Terrorism

Terrorism:
Politics, Religion, Literature

Edited by

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SCHOLARS**

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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Terrorism, as a multifarious phenomenon, can be approached from different, even opposite perspectives. This report will examine, and seek to shed light on, the purpose of terrorism by analysing a variety of viewpoints on this most elusive of issues. Scholars will find food for thought in different areas: theoretical and actual, conceptual analysis and literature.

This volume consists of essays that deal with the definitions of terrorism, what qualifies as terrorism and Igor Priomoratz's dictum that there are really only two philosophical questions about terrorism: first, "What is it?" and, second, "Can it ever be justified?" – ontological and ethical questions. Liam Hart (**New Terrorism and Mythic Terrorism: A Philosophical Critique of the 'Expert Analysis'**) will track the first question (ontological) in order to clarify the claim that there is an old and a new terrorism, the latter being characterised as an irreconcilable fanatic willing to bring about mass casualties, and reaching the conclusion that there are no quantitative differences between the old and the new terrorism. Instead, the concept of *mythos* provides a way to understand differences of terroristic outlooks: weakly mythic terrorists demand only concessions from those who do not share their *mythoi*, whereas strongly mythic terrorists demand either conversion to their *mythoi*, or death.

Fátima Costa (**Terrorism and the Uses of Violence**) claims that although terrorism involves the use of violence for political goals, a strictly political approach to the subject is most likely, not only to fail the specific features of terrorism, but also to become an exercise of excuse and justification. A purely political analysis of terrorism traps us inevitably in the sliding scale argument. A critical stand towards terrorism is only possible from an ethical perspective that distinguishes terrorism from other forms of a political use of violence and assesses the moral implications of terror, the randomness of its violence and the intentional targeting of non-combatants.

According to Luis Manuel Bernardo (**Reasons of Violence, Violence of Reason: an interpretation based on Eric Weil's core paradox**) we tend nowadays to be surprised by the continuous presence of violent phenomena in our societies, as though we're convinced that we have reached, either in terms of social organisation or in the legal constitution

of democratic states, a definitive pattern of political perfection, the epitome of our striving. Furthermore, despite philosophical thought concerning a more dialectical and critical approach, the opposing realms of reason and violence work as a presupposition of further inquiries. Accordingly, terrorism appears most of the time as an extreme practice of violence that simultaneously challenges the foundational values of modern welfare and the consensus around the preference that should be accorded to modernity's rational guidelines in contemporary nation states. How can it be thought that, after being delivered from recent totalitarianism, humans wouldn't choose freedom and legality? Is it acceptable to conceive of political institutions deprived of a communitarian basis, making it impossible for individuals to satisfy their identity claims?

Luis Salgado de Matos (**To Defeat Terrorism, Study Statistics and Send for the Priest or the Free-mason**) starts by proposing a heuristic definition: terror is a violent and symbolic surprise. He then proceeds to analyse terror as an army, albeit of a special kind, in the framework of the political organisation conceived as an articulation of *Stände* (estates) – the terrorist is the warrior-monk. Next, he demonstrates that terrorism is a special kind of physical violence that operates through the moral element: terrorists blackmail and there is almost universal agreement that terrorism is born out of poverty. This symbolical definition of terrorism does not exclude its social roots; we think we can identify some of them with the phenomenon of rising expectations. Finally, he proposes practical conclusions on how to fight terrorism.

Regina Queiroz (**Sovereignty, Global Justice and Terrorism**) shows that some thinkers have justified the activity of current transnational terrorist groups, such as, Al-Qaeda, by the inequalities of the distribution of the benefits of globalisation, that is, a lack of global justice. In contrast, others have sustained that transnational terrorism will be a constitutive factor in any reaction against the inequalities resulting from the globalisation process. In this case, it shares more affinities than differences with the ideal of global justice, namely, the declassification of the political principles of a state's sovereignty and autonomy.

Andrea Amato (**Postmodern Terrorism amid Exclusivism and Individualism**) considers that recent terrorism may be termed post-modern in line with trends in Western societies, from which it draws several and meaningful typical features. Such definition stems from: the type of consensus that the terrorism manages to gain (populist, demagogic, leader-centred, media-based); the type of religiosity permeating the very fundamentalists (which is more personal); the sort of profile fitting the militant terrorist (which is, to a certain extent, individualistic).

João Tiago Proença (**Anarchism from the right: the terroristic approach of the Unabomber**) analyses the text known as the Unabomber-manifesto in order to show that eco-terrorism is likely to fall prey to the far right rhetoric and glorification of violence.

Since 9/11, Muslim-inspired terrorism has become the predominant object of terrorism studies. According to Andreas Armborst (**Jihadi World Politics**), the jihadi movement constantly issues statements about its political views. This article describes three major themes in the writings of jihadi ideologues. Although the main political claim of the jihadi movement (the establishment of a theocracy based on the principles of Sharia law according to the interpretation of Salafism) is at odds with the Western model of governance, its narrative also includes issues that cannot be so easily dismissed by the Western observer. These issues are presented in a journalistic fashion and presumably grant the movement a considerable deal of appeal and credibility. The paper concludes with a tentative answer to the question whether it is necessary and possible to counter the jihadi ideology.

Felipe Pathé Duarte (**Political Subversion or Religious Violence the Threat of Al-qaeda Ideology in Europe**) focuses on Al-Qaeda's doctrinal motivations. The combat against this growing phenomenon is done, primarily, by understanding its matrix. Hence, we assume that the religious irrationalism lies upstream, and that downstream lies a pretentiously political narrative that looks for some streaks of religiousness to justify profoundly revolutionary and modern action. In the river bed (the action), we have terror and violence as a way to undermine confidence.

Consequently, the approach ground has been set: violence and terror which serve as means of gaining power for a movement whose inconsistent narrative merges modern revolutionary doctrines and religious faith (which, in part, helps to justify the initial violence). In other words, one either performs a rational analysis around the goals or goes forward into the deeply emotional motivations.

