

Influence of Terrorism in Horror Movies After the Attack to World Trade Centre

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ABSTRACT

The present short essay-review discusses to what an extent horror movie discourse has changed post 9/11. Terrorism seems to be accelerated the conditions to downfall the external boundaries of society. It leads to the needs to delineate tourism industry in contexts of uncertainty and fear. The modern conception of evilness, which is introduced by modern horror movies, consists in the tergiversation of ethics by politics. This means that those originally designed to protect the citizenry are corrupted to become in the threat. The host who in past protected by its guest's safety today has converted in a sadist killer. Contemporary horror movies describe remote rural zones as insecure places to visit. If United States is presented as the axis of civilization and security, the rest of the world is the opposite. It opens the geography of diversity into only one-sided gaze, the concerns of security.

Keywords. Americanism, horror movies, Tourism, terrorism.

INTRODUCTION

In last years, the specialized literature has devoted too much attention to understand the imposed narratives of cinema and destination attractiveness. International Cinema project of the calibre of the Lord of the Rings helped to publicize the landscapes of New Zealand, the same happens for other destinations. This suggests that the industry of movies and tourism seems to be inextricably intertwined (Busby & Klub, 2001; Busby, Brunt, & Lund, 2003; Connell, 2005; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006; O'Connor, Flanagan & Gilbert, 2008; Forsey & Low, 2014). But equally important seems to be that little attention was given to the political discourse instilled by horror movies in popular audience. Methodologically speaking, movies represent valid sources to examine complex emotions and common sense society. Interesting studies have focused on the role of France in international affairs in slippery matters, which ranges from migration, poverty, tourism to wars (Rascarolli, 2013; Mazierska, 2013). It is noteworthy that cinema exhibits the spirit of the epoch as well as hopes, expectancies and fears of society. It is unfortunate this genre of literature has not been widely adopted in the English speaking research.

Nor the potential of political discourse enrooted in the cinema has not been widely studied in tourism fields, neither lay-people understand the long-term impacts of 9/11 by declining the trust in "the other", the present essay review explores the connection between tourism, horror movies, and terrorism in a context of globalization. Our thesis is that 9/11 caused a serious disruption for US society to the extent to change the ways they perceive the world, geography and the other, more than tourism-led scholars are willing to accept. It means that terrorism has determined a new dwelling of American in this world. To understand this better, we have to

delineate symbolic mark classic and new horror movies. The formers signal to the discrepancy of being human while the latter ones refer to the danger of travelling abroad. Taking attention to how the archetype of villain is formed is a valid way to understand the changes provoked by terrorism in America.

A couple of decades ago, the classic horror movie villains were animals, embedded with the stereotypes of wilderness. Not only they eat human meat, but also were moved by their natural instincts, neither sadism nor torture was present in these movies. Terrorism changed this abruptly, accelerating the conditions for anthropomorphizing the danger. Circumscribed to the fact that the evilness does not respect hospitality, the new archetype of villains in contemporary cinema are humans who live, feel like us but covers a great secret, they are killers. The figure of danger is a social construe which vary on nation, context and time. What for one society may be frightful, others may ignore. The visible threat that allowed the organization of a society of risk, in terms of Beck (2006), today has mutated to other more frightful forms. L. Howie (2012) acknowledged that terrorism alludes to manage uncertainty as a political mechanism of control on West. Not only terrorists are easily identified by race or ethnicity but also many of them are good citizens educated in the best western universities.

