'Terror(ism)' in the Context of Cosmopolitanism

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to show that, as long as one approaches the question of 'terror' or 'terrorism' from the traditional (modern) perspective of 'us' and 'them', or, to put it differently, from that of the nation-state and its other, the question of whether terrorism could ever be 'overcome' or 'defused' – as opposed to 'defeated' by acts of war – is, regrettably, superfluous, because irrelevant. Irrelevant, because a novel logic is required to make sense of the possibility of defusing or overcoming terror(-ism). Derrida's analysis of *9/11* as an 'event' that was both predictable as something anticipated within the horizon of familiar, hegemonic discourses, and utterly unpredictable, is noted, as well as his claim, that it displays the threefold structure of 'autoimmunity'. According to the 'autoimmunary process' the 'very monstrosity' that must be overcome, is produced. One encounters a similar logic on the part of the social thinker, Ulrich Beck, in his reflections on 'cosmopolitanism', which is suggestive of ways in which 'terrorism' could be defused. Crucial, here, is Beck's notion of 'sovereignty' (as opposed to the putative 'autonomy' of the nation state), which allows one to think interdependency and collaboration as ways of 'solving' national and international problems. At the same time, it adumbrates a situation where 'terror' becomes redundant.

Bert Olivier

The question of 'terror' and 'terrorism' is of global importance today – not merely for politicians when they find themselves in public spaces, but for ordinary citizens too, as well as for sportsmen and women when they travel internationally. Whether it is at airports, parliamentary buildings, or at sports stadiums, the spectre of so-called 'terror attacks' always seems to hover in the background, especially since what has become known as '9/*11*', or the 'terror' attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the United States in 2001. In this paper this question is approached from a poststructuralist perspective, which, I believe, opens up novel possibilities of addressing it. In response to the objection, that 'transcendence through thought is not the answer', I should say in advance that poststructuralist thought has long since deconstructed the separation between thought and action or practice: thought, speech, and writing, are already forms of action, and it is often the case that subjects are 'spoken by discourse' (Derrida 1973: 145), where discourse denotes a convergence between language and action.

In 'Autoimmunity: Real and symbolic suicides…', Jacques Derrida (2003) argues that, paradoxically, *9/11* as an 'event' was both predictable as something anticipated within the horizon of familiar, hegemonic discourses, and – in its aspect of something, the 'advent' of an 'event' that recedes even as one tries to grasp it – wholly unpredictable and unpresentable, like a terrible sublime. More pertinent for the theme of this paper, is his notion of an '*autoimmunitary process*' (2003: 94):

> … an autoimunitary process is that strange behavior where a living being, in quasi-*suicidal* fashion, 'itself' works to destroy its own protection, to immunize itself *against* its 'own' immunity.

The metaphor of 'immunity' or 'autoimmunity' derives from medical-immunological discourse, in conjunction with those of zoology, biology and genetics. Derrida has written elsewhere on such 'autoimmunity' as the (paradoxical) process, on the part of a living organism, '… of protecting itself against its self-protection by destroying its own immune-system' (quoted in Derrida 2003: 187-188, note 7). An allergic reaction to certain toxins, venoms, natural or industrial materials would be an example of such a process, and in the case of nations' reaction to 'terrorism' one could also

perhaps speak metaphorically of an 'allergic reaction'[1].

As far as so-called 'terrorism' is concerned, specifically the *9/11* attacks in the United States[2]. one may perceive the logic of this autoimmunity unfolding in what Derrida describes as '*three moments*', namely of 'autoimmunity', of 'reflex and reflection'. The first is '*The Cold War in the head*' (2003: 94), or autoimmunity as the fear of terrorism that gives rise to terror and defence at the same time. The fear of terror(-ism) 'in the head' terrorizes most, and it engenders a 'double suicide' (of the 'terrorists' and of those hosts who trained them)[3]. Derrida is here talking of three kinds of fear: psychologically speaking, of the fear in the individual's head, politically speaking, of the figures of the Capitol and the White House, and economically speaking of the figure of the Twin Towers as the 'head' of capital. The second is '*Worse than the Cold War*' (2003: 96), or the 'event' (of *9/11*) as trauma displaying the paradoxical temporality of proceeding neither from the present, nor from the past, but from 'an im-presentable to come' (2003: 97); in other words, trauma – with no possibility of a 'work of mourning' that would alleviate the suffering – is produced by the future, by 'the threat of the worst *to come*' (2003: 97). The third is '*The vicious circle of repression*' (2003: 100), or the paradox, that even if this worst of all terrors 'touches the geopolitical collective unconscious (inscrutable as it may

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[1] See also what Derrida says about this *aporia* as an example of the *pharmakon*, something that is remedy and poison at the same time (2003: 124).

[2] See Borradori (2003a), Habermas (2003), Sorkin & Zukin (2002). See also Olivier (2007) for a thoroughgoing discussion of these attacks in relation to the perspectives of Derrida and Habermas, respectively, on them.

[3] See Beck (2006: 149-151) for an analysis of terrorism (in the aftermath of *9/11*) which is largely compatible with Derrida's analysis, here. Take the following statement, for example (2006: 151): 'Is it not the attack on the global hegemon and the fact that the USA, the military superpower, is shaken to its core that have promoted the terrorists to a kind of irregular counter-hegemon?'

be) of every living being and leaves there indelible traces' (2003: 99)[4], it can 'simultaneously appear insubstantial, fleeting, light, and so seem to be denied, repressed, indeed forgotten, relegated to being just one event among others …' (2003: 99). Yet, the effect of these attempts to deny, disarm or repress the traumatic impact of the 'event' amounts to nothing less than the autoimmunitary process according to which 'the very monstrosity they claim to overcome' is generated or invented, produced, 'fed' (2003: 99). This is how repression in both its psychoanalytical and its political senses works – in short, it means that the repressed always, ineluctably, 'returns'.

Derrida's logic, here, should by now be familiar: it is the one that permeates the work of poststructuralist thinkers (such as himself, Lacan, Foucault, Lyotard, Kristeva and Deleuze), and it goes by various names, including complexity-thinking, quasi-transcendental and aporetic logic, and is characterized by the refusal of binary oppositional thinking, or the either/or logic that derives from the logical law of identity (a=a), in favour of a double logic of both/and – an insistence that these ostensibly mutually exclusive concepts should be thought together, or brought into an intertwinement that may just show the way towards a political practice where one is no longer paralyzed by the invidious, alienating choice between stark alternatives, but vivified by the 'impossible possibility' of engendering inventive decisions which may shift the familiar terrain to uncharted territory teeming with (emancipatory) potential.

