

Terrorism in Contemporary World: A Study on Existential
Roots of Terrorism
การก่อการร้ายในโลกร่วมสมัย:
การศึกษาเกี่ยวกับรากเหง้าในเชิงอัตถิภาวะของการก่อการร้าย

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Abstract

This research was an attempt to philosophically – and, existentially, - answer the questions as follows: (1) what does it mean for an individual to be (in this case become) terrified and resort to terrorism to overcome this terror?, (2) what are the sources of it?, and (3) what are the conditions that make terrorism both contemporary and constant in our existence?. In doing so, the research set out the study by investigating the conception of subject in the modern philosophical context, with the beliefs in the hindsight that; firstly, the appropriate and fruitful way of gaining insight into and making sense of the subject or subjectivity in the contemporary setting is to do it in the modern philosophical scenario, which, in itself, is the result of the advent of the intellectual and philosophical movement called “the enlightenment,” and ,

secondly, the concept (or concepts) of “subject” is politically constructed, historical variable, and ideological infused, therefore, together with the first belief, the modern subject is best understood within the span of modern period rather than trying to come up with the eternal aspect of subject that is persistent and resistant to time, change, and history. It is found that by exploring into the modern philosophical conceptions of subject, the process of individualization of the modern subject is the process of opposition, therefore, the subject realizes itself through the opposite. In this way, I argue that there are degrees of violence inherent in the modern subject and the conception of the subject because it is based upon the suppression of the opposite, and, through the attempt at doing an existential study into the root cause of violence in the modern subject, it is found that the inherent violence is a logical and, even, natural reaction to “terror,” which is an emotional response to the core of the human condition - “nothingness” at the core of being.

Keywords: Terror, Terrorism, Subject, Violence, Existentialism

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยชิ้นนี้คือความพยายามที่จะตอบปัญหาในเชิงปรัชญาและเชิงอัตถิภาวะเกี่ยวกับคำถามดังต่อไปนี้ 1) การที่ปัจเจกบุคคลนั้นตกอยู่ภายใต้ความหวาดกลัวและหันไปใช้การก่อการร้ายในการเอาชนะความหวาดกลัวนั้นมันมีความหมายว่าอย่างไร 2) อะไรคือแหล่งหรือต้นตอของสิ่งเหล่านั้นและ 3) อะไรคือเงื่อนไขที่ทำให้การก่อการร้ายนั้นมีสถานะทั้งมีความเป็นร่วมสมัยและเกิดขึ้นอย่างต่อเนื่องซึ่งในการตอบคำถามเหล่านี้งานวิจัยนี้ได้ทำการศึกษาโดยทำการสำรวจไปยังการสร้างมโนทัศน์ (Conception) เกี่ยวกับอัตบุคคล (Subject) ในบริบทของปรัชญาตะวันตกด้วยความเชื่อลึกๆที่ว่า อันดับแรก วิธีการซึ่งเหมาะสมและให้ผลที่ดีในการเข้าถึงและทำความเข้าใจอัตบุคคลหรือภาวะความเป็นอัตบุคคล

