perspective exemplified by the philosopher Christian von Ehrenfels in his *Sexual Ethik* (1907), a work in which he expresses alarm at the way in which socio-cultural behaviour has rendered men more feminine in order to please women, and fears the extinction of the species contingent on man's loss of virility. Breivik's allusions to "National Darwinism" as responsible for regenerating Europe are, it seems, to be understood in this context. Let us recall that other well-known example in the history of psychoanalysis, the ideas elaborated by Otto Weininger (1906) in *Sex and Character*, in which anti-Semitism relies largely on comparison between the Jewish character and the weakness of women. Weininger exhausted himself in thinking and theories seeking out the root of that evil which in his opinion led the human race to its fall. He ultimately commits suicide.

### **The slippage towards autobiography**

Yet, despite the plagiarism, the not so well-referenced quotations and the intellectual context of his piece, which might suffice to classify the

compendium as an extreme right-wing political text, we shall now see how that persecuted vision of the world is for Breivik a deferred echo, a defence and interpretation of his emotional and relational history.

### *Feminization as a mortal infection*

In the paragraph entitled “Sexuality”, which he begins by affirming: “Sex is probably the most powerful and under-analyzed motivator for man on earth”, Breivik says he lived under the influence of a “Sex and the City lifestyle” and was proud of his “achievements” (pp. 1158–60). But following “a change of mentality” he now feels ashamed of his city, his country and his culture (p. 1161). An edifying passage follows, this time entitled “STDs ruin people’s lives”, in which Breivik explains that his mother and half-sister were contaminated by sexually transmitted diseases: “My half-sister, Elisabeth was infected by Chlamydia after having more than 40 sexual partners (more than 15 Chippendales’ strippers who are known to be bearers of various diseases)”. Due to this infection the half-sister had recourse to in vitro fertilization and gave birth by two caesareans. Breivik wonders if her children might have been contaminated at birth (p. 1161).

My mother was infected by genital herpes by her boyfriend (my stepfather), Tore, when she was 48. Tore, who was a captain in the Norwegian Army, had more than 500 sexual partners and my mother knew this but suffered from lack of good judgement and moral due to several factors (media – glorification of certain stereotypes being one) [...] In addition to this, the herpes infection went to her brain and caused meningitis ...

(pp. 1161–2)

To this shame at the sexual behaviour of his sister and mother is added the idea of having been the direct victim of the sexual freedom of women:

Both my sister and my mother have not only shamed me but they have shamed themselves and our family. A family that was broken in the first place due to secondary effects of the feministic/sexual revolution. I can only imagine how many people are suffering from STDs as a result of the current lack of sexual morals.

(p. 1162)

The sexual freedom of women leads not only to moral and physical decay but also to financial ruin. Breivik produces a whole series of statistical data showing how sexual diseases are costly for society. The theme of women catching and spreading infection appears once again when, a few months before his premeditated “operation”, Breivik is afraid his mother will pass on her sinus infection to him and so he decides to wear a facial mask in her presence (PR1, 4.1, p. 55).

During the psychiatric assessments he confides having feared radioactive contamination, “but without any known radiation source” note the experts, who read these excessive preoccupations and precautions as paranoid symptoms (PR1, 5.11, p. 107). If the link between sexuality and infection seems



to be lost here, it is quite clear in the compendium, in which infection first appears as a potential mortal consequence of the castration practised by the (Muslim) Turks on Christian slaves to make eunuchs of them. Breivik quotes at length Jan Hogendorn's book on the making of eunuchs (Breivik, p. 199), giving details of the risks involved in the operation. Feminization kills.

### *The fight against Muslim penetration*

This representation of the castrated Christian slave, fatally infected by the Turkish master, is accompanied by the description of another seigneurial custom mentioned previously: the Europeans' *jus primae noctis*, showing the sexual submission forced upon Christians by Muslims (Breivik, p. 147). Breivik finds a contemporary equivalent to this *jus primae noctis* in the description of the sexual mores of Muslim adolescents: "Muslim boys" consider Norwegian girls as "whores" because they are freer in their sexual mores than Muslim girls. Moreover, Norwegian girls look down upon Norwegian boys, considering them as weaker, lacking pride and automatically subdued by "the superior Muslim boys". Yet, adds Breivik, Norwegian girls are only a "commodity" for the Muslim boy and, once they have been used as a sexual object, they return to their former tribe where they are accepted with tolerance (pp. 1366–7).

This is indeed the weak link for Breivik, this alleged easy penetration of Norwegian girls, the unfortunate juncture of Muslim potency, which is the ultimate cause of the weakness and humiliation attributed to the Norwegian male. Like Europe, woman is penetrable and may force the European man to let himself be penetrated as soon as he adheres to the world vision of Marxist and feminist traitors. Whence the "political" solution Breivik advocates, which he names "national Darwinism", and which is to be implemented following a conservative revolution in Europe (pp. 1174–6).

Recalling at once the morale of the French state in 1940 and the Lebensborn of Nazi Germany, Breivik proposes a veritable "reproduction industry" with sperm donors selected according to their "Nordic genotype" – to which he might himself belong – as well as surrogate mothers from developing countries. Breivik also describes at length state structures for raising the children issued from the reproduction industry, giving details of the organization of households, schooling and even a system whereby "guardian-parents" are graded by children who decide their wages (pp. 1174–6).

Breivik presents these measures as a necessary defence against the suicide of culture: the avoidance of weakness and of penetration effected by Muslim men.

### *On friendship . . . a break-up*

In the fictional interview that Breivik stages with himself – "your personal life and convictions" (p. 1366) – we find other biographical elements showing the dramatic swing in Breivik's psychological functioning. This swing first leads Breivik to an acute sense of persecution before his entourage. In time, the persecution is displaced and extends to the entire world, transformed

into a vision of the word inhabited by traitors and favouring the infiltration of Islam into Europe.

Breivik evokes the boy who was “my best friend for many years, a Muslim”, Ben, who is Pakistani, sometimes referred to simply as “he”:

In fact, it was my Muslim friend who sparked my interest for Christianity, Islam and politics in general. We had countless discussions relating to culture, geo-politics etc. At the time, I couldn't understand why he loathed Norway and my culture so much. He simply despised it and I was unable to truly comprehend why at the time. The school curriculum was a joke, as all we learned about Islam was that it was the religion of peace, often spread by merchants. However, this was one of the primary reasons why I started to appreciate my own religion and culture to a larger degree and why I wanted to seek alternative sources which could explain more. I remember during the first Gulf war, he used to cheer loudly whenever a scud missile was launched against the Americans. I was completely ignorant at the time and apolitical but his total lack of respect for my culture (and Western culture in general) actually sparked my interest and passion for it. Thanks to him I gradually developed a passion for my own cultural identity. This was apparently very annoying for him, as I was unwilling to convert to Islam. Instead, I suggested he convert to Christianity and embrace our norms and culture.