How is this done? It will have been noticed that choosing between the simultaneously functioning alternatives outlined by Derrida, above, has precisely such a paralyzing effect – something of the magnitude of *9/11* could at one and the same time be experienced as traumatic, leaving psychic scars at a collective level worldwide, *and also* be brushed off as just one event among others (the Rwanda genocide, for example), with no distinctive

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[4] It may seem somewhat strange to readers familiar with Borradori's book (2003) that I refer here to the page *before* the one on which the third moment of 'autoimmunity' is announced, which ostensibly still comprises part of the discussion devoted by Derrida to the second moment. Despite this incongruity I cannot ignore the fact that this part of his elaboration on page 99 (Derrida 2003) pertains thematically to the third moment, regardless of it only being articulated explicitly on page 100.

features. That this is possible, should alert one to the kind of decision and action to be avoided, namely, the 'normal' route of choosing between these alternatives. Such a choice engenders an auto-immunitary, allergic response, namely that whatever 'defences' – even pro-active ones – may have been available to one, they are vitiated from the outset.

This happens in so far as the mutually paralyzing alternatives solidify into what Lyotard (1988: xi) calls a *differend*. The latter is an impasse, where every attempt to resolve a moral or legal stand-off by means of judging the relative merits of the competing alternatives in terms of the idiom or 'phrase' (discursive rules) governing one of them, results in injustice because of the ostensibly unavoidable choice in favour of one, and at the cost of the other. Should the judgment occur in terms of an idiom extraneous to both of the competing ones, the injustice applies to both. A more fruitful approach to this would be to move beyond the binary-induced impasse of the *differend* to a situation where, regardless of irreducible differences, a way of negotiating opposites may be followed that obviates the necessity of choosing between alternatives. This is easier said than done, of course, given the complexity of discursive divergence[5]. As always, Lyotard's thinking is here consonant with his tireless promotion of 'experimental' thinking and artistic practice (see Lyotard 1992).

Returning to the theme of terror(ism), in concrete terms this would mean that, on the one hand, *9/11* tends to touch people worldwide with the imagined, yet unimaginable spectre of 'the worst still to come' (from an unspecifiable future). On the other hand, its binary opposite, alternatively entertained, at the same time, is that (considering it as a peculiarly American occurrence) it is relegated to just one happening among others, with no special characteristics to distinguish it from the Rwandan genocide, for example. One could perhaps see in these two alternatives a special case of the difference between the mutually exclusive universal and the particular, which have historically exercised their mesmerizing conceptual influence on

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[5] The case of negotiating two kinds of hospitality – an unconditional as opposed to a conditional variety – without choosing between them, will be discussed later in this paper. See Olivier (2005) for a sustained investigation into the differences between relativism and 'relativity' in the case of complex linguistic or discursive relations.

the Enlightenment or modernity, and its counterpart, postmodernity, respectively. The upshot then is that opting for the former (that *9/11* as trauma affects everyone in the world) imparts a universally shared anxiety, while opting for the latter entails a divisive, particularistic competition for sympathy and 'justice'. So where does 'thinking' in a poststructuralist manner about this take one? Should one look for inventive ways to do simultaneous justice to the universal and the particular, or the global and the national?

One possible mode of proceeding[6] is suggested by Lyotard (1991) where he proposes 'rewriting modernity' as an alternative way of thinking about postmodernity. Among the various meanings that could be attributed to such 'rewriting' he favours what is known, in psychoanalysis, as 'working through'. This entails traversing the psychic territory where 'things went wrong', again, in anamnesis, but according to a certain art or technique of 'free association', or 'free-floating attention' characterized by a '…double gesture, forwards and backwards', without overly rational or 'instrumental' preconceptions or plans, 'listening' to each and every fragment of sound or meaning, so that 'something', some pattern (or lack of it), slowly emerges (1991: 26, 30-31). The reason for such a manner of proceeding in psychoanalysis has to do, as is well known, with the fact that repressed material cannot, by definition, be remembered, forced into the open at will, but has to be decoded by the psychoanalyst on the basis of the scraps of dialogue, slips of the tongue, and so on, that permeate the discourse of the analysand.

What Lyotard proposes concerning the postmodern is analogous to such a technique, and as will become apparent, Derrida's way of thinking about the notion of 'hospitality', for example. Again, it means 'working through' much that has been forgotten about it (as well as some of its unrealized future possibilities), but may still surface in the course of a kind of 'forwards and backwards' gesture that remains attentive to clues concerning the contours of a hidden picture. Derrida (2004: 7-8) also seems

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[6] Needless to say, other approaches than the ones pursued here are indeed possible. One worth mentioning in passing is that of philosopher and psychoanalytic theorist, Julia Kristeva, especially regarding her concept of 'revolt'. See Olivier (2006) for an exploration of this.

to have something like 'working through' in mind where he responds to a question from Richard Kearney (about a month after *9/11*), namely, how he (Derrida) understands the 'dialectic' between the American nation and the 'other out there', as well as (more elusively) the 'other within' the nation. The 'longest' way to understand this dialectic, says Derrida (2004: 8):

> … will be the study of the history and embodiment of Islam. How can one explain that this religion – one that is now in terms of demography the most powerful – and those nations which embody its beliefs, have missed something in history, something that is not shared with Europe – namely, Enlightenment, science, economy, development? …it took some centuries, during which Christianity and Judaism succeeded in associating with the techno-scientific-capitalistic development while the Arabic-Islamic world did not. They remained poor, attached to old models, repressive, even more phallocentric than the Europeans (which is already something)[7].

It is significant that, in this interview with Kearney, Derrida implicates an 'other' that also features prominently in the earlier interview with Borradori during the same period immediately following *September 11* (Derrida 2003: 95, 98). This is related to the question of 'working through' the terrain within which certain historical choices and decisions were made, and of reconstituting such an 'other' differently. Later in the Kearney interview, he alludes to the importance of the political as a sphere that requires restructuring, for 'enlightenment' to be effective in a non-homogeneous Islam within which there are different, countervailing stances regarding violence (Derrida 2004: 9):

> These differences, however, within Islam, cannot be developed efficiently without a development of the institution of the political, of the transformation of the *structures* of the society.

