

## THEY CALLED A WAR, AND SOMEONE CAME: *The communicative politics of Breivik's ideoscape*

### Abstract

This article examines the intensely mediated debate on the relationship between ideological affinity and political implication that followed the documenting of the 'citational ecology' of Breivik's 2083 compendium. Focusing on the recurring trope of war in counter-jihad blog posts and mainstream media comment, it argues that the invocation of 'war' is important beyond limiting debates on incitement and 'moral responsibility'. Following Butler (2009), it examines this 'frame of war' and its poetics as the condition of counter-jihad networks and as the licence for mainstream polemics on the 'failed experiment' of multiculturalism.

### Keywords

Publics • discourse • Europe • Islamophobia • multiculturalism • Norway • racism

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The polemicist proceeds encased in privileges that he possesses in advance and will never agree to question. On principle, he possesses rights authorizing him to wage war and making that struggle a just undertaking; the person he confronts is not a partner in the search for truth but an adversary, an enemy who is wrong, who is harmful, and whose very existence constitutes a threat. For him, the game consists not of recognizing this person as a subject having the right to speak but of abolishing him, as interlocutor, from any possible dialogue.

(Michel Foucault in conversation with Paul Rabinow, 1984)

## 1 Introduction: Formal perfection

In late August 2012, the French publishers Pierre Guillaume de Roux published two pamphlets by the writer and senior Gallimard editor Richard Millet. The first of those, *Langue fantôme (suivi de Éloge littéraire D'Anders Breivik)*, quickly garnered the international controversy it sought by proposing that 'Breivik is without doubt what Norway deserves, and what awaits all societies that continue to blind themselves in order to better deny themselves, in particular France and England' (Lafitte 2012). The subject of Millet's elegiac intent is not the victims of Breivik's political murder, but rather a familiar source of elite lament: the self-abolishing 'West'. Millet's intervention was precisely calibrated – for, regardless of their human cost, mediated events enter immediately into a symbolic economy of appropriation (De Zengotita 2005) – to capitalise on the coverage of the 'sanity

verdict' in Breivik's trial. In so doing, his bid for inclusion in the event drew on two forms of legitimation: his reading of Breivik as a 'product' of the conjuncture and of the aesthetics of his 'acts'.

Drawing on an argument rehearsed by, among others, the journalist Brendan O'Neill in the British *Daily Telegraph* in April 2012, Millet positions Breivik not just as an opponent of multiculturalism, but as its predictable effect and logical conclusion. According to O'Neill, Breivik is '...not an implacable foe of multiculturalism, he is a product of it. He is multiculturalism's monster, where his true aim is to win recognition of his identity alongside all those other identities that are fawned over in modern Europe' (2012). Concerned less with the impact of O'Neill's capaciously understood 'identity politics' on individual liberty than on its corrosion of the 'Christian essence',

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Millet reads Breivik as 'an exemplary product of Western decadence', a 'child of the ideologico-racial fracture that extra-European immigration has introduced to Europe' (in Crumley 2012).

In a radio interview with France Info, as well as in the text itself, Millet reproduces the geometry of violence that structured Breivik's terror. European culture has been undermined by non-European immigration – 'the repopulation of Europe with populations and cultures foreign to us' – and this dissolution has been promoted and furthered by the motivated ideological projects of the left, principally a 'multiculturalism' that '...as it has been imported from the United States, is the worst thing possible for Europe. It creates a mosaic of ghettos in which the nation no longer exists' (see Beaudoux & Labeyrie 2012). Millet may draw metaphorically here from the particular, imagined geography of Emmanuel Brenner's (2004) *Les territoires perdus de la République* – 'The lost territories of the Republic' – a reference to the 'no-go' banlieues of major French cities, but the racialising cipher of the ghetto is transnationally invoked as evidence of multiculturalism's corrosive social impact (Lentin & Titley 2011: 148–150). In turn, Millet's invocation of multiculturalism reveals the precise geometry of violence to be a prevalent form of triangulation: multiculturalism favours the agents of cultural pollution, is advanced by the agents of cultural experiment and must be opposed by the subjects of cultural imposition. For Millet, the 'formal perfection' of Breivik's 'monstrous response' is in large part its geometric precision, for all that he may protest against violence in the aesthete's detection of the sublime.

In a *Le Monde* critique of Millet's 'fascist pamphlet', the French writer Annie Ernaux identified the second order effect of this triangulation. To critique Millet's assault on the possibility of democracy, she argues, is to be immediately subject to an '...endless brandishing, like a Pavlovian reflex, of freedom of expression and the rights of the author to say whatever'. Aware of these dominant discursive dynamics, Ernaux avers that any response risks contributing to the mediation of a particular kind of performance – that of the 'courageous but beleaguered martyred writer' (2012). Millet's opportunistic appropriation, and Ernaux's reflexive response, provide a point of entry to the politics of communication concentrated around 22/7, a politics that is the general subject of this article.

Specifically, the article is concerned with the intensely mediated international debate on the relationship between ideological affinity and political implication that has followed 22/7. Millet's publicity was derived in part from his willingness to associate himself, if only 'aesthetically', with Breivik, thus occupying a space vacated hurriedly by a diverse range of commentators otherwise convinced by visions of Muslim conquest, social implosion and multicultural corrosion. The citational ecology of Breivik's compendium 2083: *A European Declaration of Independence* has drawn sustained attention to these evacuees, chief amongst them the highly organised and financed arteries, and endless, idiosyncratic capillaries, of anti-Muslim online networks (Fekete 2012, Lean 2012). This focus emerged rapidly in the days following the massacre with, for example, the security researcher Toby Archer arguing on Monday 25th July that 'Breivik is clearly a product of this predominantly web-based community of anti-Muslim, anti-government and anti-immigration bloggers, writers and activists' (2011).

However, a singular focus on the implication of 'keyboard warriors' in Breivik's compendium would obscure a consideration of the lattice of overlapping connections and affinities involved in the shifting *ideoscape* (Appadurai 1996) of European racisms. In a discussion of the range of politicians and commentators quoted in 2083, Paul Hockenos noted that 'this political mainstreaming

of Islamophobia would have been inconceivable without the post-9/11 anti-Islamic discourse across European media and the blogosphere. In large part, this trail was blazed by intellectuals who defended their positions in the name of liberalism and human rights' (2012). Unsurprisingly, those cited by Breivik as sources of inspiration countered with the contention that 'multiculturalists' were opportunistically using the 'tragedy' to suppress legitimate opinions. Robert Spencer, the founder of *Jihad Watch* – and the most heavily cited of the main 'Counter-Jihad players' identified by a 2012 *Hope Not Hate* report – compiled a 'demonization round-up' identifying the 'campaign taking shape' within days of 22/7:

The intent of this campaign is clear. The scholars, politicians and activists who have spoken out about the threat to human rights and constitutional principles that jihad and Islamization pose have never advocated any kind of violence or illegal activity. By tarring them with the murders of Anders Breivik, the enemies of freedom hope to quash all resistance to the advance of Islamic supremacism in the West. (Spencer 2011)

A similar argument was made by the British journalist, Melanie Phillips, in her *Daily Mail* column on August 1 2011: 'As soon as the atrocity happened, people on the Left saw a heaven-sent opportunity to smear mainstream conservative thinkers and writers by making a grossly distorted association between Breivik's attack and their ideas.' Those cited have an evident investment in reducing the question of ideological implication to a flat charge of causality or incitement. Yet, specific treatments of what is at stake in the general charge of implication have been lacking or left hovering around notions of a 'moral responsibility' derived from ideological affinity. In noting this critical space between causality and affinity, Molinari and Neergaard argue that '...we are not arguing for a direct link between racist ideas...and acts of terrorism. However, we would like to suggest that violent acts are carried out more frequently in times when there is an opportunity structure that symbolically acknowledges, legitimizes and supports the world-view at the core of these actions' (2012: 15). In agreeing with this proposition, this article considers the importance of a *frame of war* to the symbolic 'opportunity structure' noted by Molinari and Neergaard.

The recurring imaginary and invocation of war, and the reproduction of the *patriot/alien/traitor* geometry of war, may not involve or support a declaration of war, but it provides, in Judith Butler's terms, a 'frame'. This idea is developed in Butler's book *Frames of War* (2009), which, in asking the titular question 'when is life grievable?' understands frames as modes of organising recognition and 'recognizability' – those conditions that 'prepare or establish a subject for recognition' (2009: 4). Butler highlights the critical ambivalence of the frame, in particular how the 'sense that the frame implicitly guides the interpretation has some resonance with the idea of the frame as a false accusation' (2009: 8). Contingent by virtue and necessity of their reproducibility, frames nevertheless structure 'modes of recognition' essential to the conduct of war, but also, for example, 'in the politics of immigration, according to which certain lives are perceived as lives while others, though apparently living, fail to assume perceptual form as such' (2009: 24).

In the politics of interpretation surrounding Breivik's citations, the frame of war is often treated solely as an (false) accusation. Given that, as Liz Fekete summarises, '...most counter-jihadists, while sharing much of Breivik's discursive frameworks and vocabulary, stop short of advocating violence' (2012: 33), this reductive focus obscures the importance of the frame as a 'mode of recognition'.

In the counter-jihad frame of war, it is less that lives fail to assume perceptual form than they are positioned as over-determined forms – race enemies and race traitors for the post-racial era. Constructed as theological automatons, disparate and diverse Muslim and ‘Muslim-looking’ people are collapsed into a monolithic abstraction as carriers of *debut-de-siècle* civilizational decline: ‘The Muslim in Europe – not individual Muslims, not even Muslim communities, but the idea of the Muslim himself – has come to represent the threat of death’ (Goldberg 2009 165). The frame of war does not incite interlocutors to ‘go to war’, but to recognise that ‘we are at war’.

For Eurabia-focused conspiracy theorists (see Van Buuren 2013) – and also those who would occupy the accommodating ‘new right’ position of representing the silent majority to the detached and distant elite – this recognition of a state of *being at war* demands the concomitant identification of what Breivik termed ‘Cultural Marxists’: a capacious category of left-liberal enablers involved, depending on the intensity of the treatise, in outright treachery or naive social engineering. The controversy generated by Millet owes in part to his endorsement of the ‘logical’ outcome of Breivik’s ideological coordinates (*it was bound to happen, and Norway deserves it*), as opposed to more widespread attempts to affirm the same ideological geometry while distancing it from his terrorism (*it was bound to happen, but nobody deserves it*). Ernaux was precise in diagnosing this logic as fascist; as Robert Paxton argues in his influential study *The Anatomy of Fascism* (2004), the delineation of internal enemies that weaken and betray the nation is perhaps the only consistent dimension across different forms and histories of fascism.

Nevertheless, the prevalence of this geometry cannot be understood without Ernaux’s accompanying identification of Millet’s mediated self-positioning, whereby any critique of his arguments is automatically read, within this mode of recognition, as a continuation of the politically correct myopia of multiculturalism, furthered through an inevitable assault on freedom of expression. This frame of war thus also constitutes a system of legitimation, a mode of recognition that secures the tautological truth, post-racial licence and iconoclastic heroism of the writer or blogger. The frame of war is the condition of communicative participation in the propagation of ‘multicultural crisis’, and this article explores this prevalent construction in two sections.

In the first, it discusses the ‘counter-jihad’ blogosphere, and by way of a brief analysis of the influential blog *Jihad Watch*, argues that this frame of war constitutes this discursive community by providing what Michael Warner (2002) describes as the ‘poetics of the counter-public’. In the second, it broadens the critique of ‘anti-jihad’ counter-publics to consider the ideological legitimation sought in the more expansive frame of ‘multicultural crisis’. By examining examples of the prevalence in mainstream polemics of Millet-style positionings on the terrain of ‘war’, it argues that understanding the forms of legitimation provided by narratives of multicultural implosion draws attention to how Breivik’s symbolic economy and structuring political geometry are broadly shared and widely mediated in European communicative space.

## 2 They called a war, 1: war as the condition of a counter-public

### 2.1 The hypertext and the frame of war

The 2083 compendium is a hypertext, textually integrated to the terrain of the Western ‘crisis right’ from which it is derived and

compiled. Breivik presented the compendium as a ‘gift’ to ‘patriotic minded Europeans’, and as in any gift relation, it involved an expectation of reciprocity – his terrorism was intended to provide a lens for those patriotic activists who received, and were asked to disseminate, the compendium. Framed, in its dissemination, as a call for collective action – a step in the long struggle towards a patriotic revolution forecast to develop in three stages in advance of final victory in 2083 – the fundamental geometry of war is present from the fourth paragraph of the introduction:

Much of the information presented in this compendium (3 books) has been deliberately kept away from the European people by our government and the politically correct mainstream media. More than 90% of the EU and national parliamentarians and more than 95% of journalists are supporters of European multiculturalism and therefore supporters of the ongoing Islamic colonization of Europe; yet they DO NOT have the permission of the European peoples to implement these doctrines. (p. 11)

In Breivik’s frame of war, this triangular antagonism structures a drama of world historical proportions, predicated on the ticking urgency of two minutes to an *Islamofascist* midnight and the creeping establishment of ‘Eurabia’:

Just as the older far-Right narrative had a structural need for a Jewish conspiracy theory in order to explain the purported complicity of national governments with their enemies, so too the counter-jihadist movement tends towards conspiracy theory. After all, one might ask, why the need for popular mobilisation for the counter-jihadist cause when European governments already take a tough stance on fighting ‘radical Islam’? The answer must be that government rhetoric about fighting Islamist ‘extremism’ is mere appearance; behind the scenes, ruling elites are secretly in league with the Islamic enemy. Hence the indispensability of the Eurabia conspiracy theory. (Kundnani 2012: 9)

In a post-22/7 survey of the anti-Muslim ideoscape, Fekete (2012) maps a knotted series of conspiracy theories along a spectrum from ‘internet-focused counter-jihadist activists at one end and neoconservative and cultural conservative columnists, commentators and politicians at the other’ (2012: 30). A key point of spectrum differentiation is between those, like Breivik, who propound encompassing conspiracy theories, and those who locate the facilitation of Muslim excess in the naïve elitism and political paralysis of the ‘liberal-left’. The frame of war extends beyond conspiracy; the intensively cited ‘anti-jihadi’ websites, and Breivik’s compendium, forge a totalising and tautological theory of domination from a purposeful bricolage of hyperlinked texts. Understood not only as a religion but as a totalitarian political and cultural system, any fragment of net-located evidence of Islamic backwardness – across space and anywhere in time – is accreted as further evidence of the global progress of this totalising drive (Carr 2006).

As the final section below discusses, this resolute differentialism descends from the zero-sum identitarianism of the ‘new racism’ but extends the cultural turn’s indignant – and strategic – repudiation of racism through an idealist focus on the problem of religion. Religion, as an intellectual framework, can theoretically be repudiated, but Muslims are racialised as theological automatons, and thus their very presence signifies a (renewed) state of multi-layered war. Immigration and any cultural manifestation of lived presence are understood as interruptions of ideological, cultural and demographic conflict. Recalling

the anti-Semitic fear of the assimilated Jew (Arendt 1966), ‘those who see an Islamic conspiracy...suggest that Muslims who do not signal their Muslimness ...are merely posing as modern, progressive and westernized. They are in fact camouflaged, and this makes them the more dangerous’ (Fekete 2012: 35).

The resistance of patriots, therefore, is necessary to avoid an Islamified future spent living in *dhimmitude*, but resistance requires a concomitant assault on the hegemony of the ‘current cultural Marxist/multicultural elites, the New Totalitarians...the most dangerous generation in Western history’ (p. 30). Emasculated by feminism and weakened by its contribution to demographic decline (Walton 2012), and repressed by those multiculturalist ‘category A and B traitors’ who have transposed Marxism to the cultural terrain (Seymour 2011), cultural conservatives, Christians, nationalists and men are living as ‘slaves under an oppressive, tyrannical, extreme left-wing system with absolutely no hope of reversing the damage that has been caused. At least not democratically’. Thus, opposing the totalising drive of Islam and the totalitarian success of Cultural Marxism justifies a liberation struggle, a ‘preemptive war on all cultural Marxist/multiculturalist elites of Western Europe’.

## 2.2 This war, not that war

Writing in *Open Democracy* a month after 22/7, Markha Valenta pointed to how – in the spiralling debates evaluating Breivik and his actions in psychological and political terms, and in the struggle over the putative legitimacy of, if not his politics, his political referents – the political nature of the murders was relatively obscured:

Breivik’s most grotesque violence was not directed at Muslims or immigrants as such but at the youthful members of the Social Democrats...First and foremost, Breivik is a man at war with his own country...And it is in this alienation that Breivik is not alone: his attack on the left is part of a larger front of aggression across the west, viciously targeting all that which smacks of the ideal of multiculturalism. (2011)

He may not have been alone, yet Breivik was quickly left alone, rapidly renounced and disowned by those determined to evade implication as analysis of the compendium suggested that he had derived ideological sustenance from the counter-jihadi blogosphere. A simple visualisation of gross citations, produced by Eli Clifton for the liberal blog *Think Progress* on July 24th documented 162 citations for Robert Spencer and Jihad Watch, 59 for Bat Y’Eor, author of the most influential iteration of the *Eurabia* thesis, and 18 for Daniel Pipes of the Middle East Forum, among others. As Clifton summarised, ‘while a citation in the manifesto is far from an endorsement of violence by those Breivik referenced, it is increasingly clear that the Islamophobic right-wing in the US influenced his views’ (Clifton 2011). In a more sophisticated data-mapping in early September, *The Guardian* identified what they termed ‘Counter-Jihad nodes’, an exercise which focused attention on *Gates of Vienna* and *The Brussels Journal*, as well as ‘...a dense network of 104 European nationalist sites and political parties. Some of these are represented in parliaments: Geert Wilders’ Dutch Freedom party; the French National Front; the Danish People’s party, the Norwegian Progress party (of which Breivik was briefly a member before he left, disgusted with its moderation); the Sweden Democrats. Others, like the EDL, are fringe groupings. Then there are those in between, such as the Hungarian far-right party Jobbik’ (Brown 2011).

First wave distancing strategies predictably focused on ‘Lone wolf’ explanations. Wilders – whom Breivik cites 30 times and notes as a possible ally, albeit one who ‘would have to condemn us’ following violent action (Fekete 2012: 32) – was quick to project psychosis, and lament the damage Breivik had inflicted on democratic resistance to ‘Islamisation’ (Wilders 2012). Presaging Millet’s conjunctural argument, M.A. Khan, editor of *islam-watch.org*, wrote on July 26 that ‘As the burgeoning and increasingly radicalized and violent Muslim populations distress non-Muslims all over the world...the occurrence of such tragic incidents with increasing frequency in future also looks to be a definite possibility’ (2011).

In parallel to this insistence on individual pathology, those cited began to defend themselves by intensifying the triangular geometry of political legitimization. The Oslo-based writer Bruce Bawer rehearsed a theme in *The Wall Street Journal* on July 25, later extended in his 2012 book *The New Quislings: How the International Left Used the Oslo Massacre to Silence Debate about Islam*: ‘In Norway to speak negatively about any aspect of the Muslim faith has always been a touchy matter, inviting charges of “Islamophobia” and racism. It will, I fear, be a great deal more difficult to broach these issues now that this murderous madman has become the poster boy for the criticism of Islam’ (Bawer 2011).

Thus, establishing distance from implication in Breivik’s actions required a double discursive movement. First, the recognition of grim confirmation: the overlap between his diagnosis and ours is a testament to our consistently repressed truth. Concomitantly, however, this shared diagnosis does not suggest that we can in any way be associated with what he proposed as a cure. Where we spoke of war, or European implosion and multicultural treachery, we cannot be held responsible for actual acts of war against actual ‘traitors’. The problem for those cited is that the internet record provides copious evidence of precise articulations of this geometry of war. Writing in 2006, Ned May of the *Gates of Vienna* declared that ‘the Jihad is a symptom...the enemy lies within. This war is a civil war within the West, between traditional Western culture and the forces of politically correct multicultural Marxism that bedevilled it for the last hundred years’. Arun Kundnani notes that Breivik’s title ‘A European Declaration of Independence’ is borrowed from a 2007 Fjordman post that replicates the logic of fascist counter-revolution: ‘We are being subject to a foreign invasion, and aiding and abetting a foreign invasion in any way constitutes treason. If non-Europeans have the right to resist colonization and desire self-determination then Europeans have that right too. And we intend to exercise it’ (2012: 4–5).

Faced with this record, an ancillary strategy has been to insist on the non-performativity of language (Ahmed 2008) – *to write within the frame of war does not bring into being the war that it names*. Spencer, for example, when accused that his ‘martial rhetoric incited Breivik to murder’ countered by drawing attention to the widespread ‘use of martial imagery in metaphorical contexts’. A consequence of this strategy is a hasty recoding of forms of political speech, predicated on claims to broadly repressed truths – and in explicit opposition to the postmodern relativism of multiculturalism – as figurative and allegorical: ‘...any connection between radical Right statements and violent action were denied, in a way that suggested that a connection between their ideas and any form of action was in error. Deep down, it suggested, the ‘European crisis’ Right appeared to be arguing that their ideas were no sort of philosophy of action at all’ (Humphrys & Rundle 2011: 5–6). However, the metaphorical register is purposive, and the invocation of war cannot be assessed solely in terms of the presence or absence of manifest support for violence. Instead, the

frame of war and its pathological antagonisms constitute the very condition of communicative participation in the anti-Muslim 'counter public'.

### 2.3 The frame of war and the condition of counter-publics

In Michael Warner's discussion of 'publics and counter-publics', the public is that which 'comes into being only in relation to texts and their circulation' (2002: 50). Through this circulation, and in this coming into being, public discourse acquires a 'poetic function' that is frequently elided by the modern emphasis on 'rational-critical dialogue'. The poetics of public discourse implies '...not just that a public is self-organising, a kind of entity created by its own discourse, or even that this space of circulation is taken to be a social entity. Rather I mean that all discourse or performance addressed to a public must characterize the world in which it attempts to circulate, projecting for that world a concrete and livable shape, and attempting to live that world through address' (2002: 81). The living of this world through counter-jihad address is animated by inclusion in the truth of conspiracy and the fact of war, a truth denied or effaced by the dominant consensus, and as such the anti-jihad public constitutes itself 'through a conflictual relation to the dominant public' (2002: 85) as a 'counter-public'.

A brief discussion of the site *Jihad Watch* develops this analysis. Established in 2003 by Robert Spencer, and extensively funded by the David Horowitz Freedom Centre, it is, as Deepa Kumar documents, embedded within a well-resourced network of neoconservative, pro-Zionist and Christian Right structures that have prospered post-9/11 by projecting 'the image of a vicious and menacing "Muslim enemy"' (2012: 176–86). In 2003, Spencer's readings of the Koran are copiously quoted in shoring up the idea of Islam as a totalising socio-political system. The density of quotation, and Spencer's then high-profile role in organising the Stop Islamization of America campaign (Lean 2012), ensured that in the days following 22/7, the blog is almost fully dedicated to surveillance of the international coverage, to identifying and refuting different charges of implication – from 'moral responsibility' to 'influence and inspiration' – to compiling a 'demonization round-up' and identifying the 'opportunistic' campaign taking shape (Spencer 2011).

In a sample analysis of the blog-post roll – examining posts a month before the attacks – the conspicuous elements of the Islamic conspiracy theory and the geometry of war proliferate. June 30<sup>th</sup>: regular guest Nicolai Sennels discusses 'how Muslim parallel societies are truly a direct attack on our countries'. June 29<sup>th</sup>: regular guest 'Marisol' asserts that 'Britain has imported Sharia and it has become increasingly entrenched in the country'. June 28<sup>th</sup>: Spencer frames the story of a woman being fired from the fashion store Abercrombie & Fitch as another instance of 'creeping sharia', where the 'real point of her getting hired was to compel an American business to change its practices in order to accommodate Islamic norms'. The daily confirmation of these theses is unremarkable, but Warner's discussion of the counter-public calls for attention to be paid not just to ideas, but also to poetics and form:

A counterpublic maintains at some level, conscious or not, an awareness of its subordinate status. The cultural horizon against which it marks itself off is not just a general or wider public, but a dominant one. And the conflict extends not just to ideas or policy questions, but to the speech genres and modes of address

that constitute the public and to the hierarchy among media.... friction against the dominant public forces the poetic-expressive character of counterpublic discourse to become salient to consciousness'. (2002: 86)

The frame of war, in this understanding, is immanent to the poetic-expressive character of the counter-public. *Jihad Watch* as Nathan Lean describes, involves scouring 'daily headlines from news organisations in every corner of the world, compiling the most gruesome and sensational news stories' (2012: 61). The daily blogroll is an invitation to shared surveillance – in the sample week, stories from 24 countries were featured – and presented as the accretion of evidence that has a dual character: of the truth of a global war and of the fact of its disavowal by the wider public. Spencer's self-positioning after 22/7 may echo Millet's strategic posture as the *écrivain maudit*, but this is derived from his consistent self-presentation as a misunderstood champion of human rights (a badge that recalls Corey Robin's argument that post-war US reactionary thought has made a strategic habit of 'absorbing and transmuting the idioms' of the left [2011]). The accreted evidence is posted with a framing thought from Spencer, establishing idiomatic continuities across posts, and inviting further annotation from registered commentators.

As Geert Lovink points out, 'comment cultures are not emergent systems but orchestrated arrangements' (2011: 52). Commentators are invited to involve themselves in exegesis as a moral community of scholars and human rights activists slowly revealing the truth in the teeth of mass indoctrination. A system of confirmation is thickened through the density of cross-posts from trusted sources (Lean 2012: 50–51) and through the involvement of posters and commentators, writing as from the multiple fronts of global war. The idea that 'we are alone' is crucial to this transnational movement building – together alone, struggling against the 'dominant cultural horizon' from different points in space. And, constantly, struggling against the idiocy and treachery of the 'enablers of Islamisation', idiocy and treachery that provides 'bonding capital' for a community that finds and maintains purpose in surveying and confronting this two-pronged threat to its 'way of life'. That *Dhimmi Watch* was established as the companion site to *Jihad Watch* is a formal recognition that this triangulation constitutes the form of the counter-public. Acts of war can be repudiated, but the frame of war cannot be disavowed; it is the foundation of the counter-public's constitution, grain of its expressive character, structure of its formal possibilities and condition of its reproduction.

## 3 They called a war, 2: war as the condition of contrarian positioning

### 3.1 Multiculturalism: the archaeology of contrarian certainties

In parallel to the early cascade of accusation and repudiation in the 'blogosphere', those established commentators and politicians associated with 'mainstreaming of Islamophobia in the media' (Hockenos 2012) were subject to a similar scrutiny. The reaction was comparable, also; Melanie Phillips, for example, responding to a post on *Liberal Conspiracy* that merely drew attention to her citations, countered that this constituted an opportunistic smear (see the quotation in Introduction). Andrew Brown, in *The Guardian's* link-data analysis, drew specific attention to the subsequent focus on Phillips, once again stating that 'to appear on this list is not to

be complicit in Breivik's crime' (2011). As with the counter-jihad networks, thinking through the frame of war provides a route beyond this infinite regression.

In Phillips' case, the frame is explicit in her defensive response: 'Multiculturalism and Islamic extremism raise entirely legitimate and very serious concerns about defending a culture from attack both from within and from without' (Phillips 2011a). The familiar geometry of this construction recalls how the Eurabian threat has 'been grafted onto the anti-anti-racism and anti-cultural relativism frameworks that were established and normalized by the Thatcherite New Right during the 1980s' (Fekete 2012: 39). The emphasis on defending culture and identity against the corrosive dialectic of alien intransigence and internal weakness is relevant beyond the British frame of reference, and prompts examination of the modes of discursive positioning and stylised contrarianism that derive from opposition to 'multiculturalism'.

In 2083, 'multiculturalism' serves both as shorthand for a disintegrating social terrain and as a suffocating ideological ether, an institutionalised false consciousness fusing the violence of feminism, alienation of Cultural Marxism and disciplinary linguistic order of 'political correctness'. This slippage between senses of imposition – the social reality of dangerous admixture and the treacherous social engineering that engenders and values it – is critical to multiculturalism's currency as a capacious object of aversion. Its status as an elite imposition constitutes it as a form of self-hatred far beyond the conspiratorial compass of the counter-jihad networks: in framing British multiculturalism as an institutionally enforced 'virtue of tolerance', the conservative political theorist Kenneth Minogue regards it as motivated 'less by love of others than hatred of one's own form of life' (2005: xiii). Minogue's prescription of hatred depends on the diagnostic properties of the geometry of war, and this established conceit, of confronting the self-hatred suffusing the 'multicultural consensus', has acted as a stable licence for the kind of 'mainstream' exaggerated speech cited in 2083. While these political commentators eschew overt conspiracy theories for a vision of liberal elite naivety and paralysis, their self-positioning is also predicated on a war footing. The literature on racism and identitarian discursive formations consistently highlights the strategy and dividends of adopting the tragic-heroic mode of self-positioning that is immanent to the frame of war.

The projection of multicultural imposition is a critical manoeuvre in the narratives of 'immigrant swamping' associated since the 1970s/1980s with the so-called 'new racism' (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, 1981). Strategically signalling a break with the overt supremacism of racial hierarchies, the new racism's intellectual circles, as Neil MacMaster (2000) details, were engaged in a consciously hegemonic project to reshape the terms of racial exclusion through a culturalised discourse laden with 'commonsense' differentialism. In this argument (Barker 1981), immigration is a zero-sum construction, and the presence of immigrants, ideologically linked to the gestation of 'genuine fears' among ordinary people, represents not just cultural loss but also an integral threat to a 'way of life'. Multiculturalism, or cultural recognition, intensifies the zero-sum game. By accusing detached, cosmopolitan elites of prioritising needy minorities over the needs of silent majorities, the idea of a 'right to difference' is appropriated and the power relations of multiculturalism are inverted (and, in the similarly appropriative manoeuvres of Islamic conspiracy theories, hardened into evidence of abandonment and treachery). Much as the bloggers previously quoted regard the 'true enemy to lie within', the real culprits in this broad 'new racism' argument are not really immigrants, who 'too have natural homes', but those who

provoke the inevitable conflict of naturally incompatible cultures through 'experiment'.

Such strategies lean heavily on discursive manoeuvre; 'the very existence of fears about damage to the unity of the nation is proof that the unity of the nation is being threatened' (Barker 1981: 16). In a study of the 'new realism' in migration debates in The Netherlands since the 1980s, Baukje Prins examines how the new realist position lays claim to the same performative truth as Barker's herald of disunity. Predicated on the need to 'face up' to the truth of failed integration, the new realist 'dares' to face up to the problems effaced by the dominant multicultural consensus; merely gives voice to vernacular 'common knowledge'; simply reinstates the trait of 'plain-speaking' smothered by political correctness; and takes a stand against the damaging self-censorship of the multicultural elite (2002). Thus, where 'political correctness' has 'gone mad' the restitution of collective sanity may require extreme measures. To represent genuine fears of imposition and non-recognition is to be granted a licence to say whatever it takes, in whatever mode is necessary, to assert the truth of the situation and the fact of inverted oppression. Concomitantly, this positions any opposition that seeks to disprove or assuage such ordinary fears as above and beyond the ordinary, as a disingenuous or misguided attempt to reconstitute the multicultural fantasy.

### 3.2 *It comes home to roost: After 9/11*

As several studies suggest, the mediation of 9/11 as a globally disjunctive event intensified the transnational translation and adaptation of discourses of multicultural discontent. In particular, the tendency to index global events to domestic populations, in a context where the 'war on terror' dramatically increased surveillance and foregrounding of Muslim populations, inscribed 'multiculturalism' within securitarian discourses. As Poynting and Mason (2007) examine in their work on Australia and the UK, 9/11 and subsequent events provided moments of 'ideological payout', 'I told you so moments', which posit multiculturalism as an incubator of problems that have violently interrupted. Similarly, Demmers and Mehendale (2010) examine how the murder of Theo Van Gogh was dominantly framed as a 'now nobody can deny' event, compounding a 'culturalist regime of truth', in which political discourse in the Netherlands drew heavily on the war on terror to supply civilisational explanations.

It is critical to acknowledge – but impossible to properly address in this article – the complex confluence of ideological aversion mediated by the idea of 'multiculturalism' over the last decade or so (see Fleras 2009, Lentin & Tittle 2011). Not only has the defence of identity been augmented by the populist right's strategic adoption of gender, sexuality and liberal freedoms, what Triadafilopoulos terms 'Schmittian liberalism' (2011) substantively articulates a 'sharply antagonistic discourse designating putatively clear and inviolable boundaries of liberal-democratic conduct' among politicians, journalists, academics and 'aspirant public intellectuals' (2011). The frame of war contracts as domestic struggles over the putative dimensions of multiculturalism are constructed as localised expressions of a wider struggle, with the transnational 'idea of the Muslim' providing the legitimating continuum.

These 'localised expressions', as Vertovec and Wessendorf show, were organised and narrated as a convergent European reckoning, through a 'striking' '...rise, simultaneity and convergence of arguments condemning multiculturalism' (2009: 7). A recurring set

of 'crisis idioms' mediated responses to 'key incidents', responses that, as with the accretive logic of blog-posting, lifted 'events' from their contexts and flattened them into supplementary confirmation of the totalising gaze of war. Again, the published record is brimming with martial invocation, and the high-profile focus on Melanie Phillips' citations should not distract from the banality of this discourse among established commentators. Reacting to one of Vertovec and Wessendorf's key events, the well-known Irish columnist Kevin Myers framed the *Jyllands Posten* cartoon crisis as a front in the multi-layered war: 'As I have said many times, we are war: a generational, cultural, ethical, political, terrorist and demographic war. Sure we can give ground on the issue of the cartoons of the Prophet by beheading a few Danish cartoonists, thereby giving the Islamicists their Sudetenland' (2006). Christopher Caldwell, the celebrated *Newsweek* journalist, who cautions that 'multiculturalism has diluted the essence of Europe', provided a crisis digest in *The Financial Times*, following the murder attempt on Kurt Westergaard in January 2010:

The rise of Geert Wilders's party in the Netherlands, the referendum to ban minarets in Switzerland, the proposed ban on burkas in France – these are all desperate measures to declare that Islam is not the first religion of Europe. "This is a war," the mainstream French weekly *L'Express* editorialised in the wake of the attempt on Mr Westergaard's life. "To flee this conflict would be to buy tranquillity [sic] today at an exorbitant price in blood tomorrow." It concluded: "Banning every kind of full-body cover [the burka] in our public spaces is a necessity." This is not the non-sequitur it appears to be. (2010)

In this relief, Phillips' war-like citations are generic, but require underlining: in an article lamenting the 'erosion of national identities in Europe' and quoting Bat Y'Eor, she described the 2005 Parisian émeutes as a 'French intifada, an uprising by French Muslims against the state' (2005). Writing after the 9/11 attacks and advising 'liberal Britain' to 'get real and ditch the multiculturalism that is now a menace to life and liberty', she warned of 'thousands of alienated young Muslims, most of them born and bred here but who regard themselves as an army within, are waiting for an opportunity to destroy the society that sustains them' (2001).

'Multiculturalism', though invoked in this frame of war with instrumental plasticity, is both a threshold and a horizon. It is the threshold of projected consensus that the polemicist must bravely transgress: given its proven experimental failure, the truth must be told, cultural hierarchy no longer disavowed, and thus crisis legitimisation marks a significant departure in the reconfiguration of 'new' racism's logics. For established polemicists, writing in widely circulated publications, the threshold must be continually renewed as a condition of their transgressive status. The threshold is renewed by presenting it as a horizon; the 'hegemonic position' as Sara Ahmed writes, 'is that liberal multiculturalism is the hegemony' (2008). Multiculturalism's implacable contrarians can never permit the sun to set on its empire, for, to revisit Warner's insights, the mainstream polemicist's claim to self-positioning requires 'friction against the dominant public forces'. Renewing the multicultural horizon, puncturing it repeatedly with the force of disavowed truth, is to enact a public status through a claim to counter-publicity, a claim that necessitates, but also licences, the 'poetic-expressive character' of exaggerated speech and premonitions of war.

## 4 Conclusion

Breivik's declaration of 'pre-emptive war' has focused attention on the prevalence of rhetoric and imaginaries of multi-layered war, not only in the anti-Muslim blogosphere but in and across 'mainstream' political comment. By focusing on the idea of a 'frame of war', the aim of this article has been to broaden discussion on this communicative politics beyond reductive debates on causality and moral responsibility. The poetics that shape and perpetuate the reflexive community of anti-Muslim online formations, and the inversions and exaggerations that legitimate the self-positioning of multiculturalism's polemical critics, depend on the frame of war violently enacted on 22/7. While the cultural tendency to associate extremism with the internet has prompted significant journalistic concentration on counter-jihad networks, post 22-7, the prevalence of exaggerated speech in conventional media formats has been given less sustained analysis. As a consequence and possibility of the 'contrarian' speaking positions outlined, the consistent delineation of the Muslim threat, and the dangerous naivety and complicity of multiculturalists, has provided a routine mode of legitimisation for 'crisis' rhetoric. The seductive possibilities of this mainstream contrarianism, extended by the currency of exaggerated speech in the 'comment economy' of contemporary media, has ensured that those that fashion themselves, Millet-style, as breakers of taboos must always find more and better taboos to break. In an interview with the London *Times* in 2007, the novelist Martin Amis captured this dynamic by conducting a 'thought experiment', saying:

There's a definite urge - don't you have it? - to say, 'The Muslim community will have to suffer until it gets its house in order.' What sort of suffering? Not letting them travel. Deportation - further down the road. Curtailing of freedoms. Strip-searching people who look like they're from the Middle East or from Pakistan... Discriminatory stuff, until it hurts the whole community and they start getting tough with their children. (Hoare 2008)

The idea of the 'thought experiment', of thinking the unthinkable, signifies the position of the thinker in the vanguard of those that recognise the depths of multicultural crisis. And, for that vanguard, the recited truth of 'multicultural crisis' has been a political gift rather than a political curse, its 'relativism' less a problem than an opportunity for political renewal. Without the consistent identification of crisis, the 'nation' or 'values' being defended would lose much of their supposed stability. Beyond the question of implication, an issue which merits further investigation in the public cultures that witness this self-positioning is how propagating this frame of war could have been considered to be a politically cost-free exercise, even before Utøya.

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## Notes

1. <http://foucault.info/foucault/interview.html>
2. With the exception of the introductory example, the examples and references discussed in this article are drawn from Anglophone sources. Translations from French sources by the author. For further details of the methodology, see endnote 11 (below).
3. Appadurai's (1996) discussion of the 'ideoscape' as a terrain of global cultural flows is closely linked to the circulation, transposition and translation of modern political discourses and their institutionalisation by states. However, the terms has also come into use as a way of capturing how ideas and narratives are circulated, particularised and transformed through networks of exchange and transnational processes of mediatisation. I employ it here in this latter sense to attempt to capture a terrain of exchange that overlaps with but is not restricted to the 'blogosphere'.
4. <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/counter-jihad/>
5. Breivik, as Richard Seymour argues, assembles a 'particular set of ideological articulations that make this fascism far more adequate to 21<sup>st</sup>-century circumstances than the tenets of extant neo-Nazi groups' (2011).
6. The blog is maintained by the Center for American Progress Action Fund.
7. *Jihad Watch* features pieces written by Spencer and articles posted by him, sometimes from allies, but predominantly news articles posted with a limited, interpretative framing comment. Fekete (2012) shows that Spencer's authored writings are cited 64 times. The politics of citation was intensively contested immediately after July 22: July 26 Daniel Greefield posted an article on Frontpage Magazine picking through the citations and accusing news outlets who had focused on Spencer's citation as being set on 'silencing researchers who have put years of effort into exposing networks of radicals'. <http://frontpagemag.com/2011/dgreenfield/in-defense-of-robert-spencer/> (last accessed 17/12/12).
8. Brown, like Clifton, noted that 'to appear on this list is not to be complicit in Breivik's crime'.
9. 'The emperor is naked', *Gates of Vienna* (26 September 2006), <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2006/09/emperor-is-naked.html>
10. Demonisation round-up <http://www.jihadwatch.org/2011/07/>
11. The study referenced examined every blog post on *Jihad Watch* from 22 to 30 June 2011 for references to 'war' and martial imagery. The period chosen was the month running up to the 22 July 2011, and the study qualitatively examined every article posted by Robert Spencer or a regular guest blogger for the occurrence of war and martial imagery in the headlines and body of the text. It further mapped the sources of cross-posted blog posts and mainstream media articles, and the incidence and recurring ratios of political-geographical locations of stories about Islam. The study did not consider the comment threads. The references to war were first collated through content analysis, and analysed discursively in relation to the construction of the 'counter-public' as theorised in the article.
12. This observation about discourse should not be read as underplaying the impact of 'traitor list', 'campus watch' and other forms of surveillance and intimidation stemming from this framework.
13. The emphasis placed on the hegemonic turn to 'new' cultural differentialism is not to posit a reductive transition from biological or naturalist racism to culturalist or historicist racism. For discussions of the historical imbrication of 'nature' and 'culture' in racial formations, see Goldberg (2009) and Lentin (2004).

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