(p. 1379)

The friendship between Anders and Ben therefore developed through an intense exchange of ideas, and, as we have seen, it is precisely in this context of political argumentation that Breivik's feelings of persecution will be expressed. Anders gets baptised when he is 15 years old, and a year later he breaks up with Ben and the Hip-hop group to which he had belonged since he was 12 (pp. 1380–93). After the break-up with Anders, he allegedly spent six months in prison and was the author of several aggressions against “ethnic Norwegians”. Breivik adds: “Ben and his Pakistani friends allegedly gang raped an ethnic Norwegian girl” (p. 1366).

The definitive break-up between Anders Breivik and his friend Ben was allegedly provoked by a fight:

16 years – (Time: 16.30) – Assault – an older and much stronger/bigger Pakistani hit me without provocation in front of Majorstuenhuset. Apparently, he wanted to subdue me in front of my “friend” Ben who apparently had told him to do it. This concluded, for my part, my friendship with him and I re-connected with my old friends after this incident. However, this restricted my territorial freedoms, as I was no longer under the protection of the Oslo Ummah. From now on we would have to arm ourselves whenever we went to parties in case Muslim gangs showed up and we usually chose to stay in our neighbourhoods on Oslo West.

(p. 1384)

The ideas of persecution are very clear here: it is on the orders of his friend, Ben, that Anders was allegedly assaulted. In his own testimony Ben himself draws attention to contradictions in Breivik's discourse. Whilst Ben presents Breivik as a trustworthy friend, he considers that he has outrageously manipulated or invented certain facts reported in the compen-

dium. Ben notably denies having been to prison and rejects allegations concerning his “Muslim identity”. How can Breivik have benefited before our separation from the protection of friends of mine with whom I went out after our break up?

Among other things, Anders never hung out with the witness when the latter started hanging out with his XXXXX friends and that he lived under the protection of the witness and his friends. The witness perceives that Anders relates the witness to certain Islamic principles.<sup>6</sup>

(PR1, 2.6.11, p. 32)

This detail indicates that the separation from Ben precipitated feelings of insecurity and persecution in Anders. Furthermore, these are a deferred effect of the jealousy Anders feels at seeing Ben get closer to other Pakistani boys. It is at this moment that Anders begins to associate Ben with Islamic principles. The political opposition to Islam is therefore a reaction constructed out of jealousy and scorn. It amounts to the demonization of the former love object and his acolytes.

### *The tag episode...*

Reconstituting the different stages of the relationship in finer detail, we can form an even clearer idea of the mechanism which led to Breivik’s conception of ideas of persecution and betrayal. It all allegedly began with a very strong friendship between himself and Ben, a friendship based on unconditional mutual commitment in a hostile environment:

I remember that pride and certain moral codices/principles have always been very important to me. As a result, individuals with these traits appealed to me. If I ever got in to trouble I expected my friends to back me up 100% ... If anyone threatened me or my friends, regardless if we were at a disadvantage, we would rather face our foes than to submit and lose face. If we did get beaten we would just rally our allies and get back at them later ... The majority of people who shared these principles of pride were the Muslim youths and the occasional skinhead ...

(Breivik, p. 1378)

Beyond the demands of that friendship Breivik was looking for an ideal of honour, fraternity and support of which the Muslim gangs are now his prerogative, but which he had also found in his Hip-hop group. The functioning of these types of gang can already favour the emergence of paranoia against elements exterior to the group. Furthermore, any measure of distance on the part of one of the group members can be unsettling and provoke strong reactions, blame and mutual feelings of rejection, loss, even anxiety (Kaes, 1971; Kernberg, 1988).

---

<sup>6</sup>The XXX inside the quotes mean the names and words which can help identify people have been deleted on the web published version of the psychiatric reports.

In the psychiatric assessments, Breivik describes his first years at secondary school as happy; he obtained good results (PR1, 5.2, p. 64). It is at this time that he joins the Hip-hop group and begins tagging:

Since I was 12 years old I was into the Hip-hop movement. For several years I was one of the most notable “Hip-hop’ers” from Oslo’s West side. It was a lot easier to “gain respect and credibility” in Oslo West because of the demographic factors. [...] Around 1993 and 1994, at 15, I was the most active tagger (grafitti artist) in Oslo as several people in the old school Hip-hop community can attest to. [...] At that time it felt very rewarding to us. If you wanted girls and respect then it was all about the Hip-hop community at that time. The more reckless you were the more respect and admiration you gained.

(Breivik, p. 1378)

During this period, between the ages of 15 and 16, Anders is arrested at least twice by the police and sentenced for vandalism because of his tagging. It is difficult to establish a detailed chronology of the various episodes; there are discrepancies between Breivik’s testimonies, his mother’s, and the accounts given by the Social Services Child Protection Unit (PR1, 2.7.3, pp. 37–9). Notwithstanding, at 15 Anders is fined; he pays with his savings and has to complete community service (4.1, p. 53). Most significantly his father is very angry, refuses to forgive him and decides to no longer have him for visits. Separated from the mother, the father lived in France where he had been pursuing a diplomatic career for several years. Anders would pay him regular visits during the holidays, whilst living the rest of the year with his sister and mother in Oslo (5.2, p. 64).

### ... and the genesis of ideas of persecution

It is during one of these arrests (no doubt the last) that Anders allegedly took the decision to stop tagging. The fear of sanctions and police persuasion were enough to motivate his decision. Furthermore, we might also think his father’s anger and disappointment were key factors in the decision to stop tagging since Anders wanted to prove to him that he was capable of succeeding in life (PR1, 2.6.10, p. 31). Still he distances himself from the Hip-hop group, which makes him think that Ben, who is envious of him and hateful towards him, will want to appropriate his social network:

As a consequence of breaking up with his former environment at Ris School, he [Breivik] was *no longer friends with XXXXXXXX overnight*. He adds: *I was also the glue in Hip-hop gang and XXXXXXXX looked at me as a threat. He was hateful and bitter and took over my network. Had to leave the community in disgrace*. When asked how this happened, the subject is unable to give concrete examples.

(PR1, 5.2, p. 64)

The different versions concerning the cause of the break-up vary, thus Breivik accuses Ben of lying: “The experts ask what specifically happened at the break up between him and XXXXX. The subject says: *He lied. And*

said to a girl that I had said she was ugly. It came to a confrontation, and XXXXX threatened to use violence” (PR1, 5.3, p. 68). In retrospect Breivik holds Ben and the Hip-hop group responsible for his deterioration at school at this time:

The subject [Breivik] started at Ris Junior High School in the 7th grade. He believes that friendship with XXXXXXXX at this time was *bad news* and affected him negatively. He said: *The school and the teachers were good, but I got into the Hip-hop environment at school, it was the climax of my rebellious period. We tagged. We did not respect the teachers’ decisions.* The subject says that today, it is *pathetic* to think about the fact that he *acted tough to impress losers*. The subject adds that the Hip-hop-environment is a *fundamentally anti-authoritarian and liberal culture, with a direct line to robbers and murderers. It is idealized gangster mentality.*

(PR1, 5.2, p. 64)

We once again notice that the emergence of feelings of persecution is linked to the break up with Ben and the distancing from the Hip-hop group. Furthermore, the mechanism of projection is evident here, since the jealousy and threat attributed to Ben are indeed those of Breivik himself, who sees the others continuing gang life without him, and feels replaced in his friend’s affections.