(Subjectivity) ในลักษณะร่วมสมัยคือการศึกษาในสถานการณ์ร่วมสมัยซึ่งสิ่งนี้เป็นผลพวงมาจากการเกิดขึ้นของความเคลื่อนไหวในทางความคิดและปรัชญาซึ่งเราเรียกว่า “ยุคแห่งการตื่นรู้ทางปัญญา” (The Enlightenment) และในลำดับต่อมา มโนทัศน์ (หรือมโนทัศน์ต่างๆ) เกี่ยวกับอัตบุคคลนั้นถูกประกอบสร้างขึ้นโดยการเมืองซึ่งผันแปรไปตามประวัติศาสตร์และเจือปนไปด้วยอุดมการณ์ ดังนั้นเมื่อนำมาประกอบกับข้อแรก อัตบุคคลสมัยใหม่ (Modern Subject) สามารถถูกอธิบายและเข้าใจได้ภายในขอบเขตของยุคสมัยใหม่เองแทนที่จะถูกอธิบายโดยลักษณะที่บ่งบอกถึงความเป็นนิรันดร์ซึ่งคือดั้งและต้านทานต่อเวลา ความเปลี่ยนแปลงและประวัติศาสตร์ งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ค้นพบว่าโดยการสำรวจไปยังการสร้างมโนทัศน์ของปรัชญาสมัยใหม่เกี่ยวกับอัตบุคคล การบวนการในการสร้างความเป็นปัจเจก (Individualization) ของอัตบุคคลสมัยใหม่นั้นคือการบวนการของการสร้างคู่ขัดแย้ง (Opposition) ดังนั้นในกระบวนการนี้อัตบุคคลตระหนักรู้ถึงตัวตนของตัวเองโดยผ่านคู่ขัดแย้ง เมื่อเป็นเช่นนั้นแล้วผู้วิจัยมีข้อคิดเห็นว่ากระบวนการเช่นนี้ก่อให้เกิดความรุนแรงซึ่งแอบแฝงอยู่ในอัตบุคคลสมัยใหม่และการสร้างมโนทัศน์อัตบุคคลสมัยใหม่นั้นเกิดขึ้นจากการปราบปราม (Suppression) คู่ตรงข้าม และโดยผ่านความพยายามที่จะทำการศึกษาในเชิงอัตถิภาวะไปยังรากเหง้าของความรุนแรงของอัตบุคคลสมัยใหม่นี้เอง งานวิจัยนี้ค้นพบว่าความรุนแรงที่แอบแฝงอยู่ในอัตบุคคลสมัยใหม่นั้นเป็นปฏิกิริยาตอบสนองในเชิงตรรกะและโดยธรรมชาติต่อ “ความหวาดกลัว” (Terror) ซึ่งเป็นการตอบสนองทางอารมณ์ต่อใจกลาง (Core) ของเงื่อนไขของความเป็นมนุษย์ ซึ่งนั่นก็คือ “ความว่างเปล่า” (Nothingness) ในใจกลางของความเป็นมนุษย์

คำสำคัญ: ความหวาดกลัว, การก่อการร้าย, อัตบุคคล, ความรุนแรง,
อัตถิภาวนิยม

1. Introduction

Literally, speaking, - if the following definition is something the popular beliefs go by that is the term “terrorism” means “the unlawful use of violence or threats to intimidate or coerce a civilian population or government, with the goal of furthering political, social, or ideological objectives.” (dictionary.com/browse/terrorism: online) This definition, which is one of the most conventional definitions of the term, and which reflects the most popular perception and opinion – cliché- on the subject, has at least two implications. First and foremost, terrorism, from a popular point of view, has mainly and significantly been understood, perceived, felt, interpreted, and analyzed in the territory of politics – in terms of power struggle between binary oppositions, such as, state and non-state actor; the oppressor and the oppressed; the law keeper and the law breaker (the criminal) etc. There is a famous saying: “one person’s terrorist is another’s person freedom fighter. (Primoratz, 2004, pp.xi) This totally makes sense in the context of political and national liberation, but it unavoidably implies that the actor (or actors) who resorts to the means of violence and induction of fear and intimidation, and commits to an abhorrently, unforgivably, and spectacularly (in some sense, a terrorist act is a kind of performance aiming at making some kind of (mostly) impression on the minds of some specific or general, direct and indirect targets – that is to say “audiences”) criminal act of violence against civilians, non-combatants, the innocent is defined