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

The attacks planned against the World Trade centre not only altered the daily life in US but also through international geography. The sense of openness which years ago, spoke of America as a great nation open to the other, today has been closed to mass-migration. The other is treated as a dangerous agent for the pace of the nation. Based on an ethnocentric discourse, horror cinema generated a hierarchy of nationalities where Americans and British are situated on the top. The full-blown movies *Hostel I* and *II* tell the backpacker's nightmare that are kidnapped and tortured in the Eastern Europe by the hand of sadist millionaires. The story tells us that college students opt to travel across Europe to meet in Slovakia with a hostel. Two prostitutes Natalya and Svetlana seduce the young tourists to the extent they are offered to people who pay to torture through a net of sadists. In this respect, Americans and British are pondered higher than other nationalities. The national being plays a vital role as delineating the value of what person should be valorised or rejected. Certainly, exorbitant sums of money are paid in *Hostel* to torture Americans. West has developed the archetype of civilization in the industry of travels. Those who have resource to be mobile are considered humans, respecting to other who had not such a luck. Therefore, horror-movie synopsis has historically focused on the vulnerability of travellers. To be honest, the way this vulnerability is drawn showed substantially differences depending on the political context. Some time before 9/11, the role of villains were played by monstrous animals or insects. This is the case of *Jaws* (1975), or *Marabunta*, *Killer ants* (1954) among others else. But post 9/11 one might realize how animals set the pace to other new forms of terror enrooted in the same humankind. One of the aspects more fear wakes up is the fact that villains are not easily identified they are like us, live like us and may attack us in any moment (Korstanje & Olsen, 2011; Korstanje & Tarlow, 2012).

As Zygmunt Bauman put it, terrorism ushered the world towards a climate of fear which tightened all safety measures at the largest airports. The surveillance played a pervasive role to control the other and avoid the self to be an "undesired guest". The monopoly of technology

is placed to validate the identity of travellers. The message of 9/11 was disturbing in various senses. It is important not to lose the sight that person who can monitor to others, avoid to be controlled. Since international terrorism post 9/11 reminds that states are unable to protect their citizens, one feels that anyone may be vulnerable elsewhere and anytime (Bauman, 2013). The psychological fear American visitors feel today not only reinforces the privilege to belong to the most “civilized nation” of the world, but also reminds unfortunately that have its costs. What precisely, the specialized literature ignores, is that any tourist serves as political actor that communicate a message to others. This is exactly the point which merit to be studied.

THE SECURITY IN TOURISM

As founding event, 9/11 generated a great support of all liberal nations of the world. In doing so, the previous past similar events have fallen into oblivion. Therefore, G. Achcar (2009) explains that if Americans are attacked, naturally, it generates a great psychological impact in the world. The imperial-eye is expanded to gain loyalties to create symbolic encounters with other cultures. Sharing the American culture, though one does not live in US, represents to be part of “good boys”. Therefore, to what an extent 9/11 triggered a false shock for a world promptly adopted the American’s gaze should be discussed in depth.

Being American abroad was always troublesome. Terrorism not only exploited the fear enrooted in the Americanism, but also its sense of uniqueness. Recent applied research showed that Americans developed more prone to risk perception than other nationalities. Dominguez Baguette & Bernard (2003), explains that 9/11 was the main event that determined a strange fear in US for visiting other overseas destinations. As a result of the international affairs of their respective states in Middle East, Americans and Englanders have developed more aversion to visit international destination than other groups. Although the results are not determinants, other studied validated their main thesis. Sacket & Botterill found as well that Anglo-tourists post 9/11 perceived major risks to be victims of terrorism than other times. Anyway, it is important to clarify, Americans (72%) developed major risk than British (42%) at time to travel abroad. Similarly outcomes are showed by Ertuna and Ertuna who confirm that nationality is a reliable variable to predict risk behavior; according to the other cited papers, researchers emphasize on the connection between perception of risk and nationality. Communicated by the media, risk is gradually constructed according to cultural values, which are finely-ingrained in the national being. Being American or British means a special position respecting to other nationalities. Ertuna and Ertuna found that Anglo-tourists developed a strange sensibility for trauma and negative-events whenever a compatriot was “the victim”. It seems as though audience weaves a certain type of solidarities with victims of terrorism broadcasted by the media.

Rather, David Steiner has suggested that even though nationality may be a predictable variable of study in risk, under some contexts, further examination is needed. Alternating empirical research with a rich bibliography Steiner argues that the place of residency is more predicable than nationality. Based on the fact that 9/11 installed the fear everywhere, no matter than the national affiliation of tourist, he considers that the constant bombarding of terrorism-related news creates an atmosphere to disensibilize the potential mediated threats. Following Steiner’s account, Americans conceive fewer risks than other groups (Steiner, 2007; 2009). Fuchs

& Reichel (2004) conducted an innovative investigation to conclude that religion plays a crucial role at time of perceiving risks. Nationality would have few correlation on risk-perception unless by means of attachment to religion. Catholics and Protestant showed more prone to risk than other samples.