David Silva e Sousa (**The impatience of praxis in Uli Edel's *Der Baader Meinhof Komplex***) focuses on the film by Uli Edel, *Der Baader Meinhof Komplex*. This near-document fiction is based on the memories and research of Stefan Aust, who worked with Ulrike Meinhof and her husband in his early days as a journalist. He dedicated himself to the research of the Red Army Faction (RAF) after its leaders died in prison in 1977. The character of Ulrike Meinhof is selected as a personification of the problematic relation between theory and praxis that was the object of a philosophical dispute between Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse

during the agitated years of 1967 to 1969.

Miguel Morgado (**Terrorism and Terrorists in Joseph Conrad's** ***The Secret Agent***) offers a reading of Conrad's *The Secret Agent* against its political and theoretical background and compares the view issued by the novelist with a more contemporary notion.

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CHAPTER ONE

NEW TERRORISM AND MYTHIC TERRORISM:
THE PLACE OF PHILOSOPHY IN STUDIES
ON TERRORISM

LIAM HARTE[1]

One can most fully understand this essay as a manifesto-by-example. Its bulk consists of a detailed philosophical analysis that, if correct, brings to light serious logical flaws in what is currently the most widely accepted analysis of the concept of the "new terrorist"– something I call the "expert analysis"– along with some proposals for correcting those flaws. I engage in such philosophising not merely for its own sake, but also to illustrate my vision of how a quite traditional type of Anglophone philosophy, in its most non-empirical guise, can contribute to an improved understanding of important concepts in contemporary disciplines other than philosophy. Possible examples of that contribution are innumerable, but I have chosen to concentrate on one that is very clearly related to the current worldwide preoccupation with violent terrorism and, particularly, that which is religiously-motivated.[2] Whatever my choice of illustration, my central point remains the same: that conceptual research of the kind that philosophy purveys is vital to the success of the empirical research characteristic of terrorism studies. As a manifesto, this paper is addressed both to philosophers and to non-philosophers. The philosophers I have in mind, primarily, are those who would reject applying philosophical techniques to current events as not being real philosophy or who would, for some other reason, simply shrink from competing with empirical disciplines. The non-philosophers are those who would reject the idea that philosophy can ever be usefully related to empirical matters, whether current events or not. Clearly, therefore, I must begin by explaining why there is any need to examine the logic of the expert analysis, or of any other concept deployed in the overwhelmingly empirical field of terrorism studies.

We in the Western philosophical tradition are notorious for disagreeing with each other. Indeed, one of the most eminent amongst us complained that, despite the fact that "it has been cultivated for many centuries by the most excellent minds....there is still no point in it which is not disputed and hence doubtful".[3] Nevertheless, however much we differ on particular questions, I see little reason to doubt that we all know that our primary task is that of undertaking detailed conceptual research. Even such clearly anti-idealist projects as Nietzsche's genealogy of morals or Charles L. Stevenson's emotivist moral theory are attempts to psychologise moral *concepts* in order to show how individuals or civilisations acquired them and how it might discard them, and thus clearly count as the kind of philosophical project I have in mind. To flesh out this claim, I am going to follow Isaiah Berlin – who, as an historian of ideas, may be better placed than any philosopher, including Descartes, Nietzsche, and Stevenson, to say what it is that we are up to – and take it that conceptual research is neither empirical nor formal.[4] So, on one hand, it is not, for instance, a kind of psychological research, notwithstanding the fact that its subject-matter is concepts which must be held (if they are actually held at all) by particular individuals. A concept's philosophical value, if it has any, resides in its accuracy regarding the phenomenon of which it is the concept, rather than in any facts about an individual's or a group's psychic history. On the other hand, philosophy is not a purely formal discipline, like mathematics. Philosophers cannot simply read off a philosophical doctrine from symbolic, logical proofs or truth-tables, however useful those tools are in evaluating the consistency of a position.

In the light of this outlook, the conceptual research that I conceive of philosophers undertaking must be speculative, at least in part, and is for that reason verifiable neither by investigative means, including even such sophisticated ones as natural scientists use, nor by merely formal means. One obvious question, then, is why anyone should take philosophy seriously, when it is so difficult to verify its doctrines. I would make two replies. First, not everything can be verified by investigation. Examples of this are legion, among them basic assumptions made by natural scientists. Physics, for example, presupposes a physical world, but that presupposition cannot be confirmed by the techniques of physics without begging the question in favour of it. Every observation or experiment that one might make within the techniques of physics would presuppose the very claim – that there is a physical world – that it was supposed to verify. Second, the fact that something cannot be verified empirically does not imply, necessarily, that it is completely unverifiable. Such verification would have to be conducted outside the realm of, say, physical evidence or

historical records. I cannot verify empirically what my name is, no matter how many documents I may show anyone, because the actual connection between me and my name, whatever character it may have, is not identical with those documents, as is shown by the clearly-true fact that it's logically possible to have a name in the absence of any documents that, one may purport, prove it. (As it would be when, for instance, all my personal documents were destroyed in a house-fire.) The primary philosophical means of verifying such matters, to the extent that verification is possible at all, is that of philosophical argument, which is to say, argument that contains at least some non-empirical conceptual content. Over millennia, philosophers have developed logical techniques, which in their non-investigative way, are as powerful as scientific observation and experimentation, because they enable us to make very reliable judgments about whether claims or analyses of concepts are more likely to be correct or incorrect in terms of their logical coherence. Indeed, even empirical research is properly subject to logical constraints. As I have already said, such logical techniques are not, themselves, sufficient to establish any substantive philosophical doctrines. Nevertheless, their usefulness in thinking about issues in social science, such as the study of terrorism, is the major point that I wish to prove here.

In the light of such considerations, philosophy acquires a role somewhere between Locke's vision of it as the under-labourer of the sciences and Kant's of metaphysics as their queen.[5] Besides anything else philosophers do, we monitor other disciplines (and our own, too) for traces of conceptual disorder; and, whenever we find it, we try to put it right. Thus, we come to the reason for philosophical research into terrorism in general – and for this piece of research in particular – which is that the human sciences, also, need to be kept honest by rigorous conceptual research, being as full of philosophical assumptions as the natural sciences are. I would urge greater activity by philosophers in this area, because I believe that, since the "modern age" of violent non-state terrorism dawned in about 1968, philosophy has too often been asleep at its post or simply deferred to the human sciences, as logical empiricists would have liked that philosophers deferred to the natural sciences. Once again, I should give a short account of my reasons for this statement.