solely as a political actor, who always has in mind a political aim (to bring down the power-that-be whose villainous ambition is to install their supremacy, and to suppress the freedom of the dissidents- or those who dare to challenge their power), and is eternally motivated by political cause. For the terrorist or those who aspire to be one, terrorism is justified, and the act of terrorism is the weapon of the weak. Then the definition of terrorism given above is, implicitly or explicitly, composed from the perspective of the authority (that is to say, the state, the ruler, the sovereign, the officials, the government agencies, etc.) in ignorance of the acts of terrorism committed by the authority, or what Charles P. Webel calls “terrorism from above or (TFB.)” (Webel, 2004, pp. 9) According to conventional and popular point of view, terrorist act has always been committed only by subnational or non-state entities because, according the given definition, terrorist act is the unlawful use of violence and intimidation. This claim, since the sovereign is the source of political power and legitimacy, indicates that the authority only has monopoly on the use of violence and can never intentionally resort to the acts of terrorism.

There have been several attempts at establishing the political solutions to the tackling the plaques of terrorism, especially after the watershed coordinated attack on the twin tower “World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 allegedly by the so-called Islamic terrorist group “al Qaeda.” However, any solutions (political ones, included)

based upon the creation and demarcation of binary oppositions have been proved to be a failure, because they create the artificial lines separating and alienating the primordial and indivisible wholeness of humanness by pitching one (s) against the other (s) resulting in the eternal hostility and irreparably conflicts between the artificial self and the (also artificial) other. This project proposes to bridge the gap between binary oppositions by exploring and investigating into existential roots of terrorism, with the belief that all humans, regardless of all their external differences, have somethings in common, says, human conditions, and with the hope that after all existential human conditions has been brought into the daylight, we would be able to find – or at least get a glimpse of- some answers to the endemics of terrorism beyond the inimical (and artificial) lines of binary opposition.

This research is an attempt to philosophically – and, existentially, in particular- answer the questions as follows: (1) what does it means for an individual to be (in this case became) terrified and resort to terrorism to overcome this terror?, (2) what are the sources of it?, and (3) what are the conditions that make terrorism both contemporary and constant in our existence?. In doing so, the research set out the study by investigating the conception of subject in the modern philosophical context, with the beliefs in the hindsight that; firstly, the appropriate and fruitful way of gaining insight into and making sense of the subject or subjectivity in the contemporary

setting is to do it in the modern philosophical scenario, which, in itself, is the result of the advent of the intellectual and philosophical movement called “the enlightenment,” or “the age of reason,” starting roughly from the late 17th century; and , secondly, the concept (or concepts) of “subject” is politically constructed, historical variable, and ideological infused, therefore, together with the first belief, the modern subject is best understood within the span of modern period rather than trying (or pretending) to come up with the eternal aspect or the essence of subject that is persistent and resistant to time, change, and history. It is found that by exploring – not comprehensively, and selectively- into the modern philosophical conceptions of subject , and following the line of argument of Piotr Hoffman, the process of individualization of the modern subject is the process of opposition:

...that individuation, at least in the case of human subjects, emerges only through their interactions, and that these individuating interactions are forms of opposition. (Hoffman, 2017, p.9)

Therefore, the subject realizes itself through the opposite. By realizing itself in this way, the clarity (purenness) and distinctness of the subject is contingent upon and symmetric to the intensity and degree of the opposite. Seen in this light, I argue that there are degrees of violence inherent in the modern subject and the conception of the subject because it is based upon the suppression

of the opposite, and, through the attempt at doing an existential study into the root cause of violence in the modern subject, it I found that the inherent violence is a logical and, even, natural reaction to “terror,” which is an emotional response to the core of the human condition, which, according to existentialism, is “nothingness” (Non-being, emptiness) at the core of being, essence, or idea of subject.

2. Objectives

1) To conduct a comprehensive and existential phenomenological study upon the existential roots of terrorism in order to lay bare the existential causes of terrorism .

2) To be able to describe and articulate “terrorism” existentially and build the concept of terrorism based upon phenomena of terrorism.