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[7] In the interview with Borradori, Derrida (2003: 122-123) also elaborates on related aspects of the history and present socio-economic conditions of Islamic cultures.

Bert Olivier

This is an indication of Derrida's thinking on questions of alternative possibilities, including 'enlightenment', which remain latent within Islam, despite not having been activated historically. The failure of Islam, historically, to adopt reason, as the West did, in its Enlightenment guise as fundamental principle for the transformation of a once autocratic, hierarchically authoritarian society, is visible in the contemporary persistence, in Islamic countries, of repressive, hierarchically theocratic rule. This does not preclude the belated, contemporary development of Islamic societal structures that would make dialogue between East and West a viable option.

It should be noted that such an openness to alternative developments within society – which would not be subject to the traditional binary logic of 'self' and 'other' – presupposes, in principle, a third possibility which eschews the trap of 'either a or b'. What is at stake here may be understood better when one turns to another instance of what Lyotard calls 'working through' in Derrida's work (2001). This concerns the question – in a world where refugees and asylum-seekers increasingly face difficulties of accommodation – of cosmopolitanism and the possibility of establishing 'cities of refuge', which he places in the context of a perhaps more fundamental question, that of *hospitality*. Ignoring, for the moment, all the historical and institutional details within which he frames the difficulty that one faces with the above questions, the gist of his 'elaboration' (working-through) seems to me to be the following[8].

From the perspective of a putative 'citizen of the world' Derrida (2001: 3) poses the question, whether a 'legitimate distinction' may still be drawn between 'the two forms of the metropolis – the City and the State'. Moreover, could one 'dream' of a 'novel status' of the city as a place of

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[8] One should keep in mind that this essay first appeared in 1997 (in French), *before* the event of *9/11*. The later interview with Borradori, post *9/11* (Derrida 2003), is a clear indication that Derrida would have felt even less sanguine about the prospects of 'cities of refuge' at that time than here, where he seems to hold out the possibility of something concrete emerging from the efforts on the part of institutions such as the International Parliament of Writers (which he was here addressing on the topic in Strasbourg in 1996).

'refuge' through the '*renewal* of international law' (2001: 3)? He regards the call by the International Parliament of Writers, for cities of refuge everywhere, as nothing less than a 'new cosmo-*politics'* (2001: 4), in so far as such cities might '…reorient the politics of the state' which is still dominated by the idea of 'state sovereignty'. It is precisely the latter sovereignty that Derrida wishes to question (and as I hope to show, is also what Ulrich Beck enables one to do via his conception of 'cosmopolitanism'). As Derrida puts it (2001: 4-5): 'This should no longer be the ultimate horizon for cities of refuge. Is this possible?'

In the process of providing a tentative answer to this question, he traverses a complex terrain, touching upon several important issues, before arriving at what I believe is the culminating point of his argument. These include, firstly, the all-important allusion to the need to go beyond what the 'old word(s)', 'cities of refuge', signifies, by introducing '…an original concept of hospitality, of the duty (*devoir*) of hospitality, and of the right (*droit*) to hospitality' (2001: 5). Derrida's task here is to flesh out what such a concept of hospitality would be. One of his first tasks is to characterize the context of what he calls 'this new ethic or this new cosmo*politics* of the cities of refuge…', even if he seems to despair (2001: 5) of the possibility of listing all the threats to it, '…of menaces, of acts of censorship…or of terrorism, of persecutions and of enslavements in all their forms…'. In passing it is noteworthy, as he points out, that the victims of these menaces are almost always anonymous, and are *increasingly* '…what one refers to as intellectuals, scholars, journalists, and writers – men and women capable of speaking out...' (2001: 6).

Hannah Arendt's work on 'The decline of the nation-state and the end of the rights of man' is a major reference point to Derrida (2001: 6) for reconstructing and working through the historical context of what he is proposing here. In her analysis of 'the modern history of minorities (the stateless, the homeless and the displaced, *inter alia*), she speaks of '*two great upheavals*' in Europe. These are the 'progressive abolition…of a right to asylum' (in the face of the dispersal of masses of stateless people between the two wars), and the abandonment of the usual turn to 'repatriation or naturalisation' in the wake of an (evidently unmanageable) 'influx of refugees' at that time (Derrida 2001: 6-7). Against the backdrop of what Derrida calls the 'shadow' of 'these traumas' identified by Arendt, he insists

– 'working through' past historical 'traumas' in the manner suggested by Lyotard – on the necessity of posing new questions concerning the role cities could play under conditions that have been deteriorating for those in dire need of asylum of some kind (2001: 7-8):

> How can the right to asylum be redefined and developed without repatriation and without naturalization? Could the City, equipped with new rights and greater sovereignty, open up new horizons of possibility previously undreamt of by international state law?

He stresses that he is thinking of neither 'restoring' the classical concept of the city (as *polis*) by giving it new 'powers', nor of predicating new attributes of the city as 'old subject' (2001: 8), but that he is 'dreaming of another concept…set of rights…politics of the city'[9]. To the question, whether there is '…any hope for cities exercising hospitality', Derrida (2001: 8-9) reaffirms that the idea of human rights surpasses the realm of international law, but asks whether, in the required re-evaluation of the roles of states, federations and unions, the city could emancipate itself from nation-states in order to become a (truly) '*free city*' in a novel sense. He thus acknowledges, with Arendt, the limitations of international law by inter-state treaties, which not even a supposed world-government[10] could resolve. He cautions, however, that the theoretical and political task one faces is formidable, given the decline in the respect accorded the right to political asylum in Europe.

In the pages that follow, Derrida discusses the vicissitudes of 'hospitality' to political refugees and other asylum seekers in France and elsewhere (with reference to the Geneva Convention and its amendments) He

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[9] Lest anyone should regard this as utopian, Derrida (2001: 8) reminds one that something – inseparable from the 'turbulence' which is affecting international law – has already been initiated, albeit modestly, in this direction by the group of writers to which he belongs.

