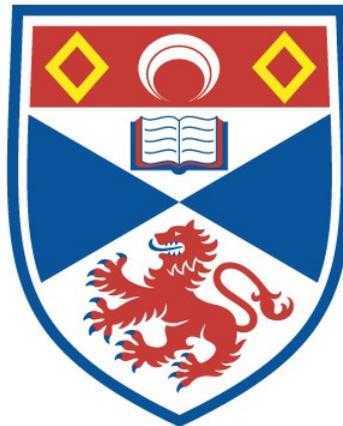


**IS TERRORISM THEATRE?
DRAMATURGICAL METAPHOR IN THE CASES OF
BUDYONNOVSK, DUBROVKA AND BESLAN**

Janina Karolina Skrzypek

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews**



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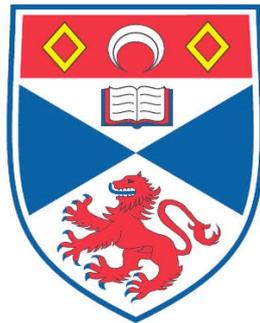
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Is terrorism theatre?
Dramaturgical metaphor in the cases of
Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan

Janina Karolina Skrzypek



This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree of PhD
at the University of St Andrews

Date of submission: December 14th, 2012

ABSTRACT

This thesis is about terrorism metaphorically conceptualised as drama, theatre, spectacle and performance. It focuses on terrorism as a process of communication aimed at manipulating political attitude and behaviour. Even though it is terrorist actors who usually initiate that communication, various audiences play an important part in it, too. Not only do they receive and interpret the terrorist message, but they also have an impact on the content of that message and how it is transmitted.

What attests to an important role of audience in terrorism is that in order for terrorism to work, those watching – the audience – need to change their behaviour to suit the political goals of terrorists. Arguably, if it were not for the people who alter their political behaviour as a result of having been terrorized, terrorism would not work, not to mention succeed. Another reason why there can be no terrorism without an audience is because the necessary presence of an audience is exactly what differentiates terrorism from other forms of political violence, such as war, secret killings or torture.

While, at least for the time being, terrorism research remains “actor-focused” (Hülse and Spencer, 2008), there is clearly a need to make it more “audience-focused”, to reflect the importance of the audience in terrorism, as highlighted above. This thesis examines the extent to which this can be achieved using the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance. By applying the four dramaturgical metaphors to the terrorist attacks in Budyonovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan, it investigates the potential of the metaphors to enhance the understanding of the dynamics between terrorism and counter-terrorism as well as the interplay between their respective actors and audiences.

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I, Janina Karolina Skrzypek, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 75,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student in September 2007 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph. D in September 2008; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between September 2007 and November 2012.

I, Janina Karolina Skrzypek, received assistance in the writing of this thesis in respect of language, grammar, spelling and syntax, which was provided by Dr Mary-Jane Fox.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“The lights go up; the actors appear; the performance begins. It is a multiple creation – the outcome of the dramatist’s purpose, the producer’s style, the actors’ performances and the audience’s participation”. (Burns and Burns, 1973: 82)

There would not be a theatrical performance, if it were not for long rehearsals, impromptu changes to the script, dress-fittings, consultations and last-minute reviews. There would not be a thesis, if it were not for the help of those working behind the scenes.

My special thanks go to my supervisor Prof. Karin M. Fierke, whose advice and patience I very much appreciate. I would also like to thank Prof. Alex Danchev and Dr Jeffrey Murer for providing highly valuable comments on the previous version of this thesis. Dr Mary-Jane Fox coached me on the rewrite and kept me calm, Emilka Skrzypek, Dr Faye Donnelly, Ania Sowinska and Alicja Turner made sure I kept smiling, whereas my Mum and Dad made it all possible. It is to them that I dedicate this thesis.

INTRODUCTION

“[W]hat one calls things matters. There are few neutral terms in politics, because political language affects the perceptions of protagonists and audiences, and such effect acquires a greater urgency in the drama of terrorism”. (Crenshaw, 1995: 7)

This thesis provides an in-depth discussion of the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, which it later applies to its case studies – the terrorist attacks in Budyonovsk, Dubrovka, and Beslan. In doing so, it demonstrates the so far understudied analytical potential of the dramaturgical metaphors to deepen the understanding of terrorism, which this thesis conceptualises as a strategy of communication aimed at manipulating people’s political attitudes and behaviour.

Metaphors play an important role in enhancing the understanding of complex phenomena and experiences in general, and politics in particular. They often do so by simplifying them or by comparing them to phenomena and experiences that are better known and therefore easier to comprehend. However, in order for metaphors to be effective, those relying on metaphors need to use them in a similar context and in a similar way. In other words, those using metaphors to enhance the understanding of a particular phenomenon or experience need to be linguistically coherent (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003). This thesis demonstrates that this is not yet the case with the “terrorism is (like) theatre” metaphor in Terrorism Studies, wherein the most basic idea of “theatre” and “terrorism as theatre” is subject to many, sometimes very diverse, interpretations and implementations. As a result, the popular comparison between terrorism and theatre frequently serves as an embellishment rather than a useful analytical term.

There is little controversy in the literature about dramatic, theatrical, performative and/or spectacular qualities of terrorism. However, most terrorism scholarship, which relies on the association of terrorism with theatre or other theatre-related categories like drama, performance or spectacle, tends not to analyse those metaphors critically. Instead, it often replicates the “programmatic

catchphrases” like “terrorism is theatre”, “the drama of terrorism” or “terrorism spectacular”, leaving the very assumptions behind such dramaturgical references unexplained.¹

The purpose of this Introduction is to present the concepts, ideas and puzzles driving the investigation into whether terrorism is theatre. To that end, it outlines potential problems of defining and studying terrorism, and introduces the metaphorical approach as a valuable research tool for its analysis. Furthermore, having conceptualised terrorism as an audience-orientated and audience-informed strategy of communication, this Introduction points to the metaphor of theatre as the most prevalent in terrorism research, and highlights some of its strengths and limitations. It then presents the research purpose and research questions, which are addressed in this thesis.

The main argument of this dissertation is that the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance do add greater depth to the understanding of terrorism and that their main contribution is in identifying, illustrating and examining the interplay between terrorist actors who design, send and transmit the terrorist message and audiences, who receive and respond to it. This argument is developed throughout four chapters, the content of which is outlined at the end of this Introduction.

Defining terrorism

Even though Terrorism Studies is currently one of the fastest growing disciplines in the Social Sciences, there is still no consensus on what terrorism is. While some consider it to be a tactic, others see it as an ideology (Moeller, 2009: 18-25).

Etymologically, the word “terrorism” comes from the word “terror” which derives from Latin *terrere* – “to frighten”. The word “terror” designates a feeling of dread, horror, fright, alarm and panic, often caused by natural as well as human-made disasters. “Terrorism” can be defined as the “practice of terror”

¹ Hansen (2006: 57) defines “programmatic catchphrase” as a textual reference, which is well established in politics, journalism and academia, such as Huntington’s “clash of civilizations”.

(Kubiak, 1987: 82) – a tactical use of terror (the feeling) to achieve a specific end.² The conceptualisation of terrorism as tactic, which *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* (Pearsall, 1998: 1886) defines in terms of an “action or strategy carefully planned to achieve a specific end”, and which Moeller (2009: 18) describes as a “method of engaging an enemy”, begs at least four questions: “who uses terror?”, “against whom?”, “how” and “why/to what end?”.

In answering the questions of “who?” and “against whom?” most classifications of terrorism differentiate between state- and non-state users of terrorism. On the one hand, state terrorism occurs when a government or its agencies use terror against their own citizens. On the other hand, non-state terrorism takes place when an individual or a group of people use terror against a state, its military and/or civilians.

Both state- and non-state terrorism generate direct as well as indirect victims. The status of a victim applies regardless of one’s nationality (or lack thereof), political or religious affiliation, or whether the person affected is a state official, member of a military or a civilian. Direct (immediate) victims of terrorism are those who are either injured or killed as a result of terrorism. At the same time, indirect victims are those who are intimidated by the feeling of terror, either because they witnessed an act of terrorism themselves or because they are emotionally related to other victims of terrorism.³

Arguably, terrorism has two main aims – an internal and an external one. Internally, it appeals to a referent audience, otherwise known as the “interest third party”, whom Münkler (2005: 102) describes as people on whose behalf terrorists claim to act – those that terrorists need to self-present to as active, able, competent, strong, powerful, and therefore worthy of support.

Externally, terrorists aim to change the political behaviour of their indirect victims. The way in which they do so is by affecting their enemies psychologically through exposing them to a display of violence or at least the threat of it. The

² The idea that terrorism creates terror is at the very core of Terrorism Studies. It has recently been questioned by Rapin (2009) who argued that actually “terrorism” rarely creates “terror” in the clinical sense of the term. In Rapin’s view (2009: 167, 174) this makes the meaning of the term “terrorism” imprecise, which calls into question its analytical utility for scientific investigation.

³ A comprehensive list of terrorist victims is provided by Bolechów (2010: 243-246).

latter is most often achieved through carrying out terrorist attacks that gain the attention of the media, which then help terrorists transmit their messages to political actors and audiences terrorists want to influence. By choreographing and staging terrorist attacks, which are later performed in front of an audience, terrorists want to induce the feeling of terror in those watching their actions, which they then hope will make the audience easier to manipulate and force into doing whatever it is that terrorists want them to do.

In order to answer the “how?” question, mentioned before, it needs to be noted that while some techniques, such as political assassinations, are used by state- and non-state terrorists, there are methods which characterise one group more than the other, which highly depends on how powerful and influential the two are. Arguably, only the state has the ability to terrorise a part or a whole of its population by depriving it of shelter, food, healthcare and education, as was the case in Pol Pot’s Cambodia (Kampuchea) in the 1970s. In addition, and as demonstrated by Stalin’s purges in the 1930s or the mass killings of Jews by Nazi Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, it is also the state that is powerful enough to deport and kill the members of its population *en masse*. At the same time, non-state terrorists, who lack the type and amount of power enjoyed by the state, are more likely to resort to hijackings, hostage-takings, suicide bombings and beheadings, especially since their aim is to “send a message, not defeat the enemy” (Moeller, 2009: 18).

When it comes to the ends state- and non-state terrorism serve, they are similar in the sense that terrorists of both kinds aim at preserving or changing a political *status quo*. However, while the aim of state terrorists is often to control the population and, in doing so, to preserve and reinforce the legitimacy of the state, non-state terrorists usually direct their actions against a state, its representatives and their constituents, whose domestic or foreign policies non-state terrorists strongly disapprove of. In addition, state- and non-state terrorists differ significantly where their respective power to justify and legitimize their actions is concerned.

Even though before 1794 the word “terror” had positive connotations,⁴ the terms “terrorism” and “terrorist” have since acquired a derogatory meaning (Rapin, 2009: 165-16) to the point that nowadays “anyone who is described as a terrorist over a long period of time will incur a major loss of legitimacy” (Münkler, 2005: 99).⁵ As a consequence, no terrorist (state- or non-state) wants to be described as such. However, because no state- or non-state actor wants to be depicted and perceived as a terrorist, “political players deliberately create semantic confusion” regarding what terrorism is and who a terrorist is “to improve their own position and to worsen that of their adversary” (Münkler, 2005: 99). This then points to two important observations, both of which will be further discussed at a later stage in this thesis. The first point is that whether one is considered a terrorist or not largely depends on whether one is perceived and named as such. This highlights that, rather than being a natural fact, terrorism is more a product of discourse, and therefore a social construct. The second observation is that the capacity to label one a terrorist is an important attribute of political power, which Livingston (1994) defines in terms of “the ability to define the content of the issue agenda”, understood as “the ability to define and limit the questions to be asked, not just the ability to influence decisions” (1994: 7).⁶ In this context, power can be defined as the ability to write political dramas – the dominant “stories of reality”, which are then played out.⁷ How such power is

⁴ 1794 is the year of the Thermidorian Reaction, which was a revolt during the French Revolution against the Reign of Terror. It is also the year in which some of the leading members of the Terror (such as M. Robespierre and L. A. de Saint-Just) were executed.

⁵ The positive meaning of the word “terrorism” can be associated with a terrorist organisation called *Narodnaya Volya*, which was active in Russia in the late 19th century, and whose members perceived terrorism to be a way of fighting against the archaic political structures of the tsarist empire. In their eyes, “terrorist action” was aimed at: eliminating the most important people in power; demonstrating that it is possible to fight against the government; promoting the revolutionary spirit among the people; and protecting the party from spies (Rapin, 2009: 166). A point similar to that of Rapin’s is made by Crenshaw (1995: 8), who highlights the fact that the “Russian revolutionaries and anarchists of the nineteenth century not only accepted the label (of terrorism – JS) as a compliment but claimed it as a badge of honor”.

⁶ Also see Cobb, Elder (1972).

⁷ The phrase “story of reality” comes from Philip Gourevitch who argues that “‘power consists in the ability to make others inhabit your story of their reality’. Those who tell the stories, map our understanding of our world. Those who manage our sense of ‘reality’, control our interest in taking future action related to the story” (cited in Moeller, 2009: 93).

exercised becomes especially visible when one conceptualises terrorism as an ideology rather than a tactic.

The New Oxford Dictionary of English (Pearsall, 1998: 908) defines “ideology” as either “a system of ideas and ideals, especially one that forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy” or “the ideas and manner of thinking characteristic of a group, social class, or individual”. Many classifications of terrorism suggest that terrorists are driven by a number of ideas and ideals – secular and religious alike – such as: resistance to the existing structures of political or economic power; disagreement with a political or territorial *status quo* or dissent against dominant values and ways of living.

It could be argued that being in opposition to something or someone is at the core of conceptualising terrorism as an ideology. On the one hand, non-state terrorists often draw their legitimacy from being against the state and the domestic and/or foreign policies it promotes. At the same time, states frequently justify their counter-terrorist actions by portraying terrorists as “them”, who are described derogatorily as those who threaten the safety and well-being of “us”. This discursive practice, which is reminiscent of the ancient rule of “divide and conquer” – *divide et impera* – serves to manipulate political allegiance by strengthening political loyalty to “us” and, at the same time, by weakening support for “them”. In addition, it often involves the mechanism of portraying “us” and “them” as monolithic entities. As a result, the complex make-up of the two becomes lost or at best overlooked. Even though such obfuscation makes obtaining political support by “us” and “them” easier, it significantly decreases the chances of understanding the actions and motives of the protagonists in question. This then prevents people (be they politicians or academics) from getting to the bottom of the problem of terrorism in any of its guises, and, what is important, it also negatively impacts on any chances they have to find a good and viable solution to it.⁸

While talking of terrorism as a tactic allows for a “culturally neutral conversation about terrorism and ways to confront it” (Moeller, 2009: 18), speaking of terrorism as an ideology often implies making a political and/or a

⁸ Moeller (2009: 22) argues that “[t]errorists must be defined narrowly if there’s any hope of understanding them”.

moral statement (2009: 25). This is one of the reasons why many authors, such as Özdamar (2008: 100), claim that the instrumental approach to terrorism, which regards terrorism to be first and foremost a tactic with the aim of achieving one's political goals, has the largest theoretical potential in terrorism research. However, while Özdamar (2008: 93) claims that the instrumental theory of terrorism is "one of the most developed approaches to the subject in the discipline of political science", he also notes that other approaches, such as viewing terrorism as political communication, can complement it.

Studying terrorism

The lack of consensus on what terrorism is partially explains why it is possible, if not necessary, to study it in different ways. This concerns aims as well as methods of terrorism analysis.

The main aim of studying terrorism is either to explain it or to understand it.⁹ On the one hand, "explaining" is characteristic of an intellectual tradition that is positivist (scientific) and which places the researcher outside the research subject. One of the best examples of such an approach in terrorism research is explaining terrorism by analyzing its root causes (such as lack of education or prospects, poverty, modernization, etc.) or explaining terrorist behaviour using psychological profiling. On the other hand, "understanding" typifies a more post-positivist (interpretative) approach, in which the researcher finds the meaning of the research subject by placing themselves inside it. In terrorism analysis the second method is often used, for example, to study terrorism as a social construction and a product of political discourse.

Various approaches to the study of terrorism are often shaped by disciplinary focus. For example, to the proponents of the economic approach to the study of terrorism, terrorism is predominantly an economic activity – a way of making a living. Because terrorist organisations incorporate and follow many of the widely accepted rules of marketing, scholars such as Landes (1978), Sandler

⁹ According to Hollis and Smith (1990), "explaining" and "understanding" constitute prevailing intellectual traditions in the Social Sciences, in general, and International Relations, in particular.

(1992, 1997), Frey (2004), Frey et al. (2007) and Krueger (2007) see merit in using scientific methods found in disciplines such as Economics or Business Studies to analyse terrorist behaviour and its impact.

There are, however, conceptualisations of terrorism that are more suited to a post-positivist, interpretative method of analysis. One is the understanding of terrorism as a social construction, put forward by P. Jenkins (2003), Jackson et al. (2007), Hülse and Spencer (2008) and Sorenson (2009), among others. According to these scholars, how people understand terrorism is heavily shaped by how they perceive and interpret it. However, as different people perceive things differently (as illustrated by the examples listed above), is it impossible for them to share the same meaning, which partially explains why the objective truth about terrorism not only does not, but also cannot exist. This is also one of the reasons why terrorism as a social construction requires an interpretative approach, which is by definition inter-subjective, rather than a scientific approach, which relies on an objective analysis.

Just as the approaches used in terrorism research vary, so do the methods used in that research. Interestingly, even though Terrorism Studies is a branch of Political Science, politics directly informs only some of the theories of terrorism, which include instrumental, organisational and political communication approaches. Other theories that terrorism researchers rely on come from Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Economics, Marketing and Organisation Studies, among other fields of knowledge.¹⁰ Because no theory can explain every aspect of the phenomenon it is used to analyse, a multidisciplinary approach to terrorism is increasingly popular, especially in light of terrorism's complexity. Dramaturgical metaphor provides comprehensive approach to understanding terrorism as a process of communication and a social construction, which this thesis calls for.

¹⁰ For an overview of instrumental, organizational, political communication, economic, and psychological theories of terrorism see Özdamar (2008).

Dramaturgical metaphor and terrorism

The metaphorical approach finds the meanings of unknown phenomena by comparing them to more familiar concepts and experiences. One of the points of view forwarded in this thesis is that just as the “[m]etaphors taken from drama (...) offer a significant way of understanding politics” (Beer and de Landtsheer, 2004: 17), metaphors taken from drama also offer a valuable way of understanding the political phenomenon of terrorism.

The most popular dramaturgical metaphorisations of terrorism include: terrorism as drama (Wagner-Pacifici, 1996); terrorism as theatre (Jenkins, B., 1974a, 1974b, 1975); terrorism as spectacle (Hozic, 1990; Giroux, 2006; Giroux, 2007) and terrorism as performance (Sabatini, 1986; Schechner, 2002). Of the four dramaturgical metaphors recounted above, all of which are analysed in this thesis, the comparison of terrorism to theatre is the most entrenched in terrorism research. However, despite its wide appeal, the “theatre” metaphor is not without its limitations, which can partially be explained by the fact that metaphors are not holistic. Not even the most popular metaphors can explain everything. Moreover, not only can metaphors be “incomplete”, they can also “mislead” (Van de Bulte, 1994: 419-420). Researchers who rely on the metaphorical approach are therefore invited to explore several metaphors for the same phenomenon, thus addressing and “offsetting the strengths and weaknesses of each” (Van de Bulte, 1994: 419-420). In keeping with this advice, the approach of this thesis is much more comprehensive, in that it focuses not only on the “terrorism is theatre” metaphor, but also on the metaphors of drama, spectacle and performance.

It has already been mentioned that even the most popular metaphors have their strong and weak points. The “terrorism is theatre” metaphor, pervasive in terrorism research, is no exception. For example, while it is useful for describing terrorism as it is presented in print and on the air, the metaphor of theatre is less able to reflect and analyse terrorism as it is presented online. This has to do primarily with the nature of the mass media used to transmit a terrorist message, some of which (like the “new” – social media) leave much and some of which leave little to be filled or completed by the audience (television being a case in point here). While the “terrorism is theatre” metaphor will be fully evaluated later

in this thesis, in the next section attention will be drawn to terrorism as an audience-orientated strategy of communication. This seems appropriate, since the aim of this thesis is to use dramaturgical metaphors to capture the process of terrorism as communication and to provide insight into the actor-audience relationship such communication generates and relies on.

Actors in terrorism

Those who conceptualise terrorism as “something that terrorists do” see its perpetrators – states, in the case of state terrorism, and individuals and groups, in the case of non-state terrorism – as the leading actors/agents in terrorism. However, there is an emerging group of academics, including Zulaika and Douglass (1996) and Hülse and Spencer (2008), who see terrorism primarily as a product of rhetoric and discourse, and who place terrorists on the same stage with those who have the power to describe them as terrorists – government officials, the mass media as well as the general public.¹¹ When terrorism is understood as a social construction, it refers not only to what terrorists do or claim to do, but also to who is perceived and described as a terrorist. Interestingly, whereas the perception that terrorism is “something that terrorists do” gives terrorists agency, the misnomer deprives the perpetrators of terrorism of their political agency and legitimacy (see Münkler, 2005: 99). One of the best examples of such practice was Margaret Thatcher’s policy towards members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), whom she denied political status and treated as criminals and outlaws.

The perception of terrorism as a social construction and a product of discourse also points to the importance of the drama of terrorism – the prevalent plot or narrative that is enacted at a given time. Political dramas change, depending on the circumstances and the short- and long-term needs and goals of those who write them. This is also because, as noted by Crenshaw “the meanings of terms change to fit a changing context. Concepts follow politics” (1995: 7). To a

¹¹ The argument that terrorists are not the only actors in terrorism but that those in charge of terrorism discourse are also actors is further supported by authors such as Hozic (1990: 7), Beer and de Landtsheer (2004: 30), P. Jenkins (2003: 129, 151), Richardson (2008: i) and Bolechów (2010: 234).

large extent, political dramas regulate who is to be afforded political agency or who is to be deprived of it. In other words, it is often particular dramas that determine protagonists (actors) and audiences in terrorism.

Audience(s) in terrorism

The requirement of an audience is what differentiates terrorism from other forms of political violence, understood as violence aimed at bringing about political effects. While war and torture can take place without witnesses, terrorism is very much about the “people watching” (Jenkins B., 1975: 5). Like theatre, a “terrorist without an audience is inconceivable”, argues Maddocks (1980). “Terrorism without its horrified witnesses would be as pointless as a play without an audience”, adds Juergensmeyer (2000: 139). As will be demonstrated in this dissertation, an audience can play a variety of roles in the theatre of terrorism, which largely depends on how terrorism is defined and what socio-political functions it is perceived to have.

With terrorism conceptualised as a social construction, the primary role of an audience is to give meaning to terrorist behaviour. In this case the audience is an interpretive community, which can evaluate the terrorist performance and determine not only what terrorism is but also how successful it is. The latter is confirmed by Wagner-Pacifici (1986) who writes that:

“in political theatre the audience not only considers the messages and ideals of the plot, it also ultimately determines its success. The public/audience can decide either to applaud the production of political reality, to passively and indifferently (or resentfully) withdraw attention by, for example, turning off the television or abstaining from voting. Or, it may decide to deny the particular dramatic resolution and thus deny the protagonist’s legitimacy. The audience reaction is therefore directly linked to the political legitimacy of the protagonists of the social drama”. (1986: 13)

Schmid (2005) notes that not only are there many audiences in terrorism, but also that “[v]arious audiences tend to give different interpretations to

terrorist acts” (2005: 138).¹² This then increases the need for terrorists to frame their messages according to which audience(s) they want to target and why.¹³ The necessity to cue one’s message to fit one’s respective audience is underlined by the notion that a message can create, shape and mobilise an audience. The latter assumption, prevalent in advertising and marketing, is more and more often incorporated into the research carried out by the proponents of the political communication theory of terrorism, such as Münkler (2005: 102).

As will be demonstrated later in this thesis, early conceptualisations of terrorism as communication (Schmid and de Graaf, 1982) assumed the linear transmission of a terrorist message from terrorists to their indirect victims. In doing so, they failed to capture the origins of the message (i.e. what prompted terrorists to send it?) or how it was responded to. As a result, Schmid and de Graaf’s model portrays the target audience of terrorists as passive, non-purposive and incapable, which is in stark contrast to an “interpretive” and “decisive” audience – one that gives meaning to terrorism and one that is able to react to it. What this all then attests to is that in terrorism research there are different perceptions of the audience and its place and role in terrorism, some of which have so far escaped scholarly analysis. This thesis attempts to fill this gap by evaluating the potential of dramaturgical metaphors to increase the understanding of terrorism as a process of communication, which is as much orientated towards the audience, as it is informed by it.

Research purpose, argument and questions

The purpose of this dissertation is four-fold. First, it provides an overview of the literature that looks at terrorism and counter-terrorism as if they were drama, theatre, performance and spectacle. Based on that survey, it defines the four dramaturgical concepts and explains relationships between them by linking them

¹² Schmid’s observation is seconded by Crenshaw (1995: 4), who defines terrorism as “a conspiratorial style of violence calculated to alter the attitudes and behaviour of *multiple audiences*” (emphasis mine – JS).

¹³ In journalism “framing” depicts the process of shaping the news by using particular structure, narratives and language (“frames”), which “organize” an event being reported on (see Moeller, 2009: 93).

with Alexander's "performative elements" – "background meaning, actors, props, scripts, direction, and audience" (Alexander, 2006b: 95) – the coming together of which determines the success or failure of any performance, including those of terrorism and counter-terrorism. It uses the metaphor of drama to study terrorist and counter-terrorist scripts and direction; the metaphor of theatre to analyse actors and the props they use; the metaphor of spectacle to look at the background meaning; and the metaphor of performance to explain the function of a terrorist and/or counter-terrorist audience. It then applies the dramaturgical metaphors to the attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Chechnya to look at how they have been scripted, directed, staged, acted out and received before analysing why some of them were more successful than others.

For the purpose of this investigation, terrorism is conceptualised as a process of communication that relies on people sending and receiving messages as well as responding to them. In its dependence on "showing doing", terrorism is similar to theatre and other theatre-like forms, such as performance and spectacle. It is because of this similarity that terrorism can be studied as drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, all of which, to a greater or lesser extent, engage with the question of actors performing a script to an audience, who then gives meaning to what it watches.¹⁴ Schechner made the observation that

"[t]he drama is the domain of the author, the composer, scenarist, shaman; the script is the domain of the teacher, guru, master; the theater is the domain of the performers; (...) the performance is the domain of the audience". (1973b: 8)

In the previous section terrorism was introduced as "the domain of the audience". It was also noted that not only are terrorist actions aimed at an audience, whose political behaviour is to be altered, but oftentimes the audience also has the "interpretive" power to decide what terrorism is and what it is not. This, however, leads one to question whether theatre, described by Schechner (1973b: 8) as "the domain of the performers", is indeed the most appropriate metaphor for the study of terrorism? If performance is "the domain of the

¹⁴ Bolechów (2010: 229) also links the idea of terrorism being communication and terrorism being a theatre, and notes that "the conceptualisation of terrorism as a process of social communication ('theatre' or 'happening') assumes the existence of an audience, whose perceptions and behaviours terrorists strive to influence".

audience”, the metaphor of performance may shed better light on the primary role of the terrorist audience. However, it is important to remember that even though terrorism is first and foremost about the audience, terrorism begins with performers – terrorism users, practitioners and/or perpetrators – those who terrorise. The importance of the latter is further demonstrated by the amount of attention that terrorists receive in terrorism research and literature, which Hülse and Spencer (2008) criticize as too “actor-focused”. This raises the actor-related question of whether in order to understand the audience, one also needs to study actors who play to that audience, alongside the drama/script they enact? The investigation contained in this thesis leads to a positive answer to this query, which further explains and justifies its focus not only on terrorism as performance – “the domain of the audience” – but also on terrorism as theatre – “the domain of the performers”. In evaluating the two conceptualisations theoretically (in terms of the respective analytical value of the two metaphors) and empirically (their applicability to the study of terrorist attacks in Budyonovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan), this thesis contends that not only do the two dramaturgical metaphors complement each other well, but, when combined, provide deeper insight into terrorism and its dynamics.

The other two dramaturgical metaphors analysed here are “terrorism as drama” and “terrorism as spectacle”. The previous paragraphs highlighted the important role of an audience and actors in terrorism. It is important to note here that as an audience is important for an actor, so is a dramaturgical text, which an actor performs to an audience. A similar observation can be made in regard to terrorists, who, like actors, act out various scripts and dramas. As will be demonstrated later in this thesis, dramas very often determine the protagonists as well as the audiences in the theatre and spectacle of terrorism, which is one of the reasons why the metaphor of drama can be used to study terrorism, alongside the metaphors of theatre, performance and spectacle.

Apart from further contributing to the debate concerning the role of an audience in terrorism, the “terrorism as spectacle” metaphor also enhances one’s understanding of the socio-political practice of “spectacularising” terrorism, as conceptualised by Hozic (1990) and Giroux (2006, 2007), among other authors. According to Hozic, “terrorism is initially a paratheatrical phenomenon which the

state and society ‘spectacularise’ in order to satisfy some of their particular needs” (1990: 65). She argues that a weak state or a terrorist group can “spectacularise” terrorism to prove themselves to their respective constituents and, as a consequence, gain their allegiance and support. The extent to which this applies in the Russo-Chechen context is analysed using the attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan, which serve as case studies in this thesis.

As the above overview demonstrates, the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance have the potential to enhance one’s understanding of various aspects of terrorism regarded as a socially constructed strategy of communication. The main aim of this thesis is therefore to examine this potential by applying the dramaturgical metaphors to terrorism in order to gain additional perspective to understanding its underlying dynamics, especially the crucial interplay between terrorist actors and audiences. What emerges from the analysis of terrorism as drama, theatre, spectacle and performance presented here is that terrorism, defined as a strategy of communication, wherein the message is both sent and responded to, is heavily interlinked with counter-terrorism, which can be regarded as a response but sometimes also a cause of terrorism. Given the close links between terrorism and counter-terrorism, which are further outlined in Chapter Two of this thesis, the dramaturgical metaphors will be applied to both in order to further demonstrate the significant analytical potential of those metaphors. Another rationale for applying them to terrorism and counter-terrorism is to demonstrate the similarities but also the differences between the two. Even though all terrorist actions have to be displayed to the public, it is only some counter-terrorist actions that are “shown”, with others taking place “behind the scenes” and removed from public view.

Structure of the thesis

Using the attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan this thesis will argue that the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance add greater depth to the understanding of terrorism, especially when it comes to studying the interplay between its actors and audiences.

