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TANSNATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY ALLIANCE IN MY REVOLUTIONS AND MEANING MORNINGS IN JENIN: A GENEALOGY OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM IN THE AGE OF AMPIRE

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Abstract

In this article, I analyze "global terrorism" as a postcolonial response to the supranational capitalist Empire, through a genealogical approach to the making of transnational revolutionary alliances in Hari Kunzru's My Revolutions and Susan Abulhawa's Mornings in Jenin. I argue that in their pursuit of specific religious or nationalist agendas, for instance, transnational fundamentalist "terrorist" groups are strengthened through alliances with non-religious, local or international, revolutionary activists. Such revolutionary groups often seek to intersect their different programs, in response to the Capitalist Empire, an enemy that is so strong and transnationally-grounded that it controls the media and either renders invisible their struggle as in My Revolutions or distorts the truth and presents the oppressor as a victim as in Mornings in Jenin. Thus, despite their recurrence in discourses on contemporary terrorism, race and religion are but secondary categories in the ongoing violent confrontation between the West and the postcolonial world.

Keywords: Empire, political violence, postcolonial, race, terrorism, religion, revolution, transnational.

Geospatial Coverage: Europe, United States, Palestine, Israel.

1. Introduction

"I'm a sworn enemy of France. I tell you I am a Muslim and I have nothing to do with a nation of homosexual Crusaders… You are America—the defense, the judge, the attackers. These people are American. I'm al Qaeda. I'm a sworn enemy of you." Thus spoke, on February 14, 2006, before the court, Zacarias Moussaoui (Thompson, 2006). The only person that has been convicted in the United States in connection with the 9/11 hijackings had just renounced his French citizenship and positioned himself as the enemy, not only of the USA, but of the entire West. He willingly embodied the barbaric homophobic Muslim other, rejecting both the US Justice System and Western humanist values. The stage was thus clearly set. What happened on September 11 was unambiguous; the victims of the Western Empire had struck back. The usual oppressor was now seeing the world through the eyes of a vulnerable victim. How and why did such a shift occur?

This imperative need to understand the roots of anti-western international political violence has aroused a renewed interest for the literature on terrorism. Fiction, non-fiction, or scholarly works of all kinds dealing with or documenting the evolution of various forms of terrorist organizations have since been extensively revisited and reinterpreted. From the same

perspective, the present paper attempts to account for the rise of what is now called "global terrorism" in light of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's views on political violence in the "age of Empire." In doing so, the paper proposes a genealogical study of the ways in which local activist groups shift into transnational revolutionary alliances in both Kunzru's My Revolutions and Abulhawa's Mornings in Jenin. At first sight, there is no apparent link between the 1960s expressions of dissent, from within the West by pro-Marxist anti-imperialist groups, documented by Kunzru and the Palestinian nationalist resistance to Israeli occupation culminating in a transnational suicide bombing at the Beirut US Embassy in Mornings in Jenin.

However, both novels show the different stages leading revolutionary groups to terrorist action first and then to the gradual intersecting of their agendas with other transnational entities' programs.Therefore, despite the differences in the historical, geographical, and political settings of these two novels, I will resort to a genealogical approach to situate, in each of them, the rationale behind the manifestations of transnational political violence against what Hardt and Negri dubbed the capitalist Empire.

After a conceptual clarification on my usage of the terms "Empire," "terrorism," and "transnational political violence," I will show that "global terrorism" is, to a large extent, a transnational reaction to the supranational capitalist Empire. Then, I will demonstrate that despite their recurrence in discourses on contemporary terrorism, race and religion are but secondary categories in the ongoing violent confrontation between the West and the postcolonial world. Finally, I will explain how Empire's totalizing cultural discourse and its imposition of a single model of society might, on the one hand, lead to extreme reactions within the West, and on the other hand, unfortunately, trigger the postcolonial world's sympathy for transnational fundamentalist organizations like al-Qaeda, the Islamic Jihad Movement, or AQIM.