3. Methods

In tandem with the objectives of this research project, the methodology employed will be comparative readings that cut across the disciplines of political sciences, social sciences, economics (including political economy), sociology, anthropology, psychoanalysis, discourse analysis, religious and ideological studies, history (especially, genealogy), ethics, and philosophy, and the social

sciences on the topic of terrorism. And to make sense that the truths of the concept of terrorism of each discipline are the results of the classification and the compartmentalization of modern life - and violence and terror are the result of a desperate attempt to put together, in an absolute and coherent manner, things (Lives) that are incomplete and incoherent with a larger framework of meaning, the critical existential analysis and the transcendental phenomenology would be employed as the tools to explore into the truths of being, theoretically or existentially, of each discipline.

3. Results

3.1 Modern subjectivity

Following the powerful line of argument from the late (and great) Sir Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997), who was of the view that two factors that, above all others, have shaped human history in the twentieth century. One is the development of the natural sciences and technology, certainly the greatest success story of our time – to this, great and mounting attention has been paid from all quarters. The other, without doubt, consists in the great ideological storms that have altered the lives of virtually all mankind: the Russian Revolution and its aftermath – totalitarian tyrannies of both right and left and the explosions of nationalism, racism and, in places, religious bigotry which, interestingly enough, not one among the most

perceptive social thinkers of the nineteenth century had ever predicted (Berlin, 2013, pp.1)

I would argue that , based on Berlin’s claims, the first factor is natural development of the materialistic philosophy , which argue that reality is matter – or only matter is real – therefore, all truths (as well as all human endeavors) – regarding the universe, the world, humans (whether they be bodies or minds) – are based or contingent upon matter or material based, which is another way of saying “only matter exists.” And the latter is that of the idealistic philosophy, which argue that reality is idea, therefore all truths that have existed, exists, or will ever exist about everything in the universe could be reducible to and understood as ideas that exist in mind, and accessible solely to the rational faculty of human.

1) Idealistic conception of subjectivity

Let’s start our brief survey and exploration of the modern philosophical conception of subjectivity by following the argument from the idealistic side of the narrative, owing to the fact that the person who is believed to start the modern philosophical movement, and is widely regarded as “the Father of Modern Philosophy” who bases his entire philosophical edifice on the firm and unshakable foundation, which he believes to be a belief that is certain and irrefutable. When Rene Descartes (1596-1650) makes an epoch-making claim that “I think, therefore I am” (Cogito, ergo sum)

He claims to have discovered a belief that is certain and irrefutable. He comes to this conclusion not by merely claiming that such and such thesis is true in a dogmatic manner. He employs the strategy which is “to doubt.” To doubt, or not believe, any claim that is false or could be false. He recognizes that his senses might be deceiving him now, since they have deceived him before; he might also be reasoning erroneously now, since he has reasoned badly before. He thereby doubts all beliefs from his senses and from his faculty of reasoning, since those beliefs could be false. Descartes then considers the most extreme reason for doubt: there may exist an evil genius who has the power to control all of his thoughts, tricking him into believing anything. However, even if all the beliefs and types of beliefs that Descartes reviews are false, or could be false, at the least, he must exist to be deceived. So, the “I think” element in the Cogito implies the direct, immediate, certain knowledge of one’s own existence. Thought requires a thinker and this is known with certainty, since not even the demon could deceive someone who doesn’t exist. Descartes thereby found what he was looking for: some certain, indubitable, irrefutable knowledge.

Seen in this way, we might come to the conclusions that; (1) what guarantees the reality of the is the idea or belief that exist in mind, and (2) the idea must be certain and irrefutable, and (3) that idea mentioned in (2) which is the foundation of all knowledges is “I think, therefore I am,” therefore (4) everything that is believed to exist

is dependent for its truth and existence upon an idea in “the thinking of the I.” The subject, according to Descartes, is the mind which is the locus of the cogito.