Chapter One sets out the theoretical and empirical foundations guiding this research into the role of dramaturgical metaphors in understanding terrorism and its relationship with counter-terrorism. It does so through reviewing relevant theoretical literature on topics such as: terrorism and dramaturgical metaphors and terrorism and counter-terrorism's relationship to the "old" and "new" media.

Theoretical explanation and elaboration of the main ideas and concepts used in this thesis, such as terrorism, counter-terrorism, drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, follow in Chapter Two, which not only outlines the metaphorical approach to terrorism, but also introduces the method, analytical corpus and case studies used in the analysis presented in this dissertation. This chapter also draws close links between terrorism and counter-terrorism and justifies the rationale for applying the dramaturgical metaphors to both.

Chapter Three provides a theoretical examination of terrorism and counter-terrorism as drama, theatre, spectacle and performance. Building on Alexander's "performative elements" – "background meaning, actors, props, scripts, direction, and audience" (Alexander, 2006b: 95) – it looks at the ability of the drama metaphor to enhance the understanding of the role of terrorists and counter-terrorists' dramas and scripts to determine who are the terrorist/counter-terrorist actors, what is it that they do and how? Having examined the analytical potential of the spectacle metaphor to study the creation and manipulation of the "background meaning" of terrorist and counter-terrorist dramas and scripts, the chapter uses the metaphor of theatre to analyse how those scripts are directed and enacted by terrorist and counter-terrorist actors and with what props. Finally, it applies the metaphor of performance to analyse how terrorist and counter-terrorist audiences interpret, understand and react to what the terrorist and counter-terrorist actors do.

Chapter Four introduces the terrorist attacks on a hospital in Budyonnovsk (in June 1995), the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow (in 2002) and the School No. One in Beslan (2004) as case studies examined in this thesis. It also presents the most relevant scholarship devoted to them. The three terrorist attacks, masterminded by a Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev, were carried out by the independence-hungry Chechens, who opposed Russia's political domination of

the separatist Chechen Republic of Ikcheria, which is located in the northern Caucasus. The main aim of Chechen terrorists during all three attacks was to force Russia to withdraw its military forces from Ikcheria. However, during the attacks in Dubrovka and Beslan, both of which took place after the 9/11 attacks on the United States, the Chechens came to be perceived as religiously motivated terrorists with strong links to militant Islam and Al-Qaeda rather than “freedom fighters”. Chapter Four presents this interesting shift as an attempt, on behalf of the Russian Federation, to turn Chechen terrorism into a political spectacle in order to suit Russia’s political needs. Using the categories of drama, theatre and performance, it also sheds light on the highly “performative” response to such efforts by the Chechens themselves.

Having examined the applicability of the theoretical discussion to the case studies, the Conclusion demonstrates the findings of the analysis presented in this thesis and outlines some of the ideas for further research. Its main function, however, is to reiterate the main argument of the dissertation, which is that there is indeed merit in studying terrorism and counter-terrorism dramaturgically, as the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance enhance an understanding of the dynamics between their respective actors and audiences, which enriches the conceptualisation of terrorism and counter-terrorism as highly interlinked strategies of communication, social constructs and products of political dramas/discourse.

The review of the theoretical literature presented in the next chapter not only provides an intellectual context to the heavily literature-based analysis carried out here, but also highlights the research gaps that this thesis aims to address. By examining the academic sources that compare terrorism to drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, Chapter One points to the need for an in-depth analysis of the meaning of those metaphors as well as an investigation into how the metaphors shape the perceptions of terrorism and counter-terrorism they are used to describe.

CHAPTER ONE

“Understanding (...) involves discovering a system of common points, which are associated with the metaphor and its object. Understanding also includes recognition, on the part of the interlocutor, of the author’s intention when he or she makes a specific declaration”. (Wood, 2002: 11)

This chapter sets the scene for the theoretical investigation described in this thesis by presenting how the metaphors of theatre, drama, spectacle and performance have so far been applied in the literature on terrorism and counter-terrorism. Having demonstrated a number of similarities between the two phenomena, it then focuses on the scholarship that depicts terrorism and counter-terrorism as communication, social construction and products of discourse. Subsequently, the chapter looks at the writings on the “old” and “new” terrorism and its relationship with the “old” and “new” media and acknowledges that the distinction is much more pronounced in the literature on terrorism than on counter-terrorism. In proceeding with the above, the chapter explains a “system of common points”, which underpin this analysis. Furthermore, in keeping with Wood’s (2002: 11) epigram, invoked above, it also reveals this author’s intentions when “she makes specific declarations”.

METAPHORS AND TERRORISM

Metaphors are frequently used to describe terrorism. Arguably, this is due to the fact that, as already noted in the Introduction, terrorism is resistant to a broadly accepted definition (Kruglanski *et al.*, 2008: 98) and as such it invites comparisons to other, more familiar concepts and experiences. It is also quite common to speak of terrorism metaphorically because it is difficult to find the “right” words to describe its “reality” (Spencer, 2010: 3).

Metaphors are used to describe terrorism and counter-terrorism alike. The most common references include the comparisons of terrorism to war (Angstrom, 2011), crime (Hamm, 2007), uncivilized evil (Spencer, 2010), disease (Garcia and

Hellín, 2010), tragedy (Macias, 2002) and theatre (B. Jenkins, 1974a, 1974b, 1975). Where counter-terrorism is concerned, the most prevalent metaphors are those of war, law enforcement, containment of a social epidemic and a process of prejudice reduction (Kruglanski *et al.*, 2008). The following exploration of the literature not only clarifies the rationale for studying terrorism and counter-terrorism metaphorically, but also explores methodologies related to that approach.

Because terrorism, and thus counter-*terrorism*, is a complex phenomenon, which is difficult to define, it might indeed be helpful to conceptualise it by comparing it to concepts that are better known and easier to grasp, such as war or crime. Hülse and Spencer (2008), for instance, study the portrayal of Al-Qaeda in the tabloid German press and analyse how the metaphorical descriptions of Al-Qaeda as a military or a criminal organisation have shaped people's perceptions of the group as well as their attitudes and reactions towards it. The authors conclude that people perceive and react to Al-Qaeda differently, depending on whether they understand the terrorist group to be a military enemy or an outlaw. Not only do Hülse and Spencer (2008) acknowledge the usefulness of metaphors for reflecting and describing reality, but also for creating it, mainly by influencing people's perceptions and interpretations.

Kruglanski *et al.* (2008) find that, as much as the metaphors they study shed light on diverse aspects of terrorism, each one of them also prescribes and allows for various ways of countering it. Drawing on the aforementioned observations of Hülse and Spencer (2008) and Kruglanski *et al.* (2008), this thesis applies the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance to terrorism and counter-terrorism and analyses not only those aspects of the two phenomena that are captured by the dramaturgical metaphors, but also how they shape audience interpretations and reactions towards them.

A further question is "how can terrorism and counter-terrorism be studied metaphorically?". Hülse and Spencer (2008) belong to a very small group of scholars who address this problem. In analysing Al-Qaeda as a military and a criminal organisation, the two authors apply the method devised by Eco (1995: 191) who advocates interpreting metaphors from the point of view of someone who encounters them for the first time. Following Eco's suggestion, Hülse and

Spencer (2008) focus on the most common understanding of the words “war” and “crime” and apply them to Al-Qaeda.

Few authors who write of terrorism or counter-terrorism dramaturgically specify the kind of “drama”, “theatre”, “spectacle” or “performance” they compare those phenomena to. As a result, the analytic potential of the dramaturgical metaphors they use is significantly weakened. Likewise, potentially informative phrases such as “terrorism is theatre”, “terrorism spectacles” or “the drama of counter-terrorism” lose their explanatory power. To address this problem, it is crucial to outline the meaning of each of the four dramaturgical notions under consideration and to evaluate possible interpretations of terrorism and counter-terrorism as drama, theatre, spectacle and performance. I begin by exploring the meaning of “dramaturgical” metaphors. Burke ([1945] 1969, 1968) and Hoffman (1990) proposed two different ways of looking at human activity as a theatre which they refer to as “dramatism” and “dramaturgy”.

Dramaturgical metaphors and terrorism

Nowadays many disciplines in the Social Sciences, such as Psychology, Psychiatry, Anthropology, Sociology, Organisational and Political Studies employ drama, theatre and performance to analyse human behaviour (Carlson, 2007: 35-130). Furthermore, since drama and theatre both rely on a basic assumption that “people in groups – whether of two, three, or dozens – in some ways ‘ritualise’ their behaviors; ‘present’ themselves rather than just be” (Schechner, 1973a: 3), Theatre Studies and the Social Sciences often cross-reference. While the Social Sciences have adopted some vocabulary of theatre (such as role-playing, scenes, setting, acting and action), theatre has also borrowed some of its key terms from the Social Sciences (interaction, ritual, ceremony, confrontation, etc.) (Schechner, 1973a: 3).

A number of drama- and theatre-derived concepts are used to depict political reality, such as: political actors, international players, political drama, political spectacle, theatre of war, international stage or, to quote the title of Mearsheimer’s well-known book, the “tragedy of great power politics” (Mearsheimer, 2001). Among other drama- and theatre-related references used

to describe politics one can also list: politics as carnival, circus or a movie (Beer and de Landtsheer, 2004: 19). Performance art and politics, of which terrorism and counter-terrorism are parts, have a lot in common, as they both rely on creating meaning through staging, enacting and observing certain behaviours and circumstances. Politics is indeed within a “cognitive distance” to drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, and as such, can be looked at through their prism.

That politics can be studied dramaturgically and performatively is further supported by Apter (2006), who not only sees politics as being very much “about performance in a public space”, but also argues that the two resemble each other “in their tropes and mechanisms, plot, script, performance, staging, and rules for making visible the tensed relationship of roles” (2006: 221-222). Alexander (2006b) claims that because terrorism “aims not only to kill but in and through killing aims also to gesture in a dramatic way” (2006b: 94), it needs to be theorised differently, i.e. dramaturgically and performatively.

As already suggested, there are two main approaches to examining the world – as staged, or as a stage – both of which can be used to study symbolic actions, such as terrorism. Burke (1968, [1945] 1969) is well known for promoting the idea of the world as staged and Goffman (1959) for the world as a stage. The two approaches share an understanding of the world as socially constructed, in which the meaning of human actions is shaped by how those actions are perceived and interpreted. In order to analyse how people influence the opinions and actions of each other and what motivates them to do so, Burke (1968, [1945] 1969) conceptualised social interactions literally rather than metaphorically, in that he looked at the world as if it was indeed a stage.

Burke’s approach is called “dramatistic” or “dramatism”. It relies on the assumption that each symbolic action can be analysed by looking at its five elements: WHO? (actor) did WHAT? (action), WHERE? (scene), HOW? (agency) and WHY? (purpose) (Burke, 1968). Authors such as Lule (1991) and Tuman (2010) use Burke’s dramatistic technique in their research on terrorism. While Lule studies media portrayals of terrorism, Tuman focuses on its rhetorical dimensions. The works by Lule and Tuman demonstrate that Burke’s (1968, [1945] 1969) dramatism is not alien to terrorism research. However, its use remains limited, compared to that of Goffman’s dramaturgical approach (1959).

Burke quite literally looks at the world “as staged”, while Goffman analyses it metaphorically – as if the world was a stage. The analysis conducted in this thesis examines terrorism and counter-terrorism “as staged” and therefore refers to the “dramaturgical” rather than “dramatistic” approach and metaphors.

Goffman’s writings reflect the idea described by Plato, Shakespeare and Cervantes, among others, that the entire world is a theatre (*Totus Mundus Agit Histrionem*) and people are actors who perform various roles.¹⁵ The latter is also one of the main assumptions of the field of knowledge called dramaturgical sociology, of which Goffman is one of the best-known representatives. Goffman (1959) notes that people “self-present in everyday life”. What this means, for Goffman, is that people act out their public roles in front of other people – the audience, whose role is two-fold. Not only does the audience judge the performances it witnesses, but its members also compare and adjust their own behaviour based on performances given by others. The fact that their “self-presentation” is constantly observed and evaluated makes people “dramaturgically aware” (Goffman, 1959). This then implies that people tend to manipulate their behaviour to improve their perception by others as well as to avoid embarrassment. Goffman describes such attempts as “impression management” (1959: 208-212) or “face-work” (1955).

Lyman and Scott (1975), like Goffman, refer to the metaphor of theatre as a way to increase one’s understanding of reality. They argue that looking at the world as if it were a theatre is inherent to any discipline that focuses on human interaction (Lyman and Scott, 1975: 2). As an interesting way to support their claim they trace the meaning of the world *theoria* to “theatre” and argue that “the method appropriate to theorizing was, from the beginning, dramatistic” (1975: 1).

Lyman and Scott’s analysis focuses on how the *topos* of the world as a stage (*theatrum mundi*) is reflected in the writings of Shakespeare, such as *Macbeth* or *Hamlet*, both of which capture the use theatrical means for political purposes. Their argument that statecraft and stagecraft are interconnected (Lyman and

¹⁵ *Totus Mundus Agit Histrionem*, which means “All the World Is a Theatre”, is a motto with which Shakespeare adorned London’s famous Globe Theatre. The theatre was built in the shape of the Earth, which in itself made it embody the idea that the “world’s a stage/ And all the men and women merely players” (Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act II, Scene 7; cited in Hawkins and Spring, 1966: 178; also see Kivisto, 2007: 272).

Scott, 1975: 114) partially influences my analysis of how terrorists and the state use theatre and theatrical means for their respective ends.

Lyman and Scott (1975) also depict various “dramas of resistance”, which can be described as situations in which people find themselves outside of a certain framework, be that framework political (slaves), legal (outlaws) or social (mental asylums). Drawing on the work of Goffman (1955, 1959), among other authors, Lyman and Scott (1975) trace the process by which such people adjust their behaviour to new circumstances and either take on the roles that have been prescribed for them (those of bandits or of the insane) or rebel against them. This process will be further analyzed elsewhere in this thesis, in the context of the Dubrovka hostage-takers who took on the role of Islamic terrorists, as cast by President Putin and his associates. This case then becomes part of a larger discussion on how and why terrorists are spectacularised by the state and also why they spectacularise themselves.

It is through the case studies of Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan attacks that this thesis will examine and evaluate the value of dramaturgical metaphors for the study of terrorism. It is crucial, however, to begin this investigation with a review of what has already been written on the subject, and how various authors have used the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance to depict terrorism and counter terrorism. Such review not only allows for an analytical overview of understandings, interpretations and implications of the aforementioned metaphors in the area of terrorism studies to date, but importantly it allows for critical analysis of those understandings, interpretations and implications theoretically as well as empirically.

Terrorism and drama

Terrorism inspires dramaturgs to at least the same extent as it inspires journalists (Orr, 1990; Pedersen, 2006; Havis, 2010; Mueller, 2002; and Román, 2002a). According to Orr (1990), “one of the attractions of terrorism to playwrights is its dramatic impact, which can be both immediate and sensational in its repercussions” (1990: 8). In addition, and apart from providing dramatists with vivid plot and character ideas, what makes terrorism so popular with theatre is

the fact that, as argued by Gerould (1990), “drama by its essence is a collective, social form that can best attack the problem of the intimidation of the few by the many” (1990: 45).

Orr and Klaić’s 1990 anthology of essays constitutes only one of many sources on the link between modern drama and terrorism. While some of those essays analyse their relationship metaphorically, others focus primarily on how terrorism is aesthetically dealt with by drama and theatre. Pedersen (2006), Havis (2010), Mueller (2002) and Román (2002a) all address this fascinating problem. For example, Pedersen (2006) analyses a number of dramatic and theatrical representations of the terrorist activity of the German Red Army Faction (RAF). Both Havis (2010) and Mueller (2002) present their readers with a compilation of dramaturgical texts, all of which have been inspired by the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. Finally, Román’s (2002a) is a compelling collection of essays that discusses the very ability of drama and theatre to represent the staged violence of terrorism on a theatrical stage. While this thesis finds the question of how terrorism is presented in drama and theatre extremely interesting and important, it considers it to be beyond its scope. This thesis also does not analyse terrorism-inspired plays and theatrical performances *per se* given it focuses on a metaphorical conceptualisation of terrorism and counter-terrorism. It instead looks at them *as* drama and theatre, as predominantly socio-political rather than aesthetic categories. However, on a number of occasions I do make references to the works of Orr and Klaić (1990), Pedersen (2006), Mueller (2002) and Román (2002a) as informative and useful, especially for analysing the role of actors and audiences in the very writing and staging of the two phenomena under consideration.

This thesis relies much more on Turner’s concept of “social drama”, as developed by Wagner-Pacifici (1986) in the context of the kidnapping and murder of the Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro by the Italian Red Brigades in the spring of 1978. Turner’s idea of “social drama” is a popular anthropological concept, which serves to describe ways in which societies arrive at a crisis and come out of it. According to Turner (1974: 38-43), such process has four main phases: breach, crisis, redressive action and reintegration or schism. In the first phase, some or all the norms guiding a particular society are breached, which leads to instability.

During the second phase the breach is brought to light, which results in a further division within society and a crisis. In the third phase a variety of official and unofficial procedures and actions are undertaken to ameliorate the existing crisis. Finally, the fourth phase is when the crisis situation is either brought back to normal (reintegration) or when the new (divided) order becomes a norm (schism).

Wagner-Pacifici's (1986) method of analysing different types of texts, which had allowed the perpetrators of "Moro's morality play" to script actions and inactions – their own as well as those of their respective audiences, was useful in devising the text-based methodology of this thesis. On a more theoretical level, Wagner-Pacifici's most significant contribution to this dissertation is her conceptualisation of an audience as an entity that "not only considers the messages and ideals of the plot, it also ultimately determines its success" (1986: 13). The ability of "drama" to script one's actions will be further discussed in Chapters Two, Three and Four. What is discussed now is the drama-related category of theatre, which illustrates how various dramas can be staged and to what effect.

Terrorism and theatre

Theatre's main function is to represent particular actions and situations. In other words, theatre is not about actions and situations as such, but about how they are interpreted and thought about. Sloan (1981) and Pedersen (2006) discuss theatre as a tool for thinking about actions, not a way to act in itself.

Sloan (1981: xvi) conceptualises terrorism as "the theatre of the obscene, where the performance often ends in carnage" and applies the notion of "theatre" to various simulations of hostage-takings, the aim of which is to train people (members of the army, police, journalists, etc.) to better deal with such attacks. Sloan's argument in favour of conducting such theatrical simulations ("playing" terrorists, their victims and counter-terrorists) is two-fold. On the one hand, the more people know how they and others perform under stress, the better they are able to control and resolve any difficult situation, including that of a hostage taking. On the other hand, Sloan (1981: 22-23) claims that people's awareness of

the fact that they have an impact how terrorism “plays out” significantly increases the chances of counter-terrorism’s success. In this context Sloan (1981) notes that:

“In the long run, of course, the impact of the event will be determined by how all the parties interact. If the terrorist’s threat is viewed as credible or at least novel, if the victims are properly visible and terrified, if the responding authorities bring their force to bear, and if the media cover the event, it will be a good drama for the audience. Unfortunately, it will be a drama with potentially disastrous results for both the witting and the unwitting actors”. (1981: 22)

Sloan uses theatre because he believes that it is able to generate emotions and tensions almost identical to those accompanying the “actual incidents” (1981: 29). However, this depends on how well those involved in a simulation perform their respective roles. Sloan claims that this is especially important when it comes to those “playing terrorists”. He states that:

“unless the terrorists totally assume their roles, they run the risk of playing at them and of becoming little more than stereotypes. The resulting charade will destroy the effectiveness of the simulation”. (1981: 46)

Furthermore, Sloan argues, if terrorists do not perform convincingly, those playing hostages will not realise that they are victims, and therefore will not take on their roles either (1981: 48).

While Sloan sees the main potential of “theatre” in its ability to re-create and represent behaviours and circumstances related to counter-terrorism, Pedersen (2006), who describes terrorism as a “staged violence”, highlights the power of theatre to “eliminate references to the reality of human suffering” caused by terrorism (2006: 342). In his opinion,

“[t]he terrorist strategy of staging violence implies an attempt to eliminate references to the reality of the pain caused by this violence. The terrorist wants us to focus on the message, wants us to understand the crime as purely symbolic, as a play”. (Pedersen, 2006: 331)

Pedersen’s comparison of terrorism to theatre heavily relies on the perception of theatre as a space, where something happens as well as an activity, which makes the public believe in what they watch. In this context, terrorists

make violence look like something else and thereby reduce it to “a carrier of political message” (Pedersen, 2006: 335). Such a perception of terrorism is shared by Weimann and Winn (1994) as well as B. Jenkins (1975), who famously noted that terrorist attacks are:

“often choreographed to attract the attention of the electronic media and the international press. Taking and holding hostages increases the drama. If certain demands are not satisfied, the hostages may be killed. The hostages themselves mean nothing to the terrorists. Terrorism is aimed at the people watching, not the actual victims. Terrorism is theater”. (1975: 5)

Since the 1970s Jenkins’ “terrorism is theatre” statement has become a “programmatically catchphrase” and a prevailing dramaturgical metaphor used in the context of terrorism. The excerpt presented above points to a number of issues that are at play in this thesis. Firstly, Jenkins observes that “[t]errorism is aimed at the people watching, not the actual victims” (1975: 5). Terrorism can therefore be regarded, first and foremost, as an audience-orientated strategy of communication, which can be analysed using dramaturgical metaphors. Secondly, his “terrorism is theatre” observation, which this thesis considers to be a metaphor, constitutes an important point of reference for the evaluation of the role of dramaturgical metaphors in an understanding of terrorism, which is presented throughout the chapters that follow. Finally, Jenkins speaks of terrorism as theatre primarily in the context of hostage-takings and kidnappings. This then leaves some doubt about the applicability of the “terrorism is theatre” metaphor to terrorism that relies on different tactics, such as suicide bombings.

According to Jenkins, terrorists’ main aim is to obtain publicity. In his words, terrorists want “a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead” (Jenkins, B., 1988). In order to gain such publicity, terrorists carefully script, direct and stage their actions to attract the attention of the mass media. Likewise, they play to an audience and communicate with it. Usually in the aftermath of an attack terrorists inform those watching of who they are as well as what they want to obtain. This is mainly because terrorists care for and respect their “interest’ third party” (Münkler, 2005: 102). Moreover, they know that in order to gain people’s support, terrorists cannot alienate them.

At this stage a number of changes in terrorist tactics, targets and capabilities since the 1970s, when Jenkins' "terrorism is theatre" remarks were first published, must be noted. For example, not only has the internet replaced television and the press as the primary source of news and information, but it has also presented terrorists with new ways of waging their struggles. Additionally, the increased lethality of modern terrorist attacks signals that today's terrorists are at least as concerned about "those dead" as they are about "those watching". The aforementioned are only some of the changes that make the readers of Jenkins' (1975) work, the author of this thesis included, pose a number of questions, which have so far been overlooked in the literature on terrorism. For instance, is all terrorism theatre, or is the theatrical metaphor restricted to the media-savvy international terrorism of the late 1960s and the 1970s, which relied heavily on the dramatic tactic of taking and holding hostages? Can one speak of terrorism on the internet as theatre, or is the conceptualisation of terrorism as theatre reserved for the "older" media, such as television? What type of theatre does Jenkins compare terrorism to? Who are the actors in such theatre? What is the role of those watching? And finally, is terrorism theatre at all?

This last question inspires this thesis and different aspects of it are presented, challenged and examined as the analysis develops. In what follows, I briefly present three arguments that already exist in the literature, and which question the adequacy and applicability of Jenkins' "terrorism is theatre" observation. The first argument is by Spencer (2006: 18) who notes that the "terrorism is theatre" concept, as presented by Jenkins, applies more to the so-called "old" terrorism of the 1970s than to what some authors refer to as "new" terrorism of the late 1990s and 2000s. Having said this, Spencer does see some validity in the "terrorism is theatre" idea, where the analysis of the more spectacular and lethal terrorism of today is concerned. He argues that "[t]errorists still want many people watching" and that "[t]errorism is still theatre, just on a much bigger scale" (2006: 24).

Like Spencer (2006), Copeland (2001) also associates Jenkins' conceptualisation of terrorism as theatre with the "old" rather than "new" terrorism. Unlike Spencer, however, Copeland does not see the conceptualisation of "terrorism as theatre" as applicable to "new" terrorism. This is mainly because,

he argues, “new” terrorists demonstrate a decreasing interest in theatricalizing their actions.

Finally, Hoffman (2002: 306) acknowledges that Jenkins’ conceptualisation of “terrorism as theatre” was “entirely germane” to the forms of terrorism that existed prior to the 9/11 attacks against the United States. He claims that even though the pre-9/11 terrorism was indeed about “those watching”, the post-9/11 terrorism is at least as much about “those killed”. For this reason Hoffman argues that Jenkins’ notion of “terrorism is theatre” no longer applies to an increasingly lethal and indiscriminate terrorism, as it is practiced and experienced today. The main target of his criticism is Jenkins’ (1975: 5) assumption that terrorism is primarily about those watching and not about those killed. To Hoffman such an assumption is not only untrue, but also harmful and counter-productive to any efforts aimed either at understanding the current wave of terrorism or countering it.

In light of the arguments outlined above it might be argued that the application of Jenkins’ “terrorism is theatre” observation has been influenced by the evolution of terrorism. For example, while it is useful to analyse terrorist attacks that rely on the tactic of hostage-takings, which were most common in the 1970s, its applicability to suicide-bombings, which are more typical of today’s terrorism, is limited. This is partially because of a particular type of theatre, to which Jenkins compares terrorism – the *proscenium* theatre. The *proscenium* model of theatre, which will be discussed in more depth in Chapter Two, depicts a theatre wherein actors are separated from the audience and where the interaction between the two is significantly restricted. A different definition of theatre, which this thesis also invokes in the context of terrorism and counter-terrorism, comes from Apter (2006: 225) who points to two different forms of theatre – “theatre from above” and “theatre from below”. He claims that the “theatre from above”, like the *proscenium* theatre or spectacle, relies on a passive audience, while the “theatre from below” promotes and encourages an audience that is mobilised and active. In Apter’s opinion, the “theatre from above” captures the activities of the state, whereas the “theatre from below” reflects the “showing doing” of “antagonistic groups”, such as terrorist organisations, which not only “regard the state with disfavor”, but which are also “inspired to change it” (Apter, 2006: 250-

251). Apter's distinction between the "theatre from below", wherein the audience is active, and the "theatre from above", wherein the audience is passive, is quite similar to the way Hozic (1990) conceptualises theatre and spectacle, respectively.

Terrorism and spectacle

One of the most influential analyses of terrorism and spectacle is that of Hozic (1990) who uses socio-political categories of theatre and spectacle to analyse social and political responses to the left-wing terrorism of the 1970s in Italy, Germany and France. Her perception of theatre and spectacle draws on the works of Allegri (1988) – an Italian theatre historian – who argues that not only do theatre and spectacle have different origins, but they also enjoy different relationships with their respective audiences and actors. As a consequence, Allegri claims, the two have distinct socio-political functions.

According to him, theatre's primary mission is to activate the audience – to compel it to cathartically "re-examine its own deeply ingrained world views" by "confronting it with a sort of existential play on the stage" (Allegri cited in Hozic, 1990: 67-68). This is in stark contrast to the role of spectacle, which Allegri perceives to be first and foremost about pleasing the audience. This, he argues, can be achieved in at least two ways. On the one hand, the audience can be satisfied if those watching are presented with what they want or what they are willing to see. On the other hand, the audience can be pleased when what is shown to its members gives them a sense of being acknowledged and provides them with an outlet for expressing any accumulated feelings the audience may have. Another difference between theatre and spectacle, which Allegri highlights, has to do with the fact that in the theatre the gap between actors and the audience is significantly reduced, whereas spectacle relies on a physical separation between the two. Finally, while theatre is an individual and private experience, according to Allegri (cited in Hozic, 1990: 66), spectacle "has always been the exclusive patrimony of the official power". This last observation implies that theatrical audience is often much smaller compared to that of spectacle. In other words, one of the functions of spectacle is to appeal to more people, i.e. to enlarge the audience.

Even though Hozic's (1990) understanding of the nature and role of theatre is very similar to Allegri's, her take on spectacle is considerably different. While Allegri looks at spectacle as a tool in the hands of those in power, Hozic claims that spectacle is a form of acquiring popular support, which can be used by state- and non-state actors alike. She presents her compelling argument in the context of terrorism, which, as was already mentioned before, she describes as "initially a paratheatrical phenomenon which the state and society 'spectacularise' in order to satisfy some of their particular needs" (Hozic, 1990: 65).

Hozic's focus is on the left-wing terrorism of the 1970s – terrorism directed against a state by non-state actors. According to her (1990: 73-74), the process of turning such terrorism into spectacle – the so-called "spectacularisation of terrorism" – has three stages. In the first instance, the state deprives terrorists of a political status by presenting them as inhuman, angry monsters and by deeming their actions politically irrelevant (Hozic, 1990: 73). In doing so, the state pleases its citizens (the audience), who, upon seeing the state "deal" with terrorists, feel looked after and protected. This, however, leaves terrorists feeling downgraded and in danger of losing their own supporters. Therefore, in order to please the latter, in the second stage of terrorism spectacularisation terrorists develop a "spectacular consciousness" of their own (Hozic, 1990: 74). As a result, they stage more spectacular attacks to please their respective audiences and to reclaim their lost legitimacy. The last phase of the process of creating the "spectacle of terrorism", stage three, is when "the two 'spectacular monsters'" (Hozic, 1990: 74) – spectacular state and spectacular terrorists – compete against each other.

Hozic (1990) demonstrates that it is not only states that can spectacularise terrorism, terrorists themselves can as well. However, the fact that individuals as well as the state are able to spectacularise terrorism does not imply that they will necessarily do so. Spectacularity is not an inherent characteristic of terrorism. Rather, as argued by Hozic (1990: 66), spectacularity is a "value added" to terrorism.

Hozic (1990) convincingly shows that states and terrorists use spectacle instrumentally. Most often they do so when they are weak –when they either lack legitimacy or are in need of political, moral or financial support. Hozic's three

case studies (the left-wing terrorism of the 1970s in Italy, Germany and France) demonstrate that not all states spectacularise terrorism. Some – like the post-Gaullist France in the 1970s – do not have to, as they have other means of generating allegiance from their citizens. The same goes for terrorists, some of whom need to be more spectacular in a certain political or temporal context than in others.