[10] It is interesting to note that Hardt and Negri (2001: xii) believe that the current global situation is already characterized by a transition to a 'supra-national' state of affairs, where matters of global importance are increasingly being approached as something to be resolved by supranational bodies and agencies instead of 'international' ones.

remarks (2001: 12-13) on the absurdity, that under certain specifications of 'immigration control' someone would be granted asylum on condition that she or he would not expect any economic benefit upon immigration. This veritable 'Catch 22'-situation highlights the impossibility of separating the economic from the political.

Another pertinent issue raised by Derrida (2001: 14-15) in this context is the historical tendency in the modern nation state, noted by Benjamin and Arendt for instance, for the police to be granted extraordinarily increased powers. In his words (2001: 14), the 'police become omnipresent and spectral in the so-called civilized states once they undertake to *make the law*, instead of simply contenting themselves with applying it and seeing that it is observed'. This situation, he points out (p.15), has become ever more serious, and he reminds one that, as a countervailing development, a movement has come into being in France to protest 'violations of hospitality'. This is not surprising when one reads that proposals exist(ed) at national level (at the time of Derrida's writing), '…to treat as acts of terrorism, or as "participation in a criminal conspiracy", all hospitality accorded to "foreigners" whose "papers are not in order", or those simply "without papers"'. This movement from what was previously regarded as a 'criminal act' to labeling it a 'terrorist act' (2001: 16) is especially significant for the theme of the present paper. 'Hospitality' in a post *9/11*-world cannot be conceived of without considering the impact of this event – widely considered a paradigm instance of a 'terror attack' – on relations with the 'other' (something which Derrida was not in a position to consider at the time of this address on cosmopolitanism).

What does Derrida find that is affirmatively pertinent to his purpose regarding the revitalization of the spirit of cosmopolitanism and a certain hospitality? First (2001: 16), he links the phrase 'city of refuge' with the 'cultivation' of 'an ethic of hospitality' which, he immediately points out, is tautological, because hospitality 'is culture itself' (that is, there could be no cultural practice without a welcoming of what is new or other within the circle of familiarity). More than this: because it involves *ethos* in the sense of 'the familiar place of dwelling', which implies ways of entering into relations with self and others, Derrida claims that '*ethics is hospitality*' (2001: 16-17). In other words, hospitality and ethics both entail a mode of 'reception' of the *other* (in oneself as well as extrinsic to oneself), in order to

come to terms with it, to '…appropriate, control, and master according to different modalities of violence…' (p. 17). It is therefore understandable that there is a 'history of hospitality', including its 'perversion'. After all, 'receiving' or 'appropriating' the other is not synonymous with 'mastering' it in varying degrees and modes of violence.

The relevance of these insights for the question of terror(ism) in a global and cosmopolitan context should already be clear. The ethics of hospitality, which always implicates the other or otherness within oneself, and within a specific nation, as well as extrinsic to them, must unavoidably also apply to so-called 'terrorists', who would be similarly subject to variously violent modalities of mastery and control. The parallel between the terrorist as 'exterior other' and the otherness within oneself (one's alter ego, for example, or the different subject positions that each 'healthy' individual human subject necessarily occupies)[11]; or within the collective 'we', the 'nation', is important here. On pain of undermining one's psychic well-being, one learns not to delude oneself into believing that one can obliterate, at will, the different aspects of one's individual or collective being. Instead, one learns to negotiate social reality in terms of the different registers signalled by these. So too, one could or should learn that violent *destruction* of the 'terrorist other' is not the only option. Its otherness can be negotiated once it is recognized that, this otherness notwithstanding, it may be approached as representing a counterpart of the individual or collective 'self', and as such may also be thought of as having something in *common* with the latter. Recall that, in his comments on *9/11* (discussed earlier), Derrida talks about what he terms '*The Cold War in the head*' (2003: 94), or 'autoimmunity' in the guise of fear of terrorism that *engenders* terror and defence simultaneously. The paradox here is that fear of terror(-ism) 'in the head' terrorizes most, and it gives rise to a 'double suicide' (of the 'terrorists' and of those hosts who trained them). Clearly this, too, suggests that a productive approach to the persisting problem of terror would be to 'work through' the grounds for the fear of terror(ism), which are at least partly rooted in one's (or a nation's) own (imaginary or repressed) fears and anxieties.

As a brief aside, here it is instructive to take note of what Hardt and Negri (2005: xv) say about 'the common' as something that is produced

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[11] See Olivier (2004) for an elaboration on these in psychoanalytical terms.

between or among all the diverse members of what they call 'multitude' – those people worldwide, across a wide spectrum of nationalities, cultures and races, who are (again paradoxically) similar *and* different at the same time: similar in their opposition to the hegemonic forces of 'Empire' (the 'capitalist states' and multinationals), and different in their specificity. The 'common' is produced every time such people, in their various acts of communication, generate a common humanity that surpasses all their differences (without neutralizing them), and points to the future possibility of a truly global society where the 'us' and 'them' of different nations, different races, and different classes no longer have any decisive alienating validity. It is this kind of paradoxical situation which has the capacity to defuse the explosive standoff between 'terrorist other' and individual or collective 'self', a defusion that Derrida and other poststructuralists, as well as these two Marxist thinkers, adumbrate in their thought.

The fact that Derrida alludes to the 'history of hospitality' to find some significant 'reference points' (2001: 17), signals the quasi-psychoanalytical process of 'working through' in which he is engaged here. The first of these concerns the 'city of refuge', which, in his view, 'bridges several traditions', of which he names the *Hebraic tradition* (p. 17) with its 'cities of refuge' for those seeking protection from vengeance, and its juridical tradition of the 'right to immunity and to hospitality'; the *medieval tradition* of the 'sovereignty of the city' and its self-determined laws of hospitality (p. 18); and the *cosmopolitan tradition* shared by the Stoic and Pauline currents of thought, inherited by Enlightenment figures such as Kant (pp. 18-20). It is relevant for present purposes that he talks of the attempts to determine 'laws of hospitality' as being aimed at 'conditioning' what he calls the 'Great Law of Hospitality – an unconditional Law, both singular and universal' (2001: 18). Here one witnesses once again Derrida's poststructuralist logic operating, through the setting-up of an opposition which he then proceeds to 'deconstruct' by negotiating both extremes in such a way that the one may be seen as setting limits to the other reciprocally. Significantly, he has already turned towards Kant's important text on 'perpetual peace' and 'universal hospitality' (2001: 11), which he returns to at this juncture (2001: 19-22). He points out that Kant imposes two limits on the 'conditions of universal hospitality', one concerning 'reflection' and the other 'transformation or…progress'. At first, however, the *unconditional*