2) Materialistic conception of subjectivity

For Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) – who is a radical materialist – life is “but a motion of limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principle part within; why may we not say, that all automata (engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as doth a watch) have an artificial life? For what is the heart, but a spring; and the nerves, but so many strings, and the joints, but so many wheels, giving motion to the whole body, such as was intended by the artificer?” (A. Burt ed., 1939, pp. 129) that means the distinction between living and non-living things is not a soul because it is immaterial. For him, living things are just those things that move because they have a source of motion within them. And the source of all thoughts are not ideas but sensations inherent the body not the mind. The entire life of the mind is nothing more than matter in motion. For sensations are motions, and all the rest is built up out of sensations. There are no distinctive mental qualities at all. Mind is just matter that is moved in distinctive ways.

Hobbes distinguishes two sorts of motions peculiar to animals: vital and voluntary motions. Vital motions are such things as the circulation of the blood, the pumping of the heart, breathing, and digestion. Voluntary motions, by contrast, are those for which the

cause is to be found in some imagination. The small beginnings of motion – the motions that set the subsequent motions in motion- Hobbes calls endeavor. Endeavor can either be toward something (which is called desire) or away from something (which is called aversion). In an ethical and moral sense, what we desire we call good; what we wish to avoid we call evil. Unsurprisingly, in the political philosophical context, he proposes that the lives of humans in the state of nature – the state preceding the advent of society and void of political authority- are solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. (A. Burt ed., 1939, pp.161)

In conclusion, Hobbesian subject is the subject that: (1) its existence is based and contingent upon general conditions of the body, and (2) its mind or consciousness is the consequence of the workings of the body, not vice versa, and (3) since all bodies (including those of humans) are materials and could be described and explained in terms of mechanical rules – matters and motions- and exist within the web of mechanical causality, therefore (4) there is no idea or thought which is independent of sensations which ,he claims, are themselves nothing but motion; “ for motion produceth nothing but motion.”(Melchert, 202, PP.367) Moreover, (5) since every motion is motivated , voluntarily or involuntarily, by internal forces or external forces, “the cogito” does not have the independent or transcendental status because the “I think” is the direct result of “endeavor,” which is believed to be the beginnings of all motion and

is inherent in the body. (6) Since endeavor can either be toward something (which is called desire) or away from something (which is called aversion), desire and aversion are the sources of all human action. Seen in this light, apart from being naturally materialistic and mechanical, Hobbesian subject, from moral and political context, also has egoistical character.

To sum up, upon the brief survey of modern conception of subjectivity, there are some traits or characters inherent in the modern subject that might leads to violence in one form or another. Even though, both are different in their orientation toward the conception, but, following the argument of Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno, both suffer from the principle of self-preservation (see this argument in details on Bowie, 2003, pp.234-244), in which everything natural is subjected to the arrogant subject (Ibid. 236), because the source of knowledge – either idealistically or materialistically – is human activity (Cartesian “cogito” is the activity of mind, and every activity is motivated) , which seeks control over the other, be it hostile nature, or other people. (Ibid. 236) Seen in this light, for the sake of its own preservation, modern subject is self-contained in the sense that it exists for the sake of itself, and adequately within its own boundary. As a consequence of its self-contained nature, it is prone the principle of reductivism in the that it tends to reduce the diversity of reality to forms of conceptual identification (for an idealist) or mechanical laws governing all matters

and motions in the universe (for a materialist), and, to the worst degree, psychologically, we might claim that modern subject is narcissistic, by which I follow Erich Fromm's definition:

“Narcissism can be described as a state of experience in which only the person himself, his body, his needs, his feelings, his thoughts, his property, everything and everybody pertaining to him are experienced as fully real, while everybody that does not form part of the person or is not an object of his needs is not interesting, is not fully real, is perceived only by intellectual recognition, while affectively without weight and color.” (Fromm, 1973, pp. 201)

For fear of its own disintegration and demise, modern subject, based upon the principle of self-preservation, views the others – where the others can range from things, nature, people, to the unknown – as a threat and a danger posed to its own integration and survival. In order to overcome this tension, and preserve its own integrity, the subject project its own real or perceived oppositions to the external world to compensate its own lack of being and essence. In doing so, the others are reducible to the tools or instruments for the subject to preserve its life and integrity. By reducing others to mere instruments, the subject is committing a violent act toward others – whereby a violent act can come into being in various degree, and in many forms (physically, psychologically, ideologically, politically, etc.)