The empirical analysis of this thesis draws on Hozic's observations on the process of spectacularisation of terrorism and applies them to the 1990s-2000s phase of the Russo-Chechen conflict. With the help of the metaphors of drama, theatre, performance and spectacle, in Chapter Four this research investigates how the Russian Federation spectacularised Chechen terrorism between 1995 (the year of the attack in Budyonnovsk) and 2004 (the year of the Beslan siege) as well as how the Chechens spectacularised themselves. In doing so, the thesis tests and elaborates on Hozic's argument by applying it to terrorism other than the left-wing terrorism of the 1970s in Western Europe.

While Hozic's main focus is on spectacle as a socio-political category, Giroux's analysis of spectacle also highlights its aesthetic function (Giroux, 2007). He links the emergence of the video images of the hijacked planes crashing into the World Trade Center on September 11th, 2001 with the birth of, what he calls, the "spectacle of terrorism" (Giroux, 2007: 20). Giroux credits such "spectacle of terrorism" with the power to focus and mobilise people's attention around a certain issue. Spectacle's ability to shape social and political relations through the use of images will be further discussed in the context of how terrorists and counter-terrorists spectacularise their respective actions to appeal to their audiences.

Terrorism and performance

Another analytical category that has been used to deepen the understanding of terrorism and counter-terrorism is that of performance. While theatre is mostly about mimetic recreating, performance is about "showing doing" and creating meaning. Furthermore, while the main concern of theatre is with semiotics and dramaturgical text, performance focuses predominantly on phenomenology (the

creation of meaning) and the actor's body/corporeality. Finally, where theatre is largely fictional and repetitive, performance tends to be more successful when it comes to generating real effects.

For these reasons, among others, Sabatini (1986) claims that the metaphor of performance art better applies to terrorism than that of theatre. This is mainly because, unlike theatre, the metaphor of performance allows one to capture terrorism not only as a symbolic action with real-life effects, but also as a phenomenon where the performers become their role and, in doing so, make it very difficult to establish the boundary between performance and real life.

Another author who advocates analysing terrorism as performance is Schechner (2002), who is also the founding father of the discipline of Performance Studies. Having defined performance as "showing doing" and Performance Studies as a discipline aimed at explaining "showing doing", Schechner (2002) presents what it means to study something as performance. One of his opening remarks is that even though "[t]here are limits to what 'is' performance", "just about anything can be studied 'as' performance" (2002: 32). In his opinion, studying something as performance can be compared to studying a painting, where one does not focus on colours and techniques used by the painter but instead examines "the circumstances in which the painting was created and exhibited" together with "how the gallery or building displaying it shapes its presentations" (Schechner, 2002: 2).¹⁶

Schechner's method of studying terrorism as performance, as well as his conceptualization of the latter, has a central place in this thesis. Of particular importance are Schechner's definitions of performance as "showing doing" (Schechner, 2002: 22) and performance as "the domain of the audience" (Schechner, 1973b: 8), further discussed in Chapter Two. Schechner captures the meaning and importance of the two definitions in the following statement:

¹⁶ Patraka's analysis of "Performing Presence, Absence, and Witness" at The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC and The Biet Hashoah Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, California (Patraka, 1999: 109-131) constitutes one of the best examples of a successful application of Schechner's method of analyzing things "as performance".

“In business, sports, and sex, ‘to perform’ is to do something up to a standard – to succeed, to excel. In the arts, ‘to perform’ is to put on a show, a play, a dance, a concert. In everyday life, ‘to perform’ is to show off, to go to extremes, to underline an action for those who are watching”. (Schechner, 2002: 22)

Apart from his contribution to the understanding of the category of performance, another aspect of Schechner’s work, which heavily influences this thesis, is his analysis of terrorism as performance (Schechner, 2002: 265-269). Having described terrorists as those who use “violence as both an instrument of war and as a symbolic performance” (2002: 265), Schechner depicts the 9/11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington as “extraordinarily performative”. He argues that a number of factors contribute to the highly performative nature of the attacks, i.e. their ability to stimulate an audience through the presentation of images. Not only did the 9/11 attacks incur disorientation and shock in those watching – either “live” or *via* the mass media, but they have also provided the news media with an amazing amount of material. Furthermore, through framing the crisis situation, and those involved in it, in highly theatrical protagonist/antagonist, good/evil, crusade/jihad terms, the 9/11 attacks resulted in the unification and mobilisation of an audience (Schechner, 2002: 265), which another author – Alexander (2006b: 96-97) – considers to be an indication of a successful performance.

According to Alexander (2006b: 96-97), whether a performance is successful or not is strongly determined by how fragmented its audience is. A separated audience, Alexander argues, might find it much more difficult to arrive at a positive interpretation of a performance than a unified one. Moreover, different interpretations may also result in the audience drifting further and further apart from the script and the performers. In Alexander’s opinion, such polarization of the audience occurs more often in complex rather than simple societies (2006b: 96). In his work he identifies a number of factors contributing to the process of audience fragmentation such as “cultural antagonisms and/or social cleavages” (2006b: 97) as well as socio-political institutions, journalists, “critics, intellectuals, social authorities, and peer groups” (2006b: 96), all of which mediate audience interpretation and “can create polarised and conflicting interpretive communities” (2006b: 97).

According to Alexander, what also accounts for the overall success of a performance is how the “background meaning, actors, props, scripts, direction, and audience” come together in a performance (2006b: 95). If they do, i.e. if the aforementioned “performative elements” are “fused”, then a performance can be considered successful. If they do not, i.e. if the “background meaning, actors, props, scripts, direction, and audience” are “de-fused”, then a performance fails and turns either into a misperformance (an unsuccessful performance) or a counter-performance, which can be defined as a reaction to a performance generated by its counter-reading (Alexander, 2006b: 104).

Yet another criterion for measuring performance’s success is that of Apter (2006: 222), who argues that for a performance to be successful the audience needs to be converted “into the play itself”. It is not enough for a performance to reach out to a wider audience; it also needs to turn the audience into “passionate actors” and to transpose them “to the stage to become participants in the drama” (2006: 236). This is achieved, in part, through discourse and narrative (Apter, 2006: 225) – a script.

The previous paragraphs demonstrated that performance is indeed “the domain of the audience” (Schechner, 1973b: 8), as it is the audience that largely determines its success. This issue will be investigated and this premise tested further in Chapter Four, where the aforementioned criteria will be applied to evaluate whether the terrorist attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan can be considered a performance, misperformance or a counter-performance, according to the aforementioned criteria.

Inherently linked to the category of performance is the notion of “performative power”. In the context of counter-terrorism this term was coined by de Graaf and de Graaff (2010) who use it to evaluate state efforts aimed at constraining non-state terrorists. Having expressed their dissatisfaction with a number of arithmetic and statistical attempts to evaluate the efficiency and productivity of counter-terrorist efforts and policies, made by authors such as Tellis (2008), Ungerer *et al.* (2008), and D’Souza (2011), de Graaf and de Graaff (2010) advocate a different approach. They propose to assess counter-terrorist actions by looking not only at how those actions are carried out, i.e. shown to the targeted public, but also at how they are perceived and received by terrorists,

their sympathisers and supporters. The ability of a national government to mobilise different audiences by staging and presenting its counter-terrorist actions is what de Graaf and de Graaff (2010: 261, 267) describe as the “performativity” or the “performative power” of counter-terrorism.

De Graaf further analyses the latter in her 2011 book on *Evaluating Counterterrorism Performance*, which constitutes a comparative study of national responses to terrorism in Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and the United States in the 1970s. Having evaluated the “performative power” of counter-terrorist activities in the four countries, de Graaf (2011) identifies as many as fourteen factors that enhance it. Some of those factors include: presenting terrorism as a political problem; presenting terrorism as a matter of utmost importance to national and/or international security; presenting terrorism as a direct and high-impact threat to one’s constituents and presenting terrorism as an omnipresent and therefore hard to contain danger.

De Graaf (2011) argues that the more visible and stimulating the aforementioned practices are to the audience, the higher the “performative power” of counter-terrorism is. Her research also demonstrates that a low level of “performative power” has a more neutralising effect on terrorism than large-scale, highly publicised counter-terrorism efforts. This constitutes an important argument in the debate on the practice of spectacularising terrorism, which will be explored later in this thesis in the context of Russia’s counter-terrorism efforts in Chechnya. By analysing Chechen attempts to mobilise different audiences for their purposes, the applicability of the aforementioned concept of “performative power” of counter-terrorism will be challenged and broadened to include, by no means less important, “performative power” of terrorism.

Although, as demonstrated above, there is no shortage of literature which points to the significance of the audience in a performance, it must also be noted here that in order to fulfill its great potential, the audience needs actors – those whom it can watch, and whose actions it can interpret. Fischer-Lichte (2008) depicts the actor-audience dynamics as crucial, in that “[t]he constitutive moment of any performance is when the ‘autopoietic feedback loop’ between the audience and the actors is set in motion” (2008: 74). In other words, Fischer-Lichte argues that for a performance to take place, an interactive bond – a feedback loop –

needs to be established between actors and their audience. The latter emerges when what the actors do heavily influences the audience and when the behaviour of the audience has an impact on how the actors perform.¹⁷

Fischer-Lichte (2008) acknowledges that the relationship between actors and audiences has evolved over time. She notes that it was in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that the behaviour of the audience in a theatre became heavily regulated and restricted. Before then, the audience had a great impact on theatrical performances, which accounted for the latter being often unpredictable and spontaneous. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, this uncertainty was eliminated through disciplining an audience. According to Fischer-Lichte:

“[t]heatre laws were passed, prohibiting disruptive and unfortunately often infectious ‘misbehavior’. The authorities tried to discourage eating, drinking, latecomers, and talking during the performance by imposing penalties. The invention of gas lighting eliminated the biggest source of trouble: the visibility of the spectators to the actors and, particularly, to each other. (...) These measures aimed at interrupting the feedback loop. Visible and audible – i.e. potentially distracting – audience reactions were to be channeled into ‘interior’ responses that would be sensed intuitively by others but remained without outward expression”. (2008: 39)

This situation did not last for long though, and in the beginning of the twentieth century theatre directors started to challenge the rigidity of the aforementioned conventions. Their efforts culminated in the late 1960s/early 1970s, which mark the so-called “performative turn” and coincide with the emergence of Performance Studies as a scholarly discipline.

Performative turn

The “performative turn” in Social Sciences denotes a change in the way of thinking about social phenomena with special attention now being paid not only

¹⁷ In this context Fischer-Lichte (2008: 38) states that “whatever the actors do elicits a response from the spectators, which impacts on the entire performance. In this sense performances are generated and determined by a self-referential and ever-changing feedback loop”.

to how an audience receives a performance, but also to how it recognises social implications thereof.

The “performative” way of conceptualizing human actions and their effects is heavily influenced by the perception of the world “as staged”, promoted by dramaturgical sociologists, such as Goffman (1955, 1959). However, while Goffman’s main point of reference is theatre, in which the audience interprets the actions it watches, the proponents of the “performative turn” point to performance as an analytical tool and a metaphor better equipped to study not only how people give meaning to the actions, i.e. the “doing” they watch, but also how “showing doing”, together with the language that accompanies it, bring about tangible effects.

According to authors such as McKenzie (2001: 176), differences between theatre and performance are fundamental, therefore the so-called “performative turn” can indeed be perceived as a “paradigmatic shift” characterized by:

“an attempt to pass from product to process, from mediated expression to direct contact, from representation to presentation, from discourse to body, from absence to presence”.¹⁸ (McKenzie cited in Shepherd and Wallis, 2004: 111)

At the same time, there are authors like Auslander (1997) who see the relationship between theatre and performance as much less antagonistic. Subsequently, they claim that the current change of focus from theatre to performance is a sign of evolution rather than a revolution or, in Auslander’s words, “a continuity rather than rupture” (1997: 1).

One of the differences between theatre and performance, which warrants the aforementioned change of perspective from theatrical to performative, is the change in perception of the dynamics between actors and audience, as discussed by Fischer-Lichte (2008). She credits the “performative turn” not only with its acknowledgement of the crucial role of the audience in any performance, but, what is even more important, with its conceptualisation of the feedback loop

¹⁸ McKenzie (2001: 176) is also of the opinion that “performance will be to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries what discipline was to the eighteenth and nineteenth, namely, an onto-historical formation of power and knowledge”.

between the actors and the audience as “the defining principle of theatrical work” (Fischer-Lichte, 2008b: 39-40).

Especially in the theatre of the *proscenium* kind, actors and audience do not interact – actors act and audience watches. In a performance, however, the two do interact. Moreover, because the audience has an impact on how the performance develops and how it ends, it is at least as important as the actors themselves.

Apart from accentuating the crucial role of an audience in providing meaning to social, cultural and political actions, the category of performance also helps to establish the extent to which what people are seen to be doing shapes who they are. This aspect of performance is discussed most famously by Butler (1990), who claims that performance plays a very important role in constructing one’s identity. According to her, one’s action/behaviour in itself does not represent one’s identity. Instead, it creates it, which will be further demonstrated in the analysis of the Chechen terrorist attack on the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow in 2002, examined in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Finally, performance allows one to study how various phenomena are constructed through discourse. That language can “do things” is an argument made most famously by Austin (1962), who notes that there are two main reasons why people use language. On the one hand, they use language to communicate something. To that end they rely on the so-called “constatives” – statements, which can be true or false, such as “it is raining” or “the bus is blue”. On the other hand, people employ words to do something and in order to “do things with words” they use the so-called “performatives”. “Performatives” are statements like “I name you...”, “I wed you...”, “I promise...” which can be successful or not. Whether a performative is successful (“happy” or “felicitous” in Austin’s terms) or not (“unhappy”, “infelicitous”) is measured by the extent to which a spoken action is accomplished. This is heavily influenced by a number of conditions. First of all, a performative needs to be voiced by a person with legitimate authority to do so. Secondly, the utterance needs to take place in an appropriate context. Finally, not only does the person speaking need to be sincere, but their audience need to believe this sincerity, too.

Both Austin (1962) and Butler (1990, 1997) highlight the importance of an audience for giving meaning to social and political actions. It is mainly in this respect that their scholarship informs the analysis of performance presented in this thesis. However, this dissertation also acknowledges a more “technical” conceptualisation of performance – one that sees performance predominantly as an analytical tool for the study of the audience. Such an approach is presented and advocated, for example, by Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998), who provide an interesting analysis of different types of audiences and how they can be studied.

Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) differentiate between three types of audience – a simple audience, a mediated audience and a diffused audience. A simple audience, they claim (1998: 57, 63), is an audience like the one that can be found in a theatre. Not only do actors communicate directly with such an audience, the communication itself occurs in a certain place or a venue. Another quality that characterises a simple audience is its high attention to what the audience is exposed to. The latter is what differentiates a simple audience from a mediated audience, which Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998: 67-68) describe as being much more distracted than a simple audience and more prone to move “in and out of attention”. An audience of the third type – a diffused audience – is the most diverse and least limited of the three audiences analysed by Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998: 34). According to the two authors, a diffused audience has access to various media. Therefore, not only is it more receptive, but also less restricted by time and space.

Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) argue that the diffused audience should be studied using categories of spectacle and performance, both of which, they argue, respond very well to the recent “changes in the nature of the audience and in the experience of being a member of an audience” (1998: 36). Further, they prefer the metaphors of spectacle and performance to that of theatre because they better capture the process of an audience moving “in and out of passivity” (1998: 67-68). The extent to which various media depend on an active or a passive audience can be demonstrated using the example of the “old” and “new” media.

“Old” and “new” mass media

While the “old” mass media (such as television) are often described as analog and non-interactive, the “new” mass media (like the internet) can be characterized as digital and relying heavily on audience participation.

Even though a number of authors focus on the “old” and “new” media, the writings of H. Jenkins (2006) are the most relevant and useful for the analysis presented in this thesis. In his work Jenkins invokes McLuhan’s differentiation between “hot” and “cool” media. According to McLuhan (cited in Jenkins H. and Thorburn, 2004: 220-221), “hot” media are low in audience participation. In other words, they leave little to be filled or completed by the audience. This then is in stark contrast to the so-called “cool” media, which McLuhan (cited in Jenkins H. and Thorburn, 2004: 220-221) conceptualises as being high in audience participation, with a lot to be filled or completed by their users. McLuhan’s “hot” media are described by Jenkins as “push” media while “cool” media are branded as “pull” ones. H. Jenkins (2006) argues that the “push” media send messages “out to the public whether they seek them or not”. At the same time, the “pull” media serve mainly those “with an active interest in seeking out information on a particular topic” (2006: 213). Jenkins’ opinion is supported by a number of authors, such as Weimann (2006: 24) or Jones and Rainie (2002) who note that

“[w]hereas television tends to provide breadth of information relatively quickly, particularly in times of crisis, the Internet provides a means by which people can ‘dig deep’ for the specifics of the news”. (2002: 36-37)

This thesis draws on H. Jenkins’ (2006) conceptualisation of the “push” and “pull” media to classify television as the “old” and “push” medium – one that is low in audience participation – and the internet as the “new” and “pull” medium – one with high audience participation and user-generated, i.e. created by the audience. What also needs to be noted is that in conceptualizing television as an “old” medium, the focus of this thesis is on the more traditional/“older” version of television, namely that which does not rely on active audience participation, such as, for instance, voting for a particular contestant in a TV show

or by submitting or “tweeting in” a comment that is then broadcast “live” on the screen.

Dramaturgical metaphors and the mass media

The role of the audience in the “old” and “new” media has been captured in the literature using drama-derived and audience-related metaphors of theatre and performance. For example, Fischer-Lichte (2008: 70) compared television to the *proscenium* theatre, which she described as one where the actors are physically separated from the audience and where the two do not interact with each other. According to her,

“television modeled itself on the perceptual experience of theatregoers in a proscenium theatre. Early television even advertised itself by demonstrating its affinity to theatre. Images of a dressed-up couple taking their seats in front of their living room television set as if attending a theatre performance are still too familiar”. (2008: 70)

In television, as in the *proscenium* theatre, the level of audience activity is low and limited to switching the TV on and off, choosing a channel and watching. Moreover, in both – television and the *proscenium* theatre – the feedback loop between the actors and audience is absent.

However, the metaphor of theatre does not apply to television alone. While Laurel (1993) focuses on “computers as theatre” in general, the idea of a relationship between theatre and the World Wide Web (WWW) has been proposed by Bolzoni and Parzen (2001) who link the beginnings of the internet with the 16th-century idea of the wooden “Theatre of Memory” designed by Giulio Camillo Delminio.

Camillo’s theatre was planned and built to serve as a device that would give its users access to all the knowledge. Forgotten very soon after the death of its creator, the then *idée fixe* of a theatre that would allow the spectators access to most, if not all, of the world’s knowledge, regained its currency 400 years later when the computers of the world became joined in one network called the internet. A person using a computer with internet access has almost unimaginable amount of information in front of them. Their situation is very

similar to the one of the “solitary spectator” of Camillo’s Theatre. They – as spectators – become actors mainly because in Camillo’s Theatre “the normal function of the theatre is reversed. There is no audience sitting in the seats watching a play on the stage” (Yates, 1992: 141). Instead, “[t]he solitary ‘spectator’ of the Theatre stands where the stage would be and looks toward the auditorium” (1992: 141).

While Bolzoni and Parzen (2001) compare the internet to “theatre”, the “reversed” model of theatre they use presents more similarities to what is conceptualised in this thesis as performance – a theatrical activity that invites audience participation, rather than the *proscenium* model of theatre, wherein the audience is passive. For this reason, and as will be further explained in Chapter Two, television, I argue, resembles the *proscenium* theatre, with the internet being within a “cognitive distance” to performance.

CONCEPTUALISATION OF TERRORISM

In order for a metaphor to work, what one knows about (the metaphor’s “source domain”), needs to be within a “cognitive distance” to what one wants to know better (the “target domain”) (Nisbet, 1969: 240). In other words, similarities between the “source domain” and the “target domain” must exist for a successful transfer of meaning between the two to take place.

In keeping with the above, terrorism and counter-terrorism can be described as the “target domains” of the four dramaturgical metaphors under consideration, whereas “drama”, “theatre”, “spectacle” and “performance” can be conceptualised as their respective “source domains”.

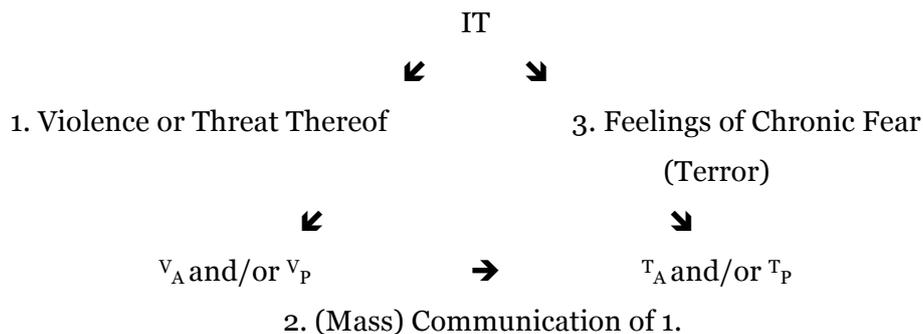
What links terrorism and counter-terrorism with drama, theatre, spectacle and performance is mainly their respective reliance on a presentation of a text or a message by someone (a sender/actor) for someone (recipient/audience) with the hope that the message (drama/script) will be received, interpreted and acted on. Like drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, terrorism and counter-terrorism rely on a process of communication and interplay between actors and their audiences. In a theatre the main role of the latter is to give meaning to what

the actors do. In terrorism and counter-terrorism this translates to the two being social constructs rather than natural facts.

Terrorism as a strategy of communication

Schmid and J. de Graaf (1982) famously conceptualised terrorist violence as communication. Their main focus was on the insurgent/non-state terrorism, which they regarded as a symbolic expression of a grievance on behalf of those who feel excluded from the “official” process of political communication (Schmid and de Graaf, 1982: 180).¹⁹ In order to re-enter this process, Schmid and de Graaf (1982: 180) argue, terrorists stage acts of violence, which the mass media then publicise to those whom terrorists want to influence. This is reflected in Schmid and de Graaf’s (1982) model of terrorist communication, which is presented below, and which depicts a terrorist message being sent by terrorists to their victims *via* the mass media:

Figure 1 – Schmid and de Graaf’s Triangle of Insurgent Terrorism



(IT = Insurgent Terrorist; V_A = Victim Belonging to the Camp of the State Authorities; V_P = Victim Being Part of the Public; T_A = The Authorities as Target; T_P = The Public as Target)
(in Schmid and de Graaf, 1982: 176)

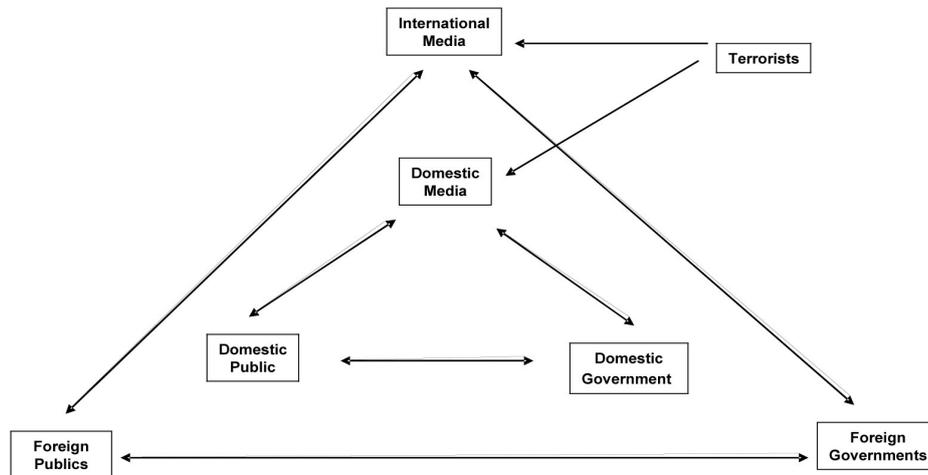
¹⁹ According to Pedersen (2006: 330), terrorism is “an extension of the political discussion by other means”.

Schmid and de Graaf's (1982) model not only describes terrorist communication in a linear manner (from the Terrorist *via* the Victim to the Target); it also presents it as a one-way process with terrorists, not the audience, largely determining its character and scope.

Münkler (2005) addresses this shortcoming. He sees the audience as an important link in the process of terrorist communication, which he claims is much less linear than Schmid and de Graaf (1982) perceive it to be. According to Münkler, an audience in terrorism does not have to be passive, non-purposive or incapable. On the contrary, by responding to a terrorist message, various terrorist audiences feed back to the senders of the message and inform them of its quality and appeal. In other words, Münkler (2005) argues, recipients of a terrorist message can actively influence the content of the message together with the ways in which it is transmitted. At the same time, the senders of the message have the power to code it in accordance with who it is that they want to target and why.

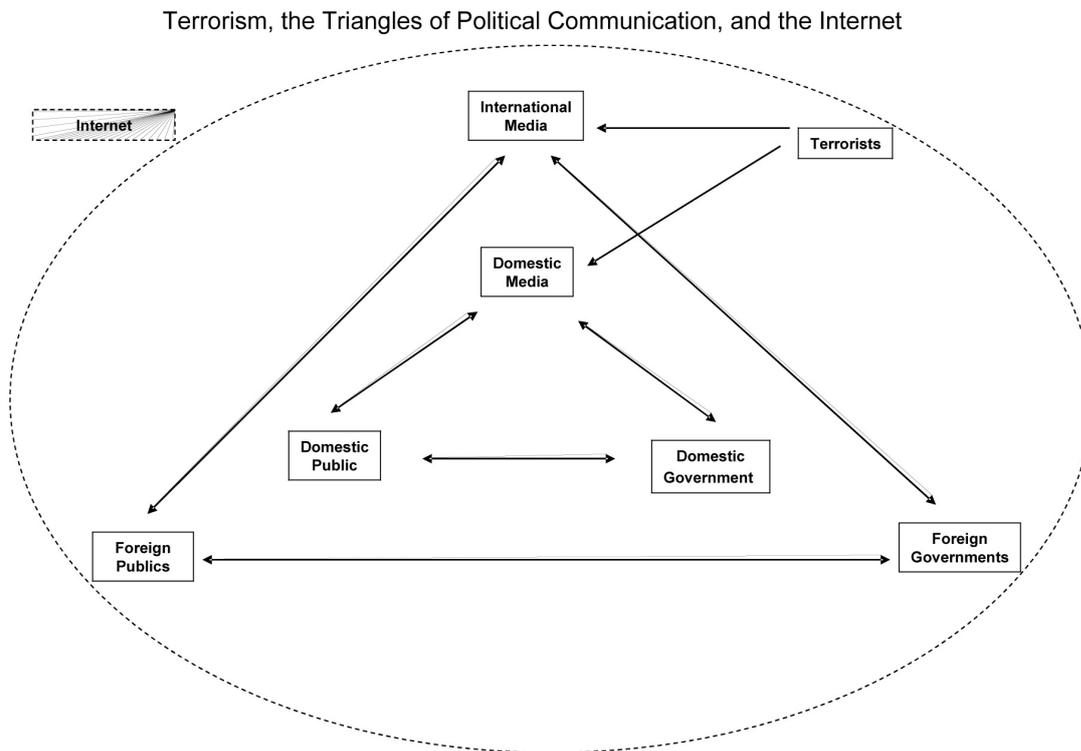
While Schmid and de Graaf (1982) focus on the ways in which non-state terrorists use the "old" media, such as television and the press, Nacos (2006) analyses their uses of the "new" media, such as the internet. Like Schmid and de Graaf (1982: 180), Nacos (2006, 2008) also sees non-state terrorism as an attempt to gain access to political communication. She presents the latter as a triangle, with the mass media, governmental decision makers and the public constituting its angles (Nacos, 2008: 228):

Figure 2 – Nacos’ Triangle of Political Communication, including the “old” media (Nacos, 2008: 228)



Writing about the relationship of terrorists to the internet, Nacos (2006: 4) points to the fact that compared to the “old” media, their access to the “new” media is much more direct and unrestricted. The internet’s position with regards to the aforementioned triangle of communication is presented on the next page:

Figure 3 – Nacos’ Triangle of Political Communication, including the “new” media
(Nacos, 2006: 4).



The above model (Figure 3) points to one of the main reasons why the internet is so popular with terrorists – it allows them to directly communicate with each other and “to circumvent the gatekeepers of the traditional media” (Nacos, 2006: 4).

Terrorism as a social construction and a product of discourse

The idea that terrorism is a social rather than a natural fact is promoted by authors such as Crenshaw (1995), P. Jenkins (2003), Hülse and Spencer (2008) and Spencer (2010) who argue that, rather than being “what terrorists do”, terrorism is what “terrorists are perceived or said to be doing”.

This shared assumption of terrorism being a social construction leads the aforementioned authors to a number of observations. Having acknowledged language’s ability to “do things” and thus to create reality, they point to the

importance of the audience, whose main role they perceive to be to recognize, interpret and name terrorism as terrorism (Spencer, 2010: 5).

In keeping with that line of thought, Alali and Eke (1991) and Zulaika and Douglass (1996) also argue that terrorism is a product of discourse in the sense that naming or labeling someone a terrorist can effectively make him one. Alali and Eke, for example, acknowledge that:

“[t]he definition of terrorism has an impact on whether or not the perpetrators of an act of violence are labeled ‘criminals’, ‘terrorists’, or ‘freedom fighters’. It is especially important given that media’s choice of label in their coverage of an act of violence stands to influence, tremendously, the audience’s perceptions of the perpetrators of the act”. (1991: 3)

The same mechanism also works in the opposite direction, which is when “yesterday’s terrorists [such as Sean McBride, Menachem Begin, Yasser Arafat, and Nelson Mandela – JS] are today’s Nobel Peace Prize winners” (Zulaika, Douglass, 1996: x). Even though neither Alali and Eke nor Zulaika and Douglass explicitly invoke the theory of the language that acts (Austin’s “speech-acts”) in their writings, they all seem to envisage the process of “making a terrorist” through and thanks to the performative power of language.

Actors in terrorism

There are at least two possible ways to define an actor. On the one hand, an actor is a person who acts out a particular drama or script (as in the case of theatre or movie actors, for example). On the other hand, an actor is a person who participates in an action or process (political actors, economic actors, etc.). Even though both understandings of the meaning of the word “actor” are used in the context of terrorism, few authors who use this concept differentiate between the two.

Scholars who claim that terrorism is a natural fact define terrorism as something that terrorists do, for example, stage and carry out terrorist attacks to change the political behaviour of others. Terrorists are then considered the leading, if not the sole, actors in terrorism. However, when terrorism is defined as a social construct, the number of terrorist actors significantly increases to include

not only terrorists but also those who have the power and authority to describe them as such – government officials, international organisations, the mass media and, especially in democracies, the general public – *demos*.

