SOCIO-LITERARY TERRORISM

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Abstract: The paper deals with announcing and defining a new type of terrorism, named by the author socio-literary terrorism. The focus of the paper is on how literary works are a medium for presenting and discussing a major problem of our contemporary-internationalized society, terrorism. Two literary works are covered in the research: Underground-The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche by Haruki Murakami and Mao II by Don DeLillo. For Haruki Murakami's book the research method used is content analysis, the word considered is terrorism. And for Don DeLillo's novel the working method used is literary analysis, the aim being to portray the literary and artistic universe created by the author, in which terrorism proves to be the element that brings to life a fictional novel.

Keywords: invisible terrorism, literary terrorism, Mao II*, "writers of Earth", socio-literary terrorism*

The first part of the paper, entitled "Invisible terrorism in Japan" is about a literary work, *Underground* by Haruki Murakami that has as a starting point for its creation a terrorist attack on the civilian population of Tokyo. By using content analysis as a research tool to analyze the text, the focus is on the impact that the terrorist attack has on the victims/survivors of the attack, are they able to identify what happened to them as being victims/survivors of a terrorist attack? The series of interviews conducted by Haruki Murakami on the victims/survivors of the terrorist attack with sarin gas that took place in the Tokyo subway on March 20, 1995, staged by Aum Shinrikyo religious sect, shows that it is possible to speak of an invisible terrorism in Japan because of, not only the nature of the weapon used for the attack, sarin gas, a formidable invisible weapon, but also because of the response given by the victims/survivors about the nature of the attack: their inability to understand and realize the nature of the events that they were part of.

The second part of the paper, entitled "Writers of Earth or Terrorism as social construct", is about a literary work, a fictional novel, that discusses matters related to terrorism in its content out of the author's own will, *Mao II* by Don DeLillo. In his novel Don DeLillo creates a literary universe meant to raise awareness around a major problem of our contemporary-internationalized society, terrorism. By its nature, being a postmodern creation, the novel signal a series of changes and ongoing processes in Don DeLillo's societal environment, that are represented in the text by a multitude of interplays, of interest are the interplays between the notion of writer and that of terrorist, and individual/author-crowd-image/art. The postmodern "tools" used by the author, the disappearence of writing into political action ad the intertextual encounter with photography will be of interest to the current research (Carmichael 212). From the social load of the novel, representative for trying to define a new type of terrorism, socio-literary terrorism, is of course the social dimension

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and implications of terrorism as presented by the text. Literary analysis is the means to do it, and the process is by revealing (all) the writers of Earth present in DeLillo's novel.

Invisible terrorism in Japan

Clarification of topic. Terrorism is an anti-human act, using calculated, shocking and illegal violence on civilian population is the core of terrorism. Such actions started to occur as a consequence of increased social division of labor and the rise of social differences between members of a social community, and globally between states. Once triggered this phenomenon, generated deepening conflicts and contradictions between individuals, social classes, states and nations (Simileanu 3). Terrorist groups use violence to achieve its goal, namely, to use the psychological impact of violence or the threat of violence to induce political, social or religious change. In specialized academic fields, terrorist acts are presented as being spectacular, designed to frighten and influence a wide audience beyond the actual victims (Barna 27).

This research is focused on the impact that a terrorist attack has on its victims/survivors by analyzing the fact if they can identify the events that they experienced as being viewed as terrorism. A series of interviews conducted by Haruki Murakami and published in the first part of the book *Underground- The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche* represents the material for the research. Haruki Murakami interviews 32 people, both passengers and workers of the Tokyo subway, all victims of the terrorist attack with sarin gas in the Tokyo subway on March 20, 1995.

Presentation of the theoretical framework. The members of the terrorist group Aum used chemical weapons of mass destruction on the population of Tokyo, the sarin gas used was produced by the members of the sect in a private laboratory. Although they had the necessary financial resources and knowledge, considering the fact that some followers were renowned researchers, they were able to produce a limited amount of toxic gas. Despite the small number of victims who died, only 12, more than a thousand people were contaminated. This attack on the Tokyo subway is considered to be the most important one for chemical terrorism at international level. Relevant in this regard is how the Japanese terrorist group Aum Shinrikyo, that produced two attacks with such agents: the sarin gas attack on 27 June 1994 in Matsumoto and on the 20 March 1995, Tokyo subway, did the attacks, by using in the first case, a fan and a heating element, and for the second, a perforated plastic bag (Barna 109).