aspect of this 'cosmopolitan law' is conceived by Kant as an 'imprescriptible and inalienable' '*natural law*'. This is predicated on the principle of the 'common possession of the surface of the earth' by all finite, rational human beings, which precludes the exclusion of some by others from any 'surface area' of this 'common place' in principle (2001: 20). Importantly, however, for Kant this is synonymous with the state of 'perpetual peace' among human beings, and hence it functions as a kind of impossible possibility that enables intermittent acts of hospitality, just as an 'impossible justice' works to enable a deconstruction of laws, and inversely, deconstruction of laws makes justice momentarily possible (Caputo 1997: 132-133).

Here already one witnesses, in Kant's work, an aspect of 'globalization', namely that which emphasizes the finitude of the globe as a commonly shared space, from (and, presumably, on) which an 'infinite dispersion' by human beings is 'impossible' (2001: 20-21), and hence requires a certain kind of unconditional, limitless, excessive hospitality. This 'aneconomic' species of hospitality is counterbalanced, however, by what Derrida hastens to add, namely that Kant distinguishes it fundamentally from its 'economic' counterpart – a hospitality which is anything but unconditional. Instead, it operates in cultural, institutional or political place(s), and no longer in a naturally and commonly shared space. Access to such culturally constructed spaces of 'habitat' is not subject to unconditional access, for Kant, but to limitation in the guise of borders, of national, political or public space (Derrida 2001: 21). Moreover, as Derrida proceeds to show, Kant infers from this two 'consequences', adding two 'paradigms': the exclusion of hospitality as 'a right of residence', limiting it to the 'right of visitation', and the dependence of hospitality on 'state sovereignty', especially where 'right of residence' is concerned (2001: 21-22). In fact, while Kant appears to link the right of *visiting* a foreign country 'without hostility' (a qualification that introduces a conditional moment) to the 'natural law' of unconditional, universal hospitality in the context of a shared global space, he connects the right to *residence* (being a 'guest') in a foreign country conditionally to an enabling 'compact' or 'treaty between states' (see the quotation from Kant's essay on pp. 21-22).

One can only echo Derrida's remark (2001: 22), apropos of Kant's thoughts on hospitality, that: 'This is of great consequence, particularly for … "violations of hospitality" … but just as much for the sovereignty of cities

…'. Indeed – it seems to me as if these questions are no less problematical today than in Kant's own day. In fact, they are even more difficult, and understandably so: *9/11* was a watershed event which catapulted the world into a new era of suspicion and uncertainty. This has cast a pall on prospects of achieving even the kind of inter-national 'hospitality' that would exemplify the first of the two 'conditional' kinds distinguished by Kant, namely the right to be treated as a 'visitor' in a foreign country (on condition of peaceful behaviour). Accordingly, the task facing the world regarding practices of hospitality is a difficult one, aptly formulated by Derrida (2001: 22-23):

> It is a question of knowing how to transform and improve the law, and of knowing if this improvement is possible within an historical space which takes place *between* the Law of an unconditional hospitality, offered *a priori* to every other, to all newcomers, *whoever they may be*, and *the* conditional laws of a right to hospitality, without which *The* unconditional Law of hospitality would be in danger of remaining a pious and irresponsible desire, without form and without potency, and of even being perverted at any moment.

This is as much as saying that, just as justice would remain impotent without the law to mediate it, and the law would be tyrannical without justice sensitizing it to difference (Caputo 1997: 136), so too, unconditional hospitality requires the mediating force of law-conditioned hospitality to get anywhere near conditioned actualization. In a world pervaded by actual and potential acts of 'terror' – including 'state terror' – one would do well to heed Derrida here. Unless this approach of acting in the interval 'between' these two forms of hospitality were adopted, one would risk losing the actual as well as potential *non-terrorist other* by reducing him or her to the category of the terrorist without, hospitably, even giving them a chance to be the peaceful 'visitor' or 'guest'. But this means, of course, especially after *9/11*, that one has to negotiate or 'interweave' the unconditional and the conditional. That is, unconditional hospitality – which constitutes the other as a fellow human being in a shared global space – has to be mediated by its conditional varieties – which constitute the other as a visitor or guest in

terms of specific laws of immigration.

Is this all there is to it, though? Doesn't Derrida's deconstruction of the opposition between these two types of hospitality in the context of cosmopolitanism point to a similar approach to the *other* in the context of terror, in its turn framed by the context of cosmopolitanism? Ulrich Beck's work on cosmopolitanism – itself a species of 'working through' – is a valuable source of reflection in this regard. In 'A new cosmopolitanism is in the air' (2007), Beck (who first gained notoriety with his book, *Risk society*; 1992) puts forward seven 'theses' as an answer to the question (2007: 2): 'How does our understanding of power and control become altered from a cosmopolitan perspective?' Here he understands 'cosmopolitan(ism)' verbally, as the process of 'cosmopolitanization', or '… the erosion of distinct boundaries dividing markets, states, civilizations, cultures, and not least of all the lifeworlds of different peoples' (2007: 1). The consonance between Beck's position and Derrida's analysis of hospitality is immediately apparent from Beck's observation that, considering the blurring of boundaries globally, together with their increasing permeability to information- and capital-flows, this is (2007: 1-2):

> Less so … to flows of people: tourists yes, migrants no. Taking place in national and local lifeworlds and institutions is a process of internal globalization. This alters the conditions for the construction of social identity, which need no longer be impressed by the negative juxtaposition of 'us' and 'them'.

In other words, for Beck (2007: 2), globalization (or cosmopolitanization) does not occur in abstraction, but in the daily lives of people, in politics at all levels: even 'domestic' politics have become inescapably global because of 'interdependencies, [reciprocal] flows, networks, threats, and so on ("global domestic politics")'. Beck's reference to 'threats' clearly implicates terror of all shades – terror has become global, even where it seems to be limited to domestic, national concerns, in so far as the globe has become a space of communicational and informational interconnectedness. This not only applies to so-called 'acts of terror', but to what Derrida thinks of as the 'fear of terror(ism) in the head', with its tendency of construing the terrorist other as *wholly* other. In so doing it establishes metonymic connections and

putative identities among such 'others' in various countries globally – something that simply ignores the indissoluble link between 'self' and 'other', as pointed out before.

The seven 'theses' that comprise Beck's answer to the question concerning power in a cosmopolitan context are as follows:

1. First thesis: 'Globalisation is anonymous control'.
2. Second thesis: 'A new perspective for a different approach to action'.
3. Third thesis: 'Only capital is permitted to break the rules'.
4. Fourth thesis: 'We, the consumers, constitute the counter-power'.
5. Fifth thesis: 'Sacrifice autonomy, gain sovereignty'.
6. Sixth thesis: 'A state towards which the nation is indifferent'.
7. Seventh thesis: 'Convert walls into bridges!'

The *first* of these (Beck 2007: 2-6) dwells on what Beck calls 'meta power play' in the relation between states and the global economy – something of utmost importance for the question of terror globally, given Beck's insight, that the economy '…has developed a kind of meta power' that enables it to surpass power relations as articulated in terms of the nation state and territories. Just think of the impact of anonymous, territory-independent economic power on states where particular or collective political, cultural and/or religious sentiments seem powerless to resist the transformational hegemonic power of capital at all these levels. Small wonder that those who harbour these sentiments look upon forms of 'terrorist' activity as the only available kind of resistance[12]. This insight is not novel *per se* – Lyotard (1984) already noted, as far back as in 1979, that power could no longer be understood in terms of geographical territorial demarcation, but had instead spread its lines of influence across the postmodern world economically and epistemically through information networks. But what Beck foregrounds against this backdrop is significant, namely that the new 'meta power play … alters the rules of world politics with their orientation to the nation state' (p. 3). The reason for this capacity

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[12] See Hardt and Negri (2001: 146-150), as well as Joel Kovel (2002: xii-xiii) for insightful elaborations on the rise of religious fundamentalism in the face of hegemonic economic (and one may add: military) power on the part of the so-called capitalist states.

becomes clearer when he points to the 'source' of such 'meta power' on the part of the 'strategies' of capital. This is expressed as a paradox: today, coercive economic power is not wielded primarily through the threat of (military) invasion (something that the Bush administration did not seem to understand), but through '… the threat of the non-invasion of the investors, or of their departure' (p. 3)[13].

  We find here the form of postmodern, global power, which is seldom directly based on the use of military violence, given the facility and flexibility of anonymous, decentred power that functions 'independently of location'. Hence, it is no understatement for Beck to claim (p. 4): 'Not imperialism, but non-imperialism; not invasion, but the withdrawal of investments constitutes the core of global economic power'. Moreover, for Beck this power requires neither political implementation[14] nor political legitimacy; it even sidesteps democratic institutions like legal systems – it is 'translegal' (p. 4) – but it nevertheless changes the rules of power nationally and internationally. Beck remarks on the astonishing analogy between this logic of economic power and military logistics (pp. 4-5): 'The volume of investment capital corresponds to the fire-power of military weaponry, with the decisive distinction, however, that in this case, power is augmented by threatening not to shoot'. These observations explain his contention, that globalization 'is not an option; it is an anonymous [and pervasive] power', and represents '… the organized absence of responsibility'[15]. This is

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[13] Beck elaborates rather humorously on this as follows (2007: 3): 'That is to say, there is only one thing more terrible than being overrun by the multinationals, and that is not to be overrun by them'.

[14] I would tend to say: unless 'necessitated', in military (dis-)guise (as in the case of the US's Iraq invasion), by resistance to such economic power.

[15] Beck points out that, ironically, this process goes hand in hand with the imperative, that states invest optimally in 'research and development' for the sake of maximizing this global 'offensive power of capital' (2007: 5). Knowledge (of a certain kind, of course) should reinforce and expand the current paradigm of power. This implies that a different kind of knowledge, such as that disseminated by Beck, Derrida and others, functions as a counter-discourse in relation to the anonymous, but strategic (discursive and non-discursive) operations of global capital.

Foucault with a vengeance – no longer is it merely politics which is 'war by other means', but economics, too, which exhibits clear traits of bellicosity.

Under the *second* thesis (Beck 2007: 6-7) the implications of the first are elaborated regarding the 'opportunities for action among the co-players' in the sphere of 'meta-power', which depend upon the various successive definitions of the political by the 'actors' themselves. Beck asserts that, under these circumstances, new opportunities for power-acquisition are conditional upon novel categories promoting a *cosmopolitan* perspective, and decisively on a 'critique of nation state orthodoxy' (p. 6). In fact, he reminds one, a blind adherence to 'the old, national dogmatism', instead of switching to a cosmopolitan mindset, is likely to lead to irrelevance, as well as to very high costs: '… nationalism – a rigid adherence to the position that world political meta-power games are and must remain national ones – is revealed to be extremely expensive. A fact learned by the USA, a world power, recently in Iraq' (pp. 6-7). He adds that the lose/lose and win/lose situations of the meta-power game could be transformed into a win/win situation for capital, the state, as well as global civil society, on condition that the new characteristics of power relations were grasped, and a cosmopolitan world-view were to be adopted: 'consciousness maximizes new possibilities for action (cosmopolitan perspective)' (p. 7). What this means for the theme of this paper, is that the emergence of a truly cosmopolitan way of thinking, in the place of an outdated nationalist mindset, could eventually defuse the need for terror.

The *third* thesis entails the proposition that neoliberalism enjoys power which rests on radical inequality: the 'breaking or changing of rules remains the revolutionary prerogative of capital' (p. 9)[16]. This is because capital is presented as being 'absolute and autonomous', and as entailing the assurance that what is 'good for capital' is also '… the best option for everyone' – something that allows one to view capital, ironically, as the

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[16] This, despite the fact (in Beck's view) that neoliberalism ironically copied Marx's underestimation of religious and nationalist movements, as well as his one-dimensional history-model, while ignoring his insight into the unleashing of destructive forces by capitalism,

'preferred path to socialism' (p. 8)[17]. Several implications here converge on the insight, that neoliberalism actually engenders terror(ism) through the unfolding of its own logic of unquestionable, exclusive economic validity.