The fight described in the compendium is in fact the last in a series of differences which began with Breivik’s decision to no longer be a tagger. His own distancing produces a feeling of loss, bitterness and jealousy, for Ben does not want to follow the path proposed by Breivik and makes closer links with other friends and notably with his Muslim cousin. It is in this relational context that the ideas of persecution develop: Breivik feels excluded, envied and attacked.

### *Treason and vengeance*

Following the tag affair Breivik, who is 16, accepted treatment from the Social Services Child Protection Unit, a decision he later brutally questions, bringing up the fact that “revelations” referring to this were allegedly made at school (PR1, 2.7.3, p. 38). Does this already mark the emergence of a feeling of betrayal beyond the ideas of persecution, a feeling which is so acute and argued out in Breivik’s politico-historical discourse? It seems that the ideas of betrayal first also take root in the break-up episode with Ben, and more precisely the fight, of which he says the following:

Apparently he [a Pakistani boy] wanted to subdue me [Breivik] in front of my ‘friend’ Ben who apparently had told him to do it.

(Breivik, p. 1384)

The quotation marks signify that Ben appears as a friend without being one. Ben is the “original” persecutor and traitor, before betrayal and ideas of persecution are displaced onto Marxists and feminists.

Indeed for Breivik the enemy to be put down will not ultimately be Ben, or the Pakistani gang to which he belonged after their break-up, or even the Muslim community. The enemy will be the traitors, those who have weakened him and feminized him in favouring the increasingly matriarchal system of feminism and cultural Marxism. The sentence “Islam isn’t the cause of Europe’s weakness but rather a secondary infection” occurs several times in the compendium (Breivik, pp. 327, 695, 716, 721, 942). The traitors, named “traitor-whores”, are those whose acts are tantamount to having sexual relations with the enemy (p. 1150)!

To better understand the origin of that category of traitors, let us first consider how they operate in Breivik’s psychical functioning. I introduce in this respect a remark made by Freud about France during the Dreyfus affair:

The *grande nation* cannot face the idea that it could be defeated; the victory does not count. It provides an example of mass paranoia and invents the delusion of betrayal [...] What develops like this need not always be delusions of persecution. Megalomania may perhaps be even more effective in keeping the distressing idea away from the ego.

(Masson, 1985, p. 110)

In Breivik’s case, too, might traitors fulfil the function of being responsible for his personal weaknesses and failures? Might they be produced by his megalomania? Even if the idea of betrayal is initially rooted in the break-up and fight with Ben, as his defensive construction develops, Breivik searches the reasons for his weakness in his past (it is his mother’s or sister’s fault), or in history (it is the fault of Marxism and feminism).

In the interviews with psychiatrists we find the link between Breivik’s feeling of betrayal, the revenge he harbours and that to which he feels victim:

*Had some reservations, would have preferred A and B, not C traitors, he says. The media have used the word children about those who were on Utøya. That is a demonizing strategy against me, 80% of the people there were over 18 years old. In any case: In a Phase II civil war, everybody above 15 years will be legitimate targets. However, the subject [Breivik] believes that Utøya was not an optimal target. It was a barbaric operation to perform for me, he says, but it had to be done. The subject becomes intense as he continues: Every day my sisters get raped and maimed because of traitors. Now they will know how it feels. The operation is more than justified by that, he adds, but in all there are several different motives.*

(PR1, 5.7, p. 88)

Revenge can be exacted on all traitors over 15 years old. They too can undergo this, as Norwegian girls do, as I did, Breivik seems to be saying. What exactly did he undergo? Is he making an unconscious reference to the fight episode in which he was “subdued”, or to another aspect of the break-up with Ben? Is he making reference to his arrest by the police or to the break up with his father? In any case, the age of 15 seems to mark the moment at which Breivik felt betrayed, abused, killed. We shall see in



relation to Breivik's childhood development that the feeling of betrayal might have originated earlier.

## Psycho-sexual development

### *Mentors*

From the moment he distances himself from Ben, Breivik spends more time with his old friends and also looks for groups with whom he can share new political opinions. He is 16 when he joins the Progress Party Youth Organization who are, he says, considered racist because of their opposition to immigration (Breivik, pp. 1368–9; PR1, 5.3, p. 67). Following the Norwegian government's intervention against the Serbs in 1999, Breivik realized that the democratic struggle against the Islamization of Europe was lost. He then wanted to join some armed resistance "cultural conservative, or Christian, anti-Jihad movement" because "It had gone too far" (Breivik, p. 1368). He is 22 when he allegedly makes contact with Serbian nationalists by internet and during a journey he makes to Liberia. Then he is allegedly selected to join the re-constitution of the Order of the Knights Templar in London in 2002. Here he meets his mentor, a man who wrote a compendium and allegedly gave him the task of writing a second edition. It is unclear whether he has one or two mentors, but he or they seem also to have taught him the analysis of financial markets as well as business management (pp. 1369, 1389).

The police enquiry which took place for several months after the attacks found no evidence to corroborate what Breivik says about the re-creation of Knights Templar and the existence of a terrorist movement (Transcript of Breivik's trial: Wednesday 30 May 2012 – Day 27). These elements nonetheless show to what extent Breivik searched out edifying paternal figures and was willing to expose his links with those who for him are heroes: the Serbian soldier who "killed many Muslims in battle" or the mentor(s) who allow him to succeed financially. He claims to feel they invested him with a mission. Furthermore, his interest in genealogy shows his need to boast a certain nobility, to feel an inheritor and belong to a lineage: "I am very proud of my Viking heritage" (p. 1390). With the same reason of cultural heritage he joins the Freemasons in 2007 of which he is very proud (PR1, 2.6.10, p. 31; Breivik, p. 805). It is worth noting how the compendium makes a display (in numerous pictures and photos) of the awards, medals and uniforms which might decorate Breivik as a Justiciar Knight.

The attempts to boost his narcissism and his masculine identity after the break with Ben and his father are evident here, whilst on the other hand he devotes a lot of time to his mother. She falls ill when he is 17 and he succeeds in adjourning his military service to look after her, before finally being exempted all together, which he says he regrets (PR1, 4.1, p. 53). The wished for, "dreamt of" link to paternal figures, who in reality are faraway/absent or rejecting (his father living in France who no longer wants to see him; his step-father now living in Thailand), bears the stamp of the ego-ideal – "one day he would show his father that he too can manage" (PR1, 2.6.10, p. 31) – and of

ideas of inheritance. We see here in outline a wish to be honoured and supported by a man, which might signify traces of prevalent anal eroticism. We shall see what Breivik's childhood can teach us on this point.

### *A joke among the boys*

The parallel between the way Breivik retraces the history of Europe and the way in which he tells his own story is patently clear. Both are stories of feminization:

I do not approve of the super-liberal, matriarchal upbringing though as it completely lacked discipline and has contributed to feminize me to a certain degree.