2. Empire, beyond Nation-State Imperialism

The concept of Empire, contrasting with formal Nation-State imperialism, has been theorized among other scholars by Hardt and Negri (2000). The connection they made in *Empire* between the capitalist Empire and global terrorism earned them much fame in the wake of the 9/11 attacks which proved, to some extent, the accuracy of their theory on the inevitable drawbacks of the capitalist Empire's political violence on the postcolonial world. According to Hardt and Negri, the roots of transnational political violence against Western interests can be traced back to the rise of Empire, which is not a single imperial Nation-State but a set of supra or transnational power structures at the service of the collective capital.

However, as in Foucault's genealogical account of modern power's mutation from the discipline regime of power to the rise of biopower, the shift from Nation-State imperialism to the more subtle rule of the capitalist Empire should be conceived in a logic intensification rather than displacement (Nealon, 2008, pp. 28-29). On this score, Hardt and Negri have pointed out their indebtedness to Foucault's account of the genesis of biopower. As they remark,

> Foucault's work allows [them] to recognize a historical, epochal passage in social forms from disciplinary society to the society of control" …. In fact, even in the most advanced capitalist societies, it is obviously clear that both panoptic surveillance and discipline and punish modes of power enforcement are still

> present alongside of the more subtle and immanent manifestations of biopower which "regulates social life from its interior. (2000, p. 21, p. 28)

Therefore, while the capitalist Empire has been increasingly powerful since the end of the Second World War, formal Nation-State imperialism is still a reality in the 21st century as one can notice through the recent US colonization of Iraq and Afghanistan or the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Likewise, although both *Mornings in Jenin* and *My Revolutions* are set in the post Second World War period, they show that 20th century state repression against revolutionary activism in Britain or nationalist resistance in Palestine was as violent as it could have been under any formal 19th century colonial empire. In *My Revolutions* "the tens of thousands" of people protesting against the Vietnam War in front of the US Embassy at Grosvenor Square are fiercely "charged with horses" in a scene that the main protagonist, Chris Carver, describes as "medieval" (p. 35). Similarly, the "Lansdowne Road" activists and the homeless families they illegally housed in unoccupied buildings were evicted in such a violence that "within half an hour, most [of the houses] had been rendered uninhabitable. Floors were torn up, toilets smashed, pipes and cables pulled out of the walls" (p. 163).

> In *Mornings in Jenin* too, the Israeli repression of Palestinian nationalists is carried with extreme and even dehumanizing violence. For instance, Youssef has been tortured, beaten, and humiliated for six months in Israeli prisons (p. 108). As for the children and teenagers involved in the "intifada," they were repressed" with "might, force, and beatings," imprisoned and tortured (pp. 249-250).

Hardt and Negri (2000) are well aware that Empire takes up and reinforces many of the characteristics of traditional imperialism. For, even though it is " formed, not on the basis of force itself, but on the basis of its capacity to present force as being in the service of right and peace" (p. 15), Empire "constructs its own relationships of power based on exploitations that are in many respects more brutal than those" of Nation-State imperialism (p. 43).Without, naming it properly, McClintock, A. (1992) has well determined the functioning of Empire except for the fact that, unlike Hardt and Negri, she addresses an exclusively American Empire, with no reference to other capitalist Nation-States or transnational power structures:

> [T]he United States' imperialism-without-colonies has taken a number of distinct forms (military, political, economic and cultural), some concealed, some half-concealed. The power of US finance capital and huge multi-nationals to direct the flows of capital, commodities, armaments and media information around the world can have an impact as massive as any colonial regime. (p. 89)

Contrary to McClintock (1992), both Negri (2001) and Leela Gandhi (1998) believe that Empire includes and supersedes the United States. From her postcolonial posture, Gandhi views capitalism as the primary source of economic injustice in the Third Word. "Neo-colonialism," she writes, "[is] held in place by transnational corporations and the international division of labor linking first-world capital to third world labor markets" (p. 175). In "*L' Empire, stade supreme de L'impérialisme,*" Negri gives a more comprehensive definition of Empire which he considers as a supranational, global superstructure exercising complete monopoly on military, monetary, communicational, and cultural powers. As he argues, in the age of Empire, a single authority detains military power, as seen in the US-lead coalitions in the Gulf wars; global finance is subordinated to a single hegemonic currency, the dollar; and the communicational power imposes Western civilization as a single model of culture. Negri

makes, however, the precision that "the Empire is not American; it is simply capitalist; it is the order of collective capital." In face of such overwhelming, almost ubiquitous, capitalist power networks, the militarily, economically and culturally dominated postcolonial peoples have little room for maneuver. Their only way out of the yoke of imperialist capitalism is through the recourse to unconventional types of warfare such as guerilla and terr