G. Fuchs, Uriely, Reichel & Maoz (2012) explain that ideology is a good resource to intellectualize the situation of danger in human mind. The first factor that causes fear is the boundaries between familiarity and the “unknown”; the sense of home gives security to self, which is broken whenever it trespasses the national boundaries. The concept risk or threats seem to be individually determined by its political attachment. Republicans would experience, under this logic, further fears than democrats at time of visiting Arab countries.

Last but not least, interesting studies have focused on the impacts of 9/11 and the inroad flux of tourists inside US. From this new angle, researchers contend that terrorist attacks are viewed as act of violence perpetrated in urban contexts, or in populated cities. As a result, tourism fluxes are not stopped it change to other destinations linked to rural areas. The proximity of citizens respecting to ground-zero or the inhabitants of urban cities were more sensible to terrorism-led news than farmers or people who live in rural zones. Even, many Americans traveled to agrarian cities to spend their holidays after this tragic event. This happens simply because we have the ability to reconfigure our perception to avoid those destinations alike to the affected place (Floyd et al 2004; Floyd and Pennington-Gray, 2003; Wong & Yeh, 2009; Woods et al, 2008).

Korstanje & Olsen (2011) have examined the genre of horror movie to consider that 9/11 not only has created a serious shock to American culture, but also have changed the ways of making terror in cinema. Based on a deep examination of movies as *Hills have eyes*, *Hostel* and *Texas Massacre Chainsaw*, Korstanje & Olsen argue that the “Americanism” exhibits a combination of pride and fear. At time, American tourists are viewed as the axis of good civilization, their own dwelling in this world is compromised by sadists whose main satisfaction is the torture of innocents. The principle of evilness seems to be inextricably intertwined into the lack of hospitality. As this backdrop, the world beyond the boundaries of US is presented as a dangerous place to visit. This leads to the creation of a much deep-seated ethnocentrism that audience cannot see with clarity, but affect how the other non-American is reconstructed. The concept of risk and terrorism as it is being exploited by Hollywood may create serious problems in the collective psyche of United States.

Recently, Norway was witness of the negative effects of local terrorism when three gunmen killed hundred of tourists at two important places in Oslo (2011). What Wolff & Larsen (2014) place under the lens of scrutiny was the belief that Norwegians would perceive Oslo as a dangerous place because the social trauma they faced. Not only this did not happen, but also researchers found contradictory evidence. Interviewees evidenced low worries of experiencing a new terrorist attack. For their perception, Norway was a safe place while they responded terrorism was a problem of others. Korstanje & Skoll found similar evidence in Buenos Aires in spite of the two terrorist attacks this city had in the past. Somehow, there is an international social imaginary that draws univocally where the danger lies. This does not correspond with facts of reality but on the geopolitical interests of superpowers. Today, Argentines still think terrorism was a serious threat for Americans but not for them (Skoll & Korstanje, 2012).

HORROR CINEMA AND TERRORISM

With the benefits of hindsight, American horror show almost always established anthropological boundaries between civility, humankind and wilderness. The role of “bad guy” was played by animals as noted above. There was a great tension between modern man and its environment in the classical genre. These types of movies not only facilitated the things to resolve these dilemmas, but introduced the role of technique as a mechanism towards improvement and progress. The human dwelling was subject to the previous destruction of pristine nature. This supposes that the supremacy of humanity over all creation was because its ability to gain autonomy respecting to natural world.

The act of travelling represents an attempt to go beyond the laminar boundaries of home, passing from certainty to uncertainty. The risk we ran in these travels engenders good anecdotes to be told others. The ideological efficacy of our travels does not work by the message but how the risk has been mitigated. The heroes defeat the villain employing weapons or poisons. Based on a happy end where heroes domesticate the monstrosity of nature, classic horror movies are the vindication of civilization over wilderness by expertise. Coast Guard, Park Rangers, Polices or the scientists were the hero and of course, their intelligence always overcomes all obstacles faced in their fight. Although these types of guidelines have characterized the ways of thinking the horror in US for more than five long decades, the fact is that the attacks to World Trade Centre changed everything forever.