(Breivik, p.1377)

*I have despised feminism since 2002, he says. It leads to dysfunctional families, and destruction of the nuclear family. The Marxist revolution is to blame. I grew up with two women, he adds, and it was a very feminist family.*

(PR1, 5.4, p. 73)

It is difficult to understand to what exactly the year 2002 might correspond, but we sense here an accusation addressed to the system and to the mother. Breivik would have preferred being entrusted to the custody of his father:

The subject says he thinks it would have been better if the father and stepmother had won the case, so that he could have stayed with them. The subject then starts a long argument regarding possible amendments to the laws regarding *custody of children* [...] *I despise Marxism for my own parents' divorce and for the patriarchy. Therefore, the role of women shall be in the home.*

(PR1, 5.11, p. 113)

Breivik ostensibly blames his mother and the Norwegian system, which he judges imbued with Marxism and Feminism, for distancing him from paternal figures. He considers himself to have been feminized by the situation. An idea which also circulated amongst his friends:

The witness then said that when he first became acquainted with the accused, he had regarded him as very feminine, which in today's society is called metrosexual. The witness thought the fact that the accused had grown up with his mother and sister could partially explain this. Many had thought this about the accused, but the witness was not one of them.

The witness was asked if he had talked with the accused about this. He explained that this had been a joke among the boys, that there were many who had believed this. The witness would be surprised if there was something in it, but then he had been surprised in other ways. It did not appear to be true.

(PR1, 2.6.4, p. 25)

Breivik's mother corroborates the idea that he appeared to want to change his appearance in adolescence and to seem stronger:

The interviewee says that the subject became *tall and thin* during the junior high school years. *It was probably some of a complex for him, she says. After being introduced to a gym by his six years older sister, the subject started to exercise regularly.*

(PR1, 4.1, pp. 52–3)

Perhaps Breivik felt pursued by this “joke among the boys” and the mocking or disparaging remarks taunting him like a girl: “Kids are mean and cynical” (PR1, 5.2, p. 64) he says, at one point, about his secondary school. This makes us think of Schreber talking of the birds pouring down scorn on him (Freud, 1911). The taunting may have prepared the terrain for the mechanism of projection which arises when Breivik separates from Ben.

### *A very demanding child*

This is the moment to turn to what we know of Anders Behring Breivik’s childhood:

The mother already had a 6 year-old girl from a previous marriage when Anders was born, “a planned and wanted child”. The parents separate when Anders is one and a half years old and the mother returns to Oslo with him and his sister. After the divorce of parents, the little Anders did not see his father for several years. It seems that contact was renewed only when he was 6 years old. Between 6 and 15 years old, during the school holidays, he will visit France 12 times to see his father who was working as a diplomat (commercial consultant at the Norwegian embassy) during that period in Paris.

(Breivik, p. 1376; PR1, 5.1, p. 61)

In 1981 Breivik is 2 years old when his mother appeals to the social services for “a weekend home”, a place taking care of children during the weekend: she describes her son as very demanding and she has gradually been worn down both physically and mentally”. But she retracts this decision since the place they propose does not seem adequate to her for the child (PR1, p. 34).

In 1983 (from 1–25 February) the mother is admitted with her children and at her own request in the ‘Centre for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry’. Following this, in the spring of the same year the father starts legal proceedings to obtain custody of the child. It seems the father and his new wife had been informed that Anders was often left alone with his sister in the flat (PR1, p. 31). We have no information about the nature of the problem, nor of these rumours. The mother opposes the father’s bid for custody but the latter withdraws his appeal, even before the case is brought before the court. Nonetheless Anders’s behaviour and his relational difficulties with his mother give sufficient cause for concern to the Child Psychiatry Services, leading them to raise the question of placing the child in a foster home (PR1, 2.7.2, p. 36).

Two principal factors emerge from this:

- 1 The mother has great difficulty establishing a stable secure relationship with her child. According to the mother, Breivik seems to have been a

child who demanded a lot of attention and appealed for contact. A child who seemed too demanding to her, even aggressive, and from whom she considered temporary separation on several occasions without nonetheless wanting to entrust him to his father. The observations of the Child Psychiatry Department refer to a mother with paradoxical behaviour in whom rejection and abandonment alternate with moments of intense tenderness. This is put forward by Aage Borchgrevink (pp. 27–33) on the evidence of two members of the Child Protection Unit who participated in observing Anders as a small child in 1983. Since Borchgrevink does not however quote his sources word for word, it would be wise to rely rather on the information provided on this point in the second psychiatric report:

Mother perceived him [Anders] as incredibly active . . . “restless and later more and more fierce, whimsical and full of unexpected incident”. Anders’ mother says that his birth was “bad”, that the child was born “blue”, almost dead at birth.

(Aspaas and Tørrissen, 2012, pp. 14–15)

The fact remains that Anders no doubt felt rejected by his mother and feared her absence. All these factors point to considerable difficulties in the relationship in terms of attachment. In the last part of this article we shall discuss the possible impact of this early relationship to the mother on the development of Breivik’s ideas of persecution.

- 2 The mother does not reveal the period during which she appealed to the Social Services, even planning to entrust Anders as a small child to a foster home. She does not refer to her difficulties and describes the encounters with the Social and Child Protection Services as the mere consequence of the father’s bid for custody: “The interviewee cannot remember that there were any particular concerns regarding the subject’s development in the early years. She says: *It came to a trial because Anders’ father wanted the boy to move in with them. In this connection, we stayed a period at the National Center for Child and Youth Psychiatry, but neither of us liked it there*” (PR1, 4.1, p. 52).

According to the mother, Anders did not like this experience. We might wonder however if this does not primarily show that the mother could not conceive of the child as psychically independent and was in fact attributing her own feelings to him.

In the psychiatric assessments Breivik also seems unaware of his difficulties as a child and the time spent in care was in his opinion purely linked to spot appraisals relating to the father’s appeal for custody (PR1, 5.2, p. 63). He says he had a privileged, non-problematic childhood (Breivik, p. 1377).

It is not within the scope of this article to measure the impact on Breivik’s psychological development of this occlusion or “forgetting” of the motives leading them to consult the Social Services Child Protection Unit on the part of both mother and son. Breivik’s account of his childhood and the criticism levelled at the system nonetheless attest to the way in which something in the relationship with the mother during that period has not been questioned or metabolized and has been projected outside. In retrospect Breivik considers that his

problems stem from the weakness of the State and of the ideology which left him in the power of his mother. Yet far from being able to experience an internal conflict and to reproach his own mother, he projects this into a critique of society at large and a reactionary political ideology. Women are considered as at once invasive, dangerous, deceiving and infecting. They must be sent back to the hearth and be present when children return from school. The childhood desire for a stable, reassuring situation and maternal object is here translated into political ideas and into nostalgia for the good old days when the child was protected and pampered by both parents, a family set up we find in the 1950s (PR1, 5.11, p. 113).