3. Modern Terrorism: A Postcolonial Response to Empire's Political Violence and Economic Injustices

Since the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent US-lead "War on Terror," "terrorism" has become a most popular term, not only in political discourse, but also in the media as well as in academia. Sometimes overused, often misused, it has been so negatively loaded as to become an all-purpose rhetorical weapon used to demonize enemies and illegitimate their cause. According to Best S. and Nocella A. (2004), the term "terrorism" is "one of the most commonly used words in current vocabulary" and also "one of the most abused terms, applied to actions ranging from flying fully-loaded passenger planes into buildings to rescuing pigs and chickens from factory farms" (p. 1). As they further remark, in his address to the nation shortly after the 9/11 attacks, "President Bush used the terms 'terror,' 'terrorism,' and 'terrorists' thirty-two times without ever defining what he meant" (p. 1). In defense of President Bush on this particular context, one might nevertheless acknowledge that the concept of political terrorism is as controversial as uneasy to define.

According to former PLO leader Yasser Arafat, "the difference between the revolutionary and the terrorist lies in the reason for which each fights." Therefore, "whoever stands by a just cause and fights for the freedom and liberation of his land from the invaders, the settlers, and the colonialists cannot possibly be called a terrorist" (as cited in Shughart II, 2006, p. 10). Depending on which camp one sides with in a conflict then, the enemy's celebrated freedom fighter, revolutionary activist, or patriot is unequivocally viewed as a lawless terrorist.

In the beginning of the Isreali-Palestinian conflict in *Mornings in Jenin,* for instance, the Israeli "Irgun, Haganah, and Stern Gang" are called "terrorists" by "the British," "Yahood, Jews, Zionists Dogs, Son of whores, Filth" by "the Arabs," and "Freedom Fighters, Soldiers of God, Saviors, Fathers, Brothers" by "the recent Jewish population" (p. 24). Likewise, to the ABC reporter commenting on the suicide bombing at the US Embassy in Lebanon, there is no doubt that "terrorists hit the US Embassy" (p. 234). At the same time, Amal, believing that her brother Youssef is the suicide bomber, rather sees the attack as the legitimate or desperate act of a man who was "denied, imprisoned, tortured, humiliated, and exiled for his wish to possess himself and inherit the land bequeathed to him by history (p. 239).

In *My Revolutions* too, the label terrorist is controversial. For while the main protagonist Chris Carver and his friends view themselves as radical "revolutionaries" (p. 127) involved in armed resistance, their activism is seen as "an act of insanity" (p. 198) or "terrorism" (p. 261). In a nutshell, the rhetoric of terrorism is always polemical in the sense that "depending on the interpreter, violence against a perceived enemy can be seen as terrorism or counter terrorism, as aggressive offence or legitimate defense" (Best & Nocella, 2004, p. 3).

If there is any consensus around the concept of political terrorism, it is perhaps that it is generally assumed to suggest both violence and terror. The term "terrorism" is in fact etymologically derived from the radical "terror." As such, whether it involves actual acts of violence or not, the phrase "political terrorism," suggests a certain reliance upon public

perception of threat in the pursuit of political goals**.** In *My Revolutions*, when Chris and his friends put the first bomb at "the American bank near the Mansion house," on a weekend, at a moment when "the City of London is deserted," they relied more on the psychological effect of violence threat than on violence *per se*. Their main objective was to get "the BBC and ITV" relay their revolutionary action which, as Chris insinuates, will be insignificant if "it is unobserved" and "not reported" (pp. 83-84). In *Mornings in Jenin* too, the first Israeli attacks, though violent, were meant to conquer the land by frightening and then "getting rid of the non-Jewish population, first the British, through lynching and bombings, then the Arabs through massacres, terror and expulsion" (p. 25).