However, even if we've discovered that violence is inherent in the conception and the concept of modern subject, and those who assume the position of the self could perceive this inherent violence prevailing in his or her own existence: but these conditions do not necessarily lead to someone resorting to or committing acts of terrorism; therefore, how does someone feel the need to commit such atrocious acts? What could possibly be to conditions of terrorism? And, can we posit the root causes that are both constant (if not permanent) contemporaneous?

3.2 A Study on Existential Roots of Terrorism

1) What is Terrorism?

There are many attempts at defining one of the most elusive and controversial words like "Terrorism." Since the research is an attempt to philosophically and existentially investigate into supposedly causes of terrorism, philosophical definitions would be given here for the sake of argument.

Igor Primoratz, the editor of one of the most celebrated books on a philosophical study on terrorism: "Terrorism: The Philosophical Issues, propose the definition as follows,

"Etymologically, "terrorism" derives from "terror." Originally the word meant a system, or regime, of terror: at first imposed by the Jacobins, who applied the word to themselves without any negative connotations; subsequently it came to be applied to any policy or

regime of the sort and to suggest a strongly negative attitude, as it generally does today. . . . Terrorism is meant to cause terror (extreme fear) and, when successful, does so. Terrorism is intimidation with a purpose: the terror is meant to cause others to do things they would otherwise not do. Terrorism is coercive intimidation.” (Primoratz, 2004, pp. 15-16)

According to this definition, “terrorism” is regarded as a system or regime that is rationally organized, and motivated by definite and intelligible desires or forces, and oriented toward rational (mostly, political) goal with a well-designed plan. Seen in this way, terrorism is a rational mean (to cause terror) selected, employed, and operated by a rational subject.

Another observation on the essential aspect that set terrorism apart from other forms of violence is

“(This) targeting of the innocent is the essential trait of terrorism, both conceptually and morally. The distinction between guilt and innocence is one of the basic distinctions in the moral experience of most of us. Most of us require that the infliction of serious harm on someone be justified in terms of a free, deliberate action on their part. If this cannot be done, people are innocent in the relevant sense, and thus immune to the infliction of such harm...” (Primoratz, 2004, pp. 20)

This line of argument has at least two implications: (1) the guilty and the innocent is conceptually and ontologically different and

exclusive; and (2) this difference and exclusivity between both subjects lead to different moral treatment between the two.

But who is innocent and who is not? C.A.J. Coady seems to have a practical and concrete answer for us when he provides the definition of a terrorist act as

“a political act, ordinarily committed by an organized group, which involves the intentional killing or other severe harming of noncombatants or the threat of the same or intentional severe damage to the property of non-combatants or the threat of the same.” (Ibid. pp. 21)

2) Terrorism and Modern Subject

If attempts at defining and conceptualizing terrorism above are representatives of modern styling of dealing with the issue (which I believe they are), these attempts – as well as other attempts of the same sort – suffer the same fate as modern conceptualization of subjectivity -says, they are based upon the oppression of the opposition, self-contained, prone to reductionism and essentialism.