Surprisingly little work about violent non-state terrorism has been published by academic philosophers, at least in the English-speaking world.[6] There has been an increase since September 2001, but, in terms of a simple comparison of the number of philosophical books and essays about terrorism with that of other topics, the bibliography remains strikingly thin.[7] Where this is not a manifestation of mere lack of interest

in or distaste for the subject, I suspect that it is partly a result of deference to those whom I shall refer to as "counterterrorism experts", a loose confraternity of not just academics from various disciplines, but also journalists, members of think-tanks, those who are both, and the occasional lone wolf, such as Bernard-Henri Levy. Apart from their interest in terrorism, these experts share a commitment to practically applying and publicly disseminating their work. In Britain and the United States, figures such as Paul Wilkinson, Walter Laqueur and Bruce Hoffmann often act almost as consultants to the Government, while, say, Hoffmann, Levy, Yonah Alexander, and Brian Michael Jenkins regularly appear on television or radio, contribute Op-Eds and give interviews to newspapers.[8] Philosophers, talking to each other at academic conferences can, perhaps, only be cowed into silence by such influence and exposure, as well as the awe-inspiring wealth of empirical details that many experts seem to have committed to memory.

Another thing to say about contemporary philosophical research into terrorism is that almost all of it conforms to Tony Coady's dictum that there are really only two philosophical questions about terrorism: first, "What is it?" and, second, "Can it ever be justified?".[9] I call these the ontological and ethical questions, respectively.[10] Here, I can pursue only one of them in depth, and so I am leaving aside the ethical question, largely because the ontological question has not only attracted greater attention from experts than from academic philosophers: it has held their attention for longer, too. Despite the fact that at least one philosophical article or book about terrorism has been published in English every year since 1968, it is a rare philosopher who has published more than two pieces on the subject in that time. Those who have published more than three, one may count on the fingers of two hands. With the obvious exceptions of R.M Hare and Michael Walzer, few are particularly eminent in the field, and even Hare and Walzer are better known for other things: Hare for his research into metaethics, Walzer for his work on the ethics of warfare. Compared to the floods of written publications from almost any counterterrorism expert (say Wilkinson and Hoffman, again), this scarcely counts as a trickle, and, when the experts' appearances in the media and their contributions to governmental deliberations are also credited, philosophical research looks like the drop in the ocean that it is.

Perhaps, though, I should entertain the idea that, philosophically, there is not much to say about terrorism. After all, the assumptions that philosophers make about the nature of terrorism – most notably, that it is "politically motivated violence" in a broad sense of the term – are usually strikingly similar to those made by the experts I have just mentioned.

Perhaps they have it right, and we philosophers should let them get on with their job while we get on with our research into the incorrigibility of mental states and the trolley problem. I would beg to differ. To try to prove this, my next task will be that of describing one area in which I think philosophical research can show that the experts' research (the work of highly intelligent people who know a great deal about their subject) can be shown to be logically quite unsound, and to propose corrections – conceptual ones, of course – to the problem. This, then, is where the example begins.

The catastrophic attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in September 2001 focused attention on the "new" terrorist: an irreconcilable fanatic willing to bring about mass casualties. Obviously, such a category implies a distinction between "new" and "old" terrorism and terrorists, but I am going to argue that the most common lines of distinction between the two concepts – the components of what I call the "expert analysis" – are insignificant, because they are confused. My case is that the expert analysis, first, mistakes the undeniable *quantitative* differences in the destructiveness of the actions of individual persons or groups for *qualitative* differences between two kinds of terrorism; and, second, mistakes what I call the "limitlessness" of new terrorism for an unprecedented kind of motivation. In some quarters of the field that I have called "terrorism studies", however, the concept has not been accepted wholesale. Despite the mutual resemblance of events such as the sarin attacks on the Tokyo subway carried out by Aum Shinri Kyo in March 1995, the Oklahoma City bombing which took place a month after them, "9/11", the Bali bombings of October 2002, the Madrid railroad bombings of March 2004 and "7/7" in London in 2005, some commentators have questioned the claim that any acts of new terrorism have yet taken place.[11] Even if such objections are correct, though, such essentially historical cases cannot be taken as reliable predictions that acts of new terrorism will never take place. I take a view of this matter that really only a philosopher can take: namely, that acts of new terrorism will never occur because they *cannot* occur, which in turn is because the concept of new terrorism is incoherent and cannot therefore describe any possible event or practice.[12]

In the early 1990s, experts noticed that terrorism seemed to be changing. The leftists, or nationalists, that had dominated the scene since the late 1960s were, it seemed, being replaced by others who were motivated by religious or right-wing ideologies, and who used more extreme violence, including crude "NCRB" weapons. Analyses of the concept of new terrorism were generated in order to make sense of such cases. As is often the case with novel analytical tools, there is a great deal

of disagreement between different experts, but the overwhelming majority of analyses include as necessary conditions the two attributes that I mentioned earlier: namely, a willingness to cause huge casualties (which I call the *destructiveness condition*) and fanatical dedication to a cause that leads the agent to make "limitless" demands of their targets (from hereon, the *limitlessness condition*).[13] These two necessary conditions are, under the expert analysis, a sufficient condition for an agent to be described as a new terrorist. Showing that either condition fails to distinguish new from old terrorism would therefore be enough to show that most particular analyses are faulty. In what follows, I shall try to refute the expert analysis altogether by showing that neither condition can distinguish new from old terrorism.