Chemical and biological terrorism is called invisible terrorism due to the ease with which chemical and biological weapons can be obtained by terrorists, and the way they act on the victims, affecting their nervous system or circulatory system- in the case of chemical weapons or by the fact that, for insidious biological weapons, the incubation period of the disease makes the disaster to settle slowly, almost imperceptibly. At first, the victims get to the hospital, one by one, a few people, the symptoms presented either puzzle the doctors or are symptoms similar to common illnesses, until medical staff realizes what it is, a large number of people can be affected (Dulea and Frunzeti 124).

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The purpose of the research. The purpose of the research carried out is to portray that the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway is an invisible act of terrorism, not only through the use of the chemical weapon in order to achieve the attack, the meaning that the term has in the scholastic work discussing chemical and biological terrorism, but also by the manner the victims/survivors of this attack are able to categorize the event, this component of terrorism seems to be invisible to them despite the fact that What they experienced was a terrorist attack, but they are quite reluctant in using the term.

My research objectives were:

1. To identify if the victims of sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway perceive the event as a terrorist act.

2. To describe the attitude of the victims, both passengers and employees of the subway, toward the punishment of the perpetrators.

Assumptions. The assumptions to start the research are:

1. If the victims/survivors of the attack identify it as a terrorist attack they can deal with what has happened to them.

2. If authors of the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway would be punished, the possibility that such an event would happen again decreases.

Methods and research techniques. The research method chosen is content analysis, this was an option because in the field of social and human sciences, content analysis represents a set of research techniques for both the quantitative/qualitative verbal communication and nonverbal communication, and to identify and offer an objective and systematic description of the manifest and/or latent content, and to draw conclusions on the individual and society or the communication process in itself, as a process of social interaction (Chelcea 573) .

This method is able to reveal the Japanese psyche as shown in the interviews published in Haruki Murakami's book *Underground The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche*, considering the fact that, content analysis was used to identify what determinates people to communicate, meaning knowing the psychological and social characteristics of whose that are part of the communicating process. Particularly, it was used in the study of interviews (Chelcea 585).

The class of documents most relevant to the research, considering the fact that the objectives of the research is to identify the response victims give toward the sarin gas attack and their attitude towards punishing the perpetrators, is a series of interviews published by Haruki Murakami, because he does not interfere with the interview and give the interviewees the opportunity to speak freely without asking questions that would interrupt the flow of consciousness.

The 32 interviews are divided into seven categories according to the line that the attack took place and the starting station and/or destination. For each category we chose at random, random sampling, two people with Japanese names, it was opted for two interviews in each category, as a third category, namely Marunouchi Line, train bound for Ikebukuro there are just two people were interviewed, Shintaro Komada and Ikuko Nakayama. From the Chiyoda line eight people were interviewed, two were chosen for the research: Toshiaki

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Toyoda and Kiyoka Izumi, for the Marunouchi line (destination: Ogikubo), the two interviews out of seven were analyzed, those of Mitsuo Arima and Sumio Nishimura; for the Hibiya line, the train departing from Naka-Meguro, out of four people interviewed, three Japanese and one American, the two chosen were: Kozo Ishino and Yoko Iizuka, for the train departing from Kita-Senju, destination Naka-Meguro, out of the three people interviewed the two selected were: Masaori Okuyama and Michiaki Tamada, and from the last set of interviews for Hibiya line, out of four testimonies two were selected: Takaori Ichiba and Michiru Kono. And from the last category, the seventh, Kodemmacho station, the interviews of Ken'ichi Yamazaki and Koichiro Makita were analyzed.

For content analysis the recording unit chosen was the word; as unit of context, to see if the recording unit has positive, negative or neutral feature, the sentence was chosen, and as unit of number the last five phrases of each interview. Of the 14 people whose interviews were analyzed two used the word terrorism by referring to the sarin gas attack, both of them were passengers. And on the topic of punishing the perpetrators, three people have ruled for the death penalty, two of them had a positive orientation, an employee and a passenger, and the third, an employee, neutral. Two other persons, both passengers thought that those who are guilty must answer for their deeds "trialed, sentenced and done away with" - Shintaro Komada (Murakami 96), "properly sentenced in court" - Ikuko Nakazama (Murakami 101).

Conclusion. Only two persons of the victims/survivors of the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway has identified what happened to them as a terrorist attack and five other people mentioned in their interview the problem of punishing those who were guilty, this illustrates that it is possible to speak of invisible terrorist in Japan not only by the nature of the weapon of the terrorist attack, but as well as by reference to the inability of the victims to understand and realize the nature of the attack. Although it is intended to punish those found guilty, the victims/survivors of this terrorist attack do not use the word terrorism for what happened to them, by making terrorism an invisible component of the events that took place, they are virtually denying its existence.