In light of these few examples, it is clear that despite the recurrence of the terms "terrorist" and "terrorism" in post 9/11 political discourse, terrorism is not at all a recent phenomenon. Bernholz P. (2006) even argues that terrorism is "an old phenomenon" which could be traced back to the Middle Ages when, "for nearly two hundred years, the Assassins, an Ismaelite Shiite sect," had "been systematically applying it in all its traits" (p. 221). Even if, as a form of revolutionary or political resistance, the traits of terrorism have not significantly changed since the Middle Ages, one can nevertheless distinguish between three different "stylized waves" in the history of modern terrorism: "terrorism in the service of national liberation and ethnic separatism, left-wing terrorism, and Islamist terrorism" (Shughart II, 2006, p. 7).

All these three types of terrorisms somehow dovetail with one another in *Mornings in Jenin* and *My Revolutions*. In *Mornings in Jenin*, Youssef and some of the Palestinian nationalist freedom fighters join the Islamic Jihad whereas the left-wing anti-imperialist revolutionary group in *My Revolutions* ends up in a "pragmatic alliance" with the PFLP—a Palestinian Marxist-Leninist nationalist organization (p. 220). These types of connections between revolutionary groups from different political backgrounds and the subsequent intersection of their respective agendas is a turning point in what is now called global or transnational terrorism.

When militarily inferior sub or transnational groups join their forces to combat a common enemy, there is reason to believe that the latter is not the traditional Nation-State, but a trans-nationally-grounded entity which, according to Hardt and Negri is nothing but the capitalist Empire. On this score, Bacchetta, Campt et al. (2003) draw attention on the fact that the very "nature" of capitalism and globalism "generates transnational movements of all kinds;" "transnational networks as diverse as al- Qaeda and the Red Cross productive of new identities and practices as well as new kinds of political repressions" (pp. 306-307).

4. Global Terrorism, a Transnational Reaction to a Supranational Capitalist Empire

The current transnational character of political violence is tightly related to the ongoing transnational configuration of geopolitical power structures from the Second World War to the present. In fact, due to the bipolarization of international politics during the Cold War, both Nation-States coalitions and revolutionary transnational alliances were centered either on the US-led capitalist camp or around the Soviet-led communist bloc. According to Sobel, "although terrorists [were] found among adherents of almost every brand of left-wing or right-wing ideology, the overwhelming majority of terrorists [could] be described as leftist. Most [had] a New Left or Trotskyist character"(as cited in Bernholtz, 2006, p. 223). This state of facts is absolutely observable in *My Revolution*s where, despite the existence of right-wing neo-Nazi activism, the striking majority of local activists were of Marxist-Leninist affiliation:

the "Free Pictures" and "Lansdowne Road" revolutionaries, the "PFLP," as well as "the African Liberation Caucus" and "the Revolutionary Socialist Students' Federation."

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, marked, not only the end of the Cold War, but also the beginning of a New World (dis)Order with the emergence of the United States as the sole Global super power. In this context, the so far ideological international political confrontations took a religious, cultural, and racial turn. Capitalist Nation-States in alliance with the now reinforced capitalist supranational power networks within and outside the West are thus confronted with fundamentalist transnational organizations like al-Qaeda and the Islamic Jihad claiming their anchorage in both Islam and Arab or other forms of Third World nationalisms. Therefore, during the Cold War as well as in the post-Cold War era, religious and non-religious transnational revolutionary alliances can be viewed as reactions to the capitalist Empire which did not rise after the Cold War, as Hardt and Negri (2000) would have it, but as early as the end of the Second World War. If we consider that Empire works for the capital, benefits from supranational military power, and seeks to impose a single cultural model, we can easily agree that the post-World War II capitalist camp, formed around the United States and major Western European countries like France, the United Kingdom, and the former Federal Republic of Germany, had almost all the characteristic features of Empire as described by Hardt and Negri. In fact, with a military alliance as strong as the NATO and an obviously Western cultural model to promote through a worldwide media network put at the service of its capitalist interests, this post-World War II alliance between capitalist powers was, without doubt, the first step toward the making of Empire. In McClintock's view, the rise of the Empire can definitely be traced back to the post-independence period since, "despite the hauling down of colonial flags in the 1950's, revamped economic imperialism has ensured that America and the former European colonial powers have become richer, while, with a tiny scattering of exceptions, their ex-colonies have become poorer" (2000, p. 94).

To be sure, there has been, in the aftermath of the Cold War, a logic of intensification reinforcing transnational capitalist networks to the detriment of traditional Nation-State imperialism. The connection between these two components of the capitalist Empire is well visible in Kunzru's *My Revolutions* whose two plots are respectively set in the heart of the Cold War and in late twentieth century Britain. In the novel's late 1990s plot, the main protagonist, Chris Carver alias Michael Frame, reacting to his step daughter's apparent disinterest in politics, explains that even though twentieth century Europe is through with the Cold War and lives in the so-called "end of history" era, there are still reasons for political activism and resistance, even in the "age of shopping":

> Thatcher's gone, the Berlin wall's down, and unless you're in Bosnia, the most pressing issue of the nineties appears to be interior design. It's supposed to be the triumph of capitalism – the end of history and the glorious beginning of the age of shopping. But politics is still here, Sam, even in 1998. (p. 47)

Moreover, in the 1960-70's plot, the junction of left-wing revolutionary groups in the protest against the Vietnam War shows clearly their awareness of the connection between the capitalist Empire and Nation-State imperialism. In response to the American News reporter's tricky question about the point in criticizing American intervention in Vietnam at a moment when they could "do something about injustice" in Britain, Chris Carver remarks that "it was all connected" in the sense that "the differences between the Viet Cong and poor blacks in Mississippi and factory workers in Bradford were artificial" (p. 32). In the mind of 1960-70's

leftist revolutionary activists then, the source of all these forms of oppression and injustice was the capitalist system. Furthermore, both the "Lansdowne Road" and "Free Pictures" groups, were in their very composition transnational entities with, not only British, but also German and American Citizens. In addition, the revolutionaries remained connected to or, at least, aware of the activism of other revolutionary groups throughout the world.

It took much longer to the refugees in *Mornings in Jenin* to realize that Zionism was actually part of a wider capitalist project in the Middle East. They first realized that the international community would be of little help before their enemy. The Swedish UN mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, who in 1948, condemned Zionism as "an offence against the principles of elemental justice" was, right after, assassinated by "Jewish terrorists" under the impotent gaze of "the five major powers" who had appointed him (pp. 39-41). The United Nations were visibly not the actual global authority as their series of ineffective resolutions and recommendations on the Palestinian crisis will confirm later on. One only has to compare the UN inefficacy on Israeli-Palestine conflict with its readiness to back the 1991 US-led military coalition in the Gulf in order to realize that the true global authority is Empire. On this score, Lisa Hajjar, focusing on Empire's manipulation of international jurisdictions, argues that "the center of gravity in establishing, interpreting, and shaping the law of war" is now subordinated to the actual practices of leading capitalist states (p.13).

In addition to the UN's subservience to Empire, the Jenin refugees will later realize that Arab solidarity was inconsistent and unreliable because of the economic, geopolitical, and military realities of the region. For instance, "the Hashemite monarchy, [fearing] for its own survival," either because of economic considerations or due to military reasons, "crushed Palestinians Guerrillas and civilians in terrible massacres" (p. 180). On this account, it is worth noting that the military strength usually ascribed to Israel has naturally much to do with Empire's support. Even if no coalition of armies was created in favor of Zionism, the Israeli army can always rely on an indefectible US support in military intelligence, logistics, and even armament. Given the very hegemonic nature of Empire, the existence of the State of Israel as a militarily strong non-Arab ally in the Middle East is a crucial geostrategic option for the capitalist Empire. In fact, the creation of a regional political or economic union between Arab countries would seriously endanger Western control over the oil market and relativize Empire's monopoly on economic power structures. Regarding the use of Empire's military power against Third World alliances, there is, as McClintock rightly points out,

> A global security system based on military muscle, not political cooperation, policed by the US's high-tech, mercenary army (and perhaps NATO), moving rapidly around the world, paid for by Germany and Japan, and designed to prevent regional, Third World consensuses from emerging. (p. 90)

Alongside the fear for Israeli military reprisals against countries hosting Palestinian guerillas though, the Hashemite Kingdom's "fear for its own survival" might also be understood on economic grounds. In fact, beyond the Hashemite royal family, most Arab monarchs and princes in the Persian Gulf do share, in one way or another, responsibility in Empire's take over and control over the region's natural resources. They are even part of Empire which, once again, is neither American nor European but Capitalist. Whoever benefits from the capitalist Empire and willingly contributes to its development is therefore part of it, regardless of racial or national origins.