There are at least two good reasons, apart from its prominence in the literature, for viewing the expert analysis as particularly important. For a start, it is pervasive in the media, especially among opinion-forming journalists. The view seems to cut across the usual categories of "liberal" and "conservative". Consider, for instance, the following passages, the first from *The Economist*:

> "... al-Qaeda's terrorism is different in kind from the sort practised by traditional terrorists. Well before September 11th, expert opinion started to worry that terrorists would turn to chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons, and so threaten millions of victims, not just hundreds or thousands. In the late 1990s a succession of warnings were sounded that this would soon become America's chief security threat. The warnings were ignored, not only because the cost of fending off such threats looked prohibitive, but also because of a lingering calculation that even terrorists were rational, deterrable political actors, with a strong interest in keeping their violent actions within some limits if they were to achieve their political ends.
>
> Everything that is known now about al-Qaeda indicates that it does not fit this template. Its aims are mystical, not rational. It does its violence in the name of Allah and so accepts no worldly obligation to moderate it. It is rich, and it is capable. Mr bin Laden and his men have made it plain that they are out to inflict maximum punishment on the infidel nations, and that they want unconventional weapons."[14]

And, at about the same time, in the opinion columns of *The Nation* we find this:

> "... Even when talking with Abu Nidal, who was a lethal psychopath and a degraded mercenary, one was still just inside the outer boundaries of rational discourse. But with the forces of Al Qaeda, traditional propaganda terms like "hijacker" and "terrorist" have become robbed of meaning. We

are faced with a weird combination of a state-supported crime family and a bent multinational corporation, sworn to the most reactionary worldview and entirely consecrated to a campaign of annihilation, which its targets are too profane and too corrupt to be expected to understand. This is new, and many liberals as well as many conservatives are still slow to discern the novelty."[15]

Even without opinion-forming journalists, though, the idea of new terrorism would still lead experts, in particular, to suggest a need for strategies of response as different from the existing ones as new terrorism is supposed to differ from old. And, indeed, we find that the experts have made exactly such suggestions, which counts as my second reason for taking the idea seriously. As Bruce Hoffman puts it, "the emergence of this new breed of terrorist adversary means that nothing less than a sea-change in our thinking about terrorism and the policies required to counter it will be required".[16] So, we might well wish that the expert analysis be complete and correct; for, if it is not, the formation of either policymakers' opinions or of the strategic response – or both – might be literally misconceived.

I shall repeat that my aim here is conceptual rather than empirical, and so we must turn to the question of what philosophers have made of this concept. Philosophical explorations of any aspect of any kind of terrorism are, as I have noted, somewhat thin on the ground, but considerations of new terrorism are about the rarest kind of all. The best-known philosophers to have yet taken on the task of examining the concept of new terrorism are Coady, whom I mentioned earlier, and Igor Primoratz. The latter accepts the destructiveness condition at least, while the former clearly accepts both the destructiveness condition and the limitlessness condition. Interestingly, though, each builds the same moral evaluation into their very analyses of new terrorism by arguing that new terrorism consists of failing to respect the unwritten rule that certain persons should be immune from attack, i.e., what is known, in just war theory, as the principle of discrimination.[17] So, with respect to new terrorism, each answers the ontological and ethical questions simultaneously. On the grounds that this third, necessary condition is not part of the expert analysis, I must therefore say that neither Primoratz's analysis nor Coady's seems to add anything uncontroversially necessary to the expert analysis itself. To that extent, then, I shall leave them aside.

Throughout what follows, I assume what seems to me to be manifestly true: that the expert analysis (whether on its own or as part of any larger analysis) is intended to distinguish new from old terrorism *in kind*. Indeed, unless that is true, I am quite unable to see the point of it. My basic case

against the analysis is that it cannot establish any qualitative difference because each of its necessary conditions can, at most, establish certain *quantitative* differences between various acts of violent terrorism or between the methods used by different violent terrorists. Where the destructiveness condition is concerned, for instance, consider the following mind experiment. If one imagines that new terrorists only ever use NCRB weapons, old terrorists never, one thus represents the putative difference between old and new terrorism as clearly as possible. As far as I can see, though, this indicates no *qualitative* difference between the new terrorists and the old, but only the quantitative one, that NCRB weapons, deployed successfully, kill, maim or debilitate greater numbers of people or destroy more property, and so forth, than the weapons favoured by old terrorists. I therefore do not see how actually using NBRC weapons could make terrorism qualitatively new, rather than something distinguishable from old terrorism only by the greater deadliness of its means. We need not even alter the experiment to consider new terrorists as willing to use all degrees of force less than NCRB weapons, since if imagining new terrorists as using only the destructive extreme of NCRB weapons fails to establish any qualitative difference between them and old terrorists, I cannot see how imagining them as using less-destructive means could. What I have said, of course, cannot deny that putative acts of new terrorism are more destructive than those of old terrorism; it is intended only to show that such differences are accidental to violent terrorism in general, and therefore cannot establish any difference in kind. Asserting in response that the idea of new terrorism is somehow situational would not help matters, for if an act of paradigmatically "old" terrorism – the Provisional I.R.A.'s bombing of the Enniskillen War Memorial on Remembrance Day, 1987, for instance – happened to kill more people than an act of allegedly "new" terrorism did, would this make the Enniskillen bombing an act of "new" terrorism relative to the act of new terrorism? Such a consequence would make the whole idea of new terrorism collapse into absurdity.

On these grounds, I conclude that the destructiveness condition can establish no difference in kind between acts of violent terrorism or between their perpetrators. Can the limitlessness condition do so? I think not, for very similar reasons as those I raised as objections to the destructiveness condition. It is quite true that the scope of the aims of old and new terrorists can differ greatly. Laqueur, for instance, explicitly details differences between the fanaticisms of different terrorists, that is, he explains that the ends for which new terrorists strive are larger in scale than those for which old terrorists do. The provisional IRA wants a united

Ireland and therefore wages war against the British in Ulster, whereas Al-Qaeda wants to purify Islam's holy lands by waging a worldwide jihad against the infidels who have corrupted them. Aum Shinri Kyo, for its part, covets the destruction of the whole world, whereas Baader-Meinhof wants only to bring down bourgeois civilisation. However, is such a difference in scope a difference in kind? As with the destructiveness condition, I am unable to see how it could be. Indeed, one can render a version of the mind experiment that I used when discussing the destructiveness condition. Imagine that a violent terrorist group, T_1, wants to establish a certain form of government across the entire world, which seems to be as limitless an aim as any such earthbound group can have. Now imagine that another group, T_2, wants only that a tiny country – Liechtenstein, say – adopt that very same form of government. The methods of each group are exactly the same – in fact, imagine that each group uses NCRB, which I have just shown establishes no qualitative difference between old and new terrorism – and each is completely uninterested in compromising with those who oppose its aims. Is the extreme difference in the scope of aims enough to identify the members of T_1 as new terrorists and those of T_2 as old terrorists? I cannot see how. And, again, saying that "new terrorism" is a comparative term – such that T_1 is a new terrorist group relative to T_2 but is an old terrorist group relative to T_3, which wants to establish the same form of government across both Earth and Mars – seems to promise all kinds of problems with self-referential paradoxes and the like.