### *Infantile sadism*

Furthermore, we might try to interpret the following testimony from a friend of Breivik's in the light of these previous factors:

The accused has among other things told him that as a little boy he used to put mustard in the anus of cats to afflict them in this manner. The witness thought it was sadistic and was provoked. The witness, however, never thought that the accused could do anything like the things he has been arrested for. On the other hand, the accused has always been a "deviant" with strange opinions. [...] The accused used to be like that. He made provocative statements, often divergent, about women and political views. He thought for example that there would be a majority of immigrants in Norway within a few years, and that the political parties were not addressing this adequately. This accused has talked about this many times, and people have been amazed by his views. Then the accused has often laughed and been pleased that he has managed to provoke people.

(PR1, 2.6.4, p. 27)

If such things indeed took place, we must ask what do they mean? Was this infantile sadism the acted out symbolization of an experience of penetration, of seduction witnessed or undergone, just as a young boy can repeat with a younger child the seduction he himself experienced?

In the absence of other accounts, verbal or written, which might elucidate this anal-sadistic activity, the most plausible interpretation would seem to be that such acts say something about Anders's relationship with his mother and sister – who made up his family environment at the time. The sadism might be seen as a defence against the mother's all-powerfulness (she had won the fight for custody and the recommendations of the psychiatric services were not followed up). As if as a child Anders Breivik might have wanted to provoke in animals something he himself had experienced, such as a painful, uncontrollable sensation of penetration. This leads us to make a link with Breivik's account of his criminal acts at Utøya and to underline their vengeful quality:

The patient stated that he did not see his victims as civilians but as political activists, and that for him justified the killings, also on young girls.

(Aspaas and Tørrissen, 2012, p. 92)

Whereas, on the other hand, Breivik seems to have spared two individuals who might have reminded him of himself: “He describes a very young boy who looked terrified and paralysed. He did not shoot him because of his young age. At one point he tried to call the police to discuss a surrender...” (Aspaas and Tørrissen, 2012, p. 46). Breivik did indeed spare the life of a young boy he considered too young to fight as well as a young man who seemed to have right-wing opinions and to be like him (Transcript of Breivik’s trial: Monday 23 April 2012 – Day 6).

### **Concluding discussion: A very Freudian case of persecution**

This analysis of the compendium and of documents belonging to the first psychiatric report on Breivik now leads us to consider those hypotheses put forward by psychoanalysts over the last century with a view to understanding the origin of ideas of persecution and their relationship to sexuality.

#### *Homosexuality and persecution*

In line with Freudian hypotheses (Freud, 1911), in the Breivik case the trigger factor indeed seems to be the interpretation he gives of the break-up with Ben. We see a reversal of (homosexual) love for Ben into jealousy and mistrust which are projected onto the exterior: Ben being seen as jealous, malevolent, who has him beaten up to subdue him and wants to take away his social network.

Several psychoanalysts (Rosenfeld, 1949; Terman, 2010) have questioned the fact that feelings of persecution can be a defence (through reversal and projection) against a feeling of homosexual love which the ego cannot admit. In this respect, the cases Rosenfeld (1949) presents show the range of possibilities and the way in which a strong feeling of persecution can also exist in homosexual men. According to Rosenfeld, the feeling of persecution is not a defence against homosexuality; on the contrary, homosexuality is a defence against paranoid anxieties (feelings of persecution) whose origin must be sought in the oral stage of paranoid development described by Melanie Klein.

Two points must be made with respect to Rosenfeld’s hypotheses:

- 1 The documents we have used and other recently published sources (Borchgrevink, 2012) indeed reveal a complex and no doubt pathogenic relationship between Breivik and his mother who was at once invasive, all-powerful and rejecting. These materials do not however allow us to go back to convincing elements of fixation to a paranoid oral phase. It seems furthermore that the most critical period of Breivik’s childhood was between the ages of 2 and 4, and that at this period or another he acted out anal–sadistic fantasies.
- 2 Rosenfeld (1949) describes three patients whose ideas of persecution are less much systematized than those of Breivik. He refers to Kleinian theory and makes the single fixation to the paranoid oral phase responsible for both the development of paranoid ideas and for the elaboration of a system of paranoid thinking such as Breivik’s. Yet the clinical distinction –



which tends to be effaced in the English-speaking world – between non-systematized (paranoid) ideas of persecution and the systematized ideas of persecution we find in paranoia, seems to me to be a fundamental condition for any aetiological and psychodynamic hypothesis concerning the Breivik case.

Indeed, from a closely clinical point of view, in Breivik's case persecution clearly appears to be an attempt to combat the persecutor by an intense, systematized activity of thought. Breivik conceives of the activity of thought itself as the object of a combat between himself and the political system which persecutes him and what he fears above all is being manipulated. This is what he refers to in the expression "character assassination" (Breivik, pp. 378–80, 651–4; PR1, 5.1, p. 59). The intensity of this defensive activity of thought raises the question of traumatic fixation or of a return of the repressed to a time when the child strongly invested reason and argumentation, from about the age of 10. The "character assassination" he condemns curiously echoes the "soul destruction" of which Schreber accused Flechsig (Freud, 1911).

So Breivik felt himself to have been victimized in the friendship he shared with Ben since he was 12 years old and may only have fully understood the meaning and danger of his friend's ideas retrospectively. That is to say he was seduced by Ben's ideas (and that seduction evidently has a sexual meaning), before beginning to mistrust him. Just like Schreber – whose delusion evolved around the nerve question which was the research subject of his doctor Flechsig (Freud, 1911; Niederland, 1968) – Breivik's persecution is constructed out of the questions concerning political and cultural rivalry which were the focal point of his discussions with Ben. In this sense the discourse of persecution which Breivik develops after the break-up with Ben might be considered as the expression of disappointed love.

### *Projection and ideology*

Breivik projected what he understood of his psychological problems into the political sphere of the outside world. That projection seems to be the consequence of Breivik's inability to conflictualize his relationship with his mother in any convincing way. He says he had a happy non-problematic childhood: "I have never been a victim, and have had a good childhood" (PR1, 5.9, p. 98). The mother herself covered over the difficulties she had had with her son and which had led her to consider placing him in a foster home at an early age. In this sense, the reforms Breivik envisages after the 2083 revolution are a way of repairing what he considered to have been tragic and traumatic in his own history. On the one hand, the fact that he had been badly affected by hanging around with the wrong people (Ben) and, on the other hand, the fact that he had been left in his mother's custody and that both his father and the Social Services Child Protection Unit were left powerless. Breivik's "political" project, his persecuting and persecuted ideology, is on the contrary, a way of putting an end to the "feminization" to which he had been subject through being

brought up by women. It is a Utopia, an attempt to repair his own existence through a form of wish-fulfilment (projected into the future and displaced onto others). In the same way, through his inability to conflictualize his relationship with his mother, Breivik levels accusations at the system, the ambient ideology, at cultural Marxism.

### *Castration versus infection/penetration*

In their study of the Schreber case, first Freud (1911), then Katan (1952) and Niederland (1968) insisted on the role of the fear of castration as an element triggering the patient's delusion. In the compendium, we find several representations of castration illustrating the persecutory and degrading effect of Muslims and of cultural Marxism on European men such as the Christian slaves' fear of decapitation and castration to make eunuchs of them. Yet these representations of castration are quickly replaced by ones revealing an even greater fear, the fear of infection. This idea of infection betrays Breivik's feeling of penetration or even of depersonalization for he says that European men are infected and feminized by women but are also subdued, castrated and infected by Muslims thus provoking their death.