Writers of Earth or Terrorism as social construct

Bill Gray, the main character of the book, a novelist, who is struggling to finish a new book, tells about one of the themes of the novel “there’s a curious knot that binds novelists and terrorist”, this “curious knot” reveals the novel’s social dimension by staging a lost battle between the author of a literary work, the novelist, and the author of a terrorist attack, the terrorist. This clash between the notion of writer as creator of work meant to have an impact on society and events that the social sphere experience and by doing so, brings into play a new creator, the terrorist, presents a change in the social apparatus. This change triggers a domino effect in the “social life” of Don DeLillo’s text and is a source of analyzing the social dimension of terrorism in a literary work.

Bill Gray, also, announces that the authored suffered a lost of territory: “In the West we become famous effigies as our books lose the power to shape and influence. …Years ago I used to think it was possible for a novelist to alter the inner life of the culture. Now bomb-makers and gun men have that territory. They make raids on human consciousness. What writers used to do…” (Don DeLillo 41). For a writer the medium of expression is his literary

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work, his books, for a terrorist the medium of expression is the crowd, the gathering of people subject to his direct infliction of terror that leads to victims, and indirect infliction of terror, the large numbers of people that find out about terrorist attacks.

More information about the writer and his connection to the work he produces is offered by Brita Nilsson, a photographer, also a creator, an author, but one that works in and with a different medium of expression, photography. She is described in the text of the novel as having dedicated an important part of her career to immortalizing the figures of writers, so it is understood that she is an experienced creator in her medium of expression. Writers are the subjects of her work, of whom she illustrates not only in photographs, but also in words: "The writer's face is the surface of the work. It's a clue to the mystery inside. Or is the mystery in the face? Sometimes I think about faces. We all try to read faces. Some faces are better then some books. Or put the pictures in a space capsule, that would be fantastic. Send them into space. Greetings. We are the writers of Earth" (Don DeLillo 26). Keeping in mind that Bill Gray announces a bind between novelist and terrorists, some features of the novelists are translated to terrorists. What Brita sees is no longer a writer concerned only by his work that would shape the society, but a writer concerned by the fact that someone else will take his place in making raids on human consciousness, the terrorist. By sending an image in space of a writer haunted by another figure able to alter the inner life of the culture and not him anymore, i.e. the terrorist, "Greetings. We are writers of Earth" has a new dimension, the terrorist is also a writer of Earth, he is a figure that was able to shape the history of our planet, Earth.

There is another writer of Earth present in DeLillo's literary work, Mao Zedong, he can be found at both the levels of the story and discourse in the novel. Mao Zedong's personality is often associated with the mass production of his books and image. The "Don DeLillo cult of Mao" refers to both "instances" of the Chinese leader. DeLillo acknowledges him as a book writer: The cult of Mao was the cult of the book… a summoning of crowds where everyone dressed alike and thought alike… Isn't there beauty and power in the reception of certain words and phrases?... They became a book-waving crowd. Mao said, 'Our god is none other than the masses of the Chinese people.' And this is what you fear, that history is passing into the hands of the crowd" (Don DeLillo 162), and as a worldwide famous image, in the very title of his novel, *Mao II*.

There are two main passages in the text discussing the title of the book, *Mao II*, the two also illustrate key entities of the text individual/author-crowd-image/art the link between them:

> He was running a little late but wanted to look at the Warhols only a few blocks away. The museum lobby was crowded. He went downstairs, where people moved in nervous searching steps around the paintings. He walked past the electric-chair canvases, the repeated news images of car crashes and movie stars, and he got used to the anxious milling, it seemed entirely right, people eager to be undistracted, ray-gunned by fame and death. Scott had never seen work that was so indifferent to the effect it had on those who came to see it. The walls looked off to heaven in a marvelous flat-eyed gaze. He stood before a silk screen called Crowd. The image was irregular, deep streaks marking the canvas, and it seemed to him that the crowd itself, the vast mesh of people, was being riven by

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> some fleeting media catastrophe. He moved along and stood finally in a room filled with images of Chairman Mao. Photocopy Mao, silk-screen Mao, wallpaper Mao, synthetic-polymer Mao. A series of silk screens was installed over a broader surface of wallpaper serigraphs, the Chairman's face a pansy purple here, floating nearly free of its photographic source. Work that was unwitting of history appealed to Scott. He found it liberating. Had he ever realized the deeper meaning of Mao before he saw these pictures? A subway rumbled past in the stony dark nearby. He stood and looked a while longer, feeling a curious calm even with people moving steadily in and out. The surge of bodies made its own soft roar. (DeLillo 21)