Bolechów (2010: 234) presents an interesting perspective on the question of who the actors in terrorism are. Unlike the terrorism scholars mentioned so far, he considers the victims of terrorists, their relations and friends to be terrorist actors as well. For Bolechów (2010: 234), the victims of hostage-takings deserve the status of an actor in terrorism. This is in striking contrast to Jenkins' conceptualisation, according to which hostages are props and not actors (Jenkins B., 1974a, 1974b, 1975: 5). Bolechów himself does not explain why he considers terrorist victims in general, and hostages in particular, to be actors. The reader of his work can only guess that it is because, unlike B. Jenkins who sees actors primarily as performers, Bolechów conceptualises actors as those who not only act (willingly and purposefully), but also those who take part in an action or a process of terrorism. In doing so, they become both an actor and an audience thereof.

The limitation and insufficiency of the theatre (and especially the *proscenium* theatre) metaphor to describe the situation in which the actors and the audience interact so strongly that one becomes the other will be discussed at a later stage of this analysis. The potential of the “performance” metaphor to address this important gap will be evaluated in Chapter Four.

Audiences in terrorism

Terrorism is first and foremost “the domain of the audience” (Schechner, 1973b: 8). This premise is reflected in the work of many authors, such as Juergensmeyer (2002) and Chaliand (1987), who argue that “terrorism without its horrified witnesses would be as pointless as a play without an audience” (Juergensmeyer, 2002: 139),²⁰ and that winning over an audience may sometimes be considered terrorism's main goal (Chaliand, 1987: 52, 111).

²⁰ In a similar light Layoun (2006: 45) argues that “[t]errorism is a violently and for some often mortally performative act that seeks to produce an effect, not only on those who bear the brunt of the physical attack but, more crucially, on a larger audience who

A number of scholars, such as Schmid (2005), Hoffman (2006), Hozic (1990) and Münkler (2005), have addressed the questions of “who constitutes an audience in terrorism?” and “what role(s) does an audience play in terrorism?”. Schmid (2005: 138), for example, argues that there are many audiences to terrorism, which include:

1. The adversary/-ies of the terrorist organization (usually a government);
2. The constituency/ society of the adversary/-ies;
3. The targeted direct victims and their families and friends;
4. Others who have reason to fear that they might be the next targets;
5. “Neutral” distant publics;
6. The supporting constituency of the terrorist organization;
7. Potential sympathetic sectors of domestic and foreign (diaspora) publics;
8. Other terrorist groups rivaling for prominence;
9. The terrorist and his organization;
10. (...) and last but not least: the media.²¹

Schmid (2005) also notes that various audiences tend to interpret and react to terrorism differently. Hozic (1990) further observes that:

“[t]errorism is a complex communicational mechanism. It has diverse messages for various segments of society. There are those whom it wants to threaten and those whom it means to attract. The ‘marketing’ of actions varies from one group to another”. (1990: 68)

Hozic’s opinion is further reflected in the writings of Hoffman (2006) who differentiates between a “committed” and an “uncommitted” audience as the main targets of terrorism, which “is directed toward a committed audience to strengthen resolve and toward an uncommitted audience to win sympathy and support” (2006: 199).

Given that there are multiple audiences to terrorism, one can raise a question of whether there is a primary audience in terrorism. Schmid (2005), Hozic (1990) and Münkler (2005), whose answers remain heavily informed by how they define terrorism and its main objectives, have addressed this matter.

witnesses the event. It is a theatrical act to draw attention and evoke a response in those who witness the violence”.

²¹ Among terrorists audiences Hoffman (2006: 199) lists: the terrorists’ or insurgents’ actual or would-be constituents; the public at large; the enemy government and its security forces; as well as the underground fighters themselves.

The first author contends that terrorism is first and foremost about intimidation, coercion and propaganda. Those who are to be intimidated are the “target of terror”; those who are to be forced into changing their behaviour according to the terrorist agenda are the “target of demands”; and those who are to acknowledge and support a terrorist cause become the “target of attention” (Schmid, 2005: 140). Hozic (1990: 68), however, sees the matter differently. She argues that terrorism is first and foremost about recruiting new followers and sympathisers. Likewise, Münkler’s (2005) main concern is with the mobilisation and construction of terrorist audiences – their respective “‘interest’ third parties”, which he defines as “those in whose interests the terrorists claim to be waging their struggle” (Münkler, 2005: 102). Münkler distinguishes between, what he calls, “ordinary” terrorists – such as the Russian anarchists of the nineteenth century or the extremist terrorists of the 1970s and 1980s, and “new” terrorists – religiously motivated terrorists of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, and claims that while the former had to activate their audiences, the latter often need to create them in the first place.

Münkler (2005) is not the only author who distinguishes between “old” (“ordinary”) and “new” (“extraordinary”) terrorism. The debate on the “newness” of the “new” terrorism in itself is by no means new. Some of the main points of view on the subject of “old”/“new” terrorism will be presented shortly. Now, however, the chapter turns its focus to the complex relationship between terrorism and the mass media, the understanding of which can also be enhanced through the application of dramaturgical metaphors, especially those of theatre and performance.

Terrorism and the mass media

However complex, there seems to be an agreement in Terrorism Studies that the relationship between terrorism and the mass media is important for terrorists and the mass media alike.

According to Weimann (1990: 16) and Hoffman (1998), terrorists’ interest in and reliance on the mass media have significantly increased since the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Hoffman argues that:

“the anti-colonial terrorism campaigns are critical to understanding the evolution and development of modern, contemporary terrorism. They were the first to recognise the publicity value inherent in terrorism and to choreograph their violence for an audience far beyond the immediate geographical loci of their respective struggles”. (1998: 65)

This is due to a number of factors. The first is the evolution of the, mostly electronic, media as evidenced by the rising popularity of radio and TV sets from the 1950s onwards.²² The 1950s was also when television began to play an important role in politics. On the one hand, television presented politicians with a plethora of ways to influence and manipulate their constituents. On the other hand, it has led to the “restyling of politics” so that it “looks good on the camera”.²³ Scanlan (2001: 12), for one, notes that it only took three years between the world’s first live global television broadcast – the moon landing of 1969 – to the first global terrorist broadcast – the 1972 hostage situation involving Palestinian terrorists and Israeli athletes at the globally broadcast Munich Olympic Games.

According to Gabler (2001), the attacks of September 11th, 2001 constitute yet another example of “terrorism with an audience in mind”. He recounts that:

“[w]hen the first plane hit the World Trade Center, presumably there would be no camera ready. So the terrorists provided a second attack at a decent interval [of 17 minutes – JS] that they knew would be captured on film or video, and then repeated from many different angles – a montage of death and destruction”. (2001: 1)

Lentricchia and McAuliffe (2003: 6) go even further when they refer to the 9/11 attacks as “terrorism for the camera” and suggest that “[t]hanks to the presence of

²² According to Gorman and McLean (2003: 128), “[i]n the United States the prosperity of the 1950s encouraged a rapid growth in television. The number of households with television sets jumped from under 4 million in 1950 to 44 million in 1959, an increase from 9 percent to 86 percent of total households. The number of stations on air increased from 69 in 1949 to 609 in 1959”. “In Britain, too, television grew rapidly in the context of a consumer boom in the 1950s. The proportion of the adult population who owned a television set increased from 4 percent in 1950 to 40 percent in 1955 and 80 percent in 1960” (Gorman and McLean, 2003: 132).

²³ See, for example, Gorman and McLean (2003: 145-147) and Corner and Pels (2003).

the camera, which guaranteed a vast audience, this act of performance means something” (2003: 14). Finally, according to I. Boal (2005), 9/11 was

“clearly predicated on the assumption that ‘a picture is worth a thousand words – that a picture in the present conditions of politics is itself, if sufficiently executed, a specific and effective piece of statecraft”. (2005: 26)

Since the late 1960s and early 1970s both terrorism and the mass media have undergone a number of significant changes. One of the most important ones was the emergence of the “new” – social media – the internet. Below I review the literature on the relationship between terrorism and the two kinds of media – “old” and “new”. Apart from looking at how various authors see the main functions of the mass media in terrorism, I also address the question of how the “old” (analog and non-interactive) and the “new” (digital and interactive) mass media report on terrorism. The importance of knowing the latter is highlighted by Moeller (2009: 84, 86), who points to a strong correlation between how the mass media report on terrorism and how terrorism is perceived and understood. Awareness of the link between the two is crucial, she argues, because people’s perception and understanding of terrorism heavily informs and shapes their very reactions to it.

The literature is replete with examples of the role of the “old” media in terrorism in a) amplifying terrorists messages (in this respect the media serve as “force multipliers” for the terrorists);²⁴ b) providing information about one’s own organization and actions as well as those of others; c) serving as a line of communication between terrorists and their various audiences (victims and constituents alike); d) marketing terrorists’ actions and, through that, increasing their “presence”; e) raising money; as well as f) attracting and motivating subsequent terrorists.²⁵ When it comes to what terrorists can do for the “old” media, one should consider their ability to create mass-media “spectaculars”. Hoffman and Kasupski (2007: 36) associate mass-media “spectaculars” with high

²⁴ “Force multiplier” is a military term, which depicts a factor or factors that significantly increase the effectiveness of a unit, without increasing its size (Bolechów, 2010: 220).

²⁵ While Schmid and de Graaf (1982: 53-54) list as many as thirty different ways in which insurgent terrorists use the news media, Martin’s (1986) focus is on how terrorists play to the media’s hands.

levels of death and destruction that draw people to television sets, which then often leads to a significant increase in profit for the media's owners and people involved in the so-called "infotainment" (Ganor, 2005: 231).²⁶

Those who analyse ways in which the "old" media report on terrorism outline a number of characteristics such accounts have. Apart from their selectivity, superficiality and heavy reliance on drama for sensational and attention-generating effects, those writing about the mass media coverage of terrorism also highlight the media's main focus being on terrorists and how they are "dealt with" by government officials, rather than on the victims of terrorism as such.

Stohl (2008), Moeller (2009: 46) and P. Jenkins (2003) highlight the extent to which the "old" media tend to focus on terrorists and counter-terrorists, and not on their victims. According to Stohl,

"[t]his focus on terrorist 'devils' such as Carlos the Jackal, Yasir Arafat, Ayatollah Khomeini, Mohmmar Qadaffi, and, more recently, Osama bin Laden dovetails with the personalization of terrorism and terrorist motives and distorts the coverage of insurgent terrorism events. Along with ascribing attacks primarily to these actors in advance of the evidence of responsibility, the focus on these relatively few actors means most events around the world are simply ignored by the international media". (2008: 8)

P. Jenkins (2003: 151, 129) notes that not only do journalists, politicians and film-makers present terrorism as "work of a handful of very evil individuals", they also single out terrorism and personalise terrorists in order to facilitate both – terrorism's explanation as well as its combat.

Apart from pointing out that direct "victims of terrorism rarely appear in the stories about it" (Moeller, 2009: 46), Moeller also notes that how the "old" media report on terrorism, in terms of the style of coverage and type of content, largely depends on the type and make-up of the audience the "old" media are hoping to attract (2009: 107). In this context, and having analysed various ways in which American and British mainstream television and press report on

²⁶ Koppel (cited in Zulaika and Douglass, 1996: 7) claims that "[w]ithout television, terrorism becomes rather like the philosopher's hypothetical tree falling in the forest: no one hears it fall and therefore it has no reason for being. And television, without terrorism, while not deprived of all interesting things in the world, is nonetheless deprived of one of the most interesting".

terrorism, Moeller (2009: 57) highlights the importance of a “national link” in the media stories about terrorist attacks. In general, the mass media audiences find reports on terrorist attacks more accessible and interesting if they can relate to them more, for example because their fellow nationals suffered as a result of the attack. According to Moeller, this is largely because “personal identification with an event is critical to get people to care” (2009: 66).

Moeller designs a list of terrorist victims, whose appearance in the mass media depends on how much the media audiences are perceived to care about them. At the top of the list are audience’s own nationals, followed by other foreigners and, as argued by Moeller (2009):

“natives of the country being attacked. And of those latter, those who matter first are infants, and then young children, pregnant women, elderly women, all other women, teenage boys, and all other men. There is, in effect, a hierarchy of innocence, a hierarchy of those we learn about”. (2009: 71)

Moeller’s “hierarchy of innocence” explains how the “old” media report on terrorism. It also helps to explain why terrorists would attack a maternity ward in a hospital, a school or a theatre filled with the “natives of the country being attacked”, as was the case in Budyonnovsk, Beslan, and Dubrovka, respectively, which are further analysed in Chapter Four.

So far the discussion of the ways in which terrorism is presented on television has focused on the importance of framing and conveying what terrorists do with an audience in mind. Now the chapter turns to the issue of how the “old” media manipulate the interest of an audience, by calling upon drama, which they believe can pull-in and affect even more viewers.

A number of authors, such as Combs and Mansfield (1976); Laqueur (1977); Livingston (1994); Lule (1991); Hoffman (2006: 180) and Nacos (2006) claim that the “old” media have a “flair for the dramatic”. Some even argue that terrorism is “essentially a media creation” (Zulaika, Douglass, 1996: 7). The reasons why the “old” media heavily rely on drama include the following: a) drama provides the media accounts with an interesting tempo; b) drama offers a comprehensible, easy-to-follow, structure; and c) drama elicits an emotive response from the audience.

B. Jenkins (1975) acknowledges the dramaturgy of terrorists attacks, when he notes that “[t]aking and holding hostages increases the drama” (1975: 5). The reasons why hostage-takings might be considered the most dramatic and therefore also the most theatrical of all terrorist tactics will be explored in Chapter Three. Chapter Three also contrasts dramaturgy and theatricality of hostage-takings with suicide attacks, which, for a number of reasons, are more commonly presented on the internet, rather than television. Moeller (2009), Weimann (2006) and Nacos (2006) all address the questions of how is terrorism “played out” online and to what ends.

Moeller (2009) notes that even though the online news aggregators such as “Google” or “Yahoo! News” tend to report on terrorism in the form of “short breaking accounts, lacking background and context”, they also provide their users with the possibility “to link to related stories” (2009: 77). Furthermore, she notes that the “old” media focus on terrorists and counter-terrorists, whereas the internet allows their indirect victims to share their “human stories”, too.

While Moeller writes mainly about how terrorism is presented on the internet, Hoffman (2006) and Weimann (2006) focus on how and why terrorists use the social medium under consideration. The two authors agree that the internet is ideal for terrorists-as-communicators because “it is decentralized, it cannot be subjected to control or restriction, it is not censored, and it allows access to anyone who wants it” (Weimann, 2006: 26).

In addition, Hoffman (2006: 197-198) points out that, unlike television, the internet is a direct medium in a sense that it allows its users to establish not only the content of the message they want to send, but also the ways in which they want to send it, and to whom. Unlike the traditional media, which largely paint the terrorists’ image for them (Crenshaw, 1995: 8), terrorists can use the internet to “portray themselves and their actions in precisely the light and context they wish – unencumbered by the filter, screening, and spin of the established media” (Hoffman, 2006: 202).

Hoffman (2006) and Weimann (2006) ask: how do terrorists use the internet? In an attempt to find an answer to this question, they point to the communicative and instrumental purposes of such use. Hoffman, for one, links the communicative aim with the “external” purpose of spreading terrorist

propaganda and the instrumental aim with the “internal” goal of command and control over the active supporters and passive sympathisers of terrorism (2006: 214). Like Hoffman, Weimann (2006) also seems to imply that the internet serves terrorists to fulfill their instrumental rather than communicative needs, such as: data mining, networking, recruitment and mobilisation, circulation and exchange of instructions and online manuals, planning and coordination, fund-raising and attacking other terrorists.

“Old” and “new” terrorism

A number of terrorism scholars point either to an “evolution” or a “revolution” of terrorism, which has taken place since B. Jenkins’ “terrorism is theatre” remarks were initially published in the mid-1970s (Jenkins B., 1975: 5). Changes over the last forty years include: 1) an increase in the number of terrorists and terrorist groups that use religion as the primary justification of their actions; 2) a rise in the use of the internet by terrorists; 3) the networked rather than hierarchical structure of many terrorist organisations; 4) their greatly enhanced striking power, which can be linked to their alleged capability to use weapons of mass destruction; and 5) the increased lethality of terrorist attacks, to name just a few.

The “new” terrorism argument suggests that in the past terrorists were predominantly secular, and their actions were orientated first and foremost towards altering a political *status quo*.²⁷ This observation is supported by Hoffman (2006) who argues that the primary objective of the so-called “old” terrorists was to achieve political power over a state or its population. Moreover, as noted by Münkler (2005), “old” terrorists valued their audiences highly, not only as a source of support but also as a source of legitimacy. This was reflected, for example, in the attempt of “old” terrorists to communicate with their audiences, by informing them of who they were and what they fought for. The so-called “old” terrorists further secured the loyalty of their audiences by refraining from the use of excessive violence and by not causing innocent casualties.

²⁷ While some authors deem “new” terrorism a product of the post-Cold War era and link its developments with the attacks such as the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York in 1993 or the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo underground in 1995, some regard September 11, 2001 as its date of birth (see Spencer, 2006: 9).

Organisations such as ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna – “Basque Homeland and Freedom”) or IRA (the Irish Republican Army), for example, would phone in before the bomb they had planted was to go off, not only to assure the media coverage of their “deeds”, but also to minimize casualties. Bombings, hijackings, kidnappings and hostage-takings were some of the tactics favoured by the “old” terrorists, whose actions were reported on by the “old” media. Finally, another important characteristic of the “old” terrorism is that it was often supported by nation-states, notably during the Cold War (Copeland, 2001: 5; also see Crenshaw, 1995: 10-11).

There is a disagreement among the proponents of the “new” terrorism concept as to whether the “new” terrorists can or cannot be argued to be backed by nation-states. While Tucker (2001: 1) claims they cannot, Spencer (2006: 21) points to Afghanistan’s support for Al-Qaeda as an example that connects the “new” terrorists with some states. Nevertheless, this is not to say that the nature and characteristics of such connections have not changed. Spencer, for one, notes that:

“[s]tate sponsorship or support is still part of terrorism today, although it might be less due to financial reasons, take a slightly different form and be less obvious. Terrorists still need a place where they can rest, plan, train and recruit members. Terrorists do not live in space, and although states have refrained from openly supporting terrorism, many do not have the financial means or the internal political support to crack down on terrorists in areas where the government only has limited or no control”. (2006: 24-25)

Although Spencer (2006) points out that the training or logistical support that many terrorists used to obtain from state sponsors is now increasingly available to them *via* the internet,²⁸ authors such as Hoffman (1998: 191) and Schweitzer (1998: 41-42) argue that states will indeed be crucial to the success of terrorists in the future.

Leaving the connection between the “new” terrorists and nation-states aside, another characteristic of the “new” terrorists, as highlighted by the proponents of the term, is their alleged capacity to use weapons of mass

²⁸ Nacos (2006: 14) seconds Spencer’s view and states that “[w]hether international or domestic terrorists – they get a great deal of info – including on terrorist methods, weapons, explosives, bomb making, etc. from the Internet”.

destruction (Laqueur, 2001). While some authors point to an increased availability of such weapons, due to technological progress on the one hand, and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, on the other, many note that the fact that some terrorists might have access to chemical, biological, radioactive and/or nuclear weapons does not necessarily imply that they will use them, primarily because of the difficulties in storing, applying as well as controlling the impact of such weapons. Chemical, biological, radioactive or nuclear weapons would be highly indiscriminate and, most likely, highly lethal, which relates to yet another characteristic of the “new” terrorists. Just as the number of their victims – “those dead” – has increased, so has the size of their audience – “those watching”. This can be linked to at least two factors – the increased presence of the terrorists on the internet in addition to the more traditional media, as well as the fact that the “new” terrorists tend to be motivated by religion, the appeal of which often proves much broader than that of secular ideas.

It is often claimed that religiously motivated terrorists, especially those of an apocalyptic strand, do not need an audience. As noted by Spencer:

“[religious terrorists are often their own constituency, not concerned about alienating their supporters with their acts of destruction, and holding themselves accountable only to God. For the similar reasons ‘new terrorists’ do not always claim and sometimes even deny responsibility for their actions. They see the action itself as important and not the claim to it”. (2006: 10)

However, Spencer (2006: 18) himself questions the aforementioned assumption and argues that the “new” terrorists not only need an audience, but they also value it and care about it. He writes that although the “new” terrorists “see their violence as legitimized by God they are still dependent on some public support for recruitment and finance” (2006: 18). The author demonstrates the importance of the latter using the example of the Al-Jama Al-Islamiyya’s 1997 attack on the Temple of Hatshepsut in Luxor, Egypt, which killed 58 tourists and four Egyptians. He notes that in the aftermath of the attack the support for the group in Egypt fell dramatically and has never been regained.

The importance of an audience for the so-called “new” terrorists as well as the significance of the impact of religion on terrorism, as presented by Spencer (2006), among others, is especially relevant for the empirical part of this

research, which focuses on Chechen terrorists, fighting for the independence of the Republic of Chechnya from the Russian Federation. Dolnik and Fitzgerald (2008) deem them “new” terrorists, mainly because of their religious motivations. However, there are a number of authors (for example, Pape and Feldman (2010), Trenin and Malashenko (2004)), whose work will be referred to in Chapter Four, who point to the fact that religion, in this case Islam, is not an inherent characteristic of Chechen terrorists but rather an instrument used by them to obtain their political goals, such as independence from the Russian Federation.

The discussion presented above highlighted numerous changes in terrorist tactics, targets and/or capabilities as revolutionary and “new”. It is crucial to note at this stage, however, that a large group of scholars, such as B. Jenkins (1974a, 1974b), Spencer (2006), Copeland (2001) and Duyvesteyn (2004) see such modifications as inherently linked to progress and therefore natural. They find the analytical power of the distinction between “old” and “new” terrorism limited, given that many aspects of the so-called “new” terrorism – its religious motivation, for example – can be found in “old” terrorism, as well (see Rapoport, 1984). Spencer (2006: 2) strengthens this claim even further when he points out that there is an actual danger in calling terrorism “new”, which may then be interpreted as extraordinary, unheard of or unknown. The threat is that such an unknown/“new” terrorism can then be used to justify extraordinary and unlimited counter-terrorism measures.

However, the aforementioned differentiation between “new” and “old” terrorism may not be as analytically useful as its proponents claim. This is largely because the “new” – “old” terrorism debate could be argued to be restricted to non-state terrorism only and does not capture or engage any changes in state terrorism. Furthermore, it fails to explore the relationship between the evolution of terrorism and the evolution of counter-terrorism.

CONCEPTUALISATION OF COUNTER-TERRORISM

Like terrorism, counter-terrorism is an activity that relies on a presentation of a text or a message by someone (a sender/actor) for someone (recipient/audience),

with the hope that the message (drama/script) will be received, interpreted and reacted to. This section of the dissertation explores counter-terrorism as a strategy of communication, social construction and a product of discourse. It then examines how the counter-terrorist actors and audience(s) are presented in the Terrorism Studies literature. Finally, it describes a selection of research devoted to the relationship between counter-terrorism and the mass media.

Terrorism and counter-terrorism have plenty in common. Not only can they be conceptualised as highly interlinked parts of one chain of communication; they also both rely on the creation of meaning through acting. As a result, terrorism as well as counter-terrorism can be analysed through the prism of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance.

Counter-terrorism as a strategy of communication

Like terrorists, counter-terrorists aim at changing people's political behaviour and allegiance. To that end, counter-terrorists also code, send and transmit their messages, which they hope will evoke a response from their recipients – their sympathisers and supporters, as well as those whom counter-terrorists aim to terrorise into inaction – terrorists themselves. In the opinion of Casebeer and Russell (2005), the aforementioned qualities of counter-terrorism make it a very good example of a strategy of political communication. Moreover, while counter-terrorism is a response to terrorism, terrorism can also be conceptualised as a reaction to counter-terrorism. The interdependency between terrorism and counter-terrorism is examined by Jackson (2011), among others, who argues that the two “are dependent upon each other for their roles in drama (of terrorism – JS). They parasitically feed upon each other”. Another author who acknowledges a close link between terrorism and counter-terrorism is de Graaf (2009) who notes that just like terrorism is theatre, so is counter-terrorism. In her opinion, “[a]ll counter-terrorism is a stage, and all counter-terrorists merely players” (2009: 5).

Counter-terrorism as a social construction and a product of discourse

Earlier, a number of arguments were presented in favour of conceptualizing terrorism as a social construction and a product of discourse. Jackson (2005) and Poynting and Whyte (2012) claim that, like terrorism, counter-terrorism is also a social fact or a “political project” (Poynting and Whyte, 2012: 241), which is not only influenced by political discourse, but also established in it.

All three of the aforementioned authors focus mainly on the post-9/11, U.S.-led Global War on Terror, although their arguments apply to other attacks, such as the ones in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan. Jackson (2005), for example, demonstrates how government officials and the media elevate the terrorist threat, not only to justify, but also to promote a number of extraordinary and sometimes even illegal measures to eliminate or mitigate that threat. Poynting and Whyte (2012) go even further and openly question whether eliminating or mitigating terrorism was indeed the main aim of the Global War on Terror, or whether its primary purpose was to fulfill the domestic and international political needs of the states waging it. The latter argument is particularly relevant to the process of spectacularising terrorism by states and terrorists, a subject which is further discussed in Chapters Three and Four of this dissertation.

Actors in counter-terrorism

Apart from questioning the true rationale behind counter-terrorist actions, such as the aforementioned post-9/11 Global War on Terror, Poynting and Whyte (2012) highlight an equally important aspect of the phenomenon. They ask whether non-state actors, as well as states, can be counter-terrorists and observe that:

“[a]n established body of research has noted that the mainstream of terrorism studies, in restricting its vision of terrorism to that committed by non-state actors, or by otherwise ignoring or overlooking state terrorism, develops a way of thinking about terrorism that effectively constructs states, particularly Western states, always as the victims and never the perpetrators of ‘terrorism’”. (Poynting and Whyte, 2012: 1)

Just as terrorism is usually understood as a struggle of the weak (non-state) against the strong (state) actors, counter-terrorism is often conceptualised as the war of the weakened/attacked state against its surprisingly powerful non-state attackers.

In this respect Crenshaw (1995) points to yet another analytical problem, which is that in the study of civil violence, such as terrorism, “oppositions are exclusively initiators, whereas governments are responders or defenders, who merely react to terrorist challenges” (1995: 6). Such conceptualisations, she argues, are unjustified and harmful for terrorism research, since the “responsibility for violence in political violence can be and often is shared. The process of violence is interactive” (1995: 6).

Crenshaw’s claim that the process of violence is interactive is important for the analysis presented in this thesis for at least two reasons. Firstly, it justifies looking at terrorism and counter-terrorism as highly interlinked phenomena. Secondly, it points to the fact that both rely on an audience, which has to be able to move “in and out of passivity” (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998: 67-68) in order for the aforementioned interactivity to occur.

Audiences in counter-terrorism

Since terrorism and counter-terrorism aim to change the political behaviour of people, they both require a degree of activity on behalf of their respective audiences. Bolechów (2010: 343) argues that in order to be successful, counter-terrorists need to mobilise people into specific actions. At the same time, some counter-terrorists might not want people to act – some states, for example, might not want their citizens to actively oppose heightened security measures, which significantly encroach on their civil liberties, or, in more extreme cases, human rights. This is why this thesis perceives audiences in counter-terrorism to be able to move “in and out of passivity” (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998: 67-68), rather than being either only passive, or only active, regardless of the ever changing social, economic and political context.

Counter-terrorism and the mass media

While the literature on audiences in counter-terrorism is quite limited, that on the relationship between counter-terrorism and the mass media is not. A significant number of authors pay a special attention to the mass media's role in influencing people's perceptions of terrorism and terrorists, as well as how the two should be countered. Many authors (Hülse and Spencer, 2008; Kruglanski *et al.*, 2008; Spencer, 2010) also point to the role various metaphors play in this process. Among the metaphors used to shape and justify counter-terrorist actions they list the following: terrorism as war, terrorism as crime, terrorism as a disease, terrorism as evil or terrorism as a natural occurrence. Apart from acknowledging an important role of metaphors in describing reality, the aforementioned authors also highlight the ability of metaphors to shape people's responses to the events and situations such metaphors describe. Furthermore, they also allude to the role of the mass media in furthering certain perceptions of terrorism as well as the counter-terrorist reactions it causes.

The role of the mass media in facilitating political actions is highlighted by authors such as Giroux (2006, 2007) and Kellner (2003, 2005), who both focus on how the presentation of political issues and events shapes people's behaviour towards them. In doing so, both authors invoke a category of spectacle as a "regime of representation" – a display of images which influences those watching to the point that the images redefine and reorganize various aspects of social and political life.

Kellner (2003, 2005), for example, differentiates between three types of spectacle: megaspectacle, interactive spectacle and political spectacle. In his opinion, megaspectacle – like the post-9/11 War on Terrorism – is a spectacle that encompasses and defines the majority of cultural and political events happening at a given time. At the same time, political spectacles are smaller in scale and can include events such as the post-9/11 U.S. military campaign against Iraq.

Both Kellner (2003, 2005) and Giroux (2006, 2007) conceptualise spectacle as a framework, in which various decisions and actions – be they economic or political – make sense. While Kellner and Giroux analyse how mass-media images shape people’s reactions to terrorism, Jackson (2005) examines the issue from the point of view of discourse, as introduced by politicians and subsequently popularized by the media. That the two perspectives complement each other will be demonstrated in Chapters Three and Four, which explore the dramas and scripts of terrorism and counter-terrorism alike.

The main aim of Chapter One has been to provide an overview of the scholarly discussions and debates, which not only inform, but also constitute a large part of the “Is terrorism theatre?” enquiry. Through doing so, the chapter illustrated the wealth of writings on the subject of dramaturgical metaphors of terrorism and the multiplicity of approaches used therein. First, it demonstrated that terrorism and counter-terrorism are often analysed metaphorically, which approach can be partially explained by a difficulty in finding the right words to capture the highly political and subjective nature of the two concepts. It then discussed how terrorism scholars analyse terrorism and counter-terrorism using the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance. In doing so, it highlighted how common it is for terrorism scholars who rely on those metaphors not to specify the exact meaning of their “source domains”.

As one of the main reasons for conceptualising terrorism and counter-terrorism dramaturgically, the chapter listed the fact that, just like drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, terrorism and counter-terrorism – understood as social constructs, products of discourse and strategies of communication – also rely on various actors to send messages to an interpretive audience. Furthermore, what was reviewed were the arguments of various authors about the nature of actors and audiences in terrorism and counter-terrorism and what it is that they do as well as some of the alleged differences between the “old” and “new” terrorism. Finally, a selection of the literature on the “old” and “new” media, their relationship to terrorism and counter-terrorism as well as the potential of studying television and the internet as theatre and performance has also been presented.