Against the background of the third thesis, above, the *fourth* one advances the claim that (2007: 9-10):

> … the counter-power [to capital] of global civil society rests on the figure of the political consumer. Not unlike the power of capital, this counterpower [sic] is a consequence of the power to say – always and everywhere – 'no', to refuse to make a purchase. This weapon of non-purchasing cannot be delimited, whether spatially, temporally, or in terms of an object. It is, however, contingent upon the consumer's access to money, and upon the existence of an [sic] superfluity of available commodities and services among which consumers may choose.

For Beck, therefore, the consumers of the world could organize themselves transnationally into a 'lethal weapon' against capital – after all, they cannot be fired (p. 10)! This 'growing counter-power of the consumer' points to a lesson concerning 'terror'. Just as the consumer can say 'no' to the exhortation to buy, people could also say 'no' to the option of opposing the hegemonic capitalist countries or powers by means of terror, and instead join the increasing numbers of people who are becoming aware of their power to combat capital (the mainstay of the hegemonic nations) where necessary. After all, what consumers and would-be anti-western 'terrorists' have in common, is the fact that their actions are predicated on the realization that the state no longer constitutes the counter-power to capital. Once this course of action is adopted on a large enough scale, it would further obviate so-called 'state terror' – it is inconceivable for the state to intervene in 'free economic activity' by forcing it to be un-free in the context of the 'free market'.

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[17] This insight on Beck's part resonates with Slavoj Žižek's (2009: 13-20) notion of a 'liberal communist', namely a capitalist (for example Bill Gates or George Soros) who claims to be doing the economic upliftment of society better than communism or socialism could.

The *fifth* thesis put forward by Beck is, to my mind, extremely pertinent to the question of terror(ism) in the context of cosmopolitanism. Here, he urges one to 'Sacrifice autonomy [and] gain sovereignty', which is nothing short of 'redefining state politics' (2007: 10). With this, Beck is at pains to demonstrate that, to transcend 'the framework of nationalism', the equation of sovereignty with autonomy – on which nationalism rests – must be seen to be cancelled, obliterated, in the context of cosmopolitanization. What this means is that the latter process, which entails the interdependence, many-levelled cooperation, networking and cultural diversification of states, actually implies a *loss of (formal) autonomy*, but a corresponding *growth in sovereignty*. The latter refers to the sense of states' increasing capacity to resolve their own problems, largely because of growing collaboration and interdependence. As Beck puts it (2007: 12): '…proceeding now in the wake of political globalization is the transformation of autonomy on the basis of national exclusion to sovereignty on the basis of transnational inclusion'. What this means for terror(ism) is the potential defusion or neutralization of grounds for both 'state terror' as well as 'anti-state terror': should globalization actualize the cosmopolitan condition of mutual interdependence of all countries, all societies, communities and individuals, there would no longer be any need or motivation for acts of terror. Although the present state of 'globalization' already entails its possible actualization, I realize that the possibility of reaching such a position of 'saturated' cosmopolitanism (which would include a pervasive acknowledgement that this is the case) is almost inconceivable. However, it presupposes a mindset worth striving for – one which also underlies what Hardt and Negri call the 'common' produced by exchanges among individuals comprising the 'multitude' (referred to earlier).

The *sixth* thesis (2007: 12-15) claims that the 'cosmopolitan state' is not reached via the 'dissolution' of the nation state, but 'through its inner transformation', that is, through what was earlier referred to as 'internal globalization', which 'reconfigures' the political, legal, economic and cultural processes at national and local levels. For Beck, this does not mean that the national state ceases to exist; rather, it assumes a 'hermaphroditic' character: 'simultaneously a cosmopolitan and a national state'. The latter, therefore, instead of positioning itself *against* other nations, would enter into collaborative relations of mutual cooperation and interdependence with other

states for the resolution of shared (that is, both national and international) problems and the promotion of shared interests[18]. Such interests would include the value of an acknowledgement of a common, shared humanity, regardless of cultural differences (2001: 12-13). This explains why Beck believes that the cosmopolitan state presupposes 'national indifference towards the state', which enables the coexistence of 'various national identities' (through the principle of 'constitutional tolerance within and cosmopolitan rights without'; p. 13). In this way (analogous to the way the religious wars of the 16th and 17th century in Europe were ended by separating the state from religion), '…the national world (civil) wars of the 20th century could be concluded by the separation of state from nation' (p. 13). Crucially, he points out, the 'theologians of nationalism' would find this inconceivable, because it entails '…a break with the ostensibly constitutive fundamental concept of the political as such: the friend-foe schema' (p. 14). He cites the European Union as an historical example of how this schema was subverted, and how 'enemies have been successfully converted into neighbours', via the 'political art of creating interdependencies'. Needless to say, this example may be regarded, for purposes of the theme of this paper, as a model for the process by which the need for 'terror(ism)' could be subverted. In this respect, I believe that Beck is correct where he says (2007: 14-15):

> The theory and concept of the cosmopolitan state must be distinguished from three positions [all of which would maintain the *status quo* as conducive to terror; B.O.]: from the illusion of the autonomous national state; from the neoliberal notion of a minimal deregulated economic state; and finally, from the irreal seductions of a unified global government, one whose concentrated power render it

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[18] In *Cosmopolitan vision* (2006: 2) Beck puts the relationship between the cosmopolitan and the national as follows: '… in the cosmopolitan outlook, methodologically understood, there resides the latent potential to break out of the self-centred narcissism of the national outlook and the dull incomprehension with which it infects thought and action, and thereby enlighten human beings concerning the real, internal cosmopolitanization of their lifeworlds and institutions'.

invincible[19].

Beck's *seventh* thesis (2007: 15-17), which exhorts us to 'convert walls into bridges', claims that his version of 'cosmopolitanism' is not simply a new name for familiar phenomena such as multiculturalism and globalization. Here it is worth quoting him at length, because what he says captures exactly what I would argue regarding the conditions that would render 'terror(ism)' redundant (2007: 15-16):

> To this, I would reply: my theory of the 'cosmopolitan perspective' describes different realities, and it is constructed differently. All of the above ideas are based on the premise of difference, of alienation, of the strangeness of the Other. Multiculturalism, for example, means that various ethnic groups live side by side within a single state. [While] tolerance means acceptance, even when it goes against the grain, putting up with difference as an unavoidable burden. Cosmopolitan tolerance, on the other hand, is more than that. It is neither defensive nor passive, but instead active: it means opening oneself up to the world of the Other, perceiving difference as an enrichment, regarding and treating the Other as fundamentally equal. Expressed theoretically: either-or logic is replaced by both-and logic.