### *Sexual identifications*

In Breivik's discourse infection is synonymous with feminization and raises the question of ambivalent sexual identification. Several witnesses refer to Breivik's feminine appearance in adolescence. This corresponds to a hypothesis outlined by Macalpine and Hunter (1953) in their discussion of the Schreber case. These authors were the first to hold that Schreber's idea of persecution originated in ambiguous sexual identifications, what they called his "transvestism" or "the delusion of changing sex". Macalpine and Hunter also thought that the emasculation Schreber refers to in his delusion screened a fantasy of giving birth. This problematic is reflected in Breivik for whom being attractive to women leads to being feminized and infected by them. There is indeed an element of gender trouble and sexual identity disorder. Breivik does not however seem to harbour the fantasy of giving birth. The birth policy proposed in the compendium seems rather to be a form of revenge against women and the sadistic control of female sexuality.

### *Traitors and feminization: Unbearable humiliation*

The fact that for Breivik femininity signifies invasion by infection raises the question of whether the persecutor might be heterosexual, and not, as Freud (1911, 1922) thinks, homosexual. Fairbairn (1956) defended this hypothesis in an article in which in the same way as Macalpine and Hunter he questions the role of the relationship with the mother in persecution. Analysis of the available documents does not however allow us to make this interpretation of the Breivik case. Although Breivik harbours hatred against women, that hatred is the result of the humiliation to which they subject European men and of the danger to which they expose

them: women are the weak spot, the Achilles' heel of European man since they provide the enemy with an opening, as Breivik puts it! If the woman, like cultural Marxists, is not the "original" persecutor, they are both figures of betrayal par excellence, responsible for its weakness and that of the country, for the shame and humiliation to which Norwegian men are subject.

Indeed Breivik's argumentation on the subject of betrayal is furthermore the projection of a reproach addressed to a system (the Social Services Child Protection unit and the judge) who was unable to take the right decision in his case: to remove him from his mother's custody, saving him from feminization but also from the emotional insecurity in which he found himself.

This figure of the traitor allows the persecuted person to find someone responsible for his failure or his weakness; it protects his megalomania. I here subscribe to the hypothesis upheld by Terman (2010), which he extracts from Harry Stack Sullivan (1956). In Breivik's case betrayal appears as a specialization or declension of the ideas of persecution which the megalomania elaborates.

### *Infantile sadism*

At first glance, we find a Leonardo-like pattern in Breivik's relational and emotional development, in which there is a strong bonding with the mother and paternal absence during the first six years of life (Freud, 1910), leading in effect to the boy's identification with his mother. Yet, on the contrary to what we know of Leonardo da Vinci, Breivik's childhood relationship with his mother seems to have been quite chaotic and characterized by periods of intense conflict, with ostensible rejection on the part of the mother and, on the part of the child, desperate attempts at control exhausting themselves in anger and hyperactivity. It is in this context that I propose to explain Breivik's alleged sadism to animals as a defence in relation to the mother. Breivik's acts as a child lead us to make a parallel with the cruel attacks he perpetrated as an adult. The fact that the attacks are not directed against Muslims but against traitors (cultural Marxists and radical feminists) of which the emblematic figure is woman – women are weak and ignore/are oblivious to honour – seems to be in line with the idea that Breivik's infantile sadism was a defence against his relationship with his mother.

### *Might this infantile sadism be at the origin of feelings of persecution?*

Let us recall that Knight (1940) attributed the origin of delusions of persecution to the repression of infantile sadism. More recently, Terman (2010), opposing the Freudian theory of a defence against homosexuality in paranoia, picks up on Kohut's (1972) thinking in considering that "narcissistic rage" is at the origin of persecution and of the murderous madness of many paranoid terrorists. If we believe the witness who mentions this, Breivik's infantile sadism can in no way, however, serve as an exclusive explanation of the origin of his ideas of persecution which, as we have seen, manifest a real attempt at defence through thought and systematized argumentation.

which goes back to Breivik's adolescence. On the other hand, the infantile sadism displayed by Anders as a child is no doubt backed up by powerful anal eroticism, the traces of which can be found in the psychical functioning of Breivik as an adult (the wish to be an inheritor, honoured by paternal figures or mentors and a marked interest for financial success as an indication of identity).

*How might we understand the apparent and frequent link manifest in terrorists and fundamentalists between persecution and violence?*

According to Strozier (2010, pp. 65–7) violence is intrinsic to paranoia whether acted out or fantasized: “And because in the paranoid world one acts on behalf of absolute righteousness, killing becomes healing...”. Clinical data largely confirms the right to kill which paranoia claims for itself. In a dangerous situation he wants to and must defend himself as well as get rid of the person experienced as his aggressor, Breivik himself makes his acts legitimate, saying that they were necessary. Necessary for what? Necessary to block the Muslim penetration of Europe, necessary to stop the penetration of infection due to feminization? Yet an often forgotten but non-negligible observation comes back to me. There are sadistic criminals who do not suffer from persecution – who do not elaborate a whole system to prove the persecution to which they are subject and there are those who suffer from persecution and who are not criminals. There are the persecuted who resort simply to legal procedures, claiming reparation through justice, others convinced they are manipulated by God and content to denounce his divine plans – being transformed into a woman – as a fatality. This is the case of Schreber (Freud, 1911). Systematized ideas of persecution as in Breivik's case first appear as a defence against a homosexual bond through thought process and it seems that for nearly ten years between 1995 and 2006 this system was efficient enough for Breivik to contain his castration and penetration anxieties.

It seems, however, that from 2006 and in any case from the moment at which he decides to prepare the attacks, Breivik's persecuted thinking has been over-nourished by anal-sadistic tendencies. This is the whole question of the transition from humiliation (such as that experienced in the break-up with Ben) to the rage employed in the attacks, which springs to the surface in the phrase: “Every day my sisters get raped and maimed because of traitors. Now they will know how it feels”.

In a major clinical study, Leslie Sohn (1995) proposed the hypothesis that the violence of certain persecuted patients (diagnosed as schizophrenic) was not due to their psychosis and to their ideas of persecution, but rather to “a defective symbolization of ‘loss’”:

I am suggesting that in all these patients there is a defective symbolization of ‘loss’. Because of the unsublimated state of their aggressive instincts and the inhibition of the activity that initiates symbol formation, projection or projective identification cannot take place in the usual way. I have a suspicion that the absence of an original object into which they could project feelings exaggerates this inhibition and

increases the need for violent physical muscularity, to replace the failed projection. Were such symbolization possible, projections would take place and therefore no violence would occur.

(p. 573)

In the same way, in her last book Frances Tustin (1994), discussing the question of “murderousness as a consequence of trauma and non-attachment”, considers the violence of serial killers as the irruption of an early traumatic violence that can no longer be controlled beneath the protective shell of autism (p. 5).