The failure of a given necessary condition to distinguish one thing from another does not automatically show an analysis of a concept to be inadequate. A whole system of differences between their respective sufficient conditions may be necessary to make plain the differences between the concepts of two different phenomena. This is especially true when two phenomena are the same as each other in certain respects, as old and new terrorism presumably are meant to be. To take a commonplace example, the status of being unmarried is a necessary condition for the concept both of a bachelor and that of a spinster, and so the two concepts are mutually indistinguishable as far as that particular necessary condition is involved in each. Clearly, only if one builds other necessary conditions, such as the difference in sex, between instantiations of each concept, can one draw the essential distinction between the two phenomena. In the case of the expert analysis, however, the fact that the destructiveness and limitlessness conditions fail in exactly the same way as each other suggests to me that – at risk of making a fallacy of composition – they will fail in exactly the same way even when put together as a jointly sufficient

condition. Since no other putative necessary conditions for new terrorism enjoy the expert unanimity that the destructiveness and fanaticism conditions do, there are as yet no further conditions to make up for this shortcoming, as the difference in sex between a bachelor and a spinster does.

If I have made a sound argument and my background assumption (that is, that one must show that old and new terrorism are qualitatively different kinds of terrorism if one is to distinguish between them adequately) is correct, then the expert analysis in itself is profoundly flawed; and, as a consequence, any analysis of the idea of new terrorism that includes either or both conditions is at least *prima facie* questionable. While I agree that much contemporary terrorism is different from terrorism that came before, I also think that the claim that an entirely new *kind* of terrorism has appeared overstates the novelty and is therefore unnecessary or misleading. If pushed to suggest a better account of this novelty, I would be inclined to suggest that we are seeing wholly empirical developments that not only experts, but also everyone else, failed to foresee, but which are nevertheless quite consistent with existing notions of terrorism. Can something be said for the expert analysis after all? My answer would be yes in some ways, but no in others.

The destructiveness condition strikes me as quite unsalvageable, but I think that a drastically revised limitlessness condition could help us understand this intuition. What I propose would, in fact, consist of applying the existing idea of *mythicism* to the concept of violent terrorism.[18] Instead of articulating a new kind of terrorism, doing this would serve only to delineate possible philosophical distinctions within the existing notion of violent terrorism (in both its state and non-state varieties, as it happens). This re-characterisation of the limitlessness condition makes more intelligible certain features of at least some contemporary violent non-state terrorists' ambitions in a fruitful new way that does not tend to represent it as an utterly novel species of the genus. So, I am not proposing a revision of the concept of terrorism (as the expert analysis does), but a qualification that it sometimes may prove necessary to make, in the same way as it is sometimes necessary to distinguish between violent terrorism in its state and non-state varieties, its politically motivated and religiously motivated varieties, and so on.

I am going to talk about mythicism and, what I call, *mythic terrorism* in both a strong and weak sense. The aim of any kind of mythic terrorism, in either sense, is to establish the temporal ascendancy of some given *mythos* – that is, to over-simplify my point, to compel all persons in the social arena to which its activities are related to change their way of life to

that which is preferred by the terrorists. In my view, this modification of the idea of terrorism explains the puzzling phenomena of latter-day violent non-state terrorism far better than the expert analysis can. *Mythos* and it counterpart, *logos*, are often distinguished from each other by means of the distinction between modernity and tradition, but I do not use it in that way. I take all human action – modern, traditional, postmodern, or whatever – to be mythic in at least the weakest sense of the term, inasmuch as human agents always act in accordance with some implicit – even unconscious – narrative that enables them to interpret the world coherently enough to take any action at any given moment. This fact seems indisputable. To walk down the street, one must take it for granted that the street will not collapse under one's feet, even though the logical possibility of the street collapsing shows the incompleteness of such an outlook. Nevertheless, such quotidian mythicism is correct far more often than not. One whose actions are mythic in the strongest sense, however, carries around with him not an implicit narrative, but one almost painfully explicit, employing it normatively in such a way that will lead him to devalue or disregard everything standing outside his *mythos* – except, maybe, whatever helps establish its supremacy in his favoured social arena. This idea of strong mythicism, it should be clear, has had many manifestations in world history, though the one that has most obvious application to my concerns is that of fanaticism, whether religious, political, or anything else.

Weakly mythic aims are subject to compromise with other *mythoi*, or even with *logos*. Strongly mythic aims, though, can be met only when everyone within some defined population wholly accepts the terrorist's *mythos* – or at least when everyone in that population acts as if they do. I contend that the limitlessness of the aims of some violent terrorists can be best understood if we apply to the phenomenon the idea of strong mythicism. To put the point in the simplest way, a violent terrorist who is weakly mythic could be satisfied by certain concessions from those not sharing his *mythos*, whereas one who is mythic in the very strongest sense can offer only a choice between death and someone else's conversion to his own *mythos*.[19] Strongly mythic violent terrorists need not be religious or right-wing fanatics, but only the kind of people who will brook no compromise on their demands.