> Karen was in the bedroom looking at the gift Scott had brought back from the city. It was a reproduction of a pencil drawing called Mao II. She unrolled it on the bed and used objects in reach to hold down the corners. She studied the picture to see what was interesting about it or why Scott thought she might like it. The face of Mao Zedong. She liked that name all right. It was strange how a few lines with a pencil and there he is, some shading in, a scribbled neck and brows. It was by a famous painter whose name she could never remember but he was famous, he was dead, he had a white mask of a face and glowing white hair. Or maybe he was just supposed to be dead. Scott said he didn't seem dead because he never seemed real. Andy. That was it. (DeLillo 62)

Information about the fragile relation between image and crowd in Don DeLillo's literary work is given by the author himself in "The Image and the Crowd": "I keep thinking, without too much supporting evidence, that images have something to do with crowds. An image is a crowd in a way, a smear of impressions. Images tend to draw people together, create mass identity." (qtd. Hardack 374) In trying to decipher the link between the rest of the key entities as revealed by the fragments above, another "writer of Earth" becomes present in Don DeLillo's text: Andy Warhol. For Andy Warhol the medium of expression is the canvas/ art. Warhol's first series of Mao images produced in 1972 marks his renewed interest in painting, the series was based on the ubiquitous photograph printed as the frontispiece to Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung. This first series of Mao images was among the first of his paintings to feature not only a gestural handling of the background, but also black scribbled lines that were screened on separately. About his choice to treat the subject, Warhol later remarked, "I really would still do just a silkscreen of the face without all the rest, but people expect just a little bit more. That's why I put in all the drawing." (qtd. Livingstone 74) The people, the art consumer crowd is always present in the mind of the artist, not only as an end product of his work, but also prior to creating the artwork. The image of Mao Zedong stands proof of how society consume and appropriate a cultural phenomenon.

In order to understand how much Mao's image has traveled along today's culture, it is important to note that Mao Zedong is placed together with pop stars and Hollywood icons not only in galleries showing Warhol's works but, also, in homeland China. The image of Mao, as part of the Maocraze, meaning: addressing a later generation who were children or teenagers at the time of Chairman Mao's death, has the status of an icon in the popular sense of the term, an idol with a visual relevance similar to that reached in the West by Marilyn Monroe or Elvis Presley (Dal Lago 51).

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Conclusion. Murakami's work aims to reveal the nature of the Japanese psyche by the way the Japanese people deal with the terrorist attack. The event is a real one, the Japanese society has experienced such a thing on 20 March 1995. The subject exists, but the need to filter it through literature is Haruki Murakami's, a man who can slice a problem of his society through his nature as an author. In this case we can talk about terrorism as it is known to us all, as an anti-human act, using calculated, shocking and illegal violence on civilian population is known to be the core of terrorism. However the medium for communicating it to the public is that of a literary work. Ever since terrorism invaded the media, and in this way each of us has become a terrorism consumer with the help offered by the media, this phenomenon being known as ad-terrorism, it is understood that when the general public has come to consume terrorism through literature a new type of terrorism was born: literary terrorism.

By analogy with the definition of ad-terrorism, a definition for literary terrorism can be provided, ad-terrorism refers to advertising terrorism or doing publicity for it, term applied to the working methods of terrorists meant to intimidate and induce of shock, fear and chaos among civilians by media or other means of advertising. Also called advertising terrorism or the message terrorism or terrorist groups, whose ads are addressed to noncombatant subjects. (Dulea and Frunzetti 177) . A first definition of literary terrorism can be offered, literary terrorism refers to terrorism that appears in a literary work, or to terrorism as being the topic a literary work. It is also a term meant to define the everyday reality of terrorism poisoning the society, given the fact that terrorism has invaded even the literary creations.

A definition of literary terrorism was offered by analyzing the literary work created by Haruki Murakami: *Underground*. In the second part of the paper the focus was on the social dimension of terrorism as it is found in the novel *Mao II* by Don DeLillo. This is done in order to give some completion on the nature and name of terrorism found in literary works. Often is not enough to call it just literary terrorism considering that the terrorism consumed through books has an important social component, as it is found in the literary works whose theme is terrorism. An enlarged term and definition is put to question, i.e. the existence of a socio-literary terrorism.

Writing about terrorism is a social act in itself, the author’s need to deal in writing with a real even, the terrorist attack on the Tokyo subway, as in Haruki Murakami’s case, or with a concept, a phenomenon that consumes our present day society, terrorism, and by dealing with non-real events triggers a series of social characterizations by fostering them in the text of his literary work, as in Don DeLillo’s case, allows the term socio-literary terrorism to announce its existence and place itself “on the market” of types of terrorism.

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