Here Beck reveals himself as being at one with poststructuralists, who have been in the process of implementing the 'logic of both-and' for a long time (at least since the 1960s)[20]. Another way of putting this is to say that he is engaged in what was referred to earlier as 'complexity-thinking', which is an attempt to get beyond binaries in an effort to think what has traditionally been construed as 'antagonistic opposites' *together*, to negotiate them in a paradoxical manner, which tends to open up unheard-of possibilities. And this is precisely what Beck and Derrida, whose work I have scrutinized here, enable one to do regarding terror(ism). In fact, in the essay under discussion

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[19] The third position, above, corresponds to what Hardt and Negri (2001) conceive of as Empire, which they see as already being actualized at various levels.

[20] See in this regard Olivier (1993 and 1998a) for an elaboration of poststructuralist logic in the work of Derrida.

Beck mentions the 'battle against terrorism' explicitly (2007: 16) as one of the problem-areas that would benefit from 'converting walls into bridges', while in an earlier text (Beck 2006: 146-153) he devotes an entire section of a chapter to the topic.

Not surprisingly, his analysis in the earlier text – *The cosmopolitan vision* (2006) – lays bare paradoxes similar to those uncovered in his more recent essay (as well as to those alluded to by Derrida). These include the collapse of the distinction between war and peace, between enemies, terrorists and criminals, between localized wars (in Iraq, among others) and global risk (pp. 146-147), and between the perception and the reality of danger (p. 149). Add to this Beck's elaboration on the following points, then one can hardly ignore the persuasiveness of his (Beck's) claim that '…the threat of terrorism is rewriting the global geography of power' (2006: 153):

- The absurdity of combating the 'horror of terror' with the 'horror of war' (p. 148);
- The fact that terrorism functions according to the (paralyzing) interaction between actual, localized catastrophe (e.g. *9/11*) and omnipresent, fantasy-fed danger (from which its political power derives; pp. 149-150 – compare Derrida's '*The Cold War in the head*');
- The subversion or neutralization, by suicidal terrorists, of the state's deterrent power through the threat of violence;
- The paradoxical state-terrorism dialectic of 'mutual *empowerment through disempowerment*' (their mutual refusal of recognition, which presupposes the distinction between *terror attacks* and [their promotion to] *terrorism* as a global phenomenon; p. 151);
- The dialectic of impotence and omnipotence, or powerlessness (of the terrorists) and hegemonic power (of the military superpowers; p. 152).

The only viable way of addressing this state of affairs is to adopt a 'cosmopolitan' perspective in Beck's and Derrida's sense(s) of the word. If one compares Derrida's and Beck's approaches to hospitality and cosmopolitanism, and to terror(ism) with that of Noam Chomsky to similar issues, one is struck by interesting and far-reaching differences. The latter,

for all his steadfast courage as public intellectual in the face of the intimidating might of the Bush Administration in the US, has not made – and I must admit, seems incapable of making – the switch to the 'complexity thinking' so characteristic of the two Continental thinkers. In contrast to poststructuralist thinkers such as Derrida and Beck (whose nuanced, critically responsible thought should not be confused with an anything-goes 'postmodernism'), Chomsky's position and approach are those of the 'mainstream' Western intellectual[21]. Accordingly, he is determined to use all the available resources in an effort to point out discrepancies between overt claims and covert actions on the part of one's political adversary, as well as to uncover hidden motives and strategies (such as 'manufacturing consensus') in order to discredit the latter. But crucially, all of this occurs without seriously questioning or modifying what seems to me to be a very traditional, social-scientific mindset on his part. In *Interventions* (2007: 2), for example, Chomsky states:

> We should also be aware that much of the world regards Washington as a terrorist regime. In recent years, the United States has taken or backed actions in Colombia, Central America, Panama, Sudan and Turkey, to name only a few, that meet official U.S. definitions of 'terrorism' – or worse – that is, when Americans apply the term to enemies.

Again, he points out (2007: 77):

> Even if we put aside the crucial matter of the criminal invasion, it should be clear that prolonged violent conflict, including the hideous manifestations in Fallujah and elsewhere, might not have occurred had the U.S.-led occupation been less arrogant, ignorant, and

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[21] Just how different the poststructuralists' approach is – in this case that of Michel Foucault – from Chomsky's very conventional, 'scientific' approach, comes across forcibly in Paul Rabinow's reconstruction and discussion of their simultaneous appearance on Dutch television to debate the topic 'Human nature: Justice versus power'. See Rabinow 1984: Introduction, pp. 3-7.

incompetent. Conquerors willing to transfer authentic sovereignty, as Iraqis demand, would have chosen a different route.

In each of these excerpts one witnesses an informed and courageous stance against the unjustified imposition of military power on a foreign state or on specific 'hostile' groups in such states. But in neither of them does one encounter an attempt to alter the way in which one thinks *fundamentally* – the fact that he relativizes the concept of 'terrorist' in the first excerpt gives one the ideal opportunity to translate this into an insight regarding the paradoxical relation between 'self' and 'other' (individual or collective), but Chomsky fails to make this move. Similarly, in the second one his use of the term 'sovereignty' is quite conventionally compatible with the concept of the autonomous 'nation state', which he fails to question the way Beck and Derrida do in order to break out of the impasse of binary thinking. Chomsky therefore seems to me to offer far less by way of a novel, if not revolutionary, way of thinking about 'terror(ism)' than Derrida and Beck. The latter thinkers have made the switch to the crucial logic of 'both/and' – a logic that is characteristic of poststructuralist (*not* postmodernist) thinking across a broad range of themes and thinkers. In the world of the early 21st century, one has to learn to think and act differently. Beck puts it succinctly, and in a manner that is a fitting conclusion to this paper (2006: 2):

> Thus the cosmopolitan outlook is both the presupposition and the result of a conceptual reconfiguration of our modes of perception.

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