The villains passed to be monstrous animals to powerful people, millionaires, whose desires were maximized by the suffering of others more vulnerable without any valid reason. They exert an extreme violence only by pure entertainment. Wilderness does not represent a real threat for humankind anymore. One of the most troubling aspects to fight against terrorism is that nobody knows or may anticipate the next attack. Now, the external boundaries of society which distinguished two dual sides have collapsed. Terrorists are today Ph D. graduate or professionals living at any modern city. The second difference lies in the modern villain takes advantage of the climate of hospitality or vulnerability of guests to cause damage. According to that tourists not only are vulnerable because is not familiar with the visited destination, but also do not know the desires of host. Instead of protecting the tourists, as Hostel I & II, these new villains seduce to youth backpackers by means of beautiful women, food and wine to achieve a relax climate of rest. Whenever the climate of hospitality is broken, one experience the counterforce, hostility. Being tourist abroad exhibits a great risk for the horror movies discourse. However, unlike classic horror cinema where victims were anonymous, innocent tourists are classified by their importance to the ethnical hierarchy. Anglo world citizens, American and British above all, were preferably selected to be attacked in remote zones or desserts. The lack of police or security force emulates the inability of state to protect tourists and the costs it runs for that. The dichotomy between being or not human has been blurred to much subtle forms of exploitation where appearance takes much importance. Ideological effects of this discourse are manifold. Because of time and space only few ones has been discussed here. Scrambling against its demons, West is pressed to new forms of imagining the other.

CONCLUSION

The modern conception of evilness, which is introduced by modern horror movies, consists in the tergiversation of ethics by politics. This means that those originally designed to protect the citizenry are corrupted to become in the threat. The host who in past protected by its guest's safety today has converted in a sadist killer.

First and foremost, contemporary horror movies describe remote rural zones as insecure places to visit. If United States is presented as the axis of civilization and security, the rest of the world is the opposite. It opens the geography of diversity into only one-sided gaze, the concerns of security. Besides, the Eastern Europe is viewed as a dangerous place for western travellers. This opens the geography of the world in two, secure and insecure destinations. The good citizens are attacked with open ends, which mean that the culprits are never found. Secondly, this poses a new message that assumes the world is hostile but needs to be domesticated by America. As this argument given, 9/11 created an explicit mega-text in the social imaginary whereas other implicit, but not for that less powerful, remains implicit. The urbanity years before symbolized the security and pride of West became in a jail, where nobody feels safe anymore. What would be more than interesting to discuss here is to what an extent, horror movies legitimate political issues framing a one-sided view of terrorism. The superiority of American tourists is not given by richness or abundance but the risks their Americanism generates. The hierarchy of nationalities confers some privilege to selected people. Any attack to them represents not only they are in the correct way, but also give an excuse to reinforce the Anglo-centrism. The hostility to American tourists, as it is presented in horror cinema, reinforces the nationalism assuming their right to intervene in the external world to prevent next attacks. Our thesis is that Americans beyond their home have been gained further value to be target of terrorism. The aura over them reminds the rest their exemplarity and uniqueness in an ever conflictive world. A sociological explanation of why this happens merits further debate.

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About the Author

As sociologist, **Maximiliano E. Korstanje** has specialized in the study of risk and mobilities from many interdisciplinary approaches. Recently, his interest was based on the impacts of 9/11 to tourism and local economies. As a result of this, in 2010 he founded the first journal dedicated to the study of safety in tourism, *International Journal of Safety and Security in Tourism* hosted by The University of Palermo Argentina. His contributions led to co-editor important journals as *Event Management* and *Int. Journal of Tourism and Travels* and work as editorial board member for more than 20 journals in risk and tourism such as: *Risk and Uncertainty*, *Journal of Tourism Anthropology*, *Journal of Risk Research*, *Rosa dos Ventos*, *Journal of Emergency Service Information*, *Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment*, *Studies and Perspectives in Tourism*, *El Periplo Sustainable*, *Tourism and Society* and *Int. Journal of Hospitality and Event Management*. With more than 300 published papers and 13 books, Korstanje takes part of the *Philosophical society of England*, *The international Society for Philosophers*, *United Kingdom* and *Int. Committee Research on Disasters*, *United States*.