These hypotheses seem very pertinent to me for thinking out Breivik’s psychical functioning and particularly the place of acting out in paranoid functioning (systematized ideas of persecution). Let us recall once more that the emergence of Breivik’s ideas of persecution were provoked by the break-up with Ben. Now it certainly seems that this paranoid thought activity existed for several years without including a criminal project, until an internal catastrophe and the regression to infantile sadism led Breivik to organize and put into action the end of other people, of himself and of the world. I would willingly propose the hypothesis that this catastrophe might correspond to narcissistic decompensation and to anxieties linked to fantasies of penetration. Indeed, whereas Breivik “has been an enterprising person who had a knack for making money” (PR1, 2.6.4, p. 27), whereas he had tried to express his political ideas on several blogs and forums, and also wanted to publish his essays, nothing works any longer: he must stop his false diploma business, he cannot succeed in being published.

The fact remains that Breivik’s return to his mother in 2006 corresponds to an exacerbation of ideas of persecution and to an awakening of infantile sadism, which in childhood was no doubt a defence against his family environment (mother and sister) and in particular an opposition to a mother at once invasive and rejecting. Yet the impossibility of thinking out the relationship with the mother in terms of conflict and of symbolizing this conflict, and the ensuing projection onto the political world in search of a cause to his ill-being, might be what brought Breivik to pour out his rage on the community, to harm just as “they” harmed him, to want to punish those who weakened and feminized him, so they might understand what that means ... to be raped. The attacks do seem to be characterized by vengeance.

Yet these observations lead to another discussion, that of the origin of Breivik’s criminal violence.<sup>7</sup>

### Acknowledgement

I wish to thank the anonymous readers of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* for the observations and advice in their reports, which helped me considerably in the development of my thinking.

---

<sup>7</sup>The research presented here, and notably that concerning ideas of grandeur, the place of the ideal and of the martyr in Breivik’s discourse, will be pursued in further publications.

## Translations of summary

### **Dekonstruktion von Verfolgung und Verrat in den Ausführungen des Anders Behring Breivik.**

**Ein Versuch.** Am 22. Juli 2011 führte ein 32-jähriger Norweger zwei Mordanschläge aus, die 77 Menschen das Leben kosteten. Kurz vor diesen Anschlägen stellte Anders Behring Breivik ein auf Englisch verfasstes Manifest ins Internet, in dem er die Gründe für seine Angriffe erklärte. Indem wir diesen Text und die Dokumentation dekonstruieren, die in dem ersten (gerichtlich angeordneten) psychiatrischen Gutachten über Breivik enthalten ist, können wir sein Verfolgungsgefühl analysieren. Wir beginnen unsere Analyse mit Breiviks Beschreibung seines persönlichen Verständnisses der zeitgenössischen europäischen Geschichte und Politik und wenden uns im Anschluss daran den autobiographischen und phantasmatischen Aspekten seiner Ausführungen zu. Die Analyse lässt die Transformation von Liebe in Hass, den ursprünglichen Verfolger, die Implementierung eines Projektionsmechanismus sowie Vorstellungen von Verrat und deren Weiterentwicklung zu einer Ideologie zutage treten. Nach dieser Aufdeckung von Breiviks Vorstellungswelt stellen wir abschließend einen Vergleich zwischen verschiedenen psychoanalytischen Hypothesen an, die die Freud'sche These der Abwehr homosexueller Liebesgefühlen in der Paranoia vertiefen oder infrage stellen bzw. die Wichtigkeit der Beziehung zur Mutter, den analen Sadismus oder die „narzisstische Wut“ hinter der Genese dieser Vorstellungen betonen. Wir lassen die Frage offen, ob zwischen Verfolgungsgefühlen und der Tendenz zu kriminellen Handlungen eine konstante Beziehung besteht.

### **Deconstrucción de la persecución y la traición en el discurso de Anders Behring Breivik. Un ensayo preliminar.**

El 22 de julio de 2011, un noruego de 32 años ejecutó dos matanzas planificadas que se cobraron 77 vidas. Poco antes de esos ataques, Anders Behring Breivik subió a Internet un sedicente Compendio escrito en inglés, en el cual explicaba lo que los había motivado. Mediante la deconstrucción de este texto y de la documentación contenida en la primera evaluación psiquiátrica (ordenada por el tribunal), podemos analizar su vivencia de persecución. Para ello, empezamos con la descripción de Breivik de su noción personal de historia y política europeas contemporáneas, y nos ocupamos luego de los aspectos autobiográficos y fantasmáticos de su discurso. El análisis revela la transformación del amor en odio, el perseguidor original y la instalación de un mecanismo de proyección, así como nociones de traición y su consiguiente evolución hacia una ideología. Habiendo revelado las concepciones de Breivik, concluimos con una comparación de distintas hipótesis psicoanalíticas que profundizan o cuestionan la tesis freudiana de la presencia de una defensa contra un sentimiento de amor homosexual en la persecución. Por el contrario, dichas hipótesis privilegian la relación con la madre, el sadismo anal o la 'rabia narcisista' que subyace a la génesis de estas ideas. Dejamos abierta la pregunta acerca de si existe una relación permanente entre las vivencias de persecución y la tendencia a cometer actos criminales.

### **Persécution et trahison dans le discours d'Anders Behring Breivik. Premiers éléments d'une tentative d'analyse.**

Le 22 juillet 2011, un Norvégien âgé de 32 ans a lancé deux attaques meurtrières qu'il avait préméditées, tuant au passage 77 personnes. Peu de temps avant ce carnage, Anders Behring Breivik avait diffusé sur Internet un précis de sa composition, rédigé en anglais, où il expliquait les motifs de ces attaques. A travers la déconstruction de ce texte et des documents contenus dans la première expertise psychiatrique (ordonnée par la cour) de Breivik, l'auteur de cet article entreprend d'analyser le sentiment de persécution de ce meurtrier de masse. Après avoir analysé la description de Breivik relative à sa conception personnelle de l'histoire et de la politique européennes, l'auteur se penche sur les aspects fantasmatiques et auto-biographiques du discours de Breivik. Son analyse permet de mettre au jour la transformation de l'amour en haine, la figure du persécuteur originaire, l'installation d'un mécanisme de projection et enfin, les notions de trahison qui auront alimenté l'idéologie à venir. Tirant parti de cette mise à nu des conceptions de Breivik, l'auteur conclut en établissant une comparaison entre les différentes hypothèses psychoanalytiques qui approfondissent la thèse freudienne de la persécution en tant que mode de défense contre des sentiments d'amour homosexuel, ou la mettent en question en privilégiant au contraire l'importance de la relation à la mère, du sadisme anal ou encore de la « rage narcissique » dans la genèse de ces troubles. L'auteur laisse ouverte la question de savoir s'il existe ou non une relation constante entre les sentiments de persécution et la tendance à perpétrer des actes criminels.