Another important aspect of the capitalist Empire's intervention in the Palestinian crisis resides in the bias of the Western media in their coverage of the conflict as well as the

official US declarations in favor of Israel. In *Mornings in Jenin*, Palestinians finally discover that what Negri calls "the communicational power" at the hand of Empire is systematically directed against their cause and interests. In this context, we can definitely agree with Gayatri Spivak that the subaltern cannot speak, his voice is inaudible since the oppressors control the media and construct their own truth according to their own interests. As Amal points out in *Mornings in Jenin*, right "a week after the massacre at Sabra and Shatila, *Newsweek* magazine determined that the most important story of the previous seven days had been the death of Prince Grace. The following week, the cover story was 'Israel in torment.' Israel, a victim." In the same logic of bias, President Bush, referring to Ariel Sharon, the main perpetrator of the horrors of Sabra and Shatila, as "a man of peace," cynically demanded from Yasser Arafat, then "holed up in a room of his [bombarded] headquarters to stop the terror" (pp. 231, 292).

It is only after the Sabra and Shatila massacre, when they understood that the Jews did not actually mind "making a liar of their only supporter," that PLO freedom fighters like Youssef, knowing that their real enemy was multifaceted, joined the Islamic Jihad in order to strike any of Empire's perceived manifestations (p. 240). While being incontestably condemnable terrorist attacks against civilian innocents, both the 1983 bombing of the US Embassy in Lebanon reported in *Mornings in Jenin* and the 2001 World Trade Center attacks were, after all, directed against symbols of the American-lead capitalist Empire. Furthermore, the transnational character of "terrorism" can further be observed in the very nature and locations of the targeted buildings in both *My Revolutions* and *Mornings in Jenin*. In *My Revolutions*, after a series of attacks and protests within Britain against both British and American symbols of power, the revolutionary group ends up assailing the German Embassy in Copenhagen. In *Mornings in Jenin* too, the suicide bombing did happen on Israeli or American soil, but in Lebanon. It did not hit an Israeli building but the US embassy.

5. Race and Religion: Secondary Categories in International Political Violence

Today, terrorism is given a Muslim-Arab face. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is often wrongly presented as a religious, cultural, and racial confrontation. Of course, contrary to what orthodox Marxists claim, the economic base cannot alone account for the cultural super structure. When it so happens that economic power is generally detained by White people of Judeo-Christian confession, both race and religion are readily viewed as significant categories in any serious study of global power relations. As Fanon points out, in his analysis of the colonized-colonizer relationship in the Algerian context, "Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with" the colonial problem where "what parcels out the world is, to begin with, the fact of belonging to or not to a given race, a given species" (p. 32).

However, while race, religion, and culture can hardly be ignored in both the Israeli-Palestinian war and the "War on Terror," they should only be considered as secondary categories, not primary causes. Actually, the racial and religious aspect of the terrorist-counterterrorist confrontation should be viewed as a logical consequence of the resistance to the single model of culture imposed by Empire. It is in this sense that, during his trial for his alleged implication in the 9/11 attacks, Moussaoui, deliberately chooses to embody all anti-western values and identify himself as the homophobic Muslim enemy of the West in order to defy the so-called Western civilizing mission theorized to cover up a purely imperialist agenda in the Third World. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon has well-articulated the native's rejection of Western values as a form of cultural resistance to White supremacy:

> The violence with which the supremacy of White values is affirmed and the aggressiveness which has permeated the victory of these values over the ways of life and thought of the native mean that, in revenge, the native laughs in mockery when Western values are mentioned in front of him. (p. 35)

Although a Moroccan born French citizen, Moussaoui is without doubt a committed member of al-Qaeda. Unlike him though, many people join or sympathize with transnational "terrorist" groups without sharing their religious or nationalist agenda. In *My Revolutions* and *Mornings in Jenin*, this form of intersectional politics works respectively in favor of the Palestinian PFLP and the Islamic Jihad groups. In fact, in *My Revolutions*, the revolutionary group has little or nothing to do with the Palestinian nationalist cause, but they decide to connect with the PFLP in order to have allies capable of providing them with the weapons and the financial means necessary for the pursuit of their agenda (p. 220). Likewise, Youssef and some of the PLO freedom fighters, while fighting for a strictly nationalist cause joined the Islamic Jihad Group for its stronger military strike force and regardless of its religious agenda.

In *Mornings in Jenin*, Abulhawa makes it clear that at its very beginning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had almost nothing to do with either religion or race since only the land was at stake:

> On its first day of occupation, Israel bulldozed the entire Moroccan neighborhood of some two hundred ancient houses and several hundred residents, who were given less than two hours' notice to evacuate. Muslims and Christians alike, Greeks and Armenians saw most of their property confiscated, while they themselves were evicted to ghettos or exiled. (p. 140)

Furthermore, the lasting friendship relations between Hasan and Ari Perlsteine first and later between their two families demonstrate that religious, cultural, or racial issues did not oppose Jews and Palestinians before the advent of *El Naksa*, the disaster. How could race or culture be a significant bone of contention between two peoples of the same Semite stock? John Hess has clearly demonstrated that, the concepts "Semite" and "Semitic" were Orientalist constructions meant to set in opposition the "Indo-European," "Indo-Germanic," or "Aryan," to "the inevitably inferior Semitic race," including both Jews and Arabs, "as the foil for the triumph of Western, Christian civilization" (pp. 56-7). Therefore, while Arabs are today portrayed as the anti-Semitic group per excellence, no other people is physically and culturally closer to the Jews than the Arabs who belong to the same Semitic group. Abulhawa gives a telling illustration of this state of fact through the story of Ismael *cum* David. If an Arab baby stolen by an Israeli soldier has been raised within the Jewish community and even served in the Israeli army, without arousing any suspicion about his Arab origins, then the physical differences between Jews and Arabs must really be insignificant.

The alleged connection between terrorism and either the Arab race or the Muslim religion is a Western construction meant to demonize the Muslim other and illegitimate revolutionary causes that have more to do with national resistance than religion. At the same time, this conflation of the terrorist-type with the Arab/Muslim nationalist activist covers up the numerous cases of politically motivated expressions of violence, internal to the West, and which would definitely fit in any rigorous definition of terrorism. There is clearly a racist operation at work "in the naming of terrorism" since, whenever the terrorists are not people of color, no one associates acts of political violence with race, as in the case of Timothy McVeigh who "bombed the Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 men"

(Bacchetta et al., 2003, p. 304). In "The Rhetoric of Terrorism," Tomis Kapitan deplores the fact that "young Palestinian" suicide bombers and "those who flew hijacked planes into the World Trade Center towers" were systematically ascribed the label of terrorists while many other acts of political violence which "would qualify as terrorist under most definitions" were not considered as such by Western media. In the long list of condoned "terrorist" acts provided by Kapitan let us single out the "attacks upon civilians in Nicaragua by the U.S.-supported 'contra' rebels of the 1980s claimed over 3000 civilian lives," the mass murder of "over 2000 Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps in Beirut in 1982," the "destruction of Grozny by Russian forces" in the 1999 Chechnya war, or the U.S. bombing of Tripoli in April 1986.

6. Cultural Resistance to the Empire's Civilizational and Cultural Model of Society

Beyond terrorism, Kunzru's *My Revolutions* deals extensively with various forms of resistance to the capitalist Empire's hegemony. In fact, to the multidimensional manifestations of the Empire, the revolutionaries oppose a multifaceted resistance. As a matter of fact, in response to the model of culture imposed on them, the revolutionary experiment with several forms of dissent ranging from the questioning of the class system to the rejection of patriarchy and sexual normativity. Regarding the class system which is among the most visible by-products of capitalism, Chris and his friends, start their revolutionary actions with the disturbance of bourgeois events. In turn, they "[disrupt] property auctions by making false bids" and mess up a bourgeois party on the ground that "these sophisticated people" are "complicit in everything they are ignoring," including the "Vietnam" War (p.119, pp.124-126). Still, faithful to the belief that "the experience of transgression is part of [their] formation as revolutionary," they further apply their "principle number one" which consists in breaking the Law" to serve the lower classes, victims of the capitalist system (p.117). Thus, Chris and his revolutionary fellows of the "Lansdowne Road group" successively "run a free shop", robbing groceries from stores to feed allegedly poor people, and illegally house the homeless for free in public buildings (pp.105-108, 140-163).

Since the capitalist Empire imposes a model of society based on rigid moral standards and societal rules, an efficient revolutionary struggle should, beyond class issues and the protest against the Vietnam War, consider also resistance on a cultural level. As Chris makes it clear, "for [them], there was only one war" which demanded "to destroy the class system, combat state oppression and end the war" (p. 28). Combating State oppression also entails combating the State-imposed model of society which, in *My Revolutions*, is based on patriarchy, sexism, sexual normativity, and the cult of individual property. The revolutionaries are therefore aware that "a revolutionary transformation of society would require a transformation of social life" which could only be made by "[throwing] a clog into the big machine" of the "capitalist state" (p.109). As such, they experimented with "free love," and shared both rooms and sexual partners on the ground that "love for freedom" meant that love itself "had to be free," whereas "bourgeois individualism" or individual property of any kind had to be condemned (pp. 111-112).

Such extreme reactions to the Empire's imposition of a single model of society are obviously not a specifically Western phenomenon. The total rejection of Western societal norms from within the West by Chris and his friends is much similar to Moussaoui's diatribe against the whole Western world when he considers that, as a Muslim, he is the enemy, not only, of the America and its institutions, but also of France, his country of citizenship which he calls a "nation of homosexual Crusaders". According to Fassin E. (2006), such a

homophobic stand can be viewed as a postcolonial response to the fact that "in the postcolonial world, and particularly after September 11, the liberal Western norm updating human rights with 'sexual democracy' is intertwined with the norm of antiracism." Moussaoui, just like "young French Muslim girls of North African origin" who defy the French law against the Burqa, "was well aware" of these liberal Western norms and was, to some extent, defying them as he consciously jumped in what, in Fassin's words, is "a formidable trap to those postcolonial subjects who have the misfortune to overstep it: accused of complicity with racism, they are called barbarians and pushed into the background." Thus, in face of the totalizing imperial cultural discourse discarding non-western values as barbaric and backward practices or beliefs, postcolonial peoples tend to empathize and identify with any entity that looks capable of confronting Empire on military, cultural or ideological grounds.

7. Conclusion

Despite the fact that "terrorism" is an old phenomenon, modern terrorism, particularly in its transnational or global aspects can be viewed as a postcolonial response to capitalism in the age of Empire. Since the latter is economically, militarily, and culturally both hegemonic and ubiquitous, the postcolonial reactions and resistances are logically multifaceted. This state of fact largely explains the various forms of intersectional politics at work in the transnational alliances between local and international revolutionary, nationalist, or fundamentalist groups with initially different political agendas. In the pursuit of specific religious or nationalist agendas, for instance, transnational fundamentalist "terrorist" groups are strengthened through alliances with non-religious, local or international, revolutionary activists. Indeed, such revolutionary groups often seek to intersect their different programs, in response to various forms of political violence generated by transnational power structures which, alongside Nation-State imperialism, operate at the service of the capitalist Empire.

In fact, given that their common enemy, the capitalist Empire, is a supranational entity, only a coalition of the forces of resistance could effectively confront it. In addition to these types of transnational revolutionary alliances, both *My Revolutions* and *Mornings in Jenin*, show that, in the end, Empire is attacked wherever its symbols are visible. When the revolutionary in Britain attack both the US Embassy in London and the German Embassy in Copenhagen, and Palestinian nationalists bomb the US Embassy in Lebanon, "terrorism" or revolutionary actions can be said to have definitely taken a transnational turn.

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