The idea of the strongly mythic, violent, non-state terrorist, I believe, solves the problems that I have identified in the expert analysis without denying the common intuition that there seems to be something more intense about certain acts of violent terrorism. The destructiveness condition is clearly no longer required, because the possible contingent connections between strong mythicism and mass-casualty violent

terrorism are now easier to understand, without requiring that every strongly mythic terrorist must harbour an ambition to obtain and use NCBR weapons or have no aims that fall short of world conquest. Similarly, puzzles that arise under the rubric of new terrorism do not arise under that of strongly mythic non-state terrorism. For instance, the unreconstructed limitlessness condition seems to indicate that violent communist terrorist groups of the 1970s, such as Baader-Meinhof and the Red Brigades, were to some extent new terrorists *avant la lettre*, simply because they saw no room for a deal with bourgeois society. If we conceive of them as strongly mythic non-state terrorists, though, there is no such problem. Ultimately, then, the idea of the strongly mythic violent terrorist is consonant with, and makes more precise, the intuition I mentioned above, while also dispelling the misleading impression, imparted by the expert analysis, that this phenomenon is peculiar to the recent past and to certain kinds of terrorists. It also has the advantage that it is compatible with a great deal of existing empirical research on the phenomenon that has hitherto been called new terrorism. In principle, the entire history of violent terrorism is susceptible to the kind of analysis I have proposed here. Applying a historically non-specific idea, such as that of strong mythicism, to the past events might well help us deal with the present in a way that the idea of new terrorism, which is taken to be so strongly linked to that present, cannot. Something like this is the distinctive contribution of philosophy to any endeavour.

Notes

1. Westfield State University, Westfield, MA 01085, USA.
2. For another possible illustration, that of bioterrorism, see Liam Harte, "Known Unknowns: How Philosophy Has Responded to Fear of the Post-9/11 World", in *The Impact of 9/11 on Religion and Philosophy: The Day that Changed Everything?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
3. René Descartes, "Discourse on the Method", tr. Robert Stroothoff, in John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. I (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 114-115 (*AT* VI, 8).
4. Isaiah Berlin, "The Purpose of Philosophy", in *Concepts and Categories: Philosophical Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 1-11.
5. See John Locke, *An Essay Concerning the Human Understanding*, "The Epistle to the Reader"; and Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Preface to the First Edition.
6. Some idea, in sheer numerical terms, of how comparatively under-researched the topic is may be gleaned by looking at *The Philosopher's Index*, the main record of publications in philosophy in the Anglophone world. It records a total of 531 publications with terrorism as their subject published between 1948 and 2009. This

compares to 1048 on abortion, 910 on euthanasia, 5051 published on Ludwig Wittgenstein and 6819 on G.W.F. Hegel in the same period.

7. *The Philosopher's Index* shows that, of the 531 publications on terrorism mentioned in the previous note, 431 were published between 2002 and 2009; and almost all the remaining one hundred were published between 1970 and 2001.

8. The most recent example of which I know at the time of writing was an appearance of less than ninety seconds made by Bruce Hoffman on a National Public Radio show, to analyse the PETN attack that Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab allegedly made on Northwest Airlines Flight 253 on 25th December 2009. (Celeste Headlee and Noel King, "Why Wasn't Christmas Bomber on No-Fly List?" on The Takeaway, first broadcast 28th December 2009; heard via WGBH Boston; available online at <http://www.thetakeaway.org/stories/2009/dec/28/why-flight-253-bomber -wasnt-no-fly-list/>.)

9. C.A.J. (Tony) Coady, "Defining Terrorism", in Igor Primoratz, ed., *Terrorism: The Philosophical Issues* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 3.

10. I also consider these questions in Liam Harte, "Known Unknowns: How Philosophy Has Responded to Fear of the Post-9/11 World", in *The Impact of 9/11 on Religion and Philosophy: The Day that Changed Everything?* Ed. Matthew J. Morgan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), at 192-193 (where I mistakenly attribute the saying of Coady to Igor Primoratz).

11. See Ariel Merari, "Terrorism as a Strategy of Struggle: Past and Future", *Terrorism and Political Violence* 11 (Fall 1999): 52-65; David Tucker, "What is New about the New Terrorism and How Dangerous is It?" *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13 (Autumn 2001): 1-14; Thomas Copeland, "Is the 'New Terrorism' Really New? An Analysis of the New Paradigm for Terrorism", *Journal of Conflict Studies* 21.2 (2001): 91-105; Isabelle Duyvesteyn, "How New is the New Terrorism?" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 27.5 (September-October 2004): 439-454); Jonny Burnett and Dave Whyte, "Embedded Expertise and the New Terrorism", *Journal for Crime, Conflict and the Media* 1.4 (2005): 1-18; and Alexander Spencer, "Questioning the Concept of 'New Terrorism'", *Peace, Conflict and Development* 8 (January 2006): 1-33; and Thomas L. Mockaitis, *The 'New' Terrorism: Myth and Reality* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

12. While, as I have already noted, the idea of new terrorism implies that of an old, both imply a more general concept of terrorism that subsumes them. It is only fair to let the reader know that I take a distinctly minority view of the nature of terrorism. The general conceptual analysis of terrorism that I take for granted is that an agent engages in terrorism (*i.e.*, is a terrorist) if and only if he tries to terrorise some subject, when terrorising a subject is understood as the agent altering the subject's conduct in some way by making the subject afraid. It does not take much thought to see that this analysis is at odds with most of the literature on terrorism, both philosophical and non-philosophical. For a detailed explanation and defence of my analysis, see Liam Harte, "Must Terrorism Be Violent?" in *Torture, Terrorism, and the Use of Violence: Review Journal of Political Philosophy* 6, Part 1 (2008): 103-122. In this essay, however, I use the term *terrorism* as shorthand for the term *violent non-state* terrorism, which is to say terrorism carried out by agents, other than state authorities, who use violent means.

The ideas of old and new terrorism are not, as far as I can see, applicable to any other kind of terrorism, whether violent or otherwise. Thus, nothing of the following argument hangs on my general definition of terrorism, because I am restricting my attention to what most of the literature calls terrorism.