### **Persecuzione e tradimento nel discorso di Anders Behring Breivik. Un tentativo di analisi decostruttiva.**

Il 22 luglio 2011, un giovane norvegese di 32 anni ha portato a effetto con furia omicida due attentati premeditati ai danni della popolazione, causando la morte di 77 persone. Poco prima degli attentati, Breivik aveva pubblicato su internet una sorta di breviario personale scritto in inglese, in cui spiegava le motivazioni ad essi sottostanti. La decostruzione di questo testo e la documentazione relativa al primo referto psichiatrico su Breivik [effettuato dietro ordinanza del tribunale] ci permettono di analizzare il suo vissuto di persecuzione. La nostra analisi prende le mosse dalla descrizione che Breivik offre della sua personale concezione della storia e della politica dell'Europa contemporanea, procedendo poi a



considerare gli aspetti autobiografici e fantasmatici del suo discorso. Tra gli aspetti che emergono dall'esame dei testi figurano la trasformazione dell'amore in odio, il persecutore originario, l'installarsi di un meccanismo proiettivo, idee relative al tradimento e il loro progressivo configurarsi in formazioni discorsive di stampo ideologico. Dopo avere gettato luce su questi aspetti insiti al pensiero di Breivik, concludiamo mettendo a confronto diverse ipotesi psicoanalitiche, delle quali alcune approfondiscono e altre contestano la tesi freudiana secondo cui nella persecuzione ci sia un elemento di difesa contro sentimenti di amore omosessuale – tesi queste ultime, che danno al contrario la priorità alla relazione con la madre, al sadismo anale o alla 'rabbia narcisistica' che sta dietro alla formazione di queste idee. Se ci sia o meno una correlazione costante tra vissuti di persecuzione e la tendenza a commettere atti criminali è una questione lasciata aperta.

## References

- Adorno TW, Frenkel-Brunswick E, Levinson DJ (1950). The authoritarian personality. In: Horkheimer M, Flowerman S, editors. *Studies in prejudice series*, vol. 1. Sponsored by The American Jewish Committee. New York: Harper & Brothers.
- Aspaas A, Tørrissen T (2012). Statement to the Oslo District Court issued on 30 April 2012 Case No. 11 -188627MED-OTIR/05 [Breivik's second psychiatric report]. Available from: <https://www.sites.google.com/site/Breivikreport/documents/anders-Breivik-psychiatric-report-2012-04-10>.
- Bat Ye'or (1996). *The decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam: from Jihad to Dhimmitude: seventh-twentieth century*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.
- Bat Ye'or (2001). *Islam and dhimmitude: Where civilizations collide*. Cranbury, NJ: Associated UP.
- Breivik Behring A (2011). 2083. A European Declaration of Independence. Pdf download on the website: 'Public Intelligence'. Available 28 July 2011 from: <http://www.publicintelligence.net/anders-behring-Breiviks-complete-manifesto-2083-a-european-declaration-of-independence/>
- Borchgrevink A (2013). *A Norwegian tragedy: Anders Behring Breivik and the massacre on Utøya*. Puzey G, translator. Cambridge: Polity.
- Fairbairn WRD (1956). Considerations arising out of the Schreber case. *Br J Med Psychol* **29**:113–26. [(1979). *Considérations au sujet du cas Schreber*. In: Prado de Oliveira L. *Le cas Schreber. Contributions psychanalytiques de langue anglaise*. Paris: PUF.]
- Freud S (1910). Leonardo da Vinci and a memory of his childhood. *SE* **11**:59–137.
- Freud S (1911). Psycho-analytic notes on an autobiographical account of a case of paranoia (dementia paranoides). *SE* **12**:3–82.
- Freud S (1922). Certain neurotic mechanisms in jealousy, paranoia and homosexuality. *SE* **18**:221–34.
- Husby T, Sørheim S (2011). Forensic psychiatric statement given on 29 November 2011 to the Oslo District Court pursuant to the appointment on 28 July 2011 with completion of the mandate on 11 August 2011. [Breivik's first psychiatric report (PR1)]. Available from: <https://www.sites.google.com/site/Breivikreport/documents/anders-Breivik-psychiatric-report-of-2011>
- Jay M (1973). *The dialectical imagination: A history of the Frankfurt school and the Institute for Social Research, 1932–1950*. Berkeley, CA: U California Press.
- Kaes R (1971). Processus et fonctions de l'idéologie dans les groupes. *Perspectives psychiatriques* **33**:27–48.
- Katan M (1952). Further remarks about Schreber's hallucinations. *Int J Psychoanal* **33**:429–32. [(1979). *Nouvelles remarques sur les hallucinations de Schreber*. In: Prado de Oliveira L. *Le cas Schreber. Contributions psychanalytiques de langue anglaise*, 15–43. Paris: PUF.]
- Kernberg O (1998). *Ideology, conflict and leadership in groups and organizations*. New Haven, CT: Yale UP.
- Knight RP (1940). The relationship of latent homosexuality to the mechanism of paranoid delusions. *Bull Menninger Clin* **4**:149–59.
- Kohut H (1972). Some thoughts on narcissism and narcissistic rage. *Psychoanal Stud Child* **27**:360–400.
- Macalpine I, Hunter R (1953). The Schreber case. *Psychoanal Q* **22**:328–71. [(1979). *Discussion sur le cas Schreber*. In: Prado de Oliveira L. *Le cas Schreber. Contributions psychanalytiques de langue anglaise*, 15–43. Paris: PUF.]
- Masson JM, editor. (1985). *The complete letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887–1904*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP.
- Niederland W (1968). Schreber and Flechsig: A further contribution to the 'Kernel of Truth' in Schreber's delusional system. *J Am Psychoanal Assoc* **16**:740–8. [(1979). *Schreber et Flechsig: encore une contribution au 'Noyau de Vérité' dans le système délirant de Schreber*. In: Prado de Oliveira L. *Le cas Schreber. Contributions psychanalytiques de langue anglaise*. Paris: PUF.]

- Rosenfeld H (1949). Remarks on the relation of male homosexuality to paranoia, paranoid anxiety and narcissism. *Int J Psychoanal* **30**:36–47.
- Sohn L (1995). Unprovoked assaults: Making sense of apparently random violence. *Int J Psychoanal* **76**:565–75.
- Stack Sullivan H (1956). The paranoid dynamism. *The collected works of Harry Stack Sullivan*, vol. 2. New York: Norton.
- Strozier C (2010). The apocalyptic other. In: Strozier Ch, Terman D, Jones J, editors. *The fundamentalist mindset*, 62–70. New York, NY: Oxford UP.
- Strozier C, Terman D, Jones J. *The fundamentalist mindset*. New York, NY: Oxford UP.
- Terman DM (2010). Fundamentalism and the paranoid gestalt. In: Strozier Ch, Terman D, Jones J, editors. *The fundamentalist mindset*, 47–61. New York, NY: Oxford UP.
- Transcripts of Anders Behring Breivik's trial. Available from: <https://www.sites.google.com/site/breivikreport/transcripts>
- Tustin F (1994). *Autistic barriers in neurotic patients*. London: Karnac.
- von Ehrenfels C (1907). *Sexualethik*. Wiesbaden: Bergmann.
- Weininger O (1906). *Sex and character. Authorized translation from the 6th*, German edition. New York, NY: Putnam.
- West D (2007). *The death of the grownup: How America's arrested development is bringing down western civilization*. New York, NY: St Martin's Griffin Press.