From the definitions given above, what is called “terrorism” is described as a regime or system that uses terror as a mean to achieve a group or one’s political goal; according to this formula, the event in which terrorism takes place is observed as self-contained and one-off event devoid of any contact or connection with any other events

taking place simultaneously (even the same place), or at a different time (and, of course, place) in history. One might argue that modern sciences have provide empirical tools that enable one to observe any connections or relations between individual events; tools such as, history which one can observe events prior to the coming into being of the actual event, and if we search hard and long enough, we might come across the root cause at some point; and that's where problems occur: How can we be certain that the event we've discovered is the first event that set all preceding events in motion? Is there any possibility that the so-called first event might be anteceded by another event, and if so, it loses it root cause status? Does the event that we claim to be the root cause the only event that ever takes place, or it is just one event among the others? And, importantly, how do we know by conviction that the first event really exists?

Arguably, any other modern intellectual endeavors, either empirical or conceptual, like natural science, psychology, social science, sociology, anthropology, political science, and any other possible sciences we can think of, also suffer the same fate because all those endeavors are the products of the activity of modern subject, which itself is the product of modern conception of subjectivity.

3) Existential Roots of Terrorism

The problem the existentialists were concerned with was the problem of meaning. Human beings crave meaning; they crave an order that they can make sense of. (Panza and Gale, 2008, pp.9) This could only happen if the so-called subject is said to be not in possession of essence (essences) or nature (natures), since commonsensically we do not crave for or desire something we already have. Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) seems to agree with this point when he declares that for human beings “existence comes before essence,” (Sartre, 1973, pp. 26) and by which he means:

... man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world – and defines himself afterwards. If man as the existentialist sees him is not definable, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself... (Ibid., pp.28)

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) seems to make the same point when he claims that:

“The essence of Dasein lies in its existence. Accordingly, those characteristics which can be exhibited in this entity are not 'properties' present-at-hand of some entity which 'looks' so and so and is itself present-at-hand; they are in each case possible ways for it to be, and no more than that” (Heidegger, 1962, pp.69).

For existentialists, the core of human existence is “nothingness”: first she discovers that she “exists,” and then make

herself out of the situation by projecting her meaning or humanness into the situation she finds herself in. Seen in this light, human being is not an object with fixed essence and nature to dictate who she is, what kind of being she should be, or where she should go (Telos leads to the sense of meaning).

However, this existential condition comes at a cost; since there is no essence that determines what kind of being she should be, no ultimate source of meaning for human being to steer her life, and, to aggravate the situation further, she finds herself in the world, among other people and objects in it, that seems alien, indifferent, or even hostile to her, there also seem to be no sings and meanings external to her that help to ease the burden of living (existing). **Anxiety** is the permanent mark of this condition.

Anxiety is the state of mind, both in the cognitive and conative sense, that reveals the core of human being as nothingness, because without definite essence and telos, nothing is certain. What is left for human to decide is choices that does not guarantee the truth or falsity, the good or the bad, and there are plenty of chances that the choice she has chosen might come bake to hurt or even dismantle her integrity; but in order to exist she does not have any other options but to choose, and to choose without any ultimate truth to guarantee its validity. Tillich differentiates anxiety from fear in that fear has a definite object which can be faced and attacked, endured or conquered, whereas anxiety has no object and “therefore

participation, struggle, and love with respect to it are impossible” (Tillich, 2000, pp. 36).

Death serves as both the ultimate meaning – since the end of life is death-, and the total context or limit of existence. Death leads to the disintegration of being. Death cancels existence, then what exists becomes non-existent. And the terror of death is that it might happen to existence anytime without rational justification, without warning, at some point in time it would certainly happen, but uncertainty remains over the definite or exact timing of death. According to Heidegger, this evasive concealment in the face of death dominates everydayness so stubbornly that, in Being with one another, the “neighbors” often still keep talking the “dying person” into the belief that he will escape death and soon return to the tranquillized everydayness of the world of his concern. Such “solicitude” is meant to “console” him. . . . In this manner the “they” provides a constant tranquillization about death (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 297-298).

Again, since death is the end of existence, because it cancels out existence and transform it into non-existence. And since death could definitely happen to existence anytime without grandiose reason and precaution, human being is left alone helpless without any sign that would lead to the total change of the situation. Deep down inside at the core of existence, everyone is in despair. We are in despair because we are overwhelmed by the conditions, which are

not of our choosing, and we have to carry the burden of existing (living) by dragging along with us those conditions until the end of the line (death).

The whole situations I mentioned above create the sense of terror toward the core of human existence, because it is full of the unknown, uncertainty, and meaninglessness. And in the end, from religious point of view, the biggest sin of being born is death, and this creates sense of helplessness and despair, because no matter how much effort, individually or collectively, human have put into overcoming those conditions ends up in failure and disaster. Therefore, the terror that she's always encountered constantly or contemporaneously is not the terror of any particular things, people, or situations, such as, the oppressor or the oppressed, Western civilization and Muslim civilization, or the Jihad and the Kaffir, etc., that exist in the world, but it is the terror toward the core of existence.

Seen in this light, terrorism and violence are devices that prevent terrorists from exposing to the terror inherent in the core of existence. Tillich makes a good point on this:

“Without an object or a tactic to defeat it, anxiety surfaces as the pain of impotence, negation and disempowerment. But the power of being stirs deeply beneath anxiety; nonbeing strives toward being when “anxiety strives to become fear, because fear can be met by courage” (Tillich, 2000, pp.39)

In conclusion, according to this narrative, terrorists are those who, in his weakness, helplessness, and despair, project his terror toward others by transforming others into the objects of fear to prevent themselves from exposing to and realize their core of existence, and to cover up their terror by violence acts.

Some new studies on the existential conditions of terrorism seems to point out to the direction mentioned above, for example, Megan K. McBride points out that : “...it is possible to argue that the radicalized ideologies underwriting terrorism actually serve as meaning-giving constructs functioning to relieve existential anxiety (K. McBride, 2011, pp. 561) , and Simon Cottee propose that the possible existential (fatal) motivations (and attractions) for engaging in terrorism are (1) the desire for excitement, (2) the desire for ultimate meaning, and (3) the desire for glory (Cottee, 2011, pp.963)

4. Discussion

This research has taken most of the clues from the research article “ **Terrorist (E)motives: The Existential Attractions of Terrorism,**” (Cottee and Hayward, 2011, pp. 963-986) in which they rightly discuss that the empirically possible conditions of the existential motives for engaging in terrorism are threefold, namely, (1) the desire for excitement, (2) the desire for ultimate meaning, and (3) the desire for glory. Those three motivations are what they call “Terrorist (e)motives,” which indicate the inner working of the minds

of terrorist. In so doing, the terrorists in this context are perceived as a real human agents, whose anxieties, fears, desires and dreams may not be altogether different from our own. (Cottee and Hayward, pp. 964) However, this article would like to argue that human (existential) motivations of any sort are not born out of nowhere, or have their existence and telos in the void. For this very reason, the three motivations given above can not be understood apart from the modern philosophical context of the violence of the subject born out of the compartmentalization and fragmentation of modern life. Also it is argued that the resulting attempt at artificially putting together of lives that have been torn apart and fragmented by modern philosophizing by establishing totalizing and reductionist system of meaning does nothing but to escalate the sense of terror and anxiety, and, I would argue, the process would in turn shape the sense of terrorism in the contemporary world.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations for further studies

This research is not supposed to be a comprehensive and all-rounded study on the subject of terrorism. It proposes the possibility of clearing and preparing the groundwork for a meaningful conception of the subject if we are to perceive a terrorist as an actor with heart and soul who happens to response to existential conditions – especially, anxiety – with terror and violence, and is somehow a victim of totalizing, reductionist, compartmentalized , and

fragmented condition of modernity – and , in particular, modern philosophizing. Since it is mostly a study on an existential and philosophical level, it is not complete without empirical data that would be able to quantify this work and give this research a concrete picture that would benefit not only a scholar, but also a general reader.

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