13. Walter Laqueur's analysis is a good example, because the two conditions constitute his entire analysis, as set out in Walter Laqueur, "Terror's New Face", *Harvard International Review*, 20.4 (Fall 1998): 48-52, and in the introduction to Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). I have criticised Laqueur's view at length in "A Taxonomy of Terrorism", in *Philosophy 9/11: Thinking about the War on Terrorism* (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 2005), at 29-37. For other good but more complicated examples of the expert analysis, see Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Bruce Hoffman, "Terrorism and WMD: Some Preliminary Hypotheses", *The Nonproliferation Review* (Spring/Summer 1997): 45-53; Bruce Hoffman, "Terrorism: Trends and Prospects", in Ian O. Lesser (ed.), *Countering the New Terrorism* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1999), 7-38; Jose Vegar, "Terrorism's New Breed", *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 54 (March/April 1998): 50-55; Jessica Stern, *The Ultimate Terrorists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Steven Simon and Daniel Benjamin, "America and the New Terrorism", *Survival* 42.1 (January 2000): 59-75; Nadine Gurr and Benjamin Cole, *The New Face of Terrorism: Threats from Weapons of Mass Destruction* (London: Tauris, 2002); Steven Simon, "The New Terrorism: Securing the Nation against a Messianic Foe", *Brookings Review* 21 (Winter 2003) 18-24; and Matthew J. Morgan, "The Origins of the New Terrorism". *Parameters* 34 (2004): 29-43. In this essay I leave aside other oft-mentioned contrasts between old and new terrorists, such as that new terrorists organise within fluid networks, old terrorists within rigid hierarchies; that new terrorists are often amateurs, old usually professionals; that new terrorists utilise new, especially digital technologies, whereas old are stuck in the analogue era; and that new terrorists rarely claim responsibility for their actions, while old always do. For an account of such characteristics, see Michael Whine, "The New Terrorism", from the annual report of the Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Anti-Semitism and Racism (Tel Aviv: Antisemitism Worldwide 2000-1), last accessed on 20th March 2009 at http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/asw2000-1/whine.htm. (Whine's "The Aftermath of 7/7: New Trends in Terror", last accessed on 20th March 2009 at http://www.thecst.org.uk/docs/New%20Trends%20in%20Terror.htm suggest new items to add to the list–such as "minimal-cost terrorism"–in the light of the "7/7" bombings.) For a more recent survey, see Copeland, "Is the 'New Terrorism' Really New?" *passim*.

14. "Preparing for Terror", *The Economist*, 30th November 2002: 11.

15. Christopher Hitchens, "Hijackers I Have Known", *The Nation*, 275 (16th September 2002); 9.

16. Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (Columbia University Press, 1998), 212. See also, for example, Paul R. Pillar, "Terrorism goes global: extremist groups extend their reach worldwide", *Brookings Review* 19 (Fall 2001): 34-7, for a pre-

9/11 view of the way to respond to the threat of new terrorism; and Thomas R. Mockaitis, *The "New" Terrorism: Myths and Reality* (Stanford University Press, 2008) for an account of how antiterrorism, consequence management, and counterterrorism should be combined into a strategy suitable to the new terrorism (the threat of which, by the way, Mockaitis believes to have been exaggerated).

17. See Igor Primoratz, "A Philosopher Looks at Contemporary Terrorism", *Cardozo Law Review* 29.1 (2007):33-51, and C.A.J. (Tony) Coady, "How New is the 'New Terror'", *Iyyun* 55 (January 2006): 49-65. I give a rather longer account of both these essays in Harte, "Known Unknowns", 194-195.

18. What follows is a revision of ideas that I put forward first in "A Taxonomy of Terrorism", especially Section III.

19. This would explain why "new" terrorists never claim responsibility for their operations, nor issue clear demands connected to them – would, if there were much to explain. Once again, I think that this characteristic is a matter of degree rather than kind. True, "traditional" terrorists often (though by no means always) make the connection between their actions and demands quite explicit – the provisional IRA even used to call press conferences after many of theirs. But Osama bin Laden has issued a long *fatwa* as a standing iteration of Al-Qaeda's demands, among which are the removal of infidels from the holy places, and the destruction of Israel. In other words, Al-Qaeda's only demand is that everyone accepts its *mythos*, or die.

Chapter Two

Terrorism and the Uses of Violence

Fátima Costa[1]

Violence has always been a constant in life, whether of individuals or their communities. To speak of humankind, of its history, of its artistic, scientific or technological achievements is to make incursions into a violent world. Violence is appealing when it forces reality to fulfil our desires, whether it is aggravated by love, anger, resentment or hatred, caused by our incapacity to communicate, our hunger for conquests and honour, or a desire to expand the empire, to strengthen the faith or to increase territorial and political influence. Moreover, our desires are both personal and collective.

However, not all kinds of violence are to be considered political. In fact domestic violence, violence committed in the name of love, in feuds, neighbourly disputes, hooliganism or gang clashes, is quite different and complies with quite dissimilar intentions to that which takes place between political communities, through its legitimate or self-proclaimed representatives. Only this last kind of violence is distinctive of war and terrorism. The word "war" typically describes those periods in which armed force is intensified and becomes widespread. This is why Carl von Clausewitz, in his celebrated book, *On War*, proclaimed that "[w]ar is merely a continuation of politics". Many statesmen or political representatives find themselves tempted or forced to use weapons to open or respond to hostilities when diplomacy or economical pressures stop being effective or when claims of political autonomy and aspirations for sovereignty do not find echo. I don't mean to say that violence is a natural and inevitable consequence of politics and its struggles, much less a desirable one. I don't mean either that this violence is purely reactive, or that its agents are only victims of their circumstances, determined by social, political or economic structures that they cannot control and from which they cannot escape. As in other forms of violence, its agents are often voluntarily and determinedly aggressive; they fight other aggressors

as well as innocent and unwillingly victims. Resorting to political violence is frequently not a defensive reaction to a previous or imminent attack, but a deliberate option, a first choice born out of patriotic and religious ideals, militaristic conceptions, or simply a product of *realpolitik*. And we should always keep this in perspective, for as Michael Walzer has maintained, "[a]s soon as we focus on some concrete case of military and moral decision-making, we enter a world that is governed not by abstract tendencies but by human choice".[2]

Political violence has a distinct nature that deserves to be acknowledged. Thus, we shouldn't treat its agents as common criminals, although some of them do commit crimes as a result of their specific activities. A complete condemnation of political violence turns out to be quite difficult, especially when you are most likely to relate terrorism, and certain types of war, to a desperate fight of the weak against the strong. Clearly, this does not happen when you are a pacifist or a non-violence enthusiast. In this case, you reject terrorism and war as immoralities, based on the assumption that killing human beings is always without justification, due to the sacrality of human life. You may also aspire, like Erasmus and the Abbot of Saint-Pierre, to the abolition of war and, in this case, you do not entirely reject all wars, but pursue the messianic dream of war eradication, which is to be achieved by means of a new international order ruled by law.