In the process, the chapter identified a number of gaps in the reviewed body of literature. This thesis constitutes a critical attempt to fill those gaps, most prominent of which are: the lack of critical analysis of dramaturgical metaphors used to study terrorism; a limited examination of the interconnectedness between terrorism and counter-terrorism regarded as audience-orientated strategies of communication; an unsystematic analysis of the place and roles of actors and audiences in terrorism, in general, and in terrorism presented in the “old” and “new” media, in particular.

This thesis uses a variety of concepts and ideas to address the pertinent issues identified above. In order to enhance the forthcoming analysis, the next chapter (Chapter Two) brings together a variety of understandings and conceptualizations of terrorism, counter-terrorism, drama, theatre, spectacle and performance. Not only does it explain their meaning, but it also points to a number of important, yet quite often overlooked, connections between them.

CHAPTER TWO

“The juxtaposition of two previously separate domains of knowledge can be an energizing force for creative thought”. (Beer and de Landtsheer, 2004: 14-15)

Dramaturgical metaphors are commonly used in the context of terrorism and counter-terrorism. However, as the previous chapter has shown, those who use them hardly ever either explicitly define the meaning of the metaphors they use or clearly outline the way in which they do so. Subsequently, the “energizing force for creative thought” of those metaphors is often compromised.

To ameliorate that, and to use the “energizing force” of the dramaturgical metaphors for the “creative” and in-depth analysis of terrorism and counter-terrorism as drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, this chapter takes a critical approach and examines the meanings and implications of those metaphors in detail. As such, it provides a crucial conceptual and methodological backdrop for the theoretical as well as empirical discussions that follow in the forthcoming sections of this work.

APPROACH

The word “metaphor” comes from the Greek word *metapherein*, which means “to carry from one place to another” (Miller, 1979: 156). In other words, metaphor is a phrase that describes something in terms of something else, often through comparison.²⁹ For a metaphor to work, there ought to be similarity between what is being described (the signified – in this case, terrorism or counter-terrorism) and what is used to describe it (the signifier – drama, theatre, spectacle or performance). However, as highlighted earlier, the signified and the signifier need

²⁹ In the opinion of de Landtsheer and de Vrij (2004: 168), a “metaphor need not be a full sentence; it may be a phrase. On the other hand, a sentence is not always sufficient to distinguish a metaphorical from a lateral use of a term. Metaphor is not a unit of discourse but a use of discourse”.

to belong to different domains of discourse,³⁰ which are referred to as “the target domain” (terrorism) and “the source domain” (drama, theatre, spectacle, performance), respectively. If the “target” and the “source” belong to the same domain of discourse, one is dealing with an analogy, not a metaphor (Shimko, 2004).

Depending on their origins, structure and functions, Beer and de Landtsheer (2004: 8-12) classify metaphors into three groups – those that follow the “substitution” model, the “syntactical” model and the “combination” model. In their opinion, metaphors of the first kind originate from philosophy, rhetoric, and literary criticism and serve to describe words from one domain of discourse by substituting them with words from a different domain.

Metaphors of the second, “syntactical” kind come from linguistics, and rely not so much on substitution as on a copula – “is a” – a form of the verb “be”, which connects a subject (terrorism, for example) and a complement (drama, theatre, etc.) and the meaning of which is equivocal to “like” and “is not”. In this context, the “terrorism is (a) theatre” phrase would mean that even though terrorism *is not* theatre *per se*, terrorism is *like* theatre, i.e. there are enough similarities between terrorism and theatre to describe terrorism in terms of theatre.

While the “substitution” and the “syntactical” models have their respective merits, according to Beer and de Landtsheer (2004: 12), it is the “combination” model of metaphors that is the most useful for studying political phenomena. This is because, unlike the other two, the “combination” model, which is used predominantly in cognitive psychology, best explains how metaphors achieve psychological effects. It does so by shifting the focus “from signs and referents to audience, from the text or speech to the reader or hearer” (Beer and de Landtsheer, 2004: 11).

³⁰ According to Sarbin (2003: 149-150), “metaphor is the use of a term from one domain of discourse to give meaning to a term from a different domain”.

One of the assumptions of the Conceptual/Cognitive Metaphor Theory is that people associate certain words (such as war or peace) with particular emotions and behaviours, which they then transfer onto concepts and issues that they describe with those words (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). It is for this reason that metaphors generate emotions in people, which subsequently explains why metaphors achieve psychological effects in an audience – be it to reassure it and make it feel more at peace or, on the contrary, to mobilise it into action.

What do metaphors do?

Those who subscribe to the Conceptual/Cognitive Metaphor Theory are of the opinion that not only do metaphors shape communication between people, but they also inform ways in which people think and act (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

One of the main functions of a metaphor is to enhance people's understanding of reality. Metaphors do so in at least three ways. Firstly, they explain unfamiliar terms and phenomena by comparing them to notions that are either more popular or less abstract. Some well-known comparisons of an international community to a family of nations or of a political leader to a father/mother of a nation, serve as examples here. Secondly, metaphors contribute to a better understanding of difficult and complex issues by simplifying them. In this context one can invoke the already mentioned metaphors of terrorism as a disease or counter-terrorism as law enforcement or war. Thirdly, metaphors enhance people's understanding through providing them with new concepts, new meanings and fresh insights. That the latter is indeed the case when it comes to terrorism and counter-terrorism metaphorised as drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, is demonstrated in the forthcoming chapters.

By describing reality in a certain way, metaphors shape people's perceptions. Because of that, metaphors can be claimed not only to reflect, but also to construct reality.³¹ Likewise, because metaphors shape people's

³¹ The approach which acknowledges that political reality is constituted by metaphorical language is called *constitutivism*, as opposed to *verificationism* which assumes that "political reality is something discovered rather than something created by the knower" (Miller, 1979: 162).

understanding of things, they also inform their responses to those things. As a consequence, different metaphors constitute different realities. For example, describing a terrorist attack as a crime invokes a different response compared to when the same terrorist attack is depicted as an act of war. While the first case would call for law enforcement measures, in the second one a military response would be expected. If one looked at a terrorist attack from the point of view of how people react to it, one could justifiably argue that they are dealing with many different attacks, not one. This in turn demonstrates the power of metaphors to create reality simply by influencing people's interpretations of it (see, for example: Kruglanski *et al.*, 2008 and Hülse and Spencer, 2008). This is especially relevant in politics, which is where all of the aforementioned functions of metaphors come together.

Metaphors and politics

According to Beer and de Landtsheer (2004), “[m]etaphors lie at the heart of political analysis, communication, and decision” (2004: 30). Among the political roles of metaphors one can list the following: reflecting, constructing and changing political reality; facilitating political actions; placing or removing certain issues from political agenda; framing political problems as well as highlighting their causes and promoting solutions to them; and appeasing or mobilising political audiences, all of which, as the following chapters will show, can be found in the context of terrorism – Chechen terrorism against Russia is no exception.

Metaphors and terrorism

In light of the material presented above it might be argued that metaphors have a number of functions, all of which are exemplified by terrorism and counter-terrorism, which this thesis conceptualises as products of discourse which in itself is very often metaphorical. The following discussion of the relationship between metaphors, terrorism and counter-terrorism further substantiates this claim.

In the Introduction I claimed that there is no universal definition of terrorism. This is partially because terrorism is a complex phenomenon, which subsequently explains why a number of metaphors have been used to enhance its understanding. The metaphors in question include military metaphors (terrorism as war); legal metaphors (terrorism as a crime); medical metaphors (terrorism as a disease); religious metaphors (terrorists as martyrs, terrorism as a holy war) and many more. Apart from highlighting some characteristics of terrorism, the aforementioned metaphors shape the ways in which people perceive terrorism. In addition, they inform various ways in which people respond to it. For example, whether one is described as a freedom fighter, guerilla, bandit, militant, insurgent, soldier, holy warrior, martyr or a terrorist matters a great deal, predominantly because one's description determines how one is perceived as well as how one's actions are interpreted and responded to by others. The same can be said of various definitions of terrorism, most of which not only reflect a variety of ways in which terrorism is conceptualised, but also highlight the difficulty in devising an effective response to it.

As much as there are strengths to the use metaphors to study terrorism, there are also weaknesses. The latter have to do with the function of metaphors, their scientific application as well as their respective adequacy and appropriateness. One limitation of studying terrorism using the metaphorical approach is linked to the fact that metaphors tend to simplify reality. Even though this allows for the development of various solutions to the problem of terrorism, there is indeed a danger of "oversimplification, stereotyping and judgmental error" (Kruglanski *et al.*, 2008: 98), which might negatively impact on the depth and adequacy of its analysis.

Another weakness of the metaphorical approach derives from the fact that metaphors, by their very nature, are "incomplete" and selective – in other words, they cannot capture all characteristics of the concepts and phenomena they are used to describe. As the forthcoming presentation of terrorism and counter-terrorism as drama, theatre, spectacle and performance will demonstrate, not only are some metaphors more comprehensive than others, but they often focus on different aspects of the same phenomenon. Moreover, while some of the four

metaphors under consideration capture more characteristics of terrorism, others are more suited to the study of counter-terrorism.

It is often claimed that metaphorical language is selective, vague and not rigorous enough to be used in the Social Sciences (Zashin and Chapman, 1974: 292-293). Those who focus on the scientific rigor of metaphors point to the difficulty in developing an appropriate method of metaphorical analysis. The absence of qualitative techniques is a further problem (see, for example, Apter, 2006: 246-247).

Yet another limitation, which has to do with the applicability of metaphors to scientific research in general and terrorism research in particular, has been voiced most strongly by Horgan (2010), a terrorism scholar, who refers to metaphors as nothing but a “handy substitute for data”. Understood in this way, those who employ metaphors to study terrorism can be accused of conducting what Hülse and Spencer (2008: 573) describe as “veranda terrorism research”. Horgan (2010) argues against such practice and in favour of “going native” – conducting terrorism research by observing and interacting with terrorists. At the same time, Hülse and Spencer (2008: 571-572) call for a more discourse- and audience-orientated approach in Terrorism Studies, which this thesis also favours.

Two final limitations of the metaphorical approach have to do with the adequacy of using metaphors to study reality. One of those shortcomings relates to the ability of some metaphors, like that of a movie, for example, to escape reality. Another is linked with the potential of metaphors to deny the existence of such reality in the first place. This is especially relevant when, as in this thesis, metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, which some might consider entertainment-related and not “serious” enough, are used to analyse emotionally charged and politically sensitive phenomena like terrorism. Using artistic metaphors to deny the existence of terrorism or to escape its effects could not only be considered inadequate and inappropriate, but also highly disrespectful, especially to the victims of terrorism. The latter is very well illustrated by the intense criticism of a German avant-garde composer Stockhausen who infamously compared the 9/11 attacks to “the greatest work of art that is possible in the whole cosmos” (cited in Román, 2002a: 114).

Stockhausen's case very clearly demonstrates a frequent misunderstanding from which the "artistic" metaphors and comparisons suffer. By providing an in-depth analysis of terrorism as drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, this thesis hopes to limit the potential for similar misinterpretation and to enrich the understanding of terrorism as well as the dramaturgical metaphors used to describe it.

Dramaturgical metaphors and terrorism

Even though the word "terrorism" belongs to a different domain of discourse than drama, theatre, spectacle or performance, there are indeed a number of similarities between them, which allow for the former to be metaphorised as the latter. What terrorism, drama, theatre, spectacle and performance have in common is that they all rely on the process of communication through symbols. They all use a script, an actor's body and an audience, whose aim is to give meaning to what is observed. In addition, their common goal is to affect an audience psychologically. As a result, terrorism can be described as symbolic communication, wherein terrorists (the actors) send a message (drama, script) to an audience (those watching and interpreting) using symbols and props (such as violence, death, religion) to bring about psychological effects, which make obtaining their political objectives possible.

What further attests to terrorism being within a "cognitive distance" to drama, theatre, spectacle and performance is that self-presentation and "impression management" (Goffman, 1959: 208-212), which are inherent to the four, have been used by a number of "dramaturgically aware" (Goffman, 1959) and "audience-conscious" terrorist organisations, such as the Irish Republican Army (see Moran, 2005; also see Dixon, 2006; Dixon, 2010); the Shining Path in Peru (Apter, 2006: 239); the German Red Army Faction (Pedersen, 2006); "Spasguerilla" (Fun Guerilla) group (Pedersen, 2006: 335); "Bewung 2. Juni" (2 June Movement) (Pedersen, 2006: 335); the Italian Red Brigades (Wagner-Pacifici, 1986) and, as illustrated in this thesis, Chechen terrorists.

Nevertheless, even though the four dramaturgical concepts under consideration have a lot in common, each one of them also has some unique

qualities. While it is indeed the similarities that explain why the four are used together in this analysis, it is their distinctive characteristics that allow for a more comprehensive dramaturgical examination of terrorism.

CONCEPTS

In the second part of this chapter, this thesis supports the case for studying terrorism using the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle, and performance. Having presented the meaning of the four dramaturgical concepts, the chapter demonstrates the complexity of terrorism and counter-terrorism, which then justifies using more than one metaphor to deepen their respective understanding. Apart from presenting terrorism and counter-terrorism as strategies of communication aimed at manipulating people's political behaviour, the argument presented here also elaborates on the relationship between terrorism and counter-terrorism and the mass media – “old” and “new”.

Drama

Through drama people can “enter into the attitude and experience of other persons” (Mead, 1934: 257) more efficiently than through prose or poetry. There are at least four different ways in which one can conceptualise this dramaturgical category. One of the most common understandings of drama is as a play – a text intended to be presented on stage, which Elam (1980) defines as “that mode of fiction designed for stage representation and constructed according to particular (‘dramatic’) conventions” (1980: 2). Drama is also a script. Schechner (1973b) differentiates between the two and argues that while “drama is the domain of the author, the composer, scenarist, shaman”, “script is the domain of the teacher, guru, master” (1973b: 8). What this then implies is that script is a narrative or a “drama plus” – a drama that has already been interpreted (by a theatre director, for example) and which is projected onto an audience using means which ease, uphold and reinforce the prescribed interpretation. According to yet another conceptualisation, “drama” is an emotional and unexpected set of events and circumstances. It is exactly this understanding of the word “drama” that informs

the expressions often found in mass media accounts of terrorism, such as “the drama of the hostages” or “a dramatic turn of events”. Turner (1974) also uses this understanding of the word “drama” in the context of “social dramas”, the meaning of which was outlined in Chapter One.

Just as there are a number of possible understandings of drama, there are also several functions that drama can have. One of them is to serve as a base for a performance. In this context, drama – as a pattern of behaviour – prescribes who the actors are and what it is that they do and why. Even though this applies predominantly to theatre, the idea of human actions being prescribed by a particular drama or a script also informs the mass media as well as political and social life in general. Another important function of drama, which can be found in all of the aforementioned definitions of the phenomenon, is that drama adds structure to the events it is used to describe in the sense that it helps one to trace the cause of an action, as well as its result. Furthermore, it enables one to foresee the consequences of an action, and provides an explanation for its very occurrence. In other words, drama provides a framework, which helps people to interpret actions – their own and those of others. It also equips people with a particular convention or a narrative in which certain actions seem appropriate and make sense, while others do not. Yet another significant function of drama is that it generates emotions – be they of joy (as in the case of comedy or farce) or sadness (in tragedy or melodrama, for example). This goes to show that the true power of drama lies in its ability to affect people psychologically – to alter their emotions and, in doing so, to also trigger certain reactions. As a result, drama can be used for political purposes, such as to terrorise people.

Tragedy and comedy constitute two main dramatic conventions, both of which have a number of socio-political functions.³² First and foremost, they give the events they portray a sequence and a form, both of which make it much easier for the audience to comprehend them. In addition, tragedy and comedy invent audiences and/or communities that have an emotional as well as a moral perspective on various issues they are confronted with through the play.

³² Even though many scholars argue that politics is indeed tragic (Mearsheimer, 2001: xi-xii; M. Weber, 1996: 64, 131, 257), there is also a number of authors who see merit in using comedy to study it (Odysseos (2001); DeVere Brody (cited in Román, 2002a: 102); Bentley (1972: 389)).

Moreover, the two genres provide a framework for an audience to interpret the performance it is watching. Finally, while comedy offers the audience comic relief, tragedy provides the audience with a possibility for *catharsis* – emotional purification and comfort, which, according to Alexander, “allows new moral judgments to form and new lines of social action to be taken in turn” (2006b: 95).

Drama understood in terms of a play provides actors with material they can enact. In other words, it equips an actor with a specific role, which they can subsequently perform. Drama itself does not choose its own actors, as this is often the job of a casting director. However, drama not only creates roles that need to be acted out; it also equips the audience with a variety of tools (such as the dramatic convention), which allow the audience to judge how convincing a certain actor is. Nevertheless, this is not to say that drama requires an audience. It does not, unlike theatre. It is in this context that the founding father of Theatre Studies in Germany, Max Hermann (cited in Fischer-Lichte, 2008a: 43) argues for drama and theatre to be considered separately, especially given that drama is a creation of a single artist – a playwright, while it is the audience and their servants (the actors) that make theatre.

When one considers drama to be first and foremost a play or a script, one pays much more attention to a written text, rather than to actors and audiences, which may or may not be involved. This is not the case with a “social drama”, which relies on actors and audiences much more than on pre-written scripts, which, as argued by Alexander (2006b):

“might be written before a performance begins, but they may also be emergent, crystallizing only as the drama unfolds. Here, the dramas that scripts are meant to inspire aim at *audiences* composed of the publics of complex civil societies. The *actors* in these social dramas may be institutional authorities or rebels, activists or couch potatoes, political leaders or foot soldiers in social movements, or the imagined publics of engaged citizens themselves. The motivations and patterns of such actors are often affected deeply, though are not controlled, by *directors*. In social dramas, these are the organisers, ideologists, and leaders of collective action”. (2006b: 95)

Those speaking of terrorism as drama tend to conceptualise the latter either as a text, in which case drama is a product of a single author or a group of authors that requires neither the actors nor the audience to exist or as a “social

drama” – a pattern of actions and events through which people arrive at and come out of a crisis, which actively involves both the actors as well as the audience. What those perceptions of drama have in common is that drama affects people psychologically, which is a quality that is used on the stage, as well as off it.

Theatre

According to its most common definitions, theatre is either a space where something happens (as in the case of the theatre of war or an operational theatre) or a place where dramatic performances are given and watched. The latter meaning of theatre, which this thesis relies on the most, has a lot to do with the etymology of the word “theatre”, which derives from Greek *theatron*. *Theatron* emerges from *theasthai* – to see, to behold and *thea* – a view (see Fischer-Lichte, 2008b: 60). It also implies a number of functions that theatre can have, which then determine the roles of actors and audience therein.

In keeping with the second of the aforementioned conceptualisations of theatre, which is especially relevant to the modern theatre in the West, its main goal is to present a dramatic text to an audience. In doing so, theatre generates emotions in an audience, thus creating psychological effects in those watching. The emotions in question vary from those of excitement and joy to pity and suffering, and largely depend on whether the drama presented in a theatre is a comedy, farce, tragedy or melodrama. While comedy and farce often relieve the audience of any worries its members might be experiencing, tragedy and melodrama allow them to re-live those difficult moments and, in doing so, to deal with any repressed emotions and stress thanks to *catharsis* – release. Subsequently, theatre has an important therapeutic function, highlighted by authors such as Fanon (1965) or Bentley (1972). For example, Fanon (1965), writing in the context of colonial wars of the 1950s and 1960s, saw terrorism as a purifying and cleansing force. Terrorism, he states:

“frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self respect”. (1965: 74)

While Fanon saw in terrorist violence a tool for bringing peace to the victims of political oppression, Bentley (1972) understood theatre's therapeutic role mainly as its ability to treat those affected by terrorist attacks, who would enact their past traumas, and in doing so, would psychologically cope with them. Yet another terrorism-related example of theatre having healing capabilities is the "I Love New York Theatre" Campaign, which began shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the Broadway's hometown. The Campaign's posters, authorised by the League of American Theatres and Producers, were headlined with the quotation from the then Mayor of the city Rudolph W. Giuliani who, on September 16th, 2001, said:

"[t]o the people from all over the country who want to help, I have a great way of helping: come here and spend money. Go to a restaurant, see a show. The life of the city goes on". (cited in Román, 2002b: 5)

Giuliani's words were addressed to all those, who "wanted to do something active in response to the terrorist attacks" (Román, 2002b: 4). There, apart from coming to the economic rescue of

"the thousands of people employed by the New York theatre industry and its related businesses – hotels, restaurants, transportation, etc., (...) [t]he theatre was positioned both as a therapeutic antidote to the suffering of the city and as the symbolic core of the city's history and traditions". (Román, 2002b: 5-6)

Theatre's cleansing and therapeutic functions aside, another important aspect of theatre is its ability to create a relationship between the actors and the audience. By gathering together in one space performers and their audience establish a strong bond. A similar process can be observed in the theatre of politics, which relies on various dramas to reinforce, shape and in many cases to create a *politea*. Theatre does so mainly through allowing people to share the emotions they experience, which Apter (2006: 227) refers to as "cathartic mobilisation". The latter quality of theatre can be demonstrated using the example of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo – an association of Argentine mothers who, in the late 1970s, came together to actively oppose the unprecedented human rights abuses conducted by the junta that terrorized Argentina between 1976 and

1983. The Argentinian state-terror led to the abduction, torture and murder of approximately 30,000 people. In addition, a number of babies and children were appropriated from their families and given to high ranking military officers and their accomplices (Agosin, 1989). The women met while searching for their disappeared children. To protest against the terror of the state, every Thursday they would walk around the Plaza de Mayo – one of the main squares in Argentina’s capital Buenos Aires – not only to attract attention to their cause, but also to give the women a sense of being active and in control – “cathartically mobilised”.

The aforementioned functions of theatre can be largely regarded as positive. However, theatre can also be unsafe. This dangerous aspect of theatre is highlighted most clearly by Apter (2006: 242, 247) and Hozic (1990: 68) who argue that it is in its very ability to stimulate and mobilise an audience that theatre’s danger lies. As Hozic (1990) states:

“[t]he fear that terrorism may outgrow its own limits and transform itself into a general dissent is probably the crucial reason why its ‘theatricality’ had to be combated and transformed into global ‘spectacle’”. (1990: 68)

Hozic’s observation largely refers to the question of how passive and/or active theatrical audience is or should be.

The idea of theatre as an institution where one watches dramas makes one think of a place where actors and audience are separated from each other by an orchestra pit and/or a curtain. Actors perform on stage, whereas spectators sit in the dark and watch. This is very much reflected in Schechner’s conceptualisation of theatre as “the domain of the performers” (Schechner, 1973b: 8). Such a model of theatre, which is called the *proscenium* theatre, dominated in the nineteenth century, and implied an almost total passivity on behalf of the audience (Fischer-Lichte, 2008b: 38-9). At that time, the rule of audience silence was imposed – “[e]arlier dramatic performances were relatively informal and ‘contact between actors and audiences was immediate and intimate’” (Williams, 1970: 30, cited in Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998: 46). In the Elizabethan theatre, for example:

“[t]he convention of obligatory audience-silence during performance was unknown: playgoers talked among themselves as they wished, and responded to playing with booing, hissing, heckling, applause, tears, or rapt silence”. (Lennard and Luckhurst, 2002: 214)

As already noted in Chapter One, the twentieth century has witnessed a number of successful attempts to challenge the rigidity of the theatrical conventions imposed in the nineteenth century (such as the passivity of the audience, for example). Examples include: Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed, New York-based Living Theatre, El Teatro Campesino as well as the Italian Futurists, Brecht’s Collective and *Neue Sachlichkeit*, Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty, Vermont Bread and Puppet Theatre or Manchester’s Action Hero. While this has not undermined the leading role of the actors in a theatre, it did influence the place and function of the audience.

The main aim of the aforementioned attempts was to bring back an active exchange between the actors and their audience, described by Fischer-Lichte (2008b: 74) in terms of a “feedback loop”, which she considers to be constitutive of any “live” (as opposed to “mediatized”) theatrical performance. The “feedback loop” can be defined as interplay between actors and audiences, wherein what the actors do has a substantial impact on the audience and *vice versa*. While in the *proscenium* theatre of the nineteenth century the audience was assumed to be passive, it has now been given a choice of whether it wants to stay passive or whether it wants to act. There are, however, still certain restrictions on how passive or how active an audience can be. Dramas, scripts, theatre directors and producers largely shape those.

Whether an audience is active or passive largely depends on how the role of the theatre is conceptualised and perceived. Those who understand theatre predominantly as a place where people watch plays tend to see theatrical audiences as mainly passive, with their roles heavily restricted by various theatrical conventions which dictate when audience members can talk, clap or even come to as well as leave the theatre. In such theatre the spotlight is on actors, with the audience merely “watching”. However, there are other theorists and practitioners of theatre, such as Berthold Brecht (1964) or Augusto Boal (1995), who see theatre mainly as a tool to stimulate and activate an audience,

also for political reasons. This is why they put much more pressure on the audience, who not only are to interpret what they watch, but are also to become “spect-actors” themselves – members of “participating audience”, who are “relieved of the obligation to be passive” (Boal, 1995: xxii).

Wagner-Pacifici (1986) acknowledges this potential of theatrical audience to move “in and out of passivity” (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998: 67-68). Additionally, she considers it in the context of the mass media, the importance of which for the shaping of actor-audience interplay will be addressed in detail in due course. According to Wagner-Pacifici (1986):

“theater allows for a greater variety of audience responses. An audience can actively participate, going on the stage as in some late sixties productions or altering the course of the story as in the experimental movies at a recent World’s Fair. It can actively contemplate (a mode close to full participation), absorbing and experiencing the conflicts portrayed, as in the tragic theaters of ancient Greece, Shakespeare and Brecht. It can passively “collaborate” (...) as in the prefixed hissing and cheering of melodramatic theater. Finally, it can simply turn the drama (televised or broadcast as it might be) off. Likewise, these are the options relevant to audiences of the theater of politics, a politics that reaches the constituency largely through the media”. (1986: 278)

Apter (2006) also discusses the aforementioned difference between a passive and an active audience. As already mentioned in Chapter One, he does so by referring to two different forms of theatre – “theatre from above” and “theatre from below”. The former characterises the state, while the latter is typical of “antagonistic groups” – such as terrorist organisations – which not only “regard the state with disfavor”, but which are also “inspired to change it” (Apter, 2006: 250-251). According to Apter (2006: 225), the “theatre from above” relies on a passive audience, while the “theatre from below” on a mobilised and active one.

Hozic (1990: 68) seconds Apter’s view on theatre’s ability to mobilise an audience. Like Apter, she argues that, when understood literally, terrorism as theatre is dangerous and needs to be transformed into a spectacle. Underlying this claim is Hozic’s (1990) perception of theatrical audiences as active, and therefore able to change their behaviour as a result of having been terrorized, and those watching a spectacle as passive, i.e. unable to (re)act. In such conceptualization, whereas theatre has the power to stimulate and mobilise

people into action, spectacle does not.

The analysis of the concept of theatre, as presented above, points to two possible ways to in which theatre can be conceptualised. On the one hand, theatre can be defined as the *proscenium* theatre, which is similar to Apter's "theatre from above", wherein actors and audience are separated and the "feedback loop" between the two is almost non-existent. In such theatre it is the actors who act, and the audience who merely watches. At the same time, theatre can also be conceptualised as a space of creative encounter between the actors and the audience – Apter's (2006) "theatre from below", wherein what the actors do heavily influences the audience and *vice versa*. Unlike the *proscenium* theatre, which relies on a passive audience, theatre of the second kind aims to mobilise and to stimulate the audience. The next section argues that the category of spectacle has more in common with the first (*proscenium*) definition of theatre, rather than with the second ("theatre from below").

Spectacle

Even though theatre and spectacle have a lot in common, the two not only have different origins, but also, more importantly for purposes of this thesis, serve different ends. Unlike Rancière (2009) who uses the notion of "spectacle" in the context of "drama, dance, performance art, mime", all of which "place bodies in action before an assembled audience" (Rancière, 2009: 2), this analysis of terrorism as performance, drama, theatre and spectacle considers the latter two notions as separate analytical categories and applies them as such.

Like drama and theatre, spectacle also lacks a single definition. On the one hand, it can be defined as a visually striking performance or a display of images, which makes spectacle an aesthetic category. On the other hand, it can be regarded as a socio-political phenomenon, especially when conceptualised in terms of a display of power.

Spectacle has a number of functions where politics is concerned. For example, spectacular elements, which are visible in such political events and rituals as presidential debates and inaugurations, state weddings and funerals or public trials, serve to reinforce political order, procedures and values. Spectacle

also helps to create and/or strengthen public allegiance and loyalties, as attested to by presidential elections or the Olympic Games.³³ In addition, it has the ability to direct public attention towards particular issues, whilst diverting it from other.³⁴ Finally, by highlighting the importance of certain problems, spectacle magnifies them and often inadequately portrays them as much bigger and more important than they really are. This then leads to a distorted perception of those issues and problems, which subsequently allows the state to distort its own behaviour in relation to its citizens.

While spectacle is mainly a socio-political category, its aesthetic dimension is also important. The main aim of spectacle as an aesthetic phenomenon is to captivate an audience and to shape its perception and understanding of reality. This is usually achieved through the presentation of highly emotive images, which can be displayed either “live”, as in the case of military parades or party conventions, or through the mass media. Another important aim of spectacle as an aesthetic phenomenon is to appeal to as many people as possible – in other words, to enlarge an audience. For the most part the latter is achieved thanks to the *mass media*.

A number of examples attest to the pivotal role of the mass media in the creation of almost any political spectacle. Kellner (2003, 2005), for one, writes about the post-9/11 “spectacle of terror and perpetual war” and points to the role of the mass media in manipulating people’s political allegiance. He does so in the context of the 2004 presidential elections in the United States. At the same time, authors such as McInnes (2002), Baudrillard (1995), Virilio (1990) and Moore

³³ In this context, Cowen (2006: 235) lists the Fourth of July celebrations, tales of the Revolution and the Founding Fathers, presidential inaugurations, monuments, holidays and celebrations marking significant war victories as spectacles accompanying the national ideology of the United States.

³⁴ It is within the power of the state power to include or exclude certain actions and issues from the public view. While some of them are “spectacularised”, some take place *behind the scenes* of politics. The following quote from President George W. Bush captures this important dichotomy well. In the aftermath of the September 11th, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington, he declared: “Our response involves far more than instant retaliation and isolated strikes. Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen. It may include dramatic strikes, visible on TV, and covert operations, secret even in success” (Presidential Statement following a meeting with George W. Bush’s National Security Team, September 12, 2001; cited by Weber, S., 2004: 328).

(2010) largely credit the mass media with transforming a war – an armed conflict between nations or states – into a spectacle.³⁵

In the past, wars had many actors and very few spectators. At present, they have fewer actors but many more spectators. This can be seen as a direct result of various advancements in the mass media as well as in military technology. McInnes (2002) goes even further in his analysis and compares modern warfare to a spectator sport. He states that:

“[w]hen Western states use force, they do so from afar, involving directly only a limited number of representatives on the field of battle. Society no longer participates, it spectates from a distance. Like sports spectators, Westerners demonstrate different levels of engagement, from those who watch unmoved and soon forget to those who follow events, personalities, tactics, and strategies closely and empathise strongly with what is happening. But their experience is removed. They sympathise but do not suffer; they emphasise but do not experience”. (2002: 2)

What McInnes demonstrates is a highly ambiguous place and role of the audience in a spectacle. On the one hand, part of the audience is “watching unmoved”. On the other hand, some spectators strongly engage with what they are seeing. This is quite similar to Abercrombie and Longhurst’s (1998) conceptualisation of a diffused audience, which is not only larger, compared to other audiences, but also more likely to move “in and out of passivity” (1998: 67-68).

While McInnes (2002) and Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) allow for some activity on behalf of the spectators, authors such as Allegri (cited in Hozic, 1990) and Hozic (1990: 67-69) perceive the spectators to be passive. The latter authors identify the main function of a spectacle as pleasing the audience and giving them the feeling of being looked after. Spectacle, as conceptualised by Allegri and Hozic, captivates an audience. Furthermore, it presents various events in a certain order, which makes them easier for the audience to comprehend. Finally, spectacle not only equips the audience with specific images and narratives; it also provides them with interpretations. This means that spectators do not need to search for the meaning themselves. According to McInnes (2002:

³⁵ For a fascinating overview of the transformation of the theatre of war (*theatrum belli*) into a spectacle see Margiotta (1996: 1064).

2), they are to spectate, but not to participate; to sympathise, but not to suffer and to emphasise rather than experience.

As with an audience, the place and role of actors in a spectacle also depends on what one understands spectacle to be and do. On the one hand, with spectacle being considered predominantly as an aesthetic category, the mass media and their owners can be regarded as its the main actors. In this context, it is primarily up to the media to display the images as well as to provide the viewers with means to interpret and understand them (such as montage, narratives and frames). On the other hand, and with spectacle defined first and foremost in terms of a display of power, it is mainly those in power such as the official representatives of the state, who enjoy the ability to act. In the view of Hozic (1990), however, states are not the only actors in a political spectacle – non-state groups, such as terrorist organisations, can also enjoy this often sought-after status.

As it appears in the literature on terrorism, spectacle is both an aesthetic as well as a socio-political category. Spectacle is not only about displaying highly emotive images; it is also about strengthening people’s political allegiance to certain political procedures, values and actions. Those in power often consider spectacle as “an investment in focality” (Cowen, 2006: 235). They use it not only to draw people’s attention to some issues over others, and, in doing so, to shape people’s perception of reality,³⁶ but also to form and manipulate their responses to it.

Performance

Performance can be defined either as an act of staging and presenting a form of entertainment (play, concert, etc.) or as an action or a process of carrying out a task or a function. This is in keeping with Pocanowsky and O’Donnell-Trujillo’s (1982: 131) distinction between performance as a form of “play-acting” and performance as derived from the French root *parfournir*, which loosely means “to

³⁶ According to Cowen (2006: 237), “the very notion of focality requires that attention be directed to or centralized upon a small number of events and stories. If too many information sources are competing for attention, and on equal terms, it can be harder for focality to evolve”.

accomplish”. Furthermore, the above definition of performance also reflects that of Schechner’s, namely performance as “showing doing” (Schechner, 2002: 22).

The understanding of performance as “showing doing” makes it a very broad category, as it stipulates that any display of “doing” can be considered a performance. Not only is this understanding extensive, it is also highly ambiguous. It leaves a number of questions unanswered. Is the “doing” scripted? Who are those who “show doing”? – are they actors, “everyday” people, institutions (a gallery or a museum, for example) or objects (like a photograph or a movie)? When it comes to performance there are those who “show doing” and those who watch it, for if the doing was not watched, “showing” could not take place. However, unlike theatre, which relies on text, performance focuses more on the act of “showing doing” itself. In other words, unlike theatre, performance prefers corporeality to textuality.³⁷

Apart from conceptualizing performance as “showing doing”, Schechner also sees it as an “interplay of efficiency, productivity, activity and entertainment” (2002: 19-20). This second definition is much more specific, compared to the first one. Conceptualizing performance as the “interplay of efficiency, productivity, activity and entertainment” (2002: 19-20) not only implies an action (“activity”), and therefore the presence of those “acting”, it also implies that there are certain standards, which allow the audience to evaluate how effective and productive those who perform are. It is the audience who decides whether a certain performance is good (successful) or bad, which is also why, according to Schechner (1973b: 8; 2002: 31), performance is very much “the domain of the audience”. In this general sense, performance is first and foremost about reception, unlike theatre, which is predominantly about production.

Given that a large number of human activities can be described using a category of performance, the functions that one can credit performance with are also copious (Schechner, 2002: 38). One of them is to entertain – to provide an audience with an interesting display, which makes the audience feel good. Furthermore, performance has a therapeutic power in that it can heal people

³⁷ This is not to say that all types of theatre are pre-occupied with textuality. Asian theatre is not and neither are some European theatres such as the postdramatic theatre of Lehmann (2006).

from negative feelings and emotions they experience. Performance can also be used to change audience's outlook on things – mainly through drawing people's attention to a certain issue and by providing them with various means of interpreting and understanding that issue. Another important function of performance is to create and foster a community, by either highlighting and strengthening or downplaying and weakening various aspects of one's identity.³⁸

As already noted, performance is “the domain of the audience” (Schechner, 1973b: 8) in that it values reception over production, and doing and creating over mimetic recreating. While the category of performance acknowledges, however implicitly, the existence of those “doing”, it very much challenges the division between those “doing” and those “watching”, to the extent that in a performance the audience can even become an actor. The latter occurs when the audience is “pulled into” the performance and “transposed to the stage to become participants in the drama” (Apter, 2006: 236). This then implies a high degree of activity on behalf of the audience. However, this is not to say that all the members of an audience need to become, to use Apter's words, “passionate actors” (2006: 236). Fischer-Lichte (2008), for example, demonstrates that this is highly unlikely, as there will always be those more and less willing to do so. Likewise, the creators of performances can manipulate the extent to which they want the audience to be engaged.

Out of the four dramaturgical categories under consideration in this analysis, performance is certainly the broadest, which is reflected not only in the amount of human activities performance describes but also in the number of aesthetic and socio-political functions it serves. Among the latter one can highlight the power of performance to entertain, to heal or to foster a community, to name only a few. The main analytical value of “performance”, however, is its focus on an audience and its ability to capture audience response(s) to the “doing” that is being shown. Having demonstrated the meaning of “drama”, “theatre”, “spectacle” and “performance”, the chapter now turns to the conceptualisation of terrorism and counter-terrorism.

³⁸ In this context Roach (1996) and Taylor (2003) speak of performance as a medium of knowledge and memory.

Terrorism can be conceptualised as a tactic – a method available to pursue the goals of a political movement, or an ideology – a system of ideas that underlies and drives political behaviour. In both cases terrorism serves a number of political functions, the most important of which is to manipulate people’s political allegiance either towards or against the state. This is usually achieved through the creation of “political, social and moral instability” (Alexander, 2006b: 93), which either morally legitimizes or delegitimizes the regime that is the perpetrator or the target of terrorism, respectively.

One of the main ways in which both state- and non-state terrorists bring about such instability is through the use of violence or at least the threat of it. Interestingly, while state-terrorists tend to conceal their terrorist actions from public view in order to avoid losing their legitimacy, non-state terrorists very often rely on the public display of their violence, which they use to obtain recognition for themselves, whilst de-legitimizing their enemy at the same time.³⁹ Moreover, while non-state terrorists strive for a reaction on behalf of their victims, state terrorists consider such a reaction not only unnecessary, but often also counter-productive. On the one hand, state terrorists often fear that their illegal actions will be exposed, and therefore do not want or need an audience to look at them and to interpret what they do. On the other hand, non-state terrorists demand both an audience and an interpretation. Unlike state terrorists, who might find various interpretations counter-productive and harmful, non-state terrorists rely on an interpretive audience. Pedersen (2006) highlights the importance of the latter in the context of the German Red Army Faction,⁴⁰ and writes:

“[w]hat distinguishes terrorists from ordinary criminals is that they do not consider themselves criminals. Their actions are intended as something ‘more’, they are supposed to transcend themselves and therefore insist on being

³⁹ Crenshaw (1995: 4) supports this point by noting that “governments and their agents can practice terrorism, whether to suppress domestic dissent or to further international purposes (...) Such use is usually carefully concealed in order to avoid public attribution of responsibility”.

⁴⁰ RAF is otherwise known as the Baader-Meinhof gang.

perceived within a specific context, be it religious, political or ideological. From this point of view, a murder committed by a terrorist is indeed a murder, but it is never just a murder. It insists on carrying a wider meaning. Not only *can* it be interpreted, it *demand*s interpretation. As a result, it depends on the view of the observer, whether he or she will get the message or merely see the damage. Do you see a freedom fighter or a terrorist, a hero or a villain?”. (Pedersen, 2006: 330-331)

Having acknowledged that it is the non-state terrorists who rely on an interpretive audience to a much greater extent than state-terrorists, this thesis focuses mainly on the former. However, it does not discard the idea of state-terrorism entirely, as on many occasions it finds state- and non-state terrorism to be similar, which makes some of the claims and arguments presented in this thesis applicable to both.

Another difference between state- and non-state terrorism is that while it is quite common to draw a line between “old” and “new” non-state terrorism, the aforementioned dichotomy is hardly ever used in the context of state terrorism. In addition, the distinction between “old” and “new” does not apply to counter-terrorism either, which significantly weakens its adequacy as well as its applicability. This thesis does not subscribe to this “old”/”new” division. Unless otherwise stated, its use of the words “old” and “new” in the context of terrorism serves only to assign particular attacks and movements to a certain point in history. Nevertheless, this thesis acknowledges that terrorist tactics and audiences evolve. In doing so, it sympathises with Rapoport’s theory of the four waves of modern terrorism with a “different energy driving each of them” (Rapoport, 1984; also see Rapoport, 2003).

According to Rapoport’s typology, the first wave of modern terrorism started in Russia in the 1880s, with individual assassinations of political leaders being the most common tool used by the then terrorists.⁴¹ Even though Pomper (1995: 63) states that “[i]n the nineteenth century, Russian terrorism, though often spectacular, was conducted on a relatively modest scale”, it would be wrong to assume that the attacks carried out by the terrorists of the first wave did not have or require an audience. The Russian anarchists of the first wave were

⁴¹ In this context Stern (1999: 16) writes of the 1890s as the “decade of the bomb”, since during this period “chiefs of state were murdered [with a bomb – JS] at the rate of nearly one per year”.

supported by (as well as accountable to) at least some of the “urban workers, students, both urban and rural *obshchestvo* (the educated public, particularly organized professional groups), and the peasants” (Pomper, 1995: 65). In addition, “ordinary” terrorists – like the Russian anarchists – did not have to create their respective audiences. Their role was to activate them, if needed, but most importantly not to let them down or act against them.

While terrorism of the first wave was aimed at representatives of a despised political power, terrorists of the second wave, which had its momentum between the 1920s and 1960s, aimed mostly at the military installations signposting the unwanted presence of the colonizing “occupiers”:

“[s]econd-wave tactics differed in some respects from those of first. Bank robberies were less common, partly because diaspora sources this time contributed more money. (...) Major energies went into guerilla-like (hit and run) actions against troops” (Rapoport, 2003: 40-41).

What one learns from Rapoport’s account of the second wave of modern terrorism is that terrorist actions were directed first and foremost at those embodying foreign power (the police, military, etc.). What Rapoport also tells us is that, like their anarchist predecessors, the anti-colonial terrorists valued their “‘interest’ third party” in that they did not direct their actions against them in fear of losing their social and economic base. Once again, this base was already there for the terrorists, as predicted by Münkler (2005: 102), and support was to be mobilised in case it was needed.

Terrorists of the late 1960s to early 1980s – the “third wave” of modern terrorism – were mostly driven by either nationalist or leftist (anti-consumerist) ideologies. Not only were they one of the most audience-conscious terrorists in history, but they also mastered turning their actions into mass media spectacles. Arguably, it is this type of terrorism that was about “those watching and not about those being killed” (Jenkins, B. cited in Dolnik and Fitzgerald, 2008: 11; also see Jenkins, B. 1988).

The fourth wave of modern terrorism began to accelerate in the late 1970s. According to Rapoport (2003), its emergence has been strongly influenced by three almost simultaneous events: the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979, the

start of the fifteenth century in the Islamic *hijri* calendar, and the 1980-1988 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Although Sedgwick (2004) questions these time frames, both scholars find a common ground when linking the resurgence of Islam and the (re-)appearance of the religious type of terrorism. Suicide bombing constitutes its main tactic.

Where audiences of the terrorists of the fourth wave are concerned, identifying them and their respective roles proves most difficult. Partially at least, this difficulty might be explained by the fact that some of the religiously motivated terrorists, especially the so-called apocalyptic terrorists, claim not to play to an “earthly” audience at all. However, there is also a significant group of terrorists (such as Chechen terrorists who took over the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow in 2002) who, despite invoking a religious rationale for their actions, aim at achieving very “worldly” goals, such as the withdrawal of the Russian army from Chechnya and the recognition of the latter as an independent state.

Even though Chechen terrorists display a number of characteristics outlined by the proponents of “new” terrorism, Chechen terrorism is not new *per se*. The Chechens have been fighting Russia for at least three hundred years now. In doing so, they relied on the means available to them at any given time. Russia’s counter-terrorist response is not new either. Just as Chechen terrorism, the Russian response to it has also evolved. Moreover, the two closely inform and re-enforce one another.

Conceptualising counter-terrorism

Counter-terrorism is defined here as all measures that aim to thwart specific attacks and to minimize their occurrence in general (see Kruglanski *et al.*, 2008: 99). These measures can be military as well as non-military (Nacos, 2008: 187-201).⁴² Among the latter one can list various legal, psychological and sociological

⁴² Speaking of one’s efforts at dealing with terrorism it is possible to distinguish between “anti-terrorism” and “counter-terrorism”. What differentiates the two is that anti-terrorist actions are carried out as a direct response to a terrorist attack while it is occurring (they are passive and defensive) whereas counter-terrorist actions take place before such an attack happens (actions are active and offensive). Aware of this distinction, this thesis merges anti-terrorism and counter-terrorism together, and uses

attempts to, respectively, punish the perpetrators of terrorist attacks, trace and de-radicalise potential terrorists, and decrease inter-cultural prejudice, which might breed and encourage terrorist violence.

Moreover, counter-terrorism is conceptualised as being highly interlinked with terrorism itself. This is partially because, as will be demonstrated in the following sub-section, both constitute strategies of communication designed to manipulate the political affiliation and behaviour of their respective audiences. Communication can be described as a “particular way of coding, sending, transmitting, receiving and *responding* to a message, through the use of symbols” (Renkema, 1993: 33; emphasis mine – JS). Therefore, if one conceptualises terrorism as communication, one needs to perceive counter-terrorism as a response to terrorism, which is inherent to and necessary for the whole process. In other words, in order for terrorism to be what it is or what it aspires to be, it has to bring about a reaction – counter-terrorism – which needs to be at least as big as the initial action itself.⁴³

Just as counter-terrorism can be described as a reaction to terrorism, a number of terrorist attacks occur as a response to counter-terrorist actions.⁴⁴ This is partially because, as will be clearly visible in the Russo-Chechen case, presented in Chapter Four, counter-terrorists often project an instrumental understanding of terrorism, which then justifies taking specific measures and actions against it. The latter serves as yet another argument in favour of understanding terrorism and counter-terrorism as highly interlinked, which also justifies why, as already noted in Chapter One, the dramaturgical metaphors under consideration in this thesis can be applied to both.

the latter notion to depict both concepts. It does so for two main reasons. Firstly, it considers the two phenomena to be quite similar, where their goals are concerned. Secondly, the meaning of the counter-terrorism misnomer is not only broader but also more popular, compared to that of anti-terrorism, and therefore its application is also wider.

⁴³ According to Spencer (2010: 3), terrorism actually aims at provoking an overreaction.

⁴⁴ In this context Crenshaw (1996: 6) claims that “The state’s use of force against nonviolent protest can be an important precipitant for oppositional terrorism. For example, the death of a demonstrator at the hands of the West German police was a catalyst for the activation of the Red Army Faction in the 1970s”.

Terrorism and counter-terrorism as strategies of communication

In conceptualizing terrorism and counter-terrorism as audience-orientated strategies of communication, this thesis draws on the metaphorical understanding of politics as communication, wherein political messages are coded, sent, transmitted, received and responded to through the use of symbols.

Chapter One has already alluded to two models of terrorist communication, one devised by Schmid and de Graaf (1982) and the other proposed by Münkler (2005). While Schmid and de Graaf's model applies mainly to terrorism, that of Münkler can be used to study terrorism as well as counter-terrorism. Unlike that of Schmid and de Graaf, Münkler's model acknowledges the active role of an audience, which not only receives a terrorist message but also acts upon it. In other words, Münkler's audience can respond to terrorism, for example, by carrying out or legitimizing counter-terrorist actions.

It has been mentioned earlier that all terrorist attacks perpetrated by non-state actors need to be shown/displayed to an audiences. This is largely because non-state terrorists, who often lack access to the triangle of political communication, need to "show their doing" to attract the attention of the media, which later provides them with a scene where the non-state terrorists can play out their respective dramas and scripts. State terrorists are somewhat different in that they have unlimited access to the triangle of political communication, which means that they do not need to "show their doing" to be noticed:

"Indeed, whereas terrorists must resort to violence or make credible threats to be admitted to the triangle of political communication by the gatekeepers of the traditional media, highly placed public officials do not have to unleash violence to gain such access because they form one corner of the domestic communication triangle and are part of the international triangular communication linkages as well". (Nacos, 2006: 14)

Although it is much easier for state terrorists to convey political messages to their target audiences than it is for non-state terrorists, state terrorists are much more restricted in terms of the messages they can send and how. The latter has largely to do with being a state, which needs to fulfill a number of political, economic and

ethical conditions in order to be accepted and recognized as a legitimate state. In other words, states have an important identity and role, which they need to uphold, and which have to be constantly reflected in their day-to-day performance/self-presentation. For this reason “dramaturgically aware” (Goffman, 1959) states are very likely to display and publicise only some aspects of their behaviour – those that agree with their perception as an effective and efficient state. At the same time, actions that might clash with that favourable image, such as terrorizing one’s own citizens, are likely to be performed “behind the scenes”.

However, in certain situations and contexts, a “dramaturgically aware” (Goffman, 1959) state can redesign its role in order to justify its out-of-ordinary behaviour. To do that, states often change the dominant dramas that not only justify and drive their behaviour, but also that cast them in a different role. Some of the best-known examples of states altering their behaviour due to a change in a dominant narrative/drama are Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia. On a much smaller scale a similar mechanism of altering rules to justify one’s actions can be observed in cases where a state finds itself under attack or in a “state-of-emergency”, be that emergency a civil unrest, poor economic conditions or terrorism.

A number of factors can cause a state to shift the dominant “story of reality”, which the state promotes and uses to legitimize its actions. While some of them are objective (natural disasters, for example) and some inter-subjective, it is indeed possible for others to be purposefully created to help a state fulfill its political needs. That terrorism is often the latter factor is evident in a number of more and less recent examples, including that of Russia, whose behaviour towards Chechnya did alter significantly between the two Chechen Wars. The First Chechen War, which began in December 1994, was widely branded as war, which led to Chechnya being considered as a *de facto* independent state and made the Chechens political enemies of Russia. At the same time, the Second Chechen War, which broke out in August 1999, was described as a counter-terrorist operation, which in effect turned the Chechens into terrorists and deprived Chechnya of its political status. While during the First Chechen War, Russia played the part of a former empire trying to sustain its territorial integrity,

in the later stages of the Second Chechen War, especially after the 9/11 attacks against the United States, Russia performed the role of a country trying to save the world from the religiously motivated terrorism of Al-Qaeda and its dangerous associates. Another notable difference is that during the First Chechen War the actions of both protagonists were restricted by international law; during the Second Chechen War such law applied only to one side – Russia; the other – Chechnya – was described as a terrorist and therefore delegitimized in the eyes of the international community of states as well as the general public.

Russia as a counter-terrorist had to “show” its counter-terrorist “doing” in order to keep up its new “counter-terrorist” image. While state terrorists tend not to display their terrorist actions, as to do so would negatively affect the way in which they are perceived, state counter-terrorists do display their counter-terrorist actions and fulfill their particular needs through doing so. At the same time, just as non-state terrorists need to show what they do in order to convey their message, so do non-state counter-terrorists, who do not enjoy such a wide access to the mass media as state counter-terrorists, and who rely on being noticed and acknowledged by constantly self-presenting and proving themselves to their audience(s).

Terrorism, counter-terrorism and the mass media

In order to manage their respective impressions both terrorists and counter-terrorists use the mass media. It was noted earlier that the mass media vary in that some, like television, are more centralized, restricted and censored than others, such as the internet. Another difference between the “old” and “new” media concerns the extent to which each medium requires its users to be active – while such activity is crucial for the internet; it is much less relevant for television. This has largely to do with the fact that the internet is a direct medium, whose audiences have the power to shape the content of the message they want to send without being limited by the restrictions typical of the much-less direct, traditional media, such as television or the press. This then allows terrorists and counter-terrorists to portray positive images of themselves, which television networks might be less inclined to convey. As a consequence of such “face-work”

(Goffman, 1955) both terrorists and counter-terrorists can win more supporters and sympathisers for their respective causes.

Apart from serving as an attention- and sympathy-gaining device, the mass media provide terrorists and counter-terrorists with an opportunity to fulfill their communicative (“propaganda”) as well as instrumental (“command and control”) goals. Later in the thesis it will be claimed that while the “old” media might be better suited for communicative purposes, the internet seems better equipped to fulfill the instrumental ones.

“Old” and “new” mass media

For the purpose of this thesis television is conceptualised as an “old” medium and the internet is regarded as a “new” one. As will become clear in the forthcoming analysis, some of the ways in which the two differ is in how active or inactive their respective audiences are as well as what functions the “old” and “new” media serve where the theatres of terrorism and counter-terrorism are concerned.

In general, and with the exception of such inventions as TiVo,⁴⁵ where television is concerned, the public has limited power over what it watches and when. In the case of the internet, however, not only is the information available for much longer, people can also “mix and match” or “mash it up”, depending on their worldview, interests and needs. What also differentiates television from the internet is that television is much more structured and less dispersed. Furthermore, compared to the internet, television is a much more likely object of censorship – internal as well as external (imposed by state regulations, for example). In addition, since putting something on television is much more expensive than posting something on the internet, television is by necessity much more selective when it comes to the choice of the material it airs. The latter observation is related to the fact that in television the ownership of and the accountability for the material screened is much more important and visible, compared to that of the internet. Finally, while television relies on the existence of the theatrical concept of the “fourth wall” – “that invisible screen that forever

⁴⁵ TiVo is a digital video recorder that allows its users to choose, record and watch scheduled television depending on their interests.

separates the audience from the stage” (Canby, 1987), the internet can be described as nothing but such a wall – a space of audience encounter, criticism and active involvement with what is being “Twitted”, “MySpaced”, “YouTubed” or “Facebooked”. For all those reasons, television indeed resembles the *proscenium* type of theatre, while the internet, as more of a “user-generated” medium, presents more similarities to performance.

Television and theatre are similar in many aspects. Not only do they create and present reality, they do so to those watching – an audience. On the one hand, among the things that theatre borrows from television are topics, plots, characters and events. On the other hand, when it comes to what television borrows from theatre, one can list dramaturgical structure, instruments for presenting and understanding reality, not to mention theatre’s ability to “make-believe”, among others.⁴⁶

Apart from being highly emotive, both television and theatrical accounts of either reality or fiction are often simplified and structured in a way that makes people’s understanding easier, faster, and in many cases more pleasurable. For this reason not only are “[j]ournalists (...) attracted to drama” (Livingston, 1994: 15), but the media have a “tendency to overdramatise events” (Hozic, 1990: 65), terrorist attacks notwithstanding.

In their respective conceptualisations of the theatre of terrorism, both B. Jenkins (1974a, 1974b, 1975) and Livingston (1994) see the terrorist audience as doing nothing else but “to watch”. In other words, the terrorist audience is there to be affected by whatever terrorists do in front of them. This makes Jenkins’ conceptualisation very similar to the “Terrorism-Victim-Target” model of terrorist communication designed by Schmid and de Graaf (1982). Arguably, this model best describes terrorist communication in the context of the “old” media, such as television. As noted earlier in light of H. Jenkins’ (2006) research on the subject, the “old” media are distinctively low in audience participation. In other words, they leave very little, if anything, to be filled or completed by the audience. Television is certainly one such medium as it usually offers observation without participation. In this respect, television can indeed be compared to the

⁴⁶ “Make-believe” can be defined as the ability of theatre to present fiction in a way that, despite being staged, it seems real to those who watch it.

proscenium model of theatre, especially since both rely on a strict physical divide between “active” actors and “passive” audience, which subsequently invalidates the feedback loop between the two.

The fact that people “use” rather than “watch” the internet leads one to claim that, unlike television, the internet relies on an audience that is active. This is reflected in the writings of many authors, such as Winn and Zakem (cited in Forest, 2009: 30), H. Jenkins (2006: 13), Jones and Rainie (2002: 36-37) and Weimann (2006: 24). While Winn and Zakem (cited in Forest, 2009: 30) claim that the “fastest growing Web sites today are sites that are built around social *interaction*” (emphasis mine – JS), other of the aforementioned authors claim that the main role of the internet, conceptualised as a source of information, is to serve those already interested in something and those who are willing to actively search for more information about whatever it is that they are passionate about.

Another way in which one can understand the activity of the internet’s audience has to do with the fact that, again, unlike television, the internet is a direct medium – not only does its audience have access to raw, i.e. unedited material, but it is also less restricted. Furthermore, it is largely the audience that decides on the content of the internet, which is also known as a *social* medium. Because the internet is “user-generated”, its audience can arguably be conceptualised as the internet’s actor, which constitutes the highest level of the interaction or the feedback loop between the two, and provides yet another argument in favour of conceptualizing the internet as similar to performance.

METHOD

It has already been pointed out that the difficulty in developing an appropriate method of analysis constitutes one of the limitations of the metaphorical approach. They vary and can be as specific as the dictionary-based method described by Hülse and Spencer (2008: 578-579) or as fluid as the “studying something as if it was a painting”, in keeping with the technique proposed by Schechner (2002: 2).

This problem is certainly noticeable in the case of dramaturgical metaphors and terrorism. For example, even though B. Jenkins (1975) compares

terrorism to theatre, neither does he specify what he means by “theatre”, nor does he outline a method of analysing terrorism as theatre. Furthermore, it is also quite common for the authors who refer to terrorism as theatre not to differentiate between dramatisic and dramaturgical approaches – of looking at terrorism as a stage or at terrorism as staged.

As already mentioned, this thesis relies on the latter approach and therefore looks at terrorism as staged. In keeping with this point of view, it conceptualises people as actors who perform their private and public roles to an audience. It is also sympathetic to Goffman’s ([1956] 1990) ideas of “face-work” and “impression management” (Goffman, 1959: 208-212), which it later uses in its analysis of terrorist- and counter-terrorist actions. In addition, this thesis makes use of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance as metaphors, and treats them as “source domains” – sets of familiar characteristics and meanings, which are then translated onto terrorism and counter-terrorism – the “target domain” – in order to increase their understanding.

The method used in this analysis is a combination of a technique proposed by Hülse and Spencer (2008) and a “case plus study” method advocated by Hansen (2006). This thesis draws on the former to present the most established meanings of the four metaphors, and to trace ways in which they inform and construct the meaning of terrorism (forthcoming in Chapters Three and Four). The application of the “case plus study” method is much broader. Not only is Hansen’s (2006) method used to evaluate the analytical potential of each of the four metaphors, but also to apply them to terrorist attacks in Budyonovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan. This is possible because, in the opinion of Hansen (2006: 11), the “case plus study” is a type of analysis that not only presents the application of a particular theory (terrorism/counter-terrorism as drama, theatre, spectacle and performance in Budyonovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan), but it also allows for a further elaboration of that theory (in this case offering an insight into terrorist actors and audiences as well as the dynamics between terrorism and counter-terrorism as such).

Analytical corpus

In order to examine the influence of the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance on the understanding of terrorism, in general, and terrorist attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan, in particular, a number of sources have been considered. A wide range of academic scholarship on terrorism has been reviewed in search of dramaturgical metaphors, as used by various authors and in different contexts. Carefully selected examples of the media accounts of terrorism in Russia and Chechnya have also been examined in order to establish the impact of dramaturgical metaphors on how terrorism and counter-terrorism are presented in newspapers, on television and on the internet. In addition, and in order to trace the shift of discourse that took place in Russia between 1995 and 2004, the media coverage of terrorism was used to analyse political discourse employed to depict the attacks under consideration.

The mass media accounts used in this analysis came from the American, British, Polish and Russian television and radio, the American, British, Polish, Russian and Chechen newspapers as well as the internet. The statements by the Russian and Chechen politicians and activists or by the international institutions were sourced either directly from their websites or from the “older” media.

Even though the English-speaking audience was not the immediate audience of the attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka or Beslan, this thesis relied on Russian- as well as English-language sources. While this thesis found the Russian sources useful for tracing the aforementioned shift of discourse in Russia as such, it also found the English sources helpful in establishing the international scope of this change. In addition, and especially given the heavy media censorship in the Russian Federation, on a number of occasions this thesis has found English accounts not only more accessible, but also more reliable and thorough.

To conclude the presentation of the analytical corpus used in this study, it needs to be acknowledged that the attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan vary significantly when it comes to the quantity and accessibility of primary and secondary data. With the more recent attacks in Dubrovka and Beslan, which

collided with the development and spread of the “new” media, the information on the two is much easily accessible.

Selection of case studies

Having analyzed the pros and cons of potential cases, reviewed the relevant literature, and established a theoretical framework, as presented in Chapter Three, this thesis focuses on the three most spectacular terrorists attacks against Russia to date, carried out in the 1990s and 2000s by military groups of Chechen separatists loyal to one of the most famous Chechen warlords – Shamil Basayev. Not only do the three sieges illustrate well how drama, theatre, spectacle and performance inform the analysis of terrorism and counter-terrorism, but, with Chechen terrorists being one of the first ones to employ the internet to their ends (Weimann, 2006) they also provide a very good insight into a mass-mediated terrorist communication that occurs in print, on air and online. In addition, the three attacks demonstrate how the perception of the Chechens evolved from nationalist-separatists to Islamic terrorists, how that change of identity was made possible by the change in discourse and how the change in discourse can be reflected in the change of dramaturgical metaphors used to describe it.

The first case study is the five-day-long siege of a hospital in Budyonnovsk, in June 1995, which was the first Chechen terrorist attack against Russian civilians and which left more than a hundred people dead and more than four hundred injured. The attack in Budyonnovsk humiliated both Russia and its political leader – Boris Yeltsin. In the words of Hughes (2007: 155-156), the Budyonnovsk raid “was a massive psychological blow to Yeltsin’s claims to be winning the [First Chechen – JS] war”. With President Yeltsin away in Canada at the time of the take-over, it was left to his Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin to succumb to the demands issued by the Budyonnovsk hostage-takers. Having “helped force Russia to the negotiating table” (The Associated Press, 2002) and facilitated the end of the First Chechen War, the person behind the attack – Shamil Basayev – left Budyonnovsk victorious and has enjoyed a mythical status among many Chechens ever since. The main reason why the attack on a hospital in Budyonnovsk has been chosen as a case study in this analysis is because it

allows to capture the shift in portrayal of the Chechens from nationalist-separatists to religiously motivated terrorists, described in this thesis in the context of the process of turning terrorism into spectacle to fulfill the political needs of both – the Russian counter-terrorists as well as Chechen terrorists.

The second case study is the attack on the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow, carried out in October 2002. There, a group of Chechen male and female terrorists under the leadership of Movsar Barayev interrupted a performance of the first Russian musical *Nord-Ost* and took hostage its audience as well as actors and theatre staff. At least 129 people died. However, only two hostages were killed by the terrorists. The remaining 127 died of gas poisoning, after the Russian Special Forces (OSNAZ) stormed the theatre in a counter-terrorist operation. The analytical potential of the Dubrovka Theatre attack as a case in this study is very high. Not only does it allow to analyse how terrorist attacks are choreographed and staged, but also how terrorists' identities are determined by what they are seen to be doing. Another reason why Dubrovka has been chosen as a case in the study of whether terrorism is theatre is because of its conceptualisation in the literature on the subject as the “‘theatre of terror’ actualised” (Weimann, 2006: 39).

The September 2004 take-over of the School Number One in Beslan, “the third deadliest terrorist attack in world history” (Dolnik and Fitzgerald, 2008: 3) constitutes the third case study. During the three-day-long siege, which Dolnik and Fitzgerald (2008: 101-102) branded Russia's *Nord-Vest*, over a thousand people (infants, children, adults and seniors) were held hostage in an unbearable heat in the school's gymnasium. Only 700 of them survived the ordeal. Apart from being one of the largest and deadliest, the September 2004 attack on the school in the North Ossetian town of Beslan, which killed almost 200 infants and children, was also highly “expressive” – symbolic and laden with emotions. Partly because of that, the Beslan siege has gained high interest from the mass media, whose dramatic portrayal of the “Beslan tragedy” affected various audiences worldwide. Notwithstanding its high importance for the forthcoming analysis of several angles of the agent-audience relationship in terrorism as well as its potential to illustrate the discussion about various dynamics of terrorism as communication, the main reason why the attack on a school in Beslan has been

chosen as a case study in this analysis is because it shows very well when terrorism fails – when it is inefficient and unproductive. In other words, it demonstrates when terrorism misperforms or counter-performs.

Chapter Two focused on the potential juxtaposition of two separate domains of discourse – terrorism and theatre – in order to deepen the knowledge, and, in some cases, to generate new knowledge. To that end, it presented the case for studying terrorism metaphorically. Having outlined the strengths and weaknesses of the “guiding metaphor” approach, it demonstrated the rationale for looking at terrorism and counter-terrorism as drama, theatre, spectacle and performance.

This thesis argues that dramaturgical metaphors have a significant potential to shed a new light on terrorism as a process of communication, where both the senders of the message and its recipients play equally important a role. What they also illustrate is a close relation between terrorism and counter-terrorism. The two arguments are further developed in the next chapter, which uses the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance to analyse terrorists and counter-terrorists’ efforts to manipulate the political behaviour of their respective audiences.

CHAPTER THREE

“Theatre is one very rich metaphor. Like a fractal, the closer I look at it the more I see”. (Laurel, 1990a)

This chapter analyses the extent to which the theatre metaphor provides insight into terrorist- and counter-terrorist actors and the respective props they use, and does so by drawing on Alexander’s “performative elements” – “background meaning, actors, props, scripts, direction, and audience” (Alexander, 2006b: 95). It then focuses on how the “performance” metaphor captures the audience ability to change their political behaviour by moving “in and out of passivity” (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998: 67-68) – a quality that both terrorism and counter-terrorism heavily rely on. Later, it investigates the power of drama to analyse various scripts and plots which determine who is a terrorist and who is a counter-terrorist. The final section of this chapter turns to the usefulness of the spectacle metaphor for analysing the context/“background meanings” through which various dramas of terrorism and counter-terrorism are read, and through which terrorist and counter-terrorist actions are performed, interpreted and acted on by their respective audiences.

The aim and the role of Chapter Three in this investigation is to further the possibility and analytical validity of using the dramaturgical metaphors to study the place and roles of actors and audiences in the “audience-orientated” and “audience-informed” process of terrorist and counter-terrorist communication. Of the four dramaturgical metaphors under consideration here, “theatre” is certainly the most established and, arguably, most commonly used in the writings on the subject of terrorism. The dominance of the theatre metaphor is reflected in the following analysis. As a result, the discussion of the theatre metaphor is more lengthy than those of performance, drama and spectacle.

THE THEATRE METAPHOR

Those using the metaphor of theatre to describe terrorism or counter-terrorism usually rely on one of the two most common understandings of the word “theatre”. On the one hand, there are those who see theatre as the *proscenium* theatre – an institutionalised space, where actors act and audience watches, and where the level of actor-audience interaction is not only heavily restricted, but also minimal. On the other hand, there are those who see theatre in terms of a stimulating and mobilising force – Apter’s (2006) “theatre from below” – which turns those watching into spect-actors.

The two understandings of theatre share reliance on the presentation of certain dramas using symbols. By acting out a particular script in public, in other words, by “showing doing”, actors convey a message to an audience, who is then invited to think about what it is that it watches and to interpret it.

However, the two aforementioned understandings of theatre differ in how they conceptualise their respective audiences and their interactions with the performers. In the *proscenium* theatre actors and audiences are physically separated and the feedback loop between them is virtually non-existent. At the same time, in the “theatre from below”, understood as a means to activate an audience, actors and audiences are not only much closer to one another, but the feedback loop linking the two is also much more prominent. In the next section, the impact of the two approaches on the understanding of terrorism and counter-terrorism is explored through the prism of the theatre metaphor.

Essentials of the metaphor

The theatre metaphor provides a framework for understanding terrorism and counter-terrorism as a form of communication between terrorist and counter-terrorist actors and their respective audience(s). Theatre is a place where actors give life to dramaturgical plays. They do so by adding visual and aural aspects to dramaturgical texts, which not only increases the interest of the audience in the play, but also enhances that play’s understanding on behalf of its audience. *Per analogiam*, terrorist and counter-terrorist actors also use visual and aural effects

to enact their particular dramas. In doing so, not only do they generate an increased interest in what they are showing, but they also facilitate the comprehension of their actions.

To a large extent, theatre relies on an illusion. For theatre's success its audience must be convinced that what it is watching is real.⁴⁷ To that end, theatre relies on props, costumes and a number of other means to make whatever is presented on stage appear as if it was not staged. Likewise, terrorists and counter-terrorists use a number of means to make their audiences believe in what terrorists or counter-terrorists are presenting. Not unlike actors in a theatre, terrorists and counter-terrorists refer to symbolic communication – they say and enact things, while leaving it to the audience to interpret them.

Theatre does not exist without the audience. This in turn implies that terrorist and counter-terrorist attacks also require the presence of those watching. Depending on how one understands theatre, those watching can be considered to be passive or active, with actors either interacting with their audiences or not. Those differences are important, especially when one uses theatre to enhance one's understanding of the phenomena, which rely heavily on the dynamics between actors and audiences, such as terrorism and counter-terrorism.

Interpretations of the metaphor

Whether the audience in terrorism or counter-terrorism is active or passive and whether terrorist or counter-terrorist actors interact with the audience or not, is indeed a crucial question, which, as this analysis aims to show, can be addressed using the metaphor of theatre.

As already mentioned, there are at least two different ways in which one can understand theatre – as the *proscenium* theatre, which relies on a passive audience or as the “theatre from below”, which aims at mobilising and activating the audience. In order to shed light on the actor-audience dynamics in both terrorism and counter-terrorism, and in doing so, to evaluate the analytical value

⁴⁷ This is different in the epic theatre of Brecht (1964).

of the theatre metaphor, both meanings of theatre will now be explored and critically assessed.

The first interpretation of the theatre metaphor is inherently related to the common understanding of the mass media, especially television, as the theatre of terrorism. Having presented arguments in favour of looking at televised terrorism as the *proscenium* theatre, this chapter later turns to a broader discussion of the latter in the context of terrorism and counter-terrorism. Following that, terrorism and counter-terrorism are analysed using the metaphor of the “theatre from below”.

The theatre metaphor and the mass media

Chapters One and Two presented a number of arguments in favour of comparing television to the *proscenium* theatre, including their foci on actors as well as their reliance on a passive audience. In other words, in the *proscenium* theatre as well as in television, it is the actors who act and the audience that watches.

The *proscenium* theatre metaphor, I would argue, is insufficient to capture terrorism presented on any stage other than television. This has mainly to do with the fact that no other medium offers the same extent of observation without participation. At the same time, the ability of the *proscenium* theatre metaphor to shed light on terrorist attacks that rely on tactics other than hostage-takings and kidnappings can also be claimed to be limited. The latter argument is based on the assumption that hostage-taking situations are indeed the most dramatic and therefore best suited for the *proscenium* theatre-like television.

One of the reasons why hostage-takings and kidnappings might indeed be considered the most dramatic, theatrical and “made-for-TV” of all terrorist tactics is because they obey

“the classical tragic dramatic structure, with a startling opening scene, a series of well defined, almost ritualised passages, and then a cathartic dramatic ending”.
(Wolf and Frankel, 2007: 269)

In both, the roles of actors (terrorists), their audience(s) (government, public opinion, etc.) and props (hostages) are clearly ascribed. This is why hostage-

takings and kidnappings not only are easy to present to the drama-hungry mass media, but the public finds them fascinating to watch and also easy to follow and comprehend. In addition, as indiscriminate and therefore highly symbolic, the tactics of hostage-taking and kidnapping almost always guarantee a high interest of those watching, who have a tendency to quickly identify with what they see and realize that it might have been them taken hostage, had they found themselves in the hospital, theatre or school that they now see on their screens.⁴⁸ Last but not least, what makes the two tactics under consideration so dramatic is the fact that, unlike suicide bombings for example, both hostage-takings and kidnappings allow for a build up in tension, leading to the development of the “reality-show” effect.

Time is a crucial factor in the terrorists’ desire to catch people’s attention and present their rationale and demands. The longer the attack lasts, the more time journalists have to reach the scene as well as to edit and present the material they gathered. Governments, non-state institutions and people directly influenced by terrorists’ actions also need time to respond – to come up with their own interpretations, answers, scenarios and strategies. All of the above make hostage incidents one of the most popular terrorist tactics used to advertise and propagate a terrorist cause (Dolnik and Fitzgerald, 2008: 9).

What the coverage of many cases of kidnapping and hostage-taking (including those of the 1995 take-over of a hospital in Budyonnovsk, the 2002 siege of the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow or the 2004 attack on the School No. One in Beslan) demonstrate is that such coverage often follows the Aristotelian pattern of exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and dénouement as shown on Freytag’s pyramid (Freytag, 2008). As a result, it also generates high emotions in those watching, allowing them to come very close to the experiences presented to them on a screen. However, even though kidnappings and hostage-taking situations remain the most theatrical terrorist tactics, this is not to say that theatrical elements cannot be found in attacks relying on different methods and strategies. For example, the tactic of suicide bombing possesses both theatrical and “anti-theatrical” qualities.

⁴⁸ In the context of becoming a hostage, Sloan (1981: xvi) speaks of one’s “guilt by location”.

Arguably, the most theatrical aspect of suicide bombing are the so-called “suicide videos”, which represent one of the best examples of terrorists enacting a script (drama) to an audience.⁴⁹ Their production involves an actor, a director, a scriptwriter as well as some form of staging and a set. At the same time, theatrical dramatization can be considered detrimental to suicide bombings as such, given that their success depends not only on the shock caused by the attack but also on its perpetrator(s) not being recognized and neutralized early enough. Another reason why suicide attacks might not qualify for the portrayal as theatre is the lack of direct screening of the situation – fewer people see a suicide attack actually happen. Of course, this is not to say that suicide attacks are absent from the mass media. On the contrary, even though the footage of an actual attack may be rarer compared to the footage of a hostage-taking, the news and images of a suicide attack circulate widely – especially online, given the internet’s lack of censorship and limitations regarding the public display of graphic or otherwise disturbing images.

It may therefore be argued that the *proscenium* theatre metaphor applies very well to terrorism, which not only relies on kidnappings and hostage-takings as a tactic, but also on television as the mass medium, which can and indeed is used to spread terrorist news and messages. Nevertheless, certain aspects of terrorist attacks other than hostage-takings or kidnappings can also be described using the *proscenium* theatre metaphor, such as “suicide videos”. However, the latter are more likely to be publicised online, as the internet is less constrained where it comes to the material it can release and when. In light of the above discussion it can be argued that the type of the mass medium used to convey the terrorist message constitutes the main criterion based on which one can evaluate the application of the *proscenium* theatre metaphor. Given that the metaphor conceptualises actors as active and audiences as passive and distant from the performers, the *proscenium* theatre metaphor is more applicable to television,

⁴⁹ Writing of how the Iraqi suicide bombers dramatize their videos, Hafez (2007: 96) notes that “[t]he dominant narratives in insurgent videos, audio recordings, online magazines, and biographies revolve around three themes that are often presented in a sequence as if to show a play in three acts. (...) These three narratives are sometimes presented separately, but often they are woven together to suggest a problem, a cause of the problem, and a solution to the problem”.

which is low in audience participation, rather than the internet, which is “user-generated”.

Terrorism and counter-terrorism as the *proscenium* theatre

One of the main characteristics of the *proscenium* type of theatre is a clear division between those playing (acting) and those watching, with the latter having hardly any impact on what or how the actors perform. The separation between actors and audiences is physically amplified by the fact that in the *proscenium* theatre there is usually a curtain, wings, a designated sitting area for the public, a separate changing room, a refreshments area and a foyer which actors normally do not enter. Furthermore, oftentimes in such theatres actors even have distinct parking places, entries, lifts and exits. One of the main ideas behind it is not to allow the public to see the actors other than as the characters they are playing. It is thought that this enhances the “make-believe” aspect of the theatre, and therefore increases the overall perception of the play.

The *proscenium* theatre metaphor depicts terrorists as actors who choreograph and stage their actions in a dramatic way to attract the attention of as many people as possible, and who use their direct victims as props. Regarded as such, terrorism is the domain of the terrorists, with the audience that is sympathetic to their cause and methods satisfied and sometimes even entertained, and with their indirect victims terrified and unable to do anything, except for switching off the television. In the *proscenium* theatre of terrorism, the actors and the audience are not only separated, but the impact of the audience on the actors is null.

The application of the *proscenium* theatre metaphor in the context of counter-terrorism is quite similar, in that it conceptualises counter-terrorists as actors playing to audiences that are passive. The metaphor makes it possible to understand the audience sympathetic to counter-terrorists as satisfied with the fact that something is being done about terrorism. Furthermore, with its focus on actors, the *proscenium* theatre metaphor captures a situation in which one’s political popularity emerges or increases because of one’s active engagement in counter-terrorism, which is especially relevant when it comes to state counter-

terrorists.⁵⁰ Finally, the *proscenium* theatre metaphor provides a better understanding of situations in which states mimic/“play terrorists”, i.e. use paramilitary terror to deal with “real terrorists”, as was the case of the Spanish state employing the Antiterrorist Liberation Groups (Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación – GAL) against ETA (Aretxaga, 2005: 215-229).

At the same time, the *proscenium* theatre metaphor proves to be less well suited with respect to one of the main audiences of counter-terrorists, namely terrorists and their supporters, whose political behaviour counter-terrorists strive to alter. This is largely because within the *proscenium* theatre paradigm a change on behalf of the audience is highly unlikely, given the latter’s role is only to “watch”. Another instance, which often escapes the *proscenium* theatre metaphor is when counter-terrorist actions are secret, i.e. hidden from the public view. One of the best recent examples of such a secret counter-terrorist action is the killing of Osama bin Laden, followed by the disposal of his body into the sea. This was done secretly in order to avoid unsettling Bin Laden’s followers and supporters. In other words, the American officials were afraid that Bin Laden’s sympathisers would “act out” if they saw his body. “Acting out” on behalf of the audience is difficult in the highly restricted *proscenium* theatre. However, it becomes much easier when one conceptualises the main role of theatre to be to activate and mobilise an audience. In this thesis such theatre is referred to using Apter’s (2006) term “the theatre from below”.

Terrorism and counter-terrorism as the “theatre from below”

Apter (2006) differentiates between the “theatre from above” and the “theatre from below”. While he argues that the “theatre from above” relies on a passive audience, he claims that the “theatre from below” depends on an audience that is mobilised, active and willing to bring about a change to the political reality it confronts. For this reason, Apter associates the “theatre from below” with “antagonistic groups”, such as terrorist organisations, and the “theatre from above” with the state.

⁵⁰ In this context Nacos (2008: 279-283) provides an interesting analysis of how terrorist crises impact on the popularity of state leaders dealing with them.

Terrorism defined as the “theatre from below” differs greatly from terrorism seen to resemble the *proscenium* type of theatre, which can be traced back to how the two models of theatre conceptualise the place and role of their respective actors and audiences. In contrast to the *proscenium* theatre, in the “theatre from below” the audience can be active – it can be stimulated and mobilised and it can do things. This then has significant consequences for terrorism and counter-terrorism, conceptualised in this thesis as actions that are aimed at altering political behaviour of its indirect victims in the case of terrorism, and terrorists and their supporters in the case of counter-terrorism. In order for terrorism to work, indirect victims of terrorism need to do what terrorists want them to do. Likewise, for counter-terrorism to work, terrorists need to stop their terrorist actions. Both do so as a direct result of having been exposed to a visual display of power on behalf of terrorists or counter-terrorists, respectively.

As much as the “theatre from below” implies an activity on behalf of the audience, it also highlights that the audience actively influences the performance of the actors to the point that the audience themselves become actors, too. The latter is reflected in Bolechów’s (2010) conceptualisation of actors in terrorism, as mentioned earlier, which sees victims of terrorist attacks – hostages, for example, as fully-fledged actors in the theatre of terrorism. What this then demonstrates is that even though the metaphor of the *proscenium* theatre focuses on actors as well as the various means they use to improve their performance (such as props, background, lights, music, etc.), it portrays terrorists or counter-terrorists as the leading actors in each. At the same time, the “theatre from below” metaphor widens the category of terrorist and counter-terrorist actors to incorporate their respective audiences, including their victims.

Another observation that can be made with regard to the “theatre from below” metaphor is that by highlighting the importance of the actor-audience feedback loop, the metaphor can indeed be used to analyse how terrorists and counter-terrorists interact. Underlying the latter claim is the assumption, already expressed in Chapter Two, that terrorism and counter-terrorism are highly interlinked, to the extent that one can often be regarded in terms of a direct reaction to the other.

Finally, the “theatre from below” metaphor has the potential to enhance one’s understanding of how terrorists and counter-terrorists obtain support for their actions. This is largely because the metaphor sheds light on how anti-state ideas can stimulate people, which then leads them to general dissent and, sometimes, terrorism.

Problems with the metaphor

A strict application of the *proscenium* theatre metaphor to terrorism would demand that not only is there only one audience to terrorist “showing doing”, but also that this audience is passive and does nothing else but to watch. Not only does this metaphor fail to address the question “who is the audience in terrorism?”, it also sheds no light on how that audience responds. For that reason, by presenting the audience as inactive and/or incapable, the *proscenium* theatre metaphor makes it difficult to analyse the emergence of counter-terrorism. The analysis of the emergence of counter-terrorism using the *proscenium* theatre metaphor is further impaired, given the metaphor’s disregard of the feedback loop between the actors and the audience, which this thesis considers to be constitutive of any terrorist and counter-terrorist performance.

What the aforementioned observations demonstrate is that the applicability of the *proscenium* theatre metaphor largely depends on the definition of terrorism. For example, the *proscenium* theatre metaphor applies best if one regards the main aim of terrorism to be to terrorise – to make people panic and do nothing, which is in keeping with P. Weber’s (2006) observation that we “only become overwhelmed when we do nothing” (cited in Keane, 2006). Nevertheless, such perception of terrorism is in stark contrast with the definition of terrorism presented in this thesis, which stipulates that not only are there many audiences to terrorism, who interpret and react to terrorism in a number of different ways, but that terrorism’s main aim is to change people’s political behaviour – to make them *act* differently. Understood in this way, terrorism works not when people are “overwhelmed” and “do nothing”, but when at least some people change their political behaviour and act in a way that terrorists want them to behave.

Unfortunately, the most common reading of terrorism as the *proscenium* type of theatre struggles to capture the ability to act on behalf of terrorist audiences. This is partially ameliorated by the second reading of the “terrorism as theatre” metaphor, where “theatre” is defined not as the *proscenium* theatre, where the actor-audience feedback loop is absent, but as a less conventional and restricted model of theatre, in which the aforementioned feedback loop is not only present, but very important.

The “theatre from below” metaphor is not without limitations, however. While it captures what terrorists do and how what they do affects their audiences, including counter-terrorists, where the latter are concerned the metaphor seems to apply to non-state counter-terrorists only. This is because the main focus of the “theatre from below” metaphor is on those who are either against the state or “below” it, in terms of their restricted access to, for example, the triangle of political communication.

In order to capture the counter-terrorist activity of the state, one would need to rely on the metaphor of “theatre from above”, which, as already noted, presents the audience as passive. While such conceptualisation would apply to cases in which a state wants its citizens to follow counter-terrorists’ orders rather than dispute them, it would still struggle to capture the situation in which those citizens change their political behaviour to suit a particular counter-terrorist policy of their state.

Having outlined the limitations of the theatre metaphor, the argument now turns to theatre’s ability to capture today’s terrorism, which many authors writing on the subject claim to be as much about “those watching” as it is about “those killed”. As already noted, B. Jenkins’ (1975: 5) “terrorism is theatre” adage considers “those killed” as props, used by terrorist actors to send their message. However, the main purpose of a prop is to help facilitate an interpretation of a theatrical production, rather than to impede it by diverting audience attention away from its content. The latter occurs, for example, when there are too many props that distract, rather than help the audience to understand the performance. With many people killed, the category of theatre often proves not large enough to conceptualise “those killed” as props, which can subsequently lead to the performance in question being perceived as spectacle, rather than theatre.

Related to that is a criticism already voiced by Hoffman (2002: 306), who claims that today's terrorism is as much about "those killed" as it is about "those watching", which makes the application of the theatre metaphor limited to the less lethal terrorism of the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

So far, this chapter focused on the theatre metaphor and its applicability to terrorism and counter-terrorism. It began by pointing out two main ways to conceptualise theatre – the *proscenium* theatre and the "theatre from below". Having noted that it is the *proscenium* theatre metaphor that allows one to better understand the presence on and the use of television by terrorists, this chapter also pointed out to the fact that while both types of theatre focus mainly on actors and how they act, they also shed light on the role of the audience in both. On the one hand, the *proscenium* theatre sees the audience as separated from the actors and passive. On the other hand, in the "theatre from below" the gap between actors and audience is significantly reduced. In addition, in the "theatre from below" the audience is active in the sense that it can be stimulated and mobilised by what it watches. Furthermore, the audience in the "theatre from below" also influences what actors perform and how. Given its focus on the audience that takes active part in a theatrical event, the category of "theatre from below" closely resembles that of performance.

THE PERFORMANCE METAPHOR

Earlier it was acknowledged that while some authors claim theatre and performance to be fundamentally different, others see a number of similarities between the two. Given the resemblance between the "theatre from below" and performance, highlighted in the "theatre" section of this chapter, this thesis sympathises more with the second observation and points to the shift in the actors-audience dynamics, described in Chapter One in reference to the scholarship of Fischer-Lichte (2008a, 2008b), as the main criterion with which to separate theatre and performance. For reasons of clarity, and to highlight the contrast between theatre and performance, from this point onwards this thesis will refer to theatre as the *proscenium* theatre, and not the "theatre from below",

since it conceptualises the latter as having more in common with what this analysis defines as performance rather than what it sees as theatre.

Unlike the *proscenium* theatre, which Schechner describes as “the domain of the performers”, performance is “the domain of the audience” (Schechner, 1973b: 8). Furthermore, while the *proscenium* theatre largely sees the audience as homogenous and passive, performance appreciates its diversity as well as ability to move “in and out of passivity” (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998: 67-68). While theatre focuses on production (*mise en scène*), performance highlights the importance of reception (i.e. how the actions of the performers are interpreted and understood). Finally, while theatre is about text and semiotics – communication, performance is much more concerned with corporality and phenomenology – the construction of meaning. As such, the theatre metaphor better describes terrorism and counter-terrorism as strategies of communication, while the performance metaphor can be argued to be better fitted to shed light on the discourse-based and socially constructed nature of the two. In order to evaluate the usefulness of the performance metaphor, this chapter now addresses the question of what it means that terrorism and counter-terrorism are “like” performance?

Essentials of the metaphor

One of the main characteristics of performance is that it is “the domain of the audience” (Schechner, 1973b: 8). This means that audience is not only important in a performance, but is constitutive of it, since without the audience performance would have no meaning, and thus would not have sense. In light of the above, the performance metaphor constructs terrorism and counter-terrorism as “showing doing” – activities or actions that not only need to be “shown”, i.e. displayed or made public, but that also need to be perceived and given meaning by the audience. In doing so, performance reflects the socially constructed nature of the two phenomena, unlike theatre, which focuses on them primarily as strategies of communication.

Another characteristic of performance which further enhances the understanding of terrorism and counter-terrorism is its conceptualisation of

audience as complex and diverse, which can be united in its interpretations and actions, but also highly fragmented, depending on a number of factors. Despite being conceptualised by the theatre metaphor as homogenous and passive, terrorist and counter-terrorist audiences tend to be complex and able to move “in and out of passivity” (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998: 67-68). Even though there are situations when terrorists or counter-terrorists want some of their audiences to “do nothing”, more often than not both aspire to make their audiences “do something” – for example, change their political behaviour or allegiance.

In addition, by acknowledging the feedback loop between actors and their audiences, the performance metaphor makes it possible to look at terrorism and counter-terrorism as not only related but also highly interlinked. Finally, it provides an insight into how the increase in terrorists’ or counter-terrorists’ ability to mobilise their audience(s) by “showing doing” affects the same ability (“performativity”) of its respective counterpart.

Interpretations of the metaphor

As metaphors, performance, terrorism and counter-terrorism can be described as activities that not only involve actions on behalf of their respective actors, but which also rely on those actions being revealed to an audience, who then sees them, evaluates them and is able to react to them. The importance of counter-terrorist performances being staged, presented and able to mobilise an audience into action is captured by the notion of “performativity” or the “performative power” of counter-terrorism, coined by de Graaf and de Graaff (2010: 261, 267).

De Graaf (2011) notes that there are many audiences to counter-terrorism. The main audiences are terrorists, their sympathisers and supporters as well as the citizens of the state that “does” counter-terrorism. She claims that the more visible and stimulating counter-terrorist actions are to those audiences, the higher the “performative power” or “performativity” of counter-terrorism is.

According to de Graaf (2011), performativity of counter-terrorism can be increased by presenting terrorism as an omnipresent, direct and high-impact threat that requires extraordinary measures in response. Put in this way,

performativity of counter-terrorism is similar to the practices of politicization and securitization, in which terrorism is presented as either a political problem or as a matter of utmost importance to national or international security – “an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure” (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 23-24). Arguably, the increase in counter-terrorism’s performativity can also be linked to terrorism spectacularisation by a state, which is further described in the “spectacle” section of this chapter as well as Chapter Four.

De Graaf and de Graaff’s (2010) main focus is on counter-terrorism performed by the state, perceived as an actor in charge of political communication, which relies on spectacle to reinforce its values, procedures and image. This is very much in keeping with the conceptualisation of spectacle as the “patrimony of the official power” (Allegri cited in Hozic, 1990: 66). However, as will be demonstrated in the forthcoming section on spectacle, this is not the only possible interpretation of spectacle, as there are authors (such as Hozic, 1990 or Apter, 2006) who see it as a tool in the hands of non-state actors. Subsequently, one could argue that the notion of “performative power” is not restricted only to state counter-terrorists but that “performativity” applies to non-state counter-terrorists as well. Both, state- and non-state terrorists can exercise “performative power”.

Given strong links to the category of spectacle, the idea of terrorism and counter-terrorism having “performative power” can also be used to strengthen the analysis of spectacle itself. Arguably, while the performance metaphor captures how the audience perceives terrorist and counter-terrorist actions, the spectacle metaphor explains why those actions are displayed to the public in the first place. This then constitutes a very good example of how the two dramaturgical metaphors complement each other.

As already mentioned, even though the spectacle metaphor better captures how the “performative power” of terrorism and counter-terrorism is exercised by those wielding it, the metaphor of performance focuses on the impact such power has on how successful terrorist or counter-terrorist attacks are in relation to their respective audiences.

Performance, misperformance and counter-performance

There are six main elements which need to come together for a performance to be successful (Alexander, 2006b: 95): a context (background meaning) needs to be firmly established in order for the script, which the directors stage and the actors enact using various props, to be understood by the audience in a similar or, even better, the same way. According to Alexander (2006a),

“[p]erformances are successful only insofar as they can ‘re-fuse’ (...) increasingly disentangled elements. In a fused performance, audiences identify with actors, and cultural scripts achieve verisimilitude [quality or feeling of realism – JS] through effective *mise-en-scène*. Performances fail when this relinking process is incomplete: the elements of performance remain apart, and social action seems inauthentic and artificial, failing to persuade”. (2006a: 29)

In light of Alexander’s (2006a) conceptualisation of a successful performance, one can argue that terrorists and counter-terrorists are successful if what they do leads at least one of their audiences – their indirect victims – to do what either terrorists or counter-terrorists want them to do. For that to happen, however, that audience needs to accept terrorists and/or counter-terrorists as legitimate actors who are capable of exercising political power over them. Furthermore, it needs to give a meaning to terrorist and/or counter-terrorist actions, which is in keeping with the script(s) that terrorists or counter-terrorists enact.

The ability to give actions a unified meaning, which is in keeping with the intentions of those who act, is another feature of a successful performance. Success requires actors to convincingly enact roles prescribed for them by a particular director and/or a script. How a given drama is choreographed and staged is significant as well. Finally, the way in which a text is presented also has an impact on how it is interpreted and understood. However, the interpretive unity of the audience is, from the point of view of the metaphor of performance, pivotal in the process of arriving at a meaning of terrorist- and/or counter-terrorist actions; in other words, the extent to which actions are organized and understood in a similar way. One of the best recent examples of the “interpretive unison” being achieved in the context of terrorism and counter-terrorism are the 9/11 attacks and their aftermath, when the 9/11 terrorists and counter-terrorists

succeeded in creating an almost Manichean divide between good/evil, crusade/jihad, etc., which consequentially led their respective audiences to interpret their actions in like manner (also see Schechner, 2002: 265).

As much as the ability of an audience to arrive at a similar understanding of reality can be a feature of that audience, it can also be imposed on that audience and manipulated. The latter is often achieved through tampering with the “background meaning” of a political script or props with which that script is enacted. This thesis demonstrates that such manipulation quite often depends on dramaturgical means and methods – such as the “performative power”, spectacularity, theatricality or dramatism of terrorism and counter-terrorism. Not only does this observation further demonstrate the analytical potential of dramaturgical metaphors, but also justifies using the categories of performance, spectacle, theatre and drama to increase the understanding of the two phenomena under consideration.

In light of the above discussion of the importance of audience impact on a success or failure of a performance, one can argue that the more united an audience, the better the chances that a performance it watches will be deemed successful (Alexander, 2006b: 96-97). Likewise, the more fragmented the audience, the higher the possibility for a performance to turn into a misperformance.

While a misperformance occurs when its “performative elements” are “de-fused”, a counter-performance takes place when an audience fails to interpret the act in keeping with the script as well as actors’ intentions (Alexander, 2006b: 104). The latter can happen, for example, when the staging or the props that accompany a performance cannot be logically linked to the type of drama that is being enacted or to the way in which the actors present it, which then impedes the actors’ ability to “re-fuse the elements of which they are made” (Alexander, 2006a: 77). One of the most poignant examples of such “mismatch” between a terrorist drama and the props used to carry it out, which will be discussed at length in Chapter Four, is the 2004 hostage-taking of the School No. One in Beslan, the main victims of which were children. Because children are universally regarded as innocent and a-political, using them for political purposes is widely considered unacceptable and immoral. At the same time, as suggested by Moeller

(2009: 71), harming children generates a lot of attention in those watching. In the case of Beslan, the fact that terrorists used children as props in their performance distracted the audience from the main drama the Beslan terrorists were enacting, namely, Chechnya's struggle for independence. Because the reactions of the audience to what terrorists did had much more to do with the fact that they had put children's lives in danger, rather than with what the terrorists were fighting for, the response to the attack in Beslan can indeed be considered in terms of a counter-performance – a reaction to a performance generated by its counter-reading (Alexander, 2006b: 104).

Performance and the internet

One of the main characteristics of performance as well as the internet is the constant interaction between actors and audiences, which, applied to terrorism and counter-terrorism, helps to see how the two influence one another. However, this is only one aspect in which the performance metaphor captures the relationship between terrorism, counter-terrorism and the internet. Performance also has the potential to capture the behaviour of terrorist and counter-terrorist audience(s), including their victims.

That the “old” media have a tendency to focus on terrorist and counter-terrorist actors rather than their victims is demonstrated by Moeller (2009), who notes:

“The voices of the everyday ‘man’ on the street – even when he or she is a victim or other eyewitness – are rarely heard, and, when used, their words are primarily included to add drama and immediacy rather than hard information or context”.
(2009: 53-54)

According to Moeller (2009: 77), while the “old” media, like terrorists and counter-terrorists, use their victims as props for telling their stories, the internet provides space for those victims to “speak out” and to share their own dramas. Moeller's general observation finds expression in the Russo-Chechen context as well. The analysis of the theatrical plays inspired by the terrorist attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan reveals that playwrights often rely on the

mass media accounts thereof to create their own material. This is certainly the case with Buchsteiner's *Nordost* (2006) and Lord's *We declare you a terrorist...* (2009), which rely on two British TV documentaries about the attack in Dubrovka for their content as well as structure.⁵¹ Given their reliance on the televised coverage of the Dubrovka attack, which, as noted above, favours terrorist and counter-terrorist actors over their victims, the two plays also give prominence to the perpetrators of the Dubrovka attack. That their victims have more presence on the internet is clearly demonstrated by another theatrical play – *September.com*, which was inspired by the 2004 terrorist attack on the school in Beslan and whose script, compiled by Gremina and Ugarov (2005), is made up entirely of the internet posts that the Russians, Chechens, Ossetians and Dagestanis were putting up in the aftermath of the Beslan siege.

The aforementioned examples illustrate that a significant difference in ways in which terrorist attacks are portrayed by the traditional media and the internet. The main contrast is the “old” media's focus on the actors and the internet's preoccupation with the audience. Subsequently, and in light of the examples presented above, one can argue that television reports on terrorism and counter-terrorism are well captured by the *proscenium* theatre metaphor, but performance sheds more light on how the two are “played out” online.

However, as a medium that is much less restricted than the traditional media, the internet allows for a variety of meanings to be attributed to similar actions or issues. In other words, the internet can be considered as an important factor that makes audiences more fragmented, which, as already noted, can have a negative impact on the overall success of a performance. This is not so much the case when it comes to television, whose restricted nature makes it easier for those who use it to manipulate the perception and interpretation of its audience. Another factor that contributes to television being more able to generate the “interpretive unison” among its audience is its integrating function. Unlike the internet, television brings together those watching as well as limits the ways in which those watching see and interpret the world around them.

⁵¹ The documentaries in question are: Dan Reed's *Terror in Moscow* for Channel 4 (Reed, 2003) and UKTV's *The Moscow Theatre Siege* written and produced by Strachan (2003).

The allegedly dis-integrating tendencies of the internet might be one of the reasons why both terrorists and counter-terrorists still rely so heavily on television as the main channel of outward communication. However, this is not to say that they do not use the internet. On the contrary, they do and they do it *en masse*. Nevertheless, as already pointed out by Hoffman (2006: 202) and Weimann (2006: 111-146), terrorists tend to use the internet more for internal and instrumental purposes (such as recruiting, fundraising, data-mining, etc.), rather than external and communicative ones (propaganda or terror, for example). That terrorists and counter-terrorists use the internet mainly to self-present as legitimate and worthy of support is further highlighted by Hoffman (2006), who, in the context of terrorists-run web-sites, notes:

“[v]irtually without exception, all sites studiously avoid focusing on or drawing any attention to either violence or death and destruction that they [the terrorists – JS] are responsible for. Instead, issues such as freedom of expression and the plight of imprisoned comrades are highlighted”. (2006: 207)

In light of the evidence presented above, it can be argued that the category of performance, rather than that of the *proscenium* theatre better captures the most prominent aspects of terrorism and counter-terrorism’s presence on the internet. However, what also needs to be mentioned here is that, unlike television, which makes all terrorist and counter-terrorist actions public, the internet gives terrorists and counter-terrorists the opportunity to prepare their actions and to display those that they want displayed, whilst hiding those that are not meant for public viewing. This last observation poses a conceptual problem for the two metaphors, since both theatre and performance are very much about “showing doing”.

Problems with the metaphor

Arguably, “the discrepancy between the secrecy of planning and the visibility of results” gives terrorism its shock value (Crenshaw, 1995: 4). While the metaphor of performance describes both terrorism’s results as well as their visibility, defined as “showing doing” performance is less fitted to enhance one’s

understanding of what happens “behind the scenes” of terrorism and counter-terrorism alike.

Another problem with the performance metaphor is its inter-subjectivity, given that it implies that both terrorism and counter-terrorism are in the eyes of their respective beholders, i.e. audiences. This, however, has to do with the performance metaphor only partially, as the inter-subjectivity of terrorism and counter-terrorism can also be related to the socially constructed nature of both.

Terrorism redefined as performance signifies an expressive and symbolic action presented to an audience, which not only categorizes it but also contributes to its success. Used to frame terrorism and counter-terrorism, the metaphor of performance helps to capture the inherently audience-orientated nature of the two phenomena. Furthermore, being focused predominantly on the audience, the performance metaphor draws the attention to how terrorist and counter-terrorist actions are received and interpreted, which then has a substantial impact on whether those actions are considered successful or not.

Whilst helpful for looking at how terrorist actions are staged and choreographed in order for the terrorist drama to be a success, the metaphor of theatre is limited when it comes to analyzing terrorism as the “domain of the audience” (Schechner, 1973b: 8). Those limitations become even more prominent when one examines terrorism in the context of an audience that is “diffused” – not only diverse, fragmented, and receptive to the various media (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998: 34), but also able to move “in and out of passivity” (1998: 67-68). Subsequently, terrorism’s reliance on the audience that can be passive or active is better addressed by the notion of performance, whose main contribution to the study of terrorism and counter-terrorism is reflected in the ability of the performance metaphor to capture the role of the audience in assessing how successful the two are. In addition, the performance metaphor, which shifts the focus from the performers to the recipients of the performance, grants the latter even more power to interpret the script that is being played out.

When applied to terrorism, performance shifts the perspective from terrorists to their audiences, which in itself constitutes an unorthodox move in the discipline of Terrorism Studies. As such, it partially responds to the call made by Hülse and Spencer (2008: 571-572), who argue for a change in focus in

Terrorism Studies from terrorists themselves to terrorist discourse as such. Performance adds to this by showing that one needs to focus not only on a discourse (drama/script) as such, but also on how the terrorist message is received and acted on by various publics. In doing so, the performance metaphor also contributes to the analysis of when terrorist and counter-terrorist performances work and when they do not. Moreover, the metaphor in question allows for an in-depth analysis of the “performative power” of both. Finally, it also describes the interactive nature of the internet, which is where “a vicious cycle of terrorism-counterterrorism is being played out” (Weimann, 2006: 242).

THE DRAMA METAPHOR

Having defined performance as a “showing doing” that creates meaning, this thesis argues that one of the strengths of performance, when it comes to the description and explanation of terrorism and counter-terrorism, is that it captures the idea of an active audience better than the *proscenium* theatre metaphor. Given its appreciation of the actor-audience interaction, performance makes it possible to study the dynamics between terrorism and counter-terrorism. Moreover, it facilitates an assessment of their respective “performative power” (de Graaf and de Graaff, 2010: 261) as well as provides a framework for analyzing when the two succeed and when they fail. Finally, the performance metaphor seems much better equipped to analyse the relationship between terrorism, counter-terrorism and the “new” – interactive media.

At the same time, the *proscenium* theatre metaphor is useful when it comes to analysing terrorism as it is presented in the “old” media, such as television. Furthermore, this metaphor seems most appropriate to investigate what actors do – how they stage and deliver their performances to those watching. However, theatre, as conceptualised in this thesis, does not exist without a drama – a text or a script that directors use to choreograph the actions of the actors, and that actors can then use to perform their roles. That the importance of drama is no less significant in the theatres of terrorism and counter-terrorism is attested to in the analysis of the drama metaphor that follows.

Essentials of the metaphor

Chapters One and Two of this thesis conceptualised terrorism and counter-terrorism as strategies of communication. Both terrorists and counter-terrorists have their messages, which they want to convey through their actions. Arguably, these messages can be described as dramas or scripts, which terrorists and counter-terrorists enact. Furthermore, apart from describing terrorism and counter-terrorism as examples of political communication, this thesis also depicted them as social constructs and products of political discourse. In this regard, the phenomena under consideration can also be regarded as dramas, in the sense that terrorist and counter-terrorist actions derive from a political drama or instability of some kind. Finally, this thesis alluded to yet another understanding of terrorism and counter-terrorism as drama, which had to do with ways in which the mass media, especially television, describe the two.

Chapter One acknowledged that the “old” media have a flair for the dramatic. The following sub-section develops this argument by presenting it in the context of a general potential of the drama metaphor to enhance the understanding of terrorism and its counterpart.

Interpretations of the metaphor

The metaphor of drama allows one to conceptualise terrorism and counter-terrorism in at least four different ways, which very much depend on how one considers drama – as a text, a textual base for a theatrical performance, a social drama or a drama of resistance. Even though the four meanings of drama are heavily interlinked, each one has its own distinctive traits, which make drama an ever richer metaphor and thus a more comprehensive analytical tool for the study of terrorism and counter-terrorism. For example, the main way in which the understanding of drama as a text differs from the other three is that drama-as-a-text does not require neither the actors nor the audience to exist. For this reason, it hardly applies to terrorism and counter-terrorism, given the two are very much about actors as well as audiences.

Drama as a base for performance

A drama that has already been interpreted can be referred to as a script. The difference between the two is best captured by Schechner (1973b) who argues that while “[t]he drama is the domain of the author, the composer, scenarist, shaman; the script is the domain of the teacher, guru, master” (1973b: 8). One of the roles of the teachers, gurus and masters is to impose a particular understanding of reality, which subsequently shapes one’s behaviour and reactions, according to a situation or a set of circumstances one encounters. A script, on the other hand, is a way to read and interpret drama, usually imposed by performance’s director. Because drama can be interpreted in a variety of ways, it can also generate a number of different scripts. In a socio-political context one drama will hardly ever capture the complexity of socio-political reality, which explains why a number of different, sometimes conflicting, dramas and scripts are often at play at once. As a result, it seems justifiable to argue that politics and political power is very much about managing various dramas and scripts, usually by giving prominence to some over others. The latter is necessary, as it is only when members of a political community know their respective social and political roles, prescribed for them by a particular drama, script or a director, that they can fulfill their purpose and successfully realize their roles.

In light of the above observation one can consider ways in which terrorists and counter-terrorists frame and justify their respective actions as drama. This is especially relevant if one conceptualises terrorism and counter-terrorism as products of discourse. However, if one looks at the two not just as products of discourse but also as social constructs, one needs to focus on what terrorists and counter-terrorists proclaim as much as on what others – the media, for example – say about them.

That the “drama as a base for performance” metaphor applies to the mass media accounts of terrorism can be illustrated by the frequency with which the mass media use dramaturgical terms, such as tragedy, to depict it. Brevoort (2005), herself a playwright, provides one reason for referring to tragedy in the context of terrorism. She states:

“the form of the Greek tragedy was designed to tell (...) the horrible stories like Lockerbie, of holocausts, wars, plagues, and genocide. It was a form designated to handle the big emotions and extreme behaviors that attend these kinds of events by presenting them in a way that the audience can bear”.⁵² (2005: 3)

Another rationale for describing terrorist violence as tragedy comes from Taylor (2002). In her view:

“[t]ragedy cuts catastrophe down to size. It orders events into comprehensible scenarios. (...) Ultimately, tragedy assures us, the crisis will be resolved and balance restored. The fear and pity we, as spectators, feel will be purified by the action”. (2002: 95)

Drama’s ability to generate and channel human emotions aside, it also serves as an important cognitive mechanism in that it equips various social, cultural and political events with a structure and order. Apart from using a dramatic convention to provide a framework within which certain actions make sense and others do not, drama also simplifies events. In other words, by pointing to causal links between various actions and situations, drama makes them much easier for the human mind to comprehend. As such, drama is often used in mass media accounts of terrorism, where not only does it serve as a frame in which a particular “story of reality” is presented, but it also identifies its main actors – *dramatis personae* – what they do, how and why.

Another important quality of drama is its role in determining the progression of actions and events. Jackson (2011) captures this quality in the following way:

“the terrorists who committed this act [the terrorist attack in Oslo and Utoeya (Norway) on July 22nd, 2011 – JS] are playing the role assigned to them in the drama and getting exactly what they hoped for: world-wide publicity and an undeserved reputation for being a powerful enemy. The media, in a perverse interdependency with the terrorists, plays along, encouraging the terrorists to believe that they are powerful, effective warriors in a war, able to punish their enemies whenever and wherever they like. This will undoubtedly embolden them and empower them to try again. They know they can make us tremble because we always respond like this in this particular play. They know they can make us react rashly because it is in the script that we will. (...) Trapped in the theatre of

⁵² Lockerbie is a town in southwestern Scotland, which came to international attention in December 1988, following a terrorist bombing of the Pan Am Flight 103, whose wreckage crashed there.

terrorism, and having witnessed the opening scenes of this particular tragedy, I remain pessimistic about whether anything will be different this time". (Jackson, 2011)

In light of the above, drama can indeed be described not only as a force that orders various events, but also as one that heavily determines their outcome. As Jackson (2011) observed, in every drama of terrorism, terrorists will gain power and will make their indirect victims "tremble" and "act rashly". Similar determinism characterises Turner's (1974) understanding of "social drama" – a category that allows one to look into how a social or a political entity arrives at a crisis and how it comes out of it.

Social drama

As already mentioned in Chapter One, Turner (1974) identifies four phases of any "social drama" – breach, crisis, redressive action, and reintegration or schism. Based on such categorization, a terrorist attack can represent a "breach" – a situation where some or all the norms guiding a society have broken down, which then leads to instability. At the same time, counter-terrorist actions could be regarded as forms of redressive action, aimed at ameliorating the crisis caused by terrorists. Unlike the previous conceptualisation of drama, which did not leave much space for counter-terrorists, in a "social drama" their presence is very much required. Without a variety of official and unofficial procedures and actions undertaken to resume stability, the "social drama" cycle would be incomplete, if not impossible. However, even though the second conceptualisation of drama seems better able to capture interactions between terrorists and counter-terrorists, it is still deterministic in that it considers counter-terrorism to be an inherent part of the social drama of terrorism.

While the categories of social drama and "drama as a base for a performance" highlight drama's prescriptive character, its more "liberating" view is captured by Lyman and Scott's (1975) notion of the "drama of resistance".

Drama of resistance

The term “drama of resistance”, coined by Lyman and Scott (1975), describes situations in which people, such as terrorists, have found themselves outside of a certain political, legal and/or social framework and aim to re-enter that framework. They either do so by taking up the roles that the framework had prescribed for them, or by rebelling against those. Given that terrorists’ main aim is to either sustain or alter a political *status quo*, one can assume that the framework they find themselves outside of is that of political communication. If this is the case, the “drama of resistance” metaphor does not apply to state terrorists or state counter-terrorists, as they are usually in charge of political communication, that is they put the very framework in place. For this reason, the “drama of resistance” metaphor mainly fits non-state actors, whose access to political communication is limited or altogether absent. This can then be considered to be one of the limitations of the drama metaphor.

Problems with the metaphor

Among the weaknesses of the drama metaphor is the tendency to simplify reality and to favour the “official”, i.e. state- scriptwriters and directors, rather than the audience. In addition, the metaphor focuses mainly on the terrorist/counter-terrorist message itself and how it is communicated, rather than on how the message is received by its recipients.

Furthermore, drama also tends to be deterministic in that it often imposes expectations on behalf of both the actors and the audience as to how certain events will play out but also how they should be played out. This provides a rather pessimistic prognosis in that it suggests a framework in which the drama of terrorism and counter-terrorism is doomed to repetition.

This chapter has so far explored the analytical potential of the metaphors of drama, theatre and performance for the study of terrorism and counter-terrorism. Using Alexander’s (2006b) “performative elements” – “background meaning, actors, props, scripts, direction, and audience” (2006b: 95) – the

theatre metaphor has been argued to shed light on terrorist- and counter-terrorist actors and props, which the actors, in keeping with the instructions from their directors, use in their performances. This then led to a focus on the category of performance, which was employed to analyse the critical role of an audience in assessing the actions of the terrorist and counter-terrorist performers. Finally, this chapter examined the metaphor of drama, which was discussed in the context of drama's ability to determine the identity of terrorist and counter-terrorist actors, their respective roles and how they should be performed so that the audience interprets the actors' "doing" according to the intentions of the terrorist/counter-terrorist playwrights, directors as well as actors themselves. Having discussed the actors, props, directors, scripts and audience in terrorism and counter-terrorism, this chapter now focuses on the last of Alexander's (2006b: 95) "performative elements", namely, "background meaning". It does so by analysing the metaphor of spectacle.

THE SPECTACLE METAPHOR

A number of factors shape audience perceptions of reality, some of which are internal to an audience, whereas others are external. Among the internal factors, one can list the cultural, social or gender make-up of the audience. At the same time, various political and mass-media influences can be considered as external factors that have an impact on how people see and interpret the world around them.

One of the ways in which the mass-media shape people's perceptions of reality is by using a spectacle – a dynamic mix of "bright colors, high volume, thrills, and perhaps violent destruction or some simulation thereof" (Cowen, 2006: 235) to attract their attention. Likewise, the media tend to satisfy their audiences by presenting them with what they assume their viewers want to see (Moeller, 2009: 40).

The aforementioned abilities of the media are often used by political actors to present particular issues as politically important and/or threatening. Even though Hozic (1990) claims that state- as well as non-state actors can use spectacle to fulfill their political needs, the majority of the authors consulted in

this thesis consider spectacle to be the “patrimony of the official power” – the state (Allegrì cited in Hozic, 1990: 66).

States use spectacle for various reasons, one of which is to re-enforce the values and procedures of the state as well as people’s allegiance to it. States also utilise spectacle to provide a prism through which their citizens can look at the political reality that surrounds them. In other words, through the means of spectacle states create a political context or a frame in which their political actions make sense. States often do so by diverting people’s attention from some issues while drawing it to others.

By manipulating the images and issues the audience is exposed to, spectacle significantly decreases the fragmentation of the audience. In other words, by limiting the “communication noise”, spectacle contributes to the audience becoming more united in its understanding of a political drama or a dominant “story of reality”.

Given that both terrorism and counter-terrorism aim to reinforce certain values and ideas, and, by doing so, to manipulate people’s political allegiance, the aforementioned functions of spectacle can be argued to be at play in both. The next section examines the extent to which this is the case, by outlining the essentials of the spectacle metaphor, together with its interpretations and possible critique.

Essentials of the metaphor

The metaphor of spectacle conceptualises terrorism as large in scale as well as in its repercussions. To that end, the metaphor relies on the aesthetic aspect of spectacle which has to do with a large-scale display of images, the purpose of which is not only to interest those watching, but also to impose upon them a particular way of looking at reality. The significant size of the aforementioned display is captured by the popular term “terrorism spectacles”, which serves to depict major, that is, highly lethal and destructive attacks, which “traumatically rattle” various countries (Hoffman and Kasupski, 2007: 36).

Arguably, by portraying terrorist attacks as “major”, spectacle also legitimizes more “spectacular” counter-terrorist actions. Having seen how “big” a

terrorist threat is, counter-terrorists' supporters understand why counter-terrorists employ severe measures to deal with it. Furthermore, not only do they expect counter-terrorist measures to be comparable to the perceived size of the terrorist threat, but in a sense they also become dissatisfied if they are not.

Apart from serving as an attention-generating device, spectacle also helps those using it to reinforce the message they send, which works for terrorists and counter-terrorists alike. In this context, spectacle serves as a propaganda conduit for political ideas. In addition, by giving terrorists and counter-terrorists a platform to show their respective doings, spectacle allows them to display their actions to their respective constituents and, in doing so, to self-present as dedicated, pro-active, competent and powerful.

Like the *proscenium* theatre, spectacle is the domain of the actors. This is largely because spectacle not only conceptualises actors and audiences as separate, it also considers the audience to be passive (Allegrini cited in Hozic, 1990: 66-67). In other words, in spectacle, it is the actors rather than the audience who generate the meaning of the "spectacularised" actions. This has a number of repercussions for both terrorism and counter-terrorism. Not only does it put terrorists and counter-terrorists in charge of their respective performances, but it also leaves the audience prone to a number of manipulations. For example, by depriving the audience of the ability to question the meaning of what they watch, spectacle deprives them of an opportunity to critically engage with it. This then allows both the threat of terrorism as well as the counter-terrorist response to that threat to grow exponentially, especially since there is no one who is able or active enough to check or control it.

Interpretations of the metaphor

The aesthetic as well as socio-political functions of spectacle are well captured by Hozic (1990) and her theory of turning terrorism into spectacle to serve one's particular needs. Hozic's "spectacularisation of terrorism" stipulates that "spectacularity" constitutes a "value added" to terrorism, rather than its inherent quality. Hozic argues (1990: 66) that terrorist as well as counter-terrorist actions can be turned into a spectacle, when terrorists and/or the state that counters

them are weak and need support. Given spectacle's ability to enlarge the audience as well as increase its political allegiance, terrorists and counter-terrorists spectacularise their actions. They do so in a number of ways, some of which include: showing their referent audiences what they want to see; self-presenting to them as powerful, competent and "in charge of the situation"; and painting a negative image of the enemy, which then explains any drastic measures used in the process of dealing with it. The latter has to do with yet another quality of spectacle, namely its ability to make things appear larger than they really are, also through focusing people's attention on them, while at the same time underplaying other matters. It is in this context that Weber (2004) highlights spectacle's ability to "help us describe just what is distinctive about 'international terrorism' being declared Public Enemy Number One" (2004: 330).

An argument against the practice of spectacularising terrorism is made most strongly by de Graaf (2011), who argues that a low level of "performative power" of counter-terrorism has a more neutralising effect on terrorism than large-scale, public counter-terrorism efforts. Spectacle's allegedly inherent tendency to increase rather than decrease such power can be considered to be one of its weaknesses, at least where terrorism and counter-terrorism are concerned.

Problems with the metaphor

Although, as noted above, both aesthetic and socio-political functions of spectacle apply to terrorism as well as counter-terrorism, they do so to various degrees. For example, while aesthetic characteristics of spectacle serve state- as well as non-state terrorists and counter-terrorists – socio-political qualities of spectacle have more to do with state-actors, especially those involved in counter-terrorism.

With spectacle defined as "the exclusive patrimony of the official power" (Allegrì cited in Hozic, 1990: 66), the spectacle metaphor endorses the state as an actor able to spectacularise its actions. On the one hand, unlike many non-state actors, states have largely unlimited access to the triangle of political communication. On the other hand, the reason why a state actor, more than a non-state actor, would need spectacle is because – by virtue of its very size and

role – a state requires a much more substantial support and allegiance in order to function effectively.

However, this is not to say that non-state counter-terrorists cannot stage or present their actions to their audience(s); in fact, they can. Most likely their power will never match that of the state, since few non-state counter-terrorists have the legitimacy and easy access to political communication enjoyed by the state. However, once again, this is not to say that their actions cannot influence their audiences. The example of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, already invoked in Chapter Two, illustrates that the opposite is often the case. Furthermore, it seems justifiable to argue that just as state and non-state counter-terrorists possess “performative power”, so do state- and non-state terrorists. To capture these factors, however, spectacle needs to be defined more broadly than as the “exclusive patrimony of the official power” (Allegri cited in Hozic, 1990: 66).

Interestingly, while states hardly ever display their own terrorist actions in fear of losing their legitimacy, they are quite keen to publicise their counter-terrorism efforts in order to gain that very legitimacy. To obtain the latter, states often implement a variety of security measures that increase the perception of security without actually improving it. Schneier (2008) and Felten (2004) refer to such practices as “security theatre”, which aims to build confidence in people, unlike the theatre of terrorism, which strives to undermine it (also see Boyle and Haggerty, 2009: 263-265 and Hafez, 2007: 97). This, however, makes the state prone to falling into a trap of spectacularisation, whereby it constantly needs to increase the level of terrorist threat to keep its citizens not only interested in terrorism, but also committed to fighting it. This then successfully diverts state’s energy and resources from dealing with the problem at hand by creating new problems.

Another difficulty related to the fit between the spectacle metaphor, terrorism and counter-terrorism has to do with its conceptualisation of actors as not only in charge of the spectacle, but also as physically separated from their audiences. The gap between the two raises a question of whether the spectacle metaphor is able to capture the interlink between terrorism and counter-terrorism, with one being often considered as a direct reaction to the other. This is unlikely to be the case, given spectacle’s view of the audience as passive and

unmoved – spectating but not participating, sympathizing but not suffering, and emphasizing but not experiencing (McInnes, 2002: 2).

However, this can be ameliorated if one, like Hozic (1990), broadens Allegri's definition of spectacle to include non-official powers, such as terrorist groups. This shift is best captured by Apter (2006) and his differentiation between the "theatre from above", which can be regarded as an equivalent of Allegri's spectacle, and the "theatre from below", which resembles performance and which was described earlier.

Even though the analytical potential of the spectacle metaphor is the strongest where state terrorism and counter-terrorism are concerned, the metaphor of spectacle is also relevant for non-state terrorism and counter-terrorism. In this context it has been noted that the applicability of the spectacle metaphor to the actions of non-state actors largely depends on the perception of the spectacle itself. With spectacle being defined solely as an attribute of official power, that applicability is significantly lower. However, if one was to allow non-state terrorists and counter-terrorists to also use spectacle in order to fulfill their political needs and goals, one would find spectacle a very useful category with which to understand their attempts not only to enlarge their audiences but also to reinforce their political messages by showcasing their actions on a much larger, i.e. "spectacular" scale.

The aim of Chapter Three has been to present the analytical potential of the four dramaturgical metaphors to enhance the understanding of terrorism as well as counter-terrorism. In doing so, it filled a gap in the literature on the subject, which, despite frequently portraying terrorism as drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, hardly ever addresses the all-important questions of "what do those metaphors actually mean?" and "how the metaphors describe and construct the phenomena they are used to analyse?".

The reading of any of the dramaturgical metaphors under consideration very much depends on who is considered to be an actor in terrorism and counter-terrorism, as this largely determines who their audiences are. It can also be said that while there are metaphors that shed more light on actors (*proscenium* theatre, for example), there are also those, like performance, whose main focus is on the audience. Moreover, when some of the metaphors tell us more about state

actors (spectacle), others, such as “theatre from below”, are more useful for analysing the communicative behaviour of non-state actors.

Nevertheless, one could still claