

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Personalising feminism: gender, myth, and the making of alternative femininities in the Italian far right

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Abstract

This article examines the activism of far-right women who, beginning in the late 1970s, produced the magazine *Eowyn*. It reconstructs the foundational principles of far-right feminist thought in Italy, which these women self-identified as personalising feminism, situating this framework within the broader currents of contemporary feminist discourse and its cultural referents. The essay further explores the reception of *Eowyn* by Marxist feminists and far-right male actors, illuminating the tensions and dialogues that shaped the movement. A distinct feminist typology emerges – one that neither repudiates an organicist conception of society nor reduces women's history to narratives of oppression, while remaining sensitive to the risks of the massification and masculinisation of the female figure. This approach advocates for women's equal opportunities while offering a sustained critique of a society and state perceived as retrograde, highlighting the complex intersections of gender, ideology, and political culture in late twentieth-century Italy.

Keywords: far-right feminism; feminism; Italian feminism; far right; feminist theories; women's rights

Introduction: Women at the extremes: why far-right female activism matters

Although receiving growing scholarly attention, the role of women in far-right activism remains relatively under-researched (Mulinari and Neergard 2005; Carter 2013; Stinton 2019). The primary aim of this article is to reconstruct the political aspirations of women in the Italian far right between the late 1970s and early 1980s and to investigate their engagement with feminist thought. Did Italian far-right women reject feminism outright, adopt its dominant theoretical frameworks, or formulate an alternative feminist model of their own? To address these questions, the article examines the bimonthly magazine *Eowyn*, first published in 1976 with a circulation of 2,500 copies per issue (Caldiron 2020, 62; Ilardi and Scandurra 2009, 82). Contributors and readers of *Eowyn* included female militants from a range of far-right organisations in Italy, from the Fronte della Gioventù (FdG), the youth wing of the parliamentary right represented by the Italian Social Movement (MSI), to the extra-parliamentary group Ordine Nuovo (ON) (Alferi and Mazzone 1979, 137; A più mani 1982, 54). This article is therefore situated within the broader scholarly field examining the intersections of gender and far-right activism, a subject that has received increasing

attention in recent years (Klatch 2010; Miller-Idriss and Pilkington 2017; Blee 2002; 2018; Miller-Idriss 2020; Campion 2020; Askanius 2021).

Historically, far-right militants have often been depicted – frequently relying on stereotypes – as white, angry, and violent men (Cockburn 2007), and it was long assumed that women were largely impervious to the ideological appeals of the far right (Miller-Idriss 2020, 1). Recent scholarship, however, indicates that women are increasingly joining and participating in populist far-right parties and movements across Europe (Campion 2020; Allen and Goodman 2021; Stinton 2019; Stasulane 2017; Mulinari and Neergaard 2018). This trend is reflected in the growing number of women who currently occupy – or have recently occupied – leadership positions in far-right parties, including Marine Le Pen of the French Front National (now become the Rassemblement National), Jayda Fransen of Britain First, Giorgia Meloni of Italy's Fratelli d'Italia (Fdi), and Alice Weidel of Germany's Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). These developments underscore the pressing need for research that addresses the gaps in our understanding of the motivations driving women to support such political movements (Stinton 2019, 86). Moreover, newspapers across the political spectrum have recently raised questions about why, in Italy, women appear more likely to attain leadership positions within far-right parties than within left-wing ones (Caporale 2021; Dell'Orco 2021; Casadio 2021).

As Kathleen Blee (2002) observes, women on the far right are neither simply misled by men nor pathologically ignorant, as they are sometimes depicted in left-wing narratives. It is therefore essential to examine the participation and ideas of far-right women within their specific political contexts. According to Blee (1996, 681), the neglect of women's activism in both historical and contemporary far-right movements presents a significant problem for two main reasons. First, it impedes a comprehensive understanding of far-right movements. Second, the exclusive focus on men has produced a distorted theoretical framework, limiting insight into why increasing numbers of women are joining these movements. While some studies have shown that far-right men occasionally exhibit oppositional attitudes toward militant women (Lesselier 2002; Ness 2008), Blee and Kimberly Creasap (2010) highlight the importance of analysing these interactions to understand what renders women receptive to far-right ideologies, what motivates their militancy, and what facilitates their advancement within parties and movements. Following Blee's methodological recommendations, this article examines the participation of women in the Italian far right during the late 1970s and early 1980s – a phenomenon that has thus far received preliminary scholarly attention through the study of *Eowyn*, a magazine representing far-right women during this period (Guerra 2022a; 2024, 184–212).

Building upon feminist theories of agency, subjectivation, and ideology (Butler 2006; Mahmood 2011; McNay 2000; Scott 2011), this article approaches women's engagement in the far right not as an anomaly or a contradiction, but as a privileged site through which the gendered configurations of political radicalism may be interrogated. Rather than casting far-right women as passive recipients of patriarchal discourses, the analysis foregrounds their capacity to negotiate, internalise, and rearticulate dominant ideological formations within particular sociopolitical contexts. In doing so, it advances a relational conception of agency that moves beyond the binary opposition between resistance and subordination, and instead attends to the complex modalities through which political subjectivities are constituted within authoritarian and nationalist frameworks. This theoretical vantage point allows for a more refined understanding of far-right women's activism as a terrain in which competing discourses of femininity, citizenship, and modernity intersect, and within which these actors may simultaneously reproduce and transform the gendered logics that underpin far-right thought and practice.

Building upon feminist theoretical frameworks, this article situates women's engagement with the far right not merely as an anomaly or a contradiction, but as a

critical site through which the gendered architectures of political radicalism can be interrogated. Drawing on the concepts of agency and subjectivation (Butler 2006; Mahmood 2011; McNay 2000; Scott 2011), the analysis considers how women internalise, negotiate, and rearticulate dominant ideological formations, thereby enacting forms of political subjectivity that are simultaneously constrained by and constitutive of far-right patriarchal structures. Here, feminist ideology functions as a lens for examining the mechanisms through which women construct their political selves within authoritarian and nationalist contexts, highlighting the interplay between individual action and structural constraint.

Central to this investigation are the competing discourses of femininity, citizenship, and modernity, which serve as axes through which women's political engagement is articulated. Femininity is constructed in relation to both traditionalist and nationalist ideals, often valorising maternal and patriotic roles (Blee 2002; Miller-Idriss 2020). Citizenship delineates the parameters of political inclusion, specifying who may participate and in what capacities, while modernity frames women's efforts to reconcile social expectations with political ambition (Mahmood 2011; Scott 2011). By situating these discourses within the practices of far-right women, the analysis foregrounds a relational conception of agency that moves beyond the binary of resistance versus subordination, attending instead to the nuanced modalities through which women enact, negotiate, and sometimes transform the ideological logics of the far right.

Importantly, the magazine *Eowyn* provides a privileged empirical site through which these theoretical frameworks can be operationalised and examined. Its content illuminates how far-right women negotiate agency in practice, engage in processes of subjectivation by internalising and reinterpreting ideological norms, and articulate competing discourses of femininity, citizenship, and modernity within the specific sociopolitical context of late 1970s and early 1980s Italy. In doing so, *Eowyn* allows for a nuanced exploration of how women's activism both reproduces and transforms far-right ideologies, bridging the gap between abstract theoretical concepts and concrete empirical observations.

The birth of *Eowyn*: unveiling the feminist legacy behind the name

According to some sources, the founders of *Eowyn* were a group of female militants associated with the Padua chapter of the Fronte della Gioventù (FdG) (Guerra 2022a, 299), later joined by women from other cities and radical movements (Alferi and Mazzone 1979, 137; A più mani 1982, 54). The magazine's name was inspired by Éowyn, the heroine of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1970), whom the editors described as 'the symbol of the ideal condition of woman' (La redazione 1976, 2). Tolkien's works, widely popular among young far-right militants, were appropriated as a cultural reference that simultaneously expressed generational renewal and ideological positioning within the Italian far right (Pandolfi 2000, 71; Guerra 2024, 188–189).

Notably, the adoption of Tolkien also entailed an ecological dimension, reflecting a broader ideological trend within European far-right thought that valorised communion with nature as a means of enacting purity, discipline, and resistance to the modern world (Goodrick-Clarke 2001; Camus 2021; Miller-Idriss 2020). In the Italian context, this translated into lifestyle practices and cultural symbols, such as the so-called Hobbit Camps, which embodied ecological consciousness, rejection of industrial modernity, and an idealised connection with the natural world (Guerra 2022a, 302). Such practices illustrate how ecological concerns were not merely personal preferences, but were embedded within a far-right ideological framework that linked nature, tradition, and nationalist identity. This framing enables a more systematic understanding of the symbolic and political significance of Tolkien for far-right women militants in Italy, illustrating modalities and discursive

pathways that resonate beyond the historical period under study and find echoes in contemporary articulations of far-right environmental thought, as documented in emerging scholarship on eco-fascist and far-right engagements with ecological and naturist themes (Forchtner 2020; Lubarda 2024; Guerra 2025).

The magazine *Eowyn* also attracted the attention of Italian intelligence, which, in a recently declassified report, described it as follows:

The magazine *Eowyn* takes its name from the heroine of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Distributed with a circulation of 2,500 copies, the publication is entirely authored by women and has hosted a number of conferences. It is grounded in a moderate traditionalism and seeks to represent 'an irreplaceable constitutive moment, the autonomous female one, of the New Right'. The journal's ideology can be summarised through the concept of 'complementarity', which ostensibly guarantees 'an equal presence between men and women on the public scene' while recognising 'certain natural differences'. From this perspective, the issue is not man versus woman, but rather man and woman united against a system that continues, for example, to offer women less advantageous employment opportunities than those available to men (SISDE 1982, 43).

The far-right women behind *Eowyn* sought to articulate not only the origins of the magazine's name but also its objectives and their perceived duty to make their voices heard within a society and political landscape long criticised for marginalising women. *Eowyn* states:

We have chosen the figure of this protagonist, Éowyn, because we see her as a symbol of the ideal condition of women, both historically and in the present, transcending the false dichotomies between the sexes that define a fallen society in which the meanings and values of the terms 'MAN' and 'WOMAN' have been entirely lost. Through our initiative, we aim to foster a debate that contributes to restoring women's awareness of their true role and genuine dimension. We specifically address contemporary women, who are beset by crises and contradictions, as they have never before been so subject to mystifications and demagogic manoeuvres by those who have deliberately ignored their identity and concerns for decades. (La redazione 1976, 2) (Figs. 1 and 2).

***Eowyn* under dual lenses: insights from Marxist feminists and far-right men**

In the spring of 1981, the magazine *Eowyn* attracted the attention of *Noidonne*, an anti-fascist publication with a communist orientation, which conducted a journalistic investigation into the young women of the far right (Neonato 1981). After reconstructing the diverse forms of female militancy within *Eowyn*, which appeared to serve as a catalyst for far-right women across different movements, *Noidonne* attributed to the magazine the ambition to break away from the earlier female milieu of the Italian Social Movement (MSI), ironically portrayed as outdated and irrelevant (Guerra 2022a, 303). *Noidonne* offered a largely positive assessment of *Eowyn*'s initiative, describing the militant women involved as contemporary figures who dressed similarly to their peers and engaged in discussions on ecology, politics, feminism, societal crises, biology, abortion, family, and rock music. Politically, the publication noted that these young women not only admired Tolkien's Nordic sagas but also referenced Mao, presenting themselves as right-wing Gramscians (Neonato 1981, 63). The excerpt below from *Noidonne* provides a detailed description of the far-right women authors of *Eowyn*:



Figure 1. Cover of *Eowyn* magazine depicting the heroine Éowyn, as portrayed in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. All the photographs illustrating this article are by the author, and the magazines are in the author's private collection.

These women endorse hierarchical structures; yet they reference Mao, acknowledging that revolution encompasses both cultural and political dimensions. They identify as 'right-wing Gramscians', a term coined by Alain de Benoist, the theoretician of the French Nouvelle Droite – a movement that emerged in 1968 and wields considerably greater influence in France than in Italy, supported by prominent intellectuals such as ethologist Konrad Lorenz and several Nobel laureates. Their intellectual engagement spans a diverse range of literature, including works by Thomas Mann, the mystical writer Carlos Castaneda, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Carl Jung, Plato, and, notably, Friedrich Nietzsche. They employ a modern and colloquial register in their discourse. Many, particularly the younger generation, advocate for political agency within their parties, asserting their right to critique. They establish radio stations and bookstores and actively write, read, and discuss topics such as ecology, politics, rock music, feminism, social crises, biology, abortion, and family life. Their attire often mirrors that of their peers, and they frequently engage with the same literary works. Nevertheless, their primary passion lies in the ancient northern sagas, as exemplified by Tolkien in his renowned *The Lord of the Rings*. The previous summer, they organised a youth gathering for the third time, aptly named Hobbit Camp in honour of Tolkien, his gnomes, and heroes. Attending reporters encountered young, anti-nuclear far-right activists and rock enthusiasts



Figure 2. Article from *Eowyn* in which far-right women explain the origins of the magazine's name.

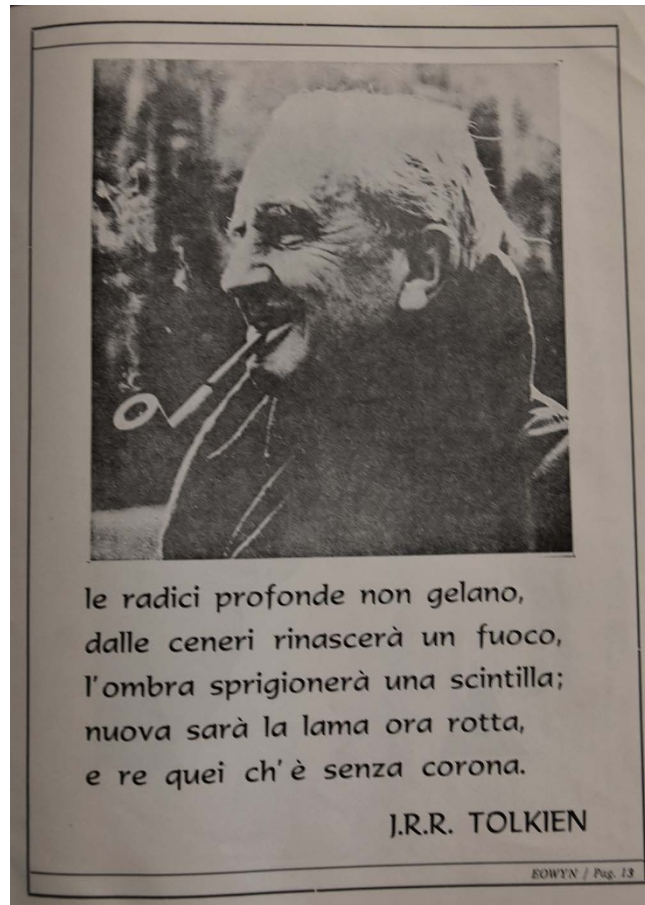
dressed in jeans, who shared childcare responsibilities and distributed domestic tasks between mothers and fathers. (Fig. 3)

Some interpretations suggest that the imagery associated with *Eowyn*, particularly the revolutionary and fighter archetypes, enabled far-right women to navigate the misogyny within their political milieus and to distance themselves from a form of feminism perceived as bourgeois (Caldiron 2020, 64). However, recent studies (Guerra 2022a; 2024) indicate that young male far-right militants welcomed *Eowyn*. While acknowledging the limited presence of women in the far-right milieu at the time, these young men reported that they 'read the magazine consistently', expressed pride in it, and demonstrated both personal and political respect for its female contributors (Guerra 2022a, 305). Consequently, *Eowyn* was valued by young male far-right militants as a marker of the modernisation of their political environment and as an indication of increasing female participation in political struggles.

Eowyn magazine: of women and not about women – the feminine voice in the context of the far right

Thirty-four per cent of the articles published in *Eowyn* are devoted to the condition of women in Italian and broader Western societies, whereas sixty-six per cent address a wide

Figure 3. Page from *Eowyn* magazine celebrating J.R.R. Tolkien. The Italian text reads: 'Deep roots do not freeze; from the ashes, a fire will be reborn; the shadow will give off a spark; new will be the blade now broken; and king will be he who is without a crown'.



array of topics, including current affairs, education, music, fashion, sports, alternative radio, history, literature, drug addiction, and political violence (Guerra 2024, 194). *Eowyn* is conceived and produced as a magazine by women, rather than about women; its principal aim is to provide a platform through which far-right women may articulate their perspectives on a range of social, political, and cultural issues. The contributors of *Eowyn* explicitly claim that the magazine seeks to encourage women to formulate their own positions and to resist what they term the 'tranquillity of cattle' imposed on women by the state to inhibit protest against injustice (Guerra 2022a, 307). In this sense, the magazine foregrounds women as active authors and producers of ideas and opinions that extend beyond the realm of women's issues to society more broadly. Furthermore, its diverse array of perspectives and narrative styles constitutes a deliberate counterpoint to a society perceived as homogenising and levelling, thereby asserting a form of intellectual and cultural resistance. (Fig. 4)

One of the most compelling thematic features of *Eowyn* is its rejection of the conventional logic of opposing extremisms, which, in Italy during this period, manifested in violent confrontations between the far right and the far left in the streets and public squares (Guerra 2020; Bull 2012). The women contributing to *Eowyn* challenge this dichotomy, articulating a desire to transcend the entrenched polarisation of extremist factions. Rather than



Figure 4. An image reproduced from *Eowyn* enumerates several of the themes addressed by the magazine, including 'woman, violence, Church, abortion, militancy, drugs, crafts, the press'.

endorsing mutual hostility, they advocate for a form of unity between far-right and far-left actors in opposition to the capitalist state. This stance is similarly reflected in *Noidonne* (Neonato 1981), which characterises the militant women of *Eowyn* as proponents of such cross-ideological engagement:

There is a sentiment among them that seeks to negate the French Revolution, the progress associated with it, and the movements of 1968, while partially preserving the rebellion of the youth of 1977, from which 'black' youth culture has derived its discourse on marginalisation and discontent. This may explain their appeal to the 'reds' to cease hostilities and to unite in the struggle against the system.

The women of *Eowyn* do not repudiate the rebellion of 1977 (Grispigni 2006; Guerra 2022b), which was distinguished by a marked ideological transversality in identifying the principal social issues at the heart of debate and generational unrest. The generationally and politically transversal character of the 1977 protests in Italy is reflected in the work of several scholars who employ the political neologism 'black autonomy' to describe young individuals associated with the far right (Lanaro 2004; Colombo 2020, 80, 141; Colombo et al. 2011, 15–16; Re 2013, 81–102). Within this context of generational revolt, and grounded in a shared diagnosis of contemporary social and economic crises, the women of *Eowyn* articulate a political stance that draws on established traditions of far-right anti-capitalist thought. Rather than advancing a systemic critique of capitalism, their position reflects a

selective form of anti-capitalism characteristic of the radical right, oriented towards opposing neoliberal globalisation, financial capitalism, and the liberal-capitalist state, while maintaining an emphasis on hierarchy, community, and national sovereignty (Galli and Gallesi 2019; Kolozi 2017). In this framework, *Eowyn* seeks to move beyond the logic of opposing extremisms and the conventional left-right divide, aligning with the ideological paradigm of neither right nor left identified by Sternhell, and envisioning a cross-ideological convergence between far-right and far-left actors united in their opposition to the conservative capitalist state, understood as the institutional guarantor of globalised economic power and liberal universalism (Sternhell 1995; de Benoist 2021; Renton 2019).

Unveiling the roots: cultural influences in far-right feminism

The editorial team of *Eowyn* does not consistently adhere to a single feminist theoretical framework (Guerra 2022a, 310; 2024, 197). The articles published within the magazine frequently convey diverse perspectives, contingent upon the subject under discussion, such as in debates surrounding female military conscription. An examination of the journal's bibliographic references reveals a network of authors who have variously informed the intellectual orientations of the women associated with *Eowyn*. For example, Arianna Stassinopoulos is positioned in contrast to Germaine Greer and her work *The Female Eunuch* (1970). The contributors to *Eowyn* draw upon Stassinopoulos for her critique of women who, despite expanded employment opportunities, continue to perceive earning income and managing finances as primarily the prerogative of men (Guerra 2024, 198). Stassinopoulos's *La femme femme* (1975) is similarly cited, as it enables the women of *Eowyn* to articulate a distinction between 'emancipation' – understood as independence from men and equal access to opportunities, which they consider legitimate and necessary – and 'liberation', which, in the view of far-right women, signifies a retreat into individualism and a doctrine of mass selfishness (Guerra 2022a, 310).

Another author frequently referenced in *Eowyn* is Betty Friedan, particularly her work *The Second Stage* (1981). Friedan is cited in relation to the magazine's aim to move beyond what the contributors describe as 'feminist mysticism' and to realise a form of partnership with men, encapsulated in the slogan: 'no longer against but with the man' (Isabella 1982, 13). In this context, it is deemed appropriate to quote the arguments presented by Isabella (1982) verbatim:

In the initial phase of feminism during the 1960s, Betty Friedan criticised the 'feminine mystique', which confined women to the 'family cage' and considered them solely in terms of their roles as mothers and/or wives. As an alternative, she introduced the concept of 'feminist mysticism', which, by 'demonising' men, denied that feminine essence could be understood and fulfilled solely through love, motherhood, and child-rearing. Approximately twenty years later, in the 1980s, Friedan called for a move beyond 'feminist mystique' to actualise the concept of partnership. She succinctly articulated this shift with the phrase: 'no longer against, but with man'. This second phase is characterised by more flexible relationships between the sexes, where individuals share common tasks and challenges to achieve harmony and balance. It is evident, and the author emphasises this point, that this phase positions men as protagonists alongside women, leading to a dynamic where both genders no longer pursue divergent interests but rather complement each other.

From this perspective, the women of *Eowyn* also seek to 'refute feminist theses on rape, which are regarded as the quintessential example of male brutality'. Their position bears resemblance to that subsequently articulated by the prominent French feminist theorist

Élisabeth Badinter (2006, 30–33), who critiques the Manichean framework that casts the male-dominated sex as inherently evil and the female-dominated sex as inherently virtuous. According to Badinter, such a binary perspective carries significant consequences, including the advocacy of separatism and the adoption of a subversive, quasi-messianic form of feminist nationalism.

Christiane Collange's seminal work *Je veux rentrer à la maison* (1980) is invoked in Eowyn to illuminate the persistent tension between domestic labour and formal employment in modern societies. Collange's analysis of the annual exodus of roughly two hundred thousand French women from paid work to domestic roles suggests that the valorisation of housework may paradoxically accompany broader processes of industrialisation and labour market expansion. Drawing upon Collange's findings, the women of Eowyn argue that women frequently inhabit an ambivalent position, tasked concurrently with unpaid domestic labour and the pursuit of professional equality with men (Maria n.d., 17). They maintain that women's incorporation into the labour market is not intrinsically emancipatory but often reproduces gendered divisions of labour, generating a mass of formally employed women without addressing underlying structural inequities. Central to their position is the assertion that participation in the workforce should be predicated on genuine choice and agency, rather than economic compulsion or normative expectation (Wilma 1976, 4–5). This critique aligns with Catherine Hakim's theory of heterogeneous work preferences, which recognises that women's labour market engagement reflects diverse priorities rather than a uniform feminist imperative (Hakim 2000, 8).

To deepen this conceptual framework, it is instructive to situate Eowyn's critique within the broader literature on the political economy of the contemporary radical right. Scholarship by Oscar Mazzoleni and Gilles Ivaldi demonstrates that radical right-wing populist movements articulate coherent economic and welfare positions that intertwine with culturally conservative views on family and gender roles (Mazzoleni and Ivaldi 2024). Their work shows that radical right parties often combine sovereigntist and economic populist rhetoric with welfare chauvinism – advocating redistributive policies for so-called 'deserving' insiders while opposing policies perceived as threatening to traditional family structures and male breadwinner norms (Mazzoleni and Ivaldi 2024). Empirical analyses of radical right family policy agendas further reveal a proclivity for promoting male-breadwinner models and resisting de-familialising measures such as expansive childcare or parental leave, thereby reinforcing gendered divisions of labour in practice (Giuliani 2023). These political projects mobilise familialist discourses to appeal to constituencies that valorise traditional domestic roles and to frame women's economic participation in ways that do not disrupt established hierarchies (Giuliani 2023).

Complementary research in gender and political theory indicates that conservative and radical right discourses frequently frame women's work and family roles in terms of 'natural' complementarity, implicitly circumscribing women's agency by valorising caregiving and domestic labour as normative ideals. As Claire Rasmussen has shown, these discursive strategies often appear in populist rhetoric that positions feminist egalitarianism as antithetical to social cohesion, thereby reinscribing gendered labour divisions under the guise of defending women's 'true' interests (Rasmussen 2023). Integrating these insights foregrounds the structural and ideological forces that shape women's labour market choices and gendered labour divisions, reinforcing Eowyn's argument that emancipation cannot be understood solely in terms of formal employment. Rather, meaningful agency involves contesting the political-economic frameworks that delimit the conditions under which women exercise choice, and recognising how party politics and policy regimes – especially those allied with radical right ideologies – influence the gendered distribution of paid and unpaid work (Mazzoleni and Ivaldi, 2024; Giuliani 2023).

Analysing the cornerstones of far-right discourse

Among the central themes of *Eowyn* is the rejection of historical narratives that construe the history of women as primarily a history of subjugation (Guerra 2022a, 312). The contributors to *Eowyn* argue that reconstructing women's history solely through the prism of male-dominated roles over the centuries is misleading, as it overlooks the active participation of women alongside men as historical agents. They contend that such an interpretation risks perpetuating the notion of women's inferiority and obscuring their substantive historical contributions (Wilma 1976, 4–5).

The women of *Eowyn* express concern regarding the distorting effects of what they perceive as a narrative of victimhood, which diminishes women's historical roles. This phenomenon is later conceptualised by Badinter (2006, 4–5) as the 'cult of victimhood', whereby feminism is positioned as a 'champion of victimhood'. The contributors to *Eowyn* characterise this form of victimising feminism as 'badly conceived and poorly learned', arguing that it originates from the presumption of women's historical inferiority and culminates in an enforced solidarity among women and other oppressed groups. According to the magazine, this results in women being 'Negritised and Jewishised', reflecting an erroneous conflation of gendered oppression with racial discrimination (*Eowyn*, n.d.). These observations resonate with broader debates in feminist theory and critical studies of victimhood, which suggest that narratives emphasising structural oppression may simultaneously illuminate systemic injustices and constrain individual or collective agency (Fraser 2020; Young 2005). Intersectional scholarship further underscores the need to differentiate between forms of oppression, emphasising that gendered, racial, and ethnic inequalities operate through distinct mechanisms and should not be conflated without critical attention to context (Crenshaw 1989; Collins 1999). *Eowyn*'s critique anticipates these theoretical concerns, highlighting that an overgeneralised victimhood narrative risks flattening the diversity of women's historical and social experiences, and may inadvertently reproduce hierarchies under the guise of solidarity. By situating *Eowyn*'s arguments within these conceptual frameworks, one can appreciate the magazine's insistence on preserving women's agency and historical specificity while interrogating the potential limitations of victimhood-focused feminist discourse. The women of *Eowyn* further critique this 'distorting feminism' for its unconventional conflation of Jews, Black people, and the proletariat with women, which casts men as bourgeois and women as the embodiment of the proletariat (*Eowyn*, undated). Although not explicitly cited, the women of *Eowyn* also offer a pointed critique of Andrea Dworkin's (1981) analogy of women to survivors of Nazi concentration camps.

Eowyn argues that a form of feminism which victimises women and diminishes their historical roles carries profound consequences, including propelling women 'towards a completely alienating identity crisis' and 'into a forced search for an identity that relies on male models' (Silvia n.d.). According to the contributors to *Eowyn*, this variant of feminism 'attempts to emancipate women in a manner that can be shared but does so through the adoption of male models', resulting in a 'dispossession of women for the benefit of men', which in turn leads to a 'loss of female identity' and an entry into the 'masculine grave' (*Eowyn* n.d.).

Within this framework, it is considered essential to 'assign meaning to future struggles of women to reclaim their identities within a massifying and levelling society', recognising that women inhabit multiple roles – as mothers, wives, educators, and workers (M.E.A. 1976). Work for women must therefore remain a matter of choice; indiscriminate participation in the labour market fosters a 'masculinised' identity, drawing women into the vortex of productivism associated with both capitalist and communist industrialisation (Guerra 2022a, 313).

Eowyn articulates the view that there are two distinct forms of women's struggles: those aimed at liberating women from the clichés of bourgeois tradition, and those seeking to eliminate all distinctions between the sexes. The former is characterised as a 'personalising' feminism, which the magazine advocates, whereas the latter is identified as an 'egalitarian, massifying feminism', regarded as constituting a total regression (*Eowyn* n.d., 9). Within this framework, the contributors address the theme of gender differentiation, arguing that where a distinction between man and woman exists, a dialectical and developmental process is established; conversely, where progressive indifferentiation prevails, conflict and stagnation ensue. From this premise, the women of *Eowyn* assert that women's emancipation is both legitimate and necessary, insofar as it is linked to the realisation of the individual. In contrast, they maintain that the concept of liberation represents a doctrine of mass selfishness (*Eowyn* n.d.).

The statements of these militant women reflect a concern for what Antoinette Fouque (1995, 8) later characterises as 'unisexual and matricidal democracy'. The warnings issued by *Eowyn* regarding the perceived dangers of gender indifferentiation resonate with the arguments advanced by Sylviane Agacinski (2001, 42, 64), who contends that the ideal of reducing differences embodies a totalitarian fantasy aimed at standardising individuals. According to Agacinski, nothing is more detrimental than the aspiration to construct a society of homogeneous individuals, freed from conflict through extreme uniformity.

Another theme central to *Eowyn* is the concept of false gender opposition. According to the magazine's contributors, 'if there is a female problem, there is a male problem; it is a problem for both, stemming from a crisis of roles' (Marilena n.d., 1–2). Gender opposition in a world that 'has lost the meaning of the words man and woman' is regarded as a spurious dichotomy. The militants assert that it is essential to address this misconception by continuing the struggle for women's societal roles and by promoting the understanding that social improvement requires a harmonious and complementary contribution from both men and women (M.E.A. 1976, 3). This perspective is characterised as 'personalising feminism', which advocates for women's equal rights while affirming the significance of female roles and rejecting the notion of liberation that seeks to abolish male and female identities and roles.

A further theme addressed in the magazine, drawing on news reports, concerns sexual violence, which is interpreted as a consequence of social and cultural distortions that have fostered the conception of 'a woman who becomes a pleasure machine', contributing to the perception that 'it is no longer possible to accept that a woman can say no to a man' (Elisabetta 1976, 7). While rejecting the reduction of sexual violence to a simple male-rapist equation, the militants argue that Italian sexuality is predominantly articulated and represented from a masculine perspective. To confront the issue of rape, the women of *Eowyn* propose two forms of intervention: the first involves advocating cultural change that recognises women's sexual pleasure, while the second calls for harsher penalties for rapists. In *Eowyn* 1982 (p.7), the case of two women who killed their daughters' rapist is presented, with the act justified in terms of 'the sacredness of punishment'.

Although far-right women express a need for stricter sentencing for rapists and for reforms to sexual violence laws with considerable rhetorical emphasis, they remain attentive to, rather than aligned with, what Badinter (2006, 30) identifies as 'the danger of binary categories'. Specifically, they do not posit a singular form of masculinity; rather, they contend that multiple forms exist, analogous to the diverse expressions of femininity.

Another issue receiving significant attention in *Eowyn* is that of abortion. Generally, abortion is framed as 'a murder and a false freedom of the woman', which 'can be avoided through an adequate prevention campaign using contraceptives'. The contributors assert that the state bears responsibility for presenting abortion as a viable option, which they



Figure 5. An image from *Eowyn* attributing the alienation of contemporary individuals to technological society.

regard as a form of murder that unjustly places the burden on women. They contend that the perceived necessity for abortion arises from the inefficiencies and obscurantist attitudes of both society and the state. According to these far-right women, the state should ensure the provision of ‘nurseries, family counselling, and pre-marital counselling centres with specific medical care in every neighbourhood’, as well as ‘appropriate sex education courses in schools’ (M.E.A. 1976, 3). In this framing, abortion is treated as a right ostensibly afforded to women, which ultimately functions to transfer the weight of a complex decision onto them. This recourse to abortion is understood as a consequence of the state’s failure to provide adequate sex education, promote contraceptive use, and develop accessible support structures such as kindergartens. Consequently, the women of *Eowyn* argue that women are left to bear the burden and endure the consequences of a bigoted and inefficient society and state.

The magazine frequently engaged in contentious debates with the MSI, the parliamentary party of the Italian right during this period. One of the most acrimonious disputes concerned the MSI’s proposal to provide a salary to housewives, which the women of *Eowyn* deemed ‘demeaning’ (Guerra 2022a, 315). While far-right women expressed concern that women’s entry into productivism could be misleading – presenting the appearance of self-realisation while ultimately subjecting them to the harsh realities of productivist exploitation rather than facilitating genuine freedom of choice – they vehemently opposed the MSI’s proposal, perceiving it as a limitation on women’s autonomy and an impediment to their pursuit of personal affirmation. Moreover, the contributors emphasised that, despite the increasing participation of women in the workforce, this new role did not supplant traditional responsibilities but rather compounded existing duties (Fig. 5).

Another significant theme addressed by *Eowyn* concerns fashion. The magazine highlights the dangers posed by the mechanisms of fashion and its marketing, which can transform fashion into a 'life purpose'. This concern arises within a broader culture of hedonism, regarded as pervasive and increasingly influential in society (Isabella 1976). According to the women of *Eowyn*, advanced marketing techniques associated with fashion pose challenges that extend beyond mere consumerism. They argue that fashion transcends the superficial dictates of trends and hedonistic allure, aspiring instead to reshape female identity, with the assertion that 'it is not a haircut or a style that is in fashion, but a type of woman' (Flavia n.d., 4). The contributors express concern regarding the imposition of a singular, undifferentiated, and heterodirected model of femininity, which, by succumbing to the allure of uncritical individualism, ultimately constrains women's self-determination.

A radical reframing: the theoretical dimensions and conclusions of far-right feminism

A preliminary theoretical framework for far-right feminism can be established by situating it relative to relational/Marxist and modernist/individualist feminism (Offen 1988). Far-right women categorically reject the relational/Marxist paradigm, which posits capitalism and patriarchy as constitutive of women's oppression and constructs gender as socially imposed (Jackson 2001). *Eowyn* militants repudiate historical narratives of invariant female subjugation, conceiving them as incapacitating and counterproductive, and posit that crises of female identity are interdependent with crises of male identity. While acknowledging that capitalism shapes industrial production and affects women (Hennessy 1993), they dispute the necessary linkage between domestic labour and patriarchal exploitation.

Far-right women attribute subordination and disorientation of women to the advent of industrial productivism, yet emphasise historical contingency and reject the presumption that inter-gender collaboration constitutes female subordination. The central divergence from relational/Marxist feminism lies in the refusal to posit a permanent, universal history of women's oppression via capitalism-patriarchy interplay. Capitalism and communism are construed as dual manifestations of materialist productivism, alienating to all genders; gendered stereotypes structure social behaviour reciprocally, warranting integrated analysis.

Engagement with modernist/individualist feminism is limited and selective, principally concerning the historical genesis of feminist movements and rights struggles (Kennedy Taylor 1992; 1993). *Eowyn* militants advocate for the advancement of women's rights irrespective of ideological alignment, while critiquing modernism – and individualism in particular – as socially fragmenting. 'Personalising feminism' thus emerges as a *sui generis* trajectory, distinct from relational/Marxist and modernist/individualist frameworks, foregrounding cross-ideological collaboration and organicist social cohesion.

Theoretical foundations of 'personalising feminism' include communitarianism and an organicist conception of the state as a community of interdependent individuals (Evola 2004; Olivetti 1927; Sermoniti 2003; Preve 2006). Within this schema, social functioning requires contribution from all members, and feminism is collaborative rather than adversarial; men are expected to assume responsibility in women's struggles. By rejecting victim-oriented historiography, far-right women facilitate dialogue with politically aligned men, positioning leadership potential within an organicist framework of society.

Female emancipation is conceived not as an autonomous goal but as integrally linked to societal well-being. Industrialisation constitutes the pivotal locus of female identity crisis; participation in capitalist or communist productivist mechanisms imposes male norms designed to expand productive capacity. Work is framed as a voluntary modality

of self-realisation, balanced with domestic responsibilities. Crises of female identity are mutually constitutive with male identity, and gender antagonism is explicitly rejected.

It is useful to visualise, in the table below (Table 1), how *Eowyn*'s 'personalising feminism' relates to other feminist theories, demonstrating that men share imposed gender roles and that dialogue with men should be encouraged, with men taking responsibility for supporting women's struggles in a framework of mutual support:

It is also instructive to observe that the analysis of *Eowyn* reveals a complex phenomenon of adherence to and rearticulation of feminist themes and discourses within a nationalist, traditionalist, and anti-egalitarian ideological framework, situated within a broader schema of autonomous feminism. This study thus enables the formulation of analytically significant conclusions by synthesising the empirical findings and systematically situating them within broader models of far-right ideological production.

First, the case of *Eowyn* demonstrates that far-right female activism cannot be dismissed as mere passive acquiescence to patriarchy or as an anomaly (Guerra 2022a; 2024). On the contrary, it constitutes a privileged site of political subjectivation, wherein women actively negotiate, internalise, and rearticulate dominant discourses. *Eowyn* militants exercise relational agency: while operating within authoritarian and hierarchical structures, they claim an autonomous space of thought and action, contesting both egalitarian feminism and the more reactionary positions within their own political milieus (such as the MSI). Their critique of 'massified feminism' and the promotion of a 'personalising feminism' represent an effort to construct a female identity that integrates claims to autonomy with the affirmation of traditional and differentialist roles.

Second, the analysis of the magazine allows for the identification of a recurring ideological pattern within the far right, and beyond: the strategy of 'personalisation' or selective engagement (Minkenberg 2001; Mouffe 2018). *Eowyn* activists do not reject feminism outright but rather deconstruct and reformulate it along anti-universalist and anti-egalitarian lines. They draw selectively on feminist theory (Friedan, Stassinopoulos) to critique both capitalist society and radical feminism, charging each with erasing difference and producing alienation. This mechanism of 'far-right differentialist feminism' – which emphasises biological and spiritual complementarity between the sexes while rejecting emancipation conceived as assimilation to male models – both anticipates and illuminates contemporary dynamics (Sommers 1995; Badinter 2006).

Third, the study of *Eowyn* reveals the transversal nature of cultural references and the fluidity of ideological boundaries within the far right of the period. The deployment of Tolkien, engagement with ecologism, selective anti-capitalism, attempts to transcend binary extremes, and dialogue with themes from the '77 counterculture indicate female activism embedded within a broader generational and cultural renewal of the right. This underscores that the right is not a monolithic bloc but a contested field in which identities and strategies are continually negotiated, and in which women can act as agents of symbolic modernisation while remaining aligned with core dogmatic principles (nation, hierarchy, difference) (Guerra 2024).

Finally, this case study contributes to theorising the appeal of the far right to women. It demonstrates that such appeal is not predicated on the denial of female agency, but rather on the promise of a 'protected' form of identity recognition. *Eowyn* provides its readership with a discourse that legitimises their disquiet toward a society perceived as massifying and nihilistic (both capitalist and Marxist), confers a historically and politically 'noble' and 'distinct' role (the woman as custodian of tradition and community), and simultaneously affords a space for critique and personal self-assertion. This configuration – which transforms potential tensions with the movement's patriarchal structures into a cohesive force grounded in the defence of a differential identity – remains a potent resource for far-right movements both past and present (Koonz 1986; Dietze and Roth 2020; Guerra 2022a).

Table 1. Summary table of the conclusions and Eowyn's 'personalising feminism' in relation to other feminist theories

Aspect/Theme	Relational/Marxist feminism	Modernist/individualist feminism	Far-right/Eowyn's personalising feminism
View of women's oppression	Permanent and universal oppression rooted in capitalism and patriarchy; gender as social construct.	Focus on individual rights and historical struggles for legal equality (e.g. suffrage).	Rejects notion of perpetual female subjugation; opposes victimhood narratives; oppression arises mainly from productivism and industrialisation.
Attitude towards gender roles	Gender roles socially imposed; critique of male dominance.	Emphasis on individual autonomy and liberation.	Gender roles affect both men and women; crises of female identity are linked to crises of male identity; collaboration rather than opposition between sexes.
View of capitalism/industrialisation	Central to women's oppression; capitalist production linked to exploitation.	Limited focus; recognises economic context but prioritises individual rights.	Productivism and materialist industrialisation (capitalist or communist) undermine both male and female identities; capitalism is alienating but not inherently patriarchal.
Ideological stance	Anti-capitalist, anti-patriarchal.	Individualist, modernist.	Far-right; communitarianism; state as organic entity; anti-modernist, anti-individualist.
Core concepts	Structural oppression, gender as social construct.	Individual autonomy, legal equality.	'Personalising feminism'; communitarianism; societal organicism; collaboration with men; rejection of victimhood feminism.
Approach to feminism	Structural critique; historical lens.	Rights-based, individualist.	Third pathway: rejects both structural victimhood and extreme individualism; work must remain voluntary and self-realising; promotes societal improvement as collective duty.
Perspective on women's work	Domestic and industrial production linked to patriarchal exploitation.	Work as means of individual freedom.	Work is voluntary, self-realising; should not impose undifferentiated standardisation or additional oppression; balances domestic and professional roles.

In conclusion, the analysis of Eowyn demonstrates that female activism within the Italian right of the 1970s and 1980s constituted a sophisticated phenomenon of political subjectivation. It not only enriches our historical understanding of the period but also provides a crucial analytical model for decoding the contemporary strategies through which the globalised right attracts and mobilises women, integrating their aspirations within an anti-egalitarian, nationalist, and organicist worldview. The study thereby underscores the importance of examining female voices within these movements not as marginal, but as revealing of both transformations and enduring structural logics at the core of far-right ideology.

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Italian summary Questo articolo esamina l'attivismo delle donne dell'estrema destra che, a partire dalla fine degli anni Settanta, diedero vita alla rivista *Eowyn*. Esso ricostruisce i principi fondativi del pensiero femminista di area neofascista in Italia, che queste donne definirono come una forma di "personalizzazione" del femminismo, collocando tale prospettiva nel più ampio contesto dei dibattiti femministi contemporanei e dei relativi riferimenti culturali. Il contributo analizza inoltre la ricezione di *Eowyn* da parte delle femministe marxiste e degli attori maschili dell'estrema destra, mettendo in luce le tensioni e i dialoghi che contribuirono a plasmare il movimento. Né emerge una tipologia femminista peculiare, che non rinnega una concezione organicistica della società né riduce la storia delle donne a una mera narrazione di oppressione, pur mantenendo una consapevolezza critica dei rischi di massificazione e mascolinizzazione della figura femminile. Tale approccio promuove l'uguaglianza delle opportunità per le donne, articolando al contempo una critica sistematica a una società e a uno Stato percepiti come arretrati, e mettendo in evidenza le complesse intersezioni tra genere, ideologia e cultura politica nell'Italia del secondo Novecento.

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