The same does not apply if you prefer the moral scepticism of political realism, especially in its strongest version. According to Robert O. Keohane, realists are sometimes permissive in what concerns political violence, for they prefer "the language of power and interests rather than of ideals or norms".[3] Realists consider international relations to be amoral, and believe, therefore, that they shouldn't be described, judged or regulated by "idealistic" or "legalistic" rules. Kenneth Waltz writes that states, being units of an anarchical competitive system, are condemned to live in a natural state of war and to fight permanently for dominance in the international arena. Without a common sovereignty or a sharing of similar purposes, states act in order to achieve the maximisation of their own authority or at least to maintain an equitable balance of power. In order to guarantee survival, each state has to presume that all others will act to favour its egoistic interests without any concern for morality. This way, they must act, not only according to other states' effective or declared politics, but according to their real or perceived capabilities. When states are militarily capable of attacking, all others must proceed to equal or to surpass them. As a result, warfare and terrorist activities can be seen as necessary and even prudential. "In politics," Kenneth Waltz writes, "force

is said to be the *ultima ratio*. In international politics force serves, not only as the *ultima ratio*, but indeed as the first and constant one."[4] That's why Clausewitz defends that states must seek to ensure victory at any cost, making use of all unrestrained violence considered to be necessary, for only victory can compel your enemy to submit to your will. This being said, we should also keep in mind that realists are not militarists, because they often condemn the resort to political violence for prudential reasons. Although political realism is mostly a state-centred theory, its particularist and consequentialist standpoints are easily adopted by those to whom political ends seem to justify the means, whether they be the conquest of sovereignty, the dictatorship of the proletariat or the safeguard of faith.

Just wars theorists, by contrast, assume that political violence sometimes can be used with justice in defence of crucial rights, like citizens' entitlement to life and freedom and political communities' entitlement to self-determination, especially against extreme forms of submission or enslavement. In fact, as Michael Walzer, one of the most distinguished just war theorists, claims "[t]he defense of rights is a reason for fighting. I want now to stress again, and finally, that it is the only reason".[5] The main purpose of just war theory is precisely to establish the boundaries between a just and an unjust resort to political force (the *jus ad bellum*) and a just and an unjust violent conduct within armed conflicts (the *jus in bello*). Therefore, just war theorists believe that a total refusal of armed resistance, at least in self-defence and in the presence of just *casus belli*, could simply leave some communities at the mercy of their aggressors, despite the fact that resorting to violence involves great dangers. As Michael Walzer said, "[a]ll aggressive acts have one thing in common: they justify forceful resistance, and force cannot be used between nations, as it often can between persons, without putting life itself at risk".[6]

And because rights challenged in armed conflicts are of such an exceptional importance, and war causes sometimes appear to be just, some people, who don't have pro-war and pro-violence attitudes, succumb to two great temptations, which we must oppose. We must resist first the utilitarian temptation to devaluate the individuals' and political communities' rights, accepting their sacrifices in the name of the greatest-happiness principle, especially of those we believe are fighting for the "wrong" causes. But we must also defy the deontological temptation of the "sliding scale argument", into which, according to Michael Walzer, even some just war theorists, such as John Rawls, have fallen. According to the sliding scale argument, belligerents fighting for just causes have more rights. Certainly, the purpose of this argument is to deny the right to wage war to those who fight for the sake of an unjust cause, who hold

totalitarian plans of world domination or wage religious or political crusades. Only those who fight for a just cause, i.e., for the entitlement to life and liberty, have the right to resort to political violence. Translated into just war lingo, this is to say that, according to the sliding scale argument, the logic of the ends, the logic of *jus ad bellum*, must surpass the logic of the means, i.e., of the *jus in bello*. But Walzer believes that the supremacy of the *jus ad bellum* justice traps us in the sliding scale argument. And this is conceived to be wrong and dangerous, because it disregards the universality of rights and "creates a new class of generally inadmissible acts and of quasi-rights, subject to piecemeal erosion by soldiers whose cause is just – or by soldiers who believe that their cause is just".[7] For soldiers and politicians tend to think this way: "the greater the injustice likely to result from my defeat, the more rules I can violate in order to avoid defeat".[8] This last reasoning is culturally dominant and leads us to moral relativism, which collides with the universality of rights we wish to preserve. Thus, we shouldn't be surprised by the fact that most of our moral judgments on armed conflicts, and even the most apparently pacifist ones, are mainly prejudiced. They are, Walzer claims, basically condemnations of a violence that their authors "don't like, or [of a] violence committed by people they don't like".[9] The sliding scale argument is tremendously risky, above all because we tend to devalue the lives and rights of our enemies, both combatants and civilians, as well as the lives and rights of the members of those communities that, for various reasons, we don't like, and to be tremendously indulgent with those we do like, especially if we think of them as being oppressed or martyrs of freedom.

Since St. Augustine, it is well known that it is impossible to have two sides fighting justly in a war, but as Francisco de Vitoria claimed, nothing hinders war to be perceived as just by both factions in conflict. Hence, it wouldn't be difficult to find combatants of opposing factions, totally and passionately persuaded for a variety of reasons that their cause is just, at the very point of risking their lives and dying for it, such is the pre-eminence of the values that are at stake. Wars, even the most unquestionably unjust and aggressive ones, are only possible due to wide support among the aggressor's community, whether a freely granted one, or the result of strong manipulation and political control.

All things considered, Walzer seems to mistrust the interference of idealism in war, in other words, he fears that "when winning is seen to be morally important,… when the outcome of the struggle is conceived in terms of justice",[10] or even when the messianic dream of the "war to end all wars" takes shape, political communities can rush into endless and total