

## **ON PRIMAVERA FISOGNI'S DEHUMANIZATION AND HUMAN FRAGILITY: A PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATION (2013 BLOOMINGTON, AUTHORHOUSE)**

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The attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001 resulted in two different effects on the Western cosmology. At a first glance, a tragedy of this magnitude appears to have triggered a globalized fear associated with a decline of trust in the modern means of transport. Mobile industries such as tourism and hospitality have not only faced serious problems but also temporary stagnation. The efficacy of terrorists in administering panic consisted in their ability to utilize the comfortable technologies of the West against civilian targets. Secondly, religion has been placed under scrutiny to the extent that the process of secularization has experienced rapid acceleration. The points of view of religious leaders have been equated with expressions of intolerance and discrimination. In this discussion, Primavera Fisogni's attempt to unravel the roots of vulnerability and terrorism is not only necessary but also bold. She uncovers the legacy of Aquinas and scholastic philosophers to reconstruct the universe of ethics in terms of a new theology. What have we learned from 9/11 events?

Based on a most profound philosophical concern, our Italian philosopher explains convincingly that events should be judged by feeling their complexity and by being in the world of the other. This type of empathy expands the current understanding of a terrorist's mind. Beyond any repudiation of terrorism's effects, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that terrorists are not evil maniacs or demons that must be effaced from the planet. Following the legacy of Arendt and Eichmann's trial, this text shows how the idea of "the banality of evil" also applies to the indifference necessary to engender terrorism.

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As with the previous argument, the concept of innocence and respect for the civilians who are killed alludes to a new type of indifference as regards sensing the world and others in this world. Evildoers lack empathy for the evil they do. This means that terrorism works following a logic of instrumentalism whereby goals are more important than other's lives. This is exactly where Aquinas's doctrine serves to fill the connection between terrorism and sensing with an ethical discussion. To reverse this dialectic, people should not live outside reality.

To be able to exert violence or suffering over others, the victim should be dehumanized. Since terrorists are able to understand the consequences of their acts, they cannot be defined as "maniacs" or psychiatric cases. Although psychology and psychiatry have devoted considerable time trying to examine their motivations, the fact is that philosophy has been excluded from the discussion. In this vein, the present research fulfills a gap by highlighting the roots of evil-doing. Looking closely, Fisogni acknowledges the commonalities between terrorists and psychotics. Both experience the deprivation of dialectical sense that would connect them to the real world. However, whilst the former make the decision to keep their will, the latter are not open to any deliberation. This is the reason why, she adds, terrorists are not maniacs, although they suffer a type of rupture through which the other's life is undermined. A thorough reading suggests that the chapters comprising this fascinating book explore brilliantly a great variety of philosophical concerns which reassert Habermas' inconsistencies. One of the merits of Fisogni consists of her ability to bring scholastic philosophy to bear to resolve the problems of ethics in modernity. Post Arendt, undoubtedly and beyond exaggeration this is one of the best books I have read about the philosophy of terrorism.

Anyway, here I would like to take this opportunity to stress two important points which may serve to improve her argument. On one hand, many Islamic terrorists have been educated in the best Western Universities. Far from being isolated or disconnected from the world they have access to all the information needed to fly a plane through an American sky. On the other, Al-Qaeda tactics and plans may be found in any management guidebook. Besides, it is not clear to what an extent terrorists actually want to kill thousands of "innocent civilians"; they presumably rather prefer to generate psychological fear as a mechanism to extort the state. Preferably, Fisogni should clarify if the isolation which she refers to in the text is geographical, cultural or psychological. In this vein I may add that there are no differences between a terrorist attack and a labor strike. Both exploit a key factor to dissuade a stronger agent; at this time consumers/civilians are threatened as means to achieve a broader aim.

The thesis here discussed is that terrorism is the organization of labor by other means.

The mass-migration from Europe to America resulted from the process of industrialization and implanted an ideology which fostered the struggle directly against the owners of capital: anarchy. The first activists were not only prosecuted but also jailed and deported as they were considered to be a danger to society. In a similar way, “terrorists” perpetrated a set of attacks against politicians, security forces and other leaders. At the time, the state disciplined these insurgents by orchestrating violent responses and other anarchist-groups were launched to organize and represent the claims of the workers. At their onset, worker unions received further support from clandestine anarchist leaders. The benefits brought by unionization and the Wagner-act in America paved the way for the emergence of holidays, tourism, better wages and technological advances that ultimately positioned US as a leader of the industrial-world. The radical ideology of terrorism in the pre-industrial era was absorbed by the system and transformed into a “disciplined form of protest” – legal strikes. If we pay attention to this correlation, not surprisingly we will see how the modern state expelled terrorists at the same time as it adopted their ideology. From that moment on, terrorism and capitalism have been inextricably intertwined. Last but not least, there is considerable evidence that suggests that the custom of hostage-taking in Middle East is not considered correct according to Islam. Rather, it was not only imported by the British Empire but also adopted by Arabs as a form of relations with West. However, things have changed a lot since colonial times. The ‘other’ uncivilized has been educated according to our terms and conditions. It is likely that our feelings of terror are based on the fact that ‘they’ live in our societies and they look like us. The efficiency of terrorism may be measured by the degree of terror it can instill in our minds. The misunderstanding about this depends on the late-modernism that as an academic-project not only broke the tenets of the Enlightenment but also focused on the effects of events instead of their causes.