

*SOCIO-LITERARY TERRORISM. UPGRADED DEFINITION*

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*Abstract: The paper is set to analyze the challenges faced by the research topic of socio-literary terrorism as its form of research shifts from MA dissertation in the field of Intelligence Studies to PhD thesis in the field of Cultural and Literary Studies. The paper presented in 2013 at the first edition of LDMD, entitled `Socio-literary Terrorism`, dealt with announcing and defining a new type of terrorism, named by the author socio-literary terrorism. The paper dealt with the fact of how literary works are a medium for presenting and discussing a major problem of our contemporary-internationalized society, terrorism. And two literary works represented the objects of study: *Mao II* by Don DeLillo and *Underground- The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche* by Haruki Murakami. This current research develops on the theme of terrorism in fiction in three of Don DeLillo's novels: *Players* (1977), *Mao II* (1991) and *Falling Man* (2007), and expands on the theme of terrorism in Japan beyond Haruki Murakami's text.*

*Keywords: current research on terrorism, Don DeLillo, socio-literary terrorism, terrorism in Japan, terrorism in literature.*

The paper presented in 2013, "Socio-literary Terrorism", was focused on "how literary works are a medium for presenting and discussing a major problem of our contemporary-internationalized society, terrorism" (Banica, 566). And the purpose of research was to name and define the information about terrorism made available to the public through books. Bringing into play a new type of terrorism questions about forms of countering it would be raised inside the field of counterterrorism academic field. Such a theme of research was possible inside the field of Intelligence Studies. In order to validate the research done a stronger accent was to be put on the terrorism in literature component of the research, that is why the research took on a new format, that of a PhD in the field of Cultural and Literary Studies.

Of interest to the current research "Socio-literary Terrorism Upgraded Definition", are the summary of the two parts of the 2013 paper and the conclusions. The paper "Socio-literary Terrorism" was divided in two parts: "Invisible Terrorism in Japan", that was dedicated to

developing on the theme of terrorism in Japan through the lenses of Haruki Murakami's text: "Underground: The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche, published in 1997/1998, and "Writers of Earth or Terrorism as Social Construct", that represented an analysis of Don DeLillo's novel *Mao II* (winner of the PEN/Faulkner Award in 1992).<sup>1</sup> The working method was content analysis for Haruki Murakami's book, the word considered was terrorism, while for Don DeLillo's novel it was literary analysis.

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. (Banica, 566)

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 disappearance of writing into political action and 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

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<sup>1</sup> "The PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction is a national prize which honors the best published works of fiction by American citizens in a calendar year." According to the PEN/Faulkner Foundation site, <http://www.penfaulkner.org/award-for-fiction/>, accessed November 2015.

a new type of terrorism, socio-literary terrorism, is of course the social dimension 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. (Banica, 566)

In the conclusion of the respective research the definition of socio-literary terrorism is presented:

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. (Banica, 572)

The choice of authors and books for the “Socio-literary Terrorism” paper relays on the fact that both authors are widely read and acclaimed writers, not only in their country, but, also abroad. So their works are disseminated on a large scale. Regarding the two books: *Underground* and *Mao II*, they both represent “grand narratives” of the 1990s material on terrorism in their on countries and abroad. The 1990s represented the period of interest for the research in order to shed light on the existence and circulation of information about terrorism through books prior to the 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, that marked a “boom” in the literature and discourse about terrorism.

As a PhD thesis the research that was started as an M.A. dissertation was amended from the very first instance of its being, the title. It is called “Terrorism in Fiction: An American and a Japanese Perspective”, and of course the nucleus of interest is represented by literature about terrorism, considering that the medium of disseminating the information about terrorism is the book. This brought into play a first big challenge: keep Haruki Murakami’s text *Underground* as part of the research. His work is not a fictional novel, but a collection of interviews with victims and perpetrators of the attacks, and an essay of the topic of the attack in Tokyo under the form of a Preface. What was considered to be valid was the worked done on Don DeLillo’s novel *Mao II*. Part two of the “Socio-literary Terrorism” was the ground materials for one of the subchapters of the PhD thesis, that was presented under the form of two distinct papers “Don DeLillo’s ‘Writers of Earth’ in *Mao II*” at the 60<sup>th</sup> Edition of the British Association for American Studies Conference, organized by Northumbria University, Newcastle. U.K., on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April<sup>2</sup> and “The Reproduction of Art as Gift and Souvenir in Don DeLillo's *Mao II*” at the 1st Edition of the International Scientific Conference: “Text versus A Piece of Art”, organized by the Department of Art History, Department of Slavic Studies and Faculty of the History of Arts at the Lviv National Academy of Arts and Waldemar Ceran Research Center for the History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe CERANEUM at the University of Lodz.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> “Don DeLillo’s Writers of Earth in *Mao II*” *Abstract*: In his novel *Mao II* Don DeLillo creates a literary universe meant to raise awareness around terrorism, a major problem of his contemporary-internationalized society-the American society of the 90s. By its nature, being a postmodern creation, the novel signals a series of changes and ongoing processes in Don DeLillo’s societal environment, which are represented in the text by a multitude of interplays. Of interest to the current paper are the interplays between the notion of writer and that of terrorist, and between individual/author-crowd-image/art. By analyzing the mentioned interplays the research is set to reveal (all) the of Earth” present in DeLillo’s novel (the novelist, the terrorist, Mao Zedong, Andy Warhol).

<sup>3</sup> “The Reproduction of Art as Gift and Souvenir in Don DeLillo’s *Mao II*” *Abstract*: The paper is set to analyze the description of an art work by Andy Warhol in Don DeLillo’s novel *Mao II* (1991): a reproduction of a pencil drawing called *Mao II* offered as a gift by Scott to Karen, two of the novel’s secondary characters. The analysis

At the current stage of its writing, the PhD thesis develops on the theme of terrorism in fiction in three of Don DeLillo's novels: *Players* (1977), *Mao II* (1991) and *Falling Man* (2007), and expands on the theme of terrorism in Japan beyond Haruki Murakami's text.

The "Terrorism in Fiction" is based on the assumption that providing research and information about the period before the 9/11 terrorist attacks is to be central to its writing. That is why Benjamin Kunkel's vision on Don DeLillo's terrorist novels encompassing two of his pre-9/11 novels: *Players* (1977) and *Mao II* (1991) dealing with the theme of terrorism and the author's post-9/11 novel *Falling Man* (2007) will represent the material for the literary and cultural analysis in the corpus of research.<sup>4</sup>

Materials from the developing subchapter about *Falling Man* (2007) were presented at two conferences abroad: "Still Life and 'Falling Life' Instances of Art in Don DeLillo's novel *Falling Man*", The 1<sup>st</sup> Edition of the International Scientific Conference: Beyond the Crisis in the Humanities: Transdisciplinary transformations of Contemporary Discourses on Art and Culture, organized by the Faculty of Media and Communications, Singidunum University, Belgrade, Serbia, in April 2015,<sup>5</sup> and "*The Falling Man*, the photograph, the article, the

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deals with the two dimensions of the art work as presented in the novel: as "physical object" in the form of a reproduction of a drawing and as an example of ephrasis. The introduction of the art work in the content of the novel provides information about the relationship between the two characters that interact with it as an object, not only as an art work: "Karen was in the bedroom looking at the gift Scott had brought back from the city. (...) 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. (...) It was by a famous painter whose name she could never remember but he was famous, he was dead, (...). 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). Such an element also sheds light on the role the description of an art work plays in the literary work considering the direct relation it has with the title of the novel and its topic: "It was a reproduction of a pencil drawing called *Mao II*. (...) The face of Mao Zedong. She [Karen] liked that name all right. It was strange how a few lines with a pencil and there it is, some shading in, a scribbled neck and brows" (DeLillo 62).

<sup>4</sup> The reference is to Benjamin Kunkel's 2005 article "Dangerous Characters", published in The New York Times, [http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/11/books/review/11kunkel.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/11/books/review/11kunkel.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0), accessed July 2014

<sup>5</sup> "Still Life and 'Falling Life' Instances of Art in Don DeLillo's Novel *Falling Man*" *Abstract*: Taking into consideration the fact that Don DeLillo's novel deals with the topic of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center towers on the 11th of September 2001 there is no surprise that this fiction is ostensibly about trauma and terrorism, but not the same can be said about the prevalence of art that is to be found in the novel. In the universe of the novel the event invades, via art, the private life of the characters and the public sphere. The towers follow the characters everywhere, sitting in one's living room surrounded by familiar objects is no longer possible: "I keep seeing the towers in this still life. (...) She saw what he saw. She saw the towers" (DeLillo, 61). The public sphere is haunted by a "single falling figure that trails a collective dread, body come down among us all", the audience of such acts of falling identifies in the performance an act of remembrance: "He brought it back, of course, those stark moments in the burning towers when people fell or were forced to jump" (DeLillo, 40). The paper is set to analyze the role still life and performance art has in Don DeLillo's novel *Falling Man* (2007) and it argues that there is no opposition between inanimate subject matter-the still life paintings of Giorgio Morandi, and animate subject matter- the performance art of David Janiak, 'a performance artist known as the Falling Man'. Together they form a continuum that allows art to empower the text.

documentary and the novel- A Snapshot Image of a Wounded USA” Third Annual International CCCS Conference 2015 "Identity and Culture", organized by the Center of Culture and Cultural Studies, Skopje, Macedonia, in September 2015.<sup>6</sup>

The material designed for the subchapter discussing the three novels as one unit in Don DeLillo's literary career will be presented at the European Association for American Studies Conference, in April, 2016. And the title of the material is: "The Transformative Power of the Arts in Don DeLillo's Terrorist Novels", and it pays attention to the fact that Don DeLillo's development of the terrorism theme goes hand in hand with the increase of the arts theme in his terrorist novels. This aspect, the presence of the arts theme in his terrorist novels, will be analyzed as DeLillo's means of creating a counter-narrative to find against terrorist, the need for such counter-narrative is presented in his essay "In the Ruins of the Future- Reflections on Terror and Loss in the Shadow of September": "The narrative ends in the rubble, and it is left to us to create the counter-narrative. (...). This is also the counter-narrative, a shadow history of false memories and imagined loss" (DeLillo, 35).

The paper entitled "The Transformative Power of the Arts in Don DeLillo's Terrorist Novels" is set to present the transformative power of the arts in Don DeLillo's terrorist novels: *Players* (1977), *Mao II* (1991), and *Falling Man* (2007), by analyzing the passage from terrorist as social actor in the universe of the novel to terrorism as a main theme of a novel by Don DeLillo, and it argues that Don DeLillo makes use of the transformative power of the arts to create his counter-narrative. In Don DeLillo's literary work the notion of terrorist as societal actor first appears in his 1977 novel *Players*, the notion is later given in-depth treatment in his 1991 novel *Mao II*. In his post- 9/11 novel *Falling Man*, terrorism itself is the main theme of the novel along trauma. This passage from terrorist as a character and theme of discussion in his novels to terrorism as an international phenomenon, no longer focusing on the person but

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<sup>6</sup> "The Falling Man, the photograph, the article, the documentary and the novel- A Snapshot Image of a Wounded USA" Abstract: The paper is set to analyze the impact which Richard Drew's photograph of a man falling from the North Tower of the World Trade Center, during the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center Towers on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001, had on the national image of the United States of American, by trying to reveal the social and cultural significance of the *Falling Man*. The resources used for conducting the research are Tom Junod's article about the photograph: *The Falling Man* published in the September 2003 issue of *Esquire* magazine 9/11: *The Falling Man*, a 2006 documentary film about Richard Drew's photograph *The Falling Man* and the story behind it, and Don DeLillo's novel *Falling Man* (2007) dealing mainly with terrorism and trauma. The article and the documentary film focus on identifying the falling man, whereas in Don DeLillo's novel the falling man is a performance artist who is recreating the event of Drew's photograph in a literary setting. What is achieved through filtering the event of the photograph in a literary context? Where should this photograph be shown and why? It is known that the American press decided upon self-censorship regarding the publication of the photograph. These are the questions the paper is dealing with.

on his act, is marked by an increasing usage of art in his novels. If in *Players* the arts have a small dosage in the content of the novel ( a cinematic passage: a no sound movie depicting golfers killed by terrorists) in *Mao II* a prevalence of the arts is noted through direct reference to Andy Warhol's works, and the author's focus on photography. In his post- 9/11 novel *Falling Man* the prevalence of the arts increases: there is art, artists and art critics present in the novel.

A first step for being able to keep Haruki Murakami's book *Underground* as material for research was made through presenting a paper entitled "Panic Sites' of the Heisei Period" at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Cultural and Social Anthropology of East Asia 2015 organized by the Department of Asian Studies, Palacky University Olomouc, Olomouc, Czech Republic in October 2015. The material tries to contextualize the event of the terrorist attack on the Tokyo subway inside the Japanese culture of disaster. Also the paper is set to analyze the three main disasters of contemporary Japan, the Heisei period (1989 to present): the Great Hanshin Earthquake ( 17<sup>st</sup> of January 1995), the sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway led by Aum Shinrikyo religious sect (20<sup>th</sup> of March 1995) and the Great East Japan Earthquake (11<sup>th</sup> of March 2011) as 'panic sites', focusing on the impact the events had on individual Japanese people and the Japanese psyche. The Great Hanshin Earthquake was considered at the time of its happening 'the worst natural disaster in post World War II Japan'. In the same year Japan faced an act of domestic terrorism. Failure of the Japanese government to react effectively to these events led to the formation of non-governmental organizations in Japan. Sixteen years later, on March 2011, the country suffered the strongest recorded earthquake in its history, which was followed by a devastating tsunami and radioactive contamination. Analyzing the three main disasters of the Heisei period as 'panic sites' refers to playing the real events against the Japanese imagination of disasters as portrayed in animated science fiction movies (from *Godzilla*, 1954, to *Akira*, 1988) released before 1989.

The future path for analyzing terrorism in Japan is by focusing on the "terrorism discourse". This is needed considering the fact that the "terrorism discourse" is made out of literary and non-literary "types of fictionalization- representation by the media, political manipulation, academic definitions " (Zulaika and Douglass, 16) and this comes in handy because the Tokyo sarin gas attack is not represented in modern Japanese literature.<sup>7</sup> The event

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<sup>7</sup> During the research done so far inside the field of Japanese culture and literature, such an example was not found of a fictional novel about the terrorist sarin gas attack.

of the terrorist attack on the Tokyo underground that took place in March 1995 is widely discussed in terms of the government's inability to respond to the event through its emergency service and paying consideration to the reality and developing status of the new religions in Japan, the religious sect that caused the attack was enlisted as one of the new religions.

Despite the hard work done in terms of conducting research on the socio-literary terrorism, the term is not provided with a upgraded actual definition as the title suggested "Socio-literary Terrorism Upgraded Definition", instead the work done tries to elucidate and develop on the topic of terrorism in literature and terrorism in discourse in order to enrich the current definition of socio-literary terrorism in order to pass as a valid definition of a type of terrorism inside the field of study of literary and cultural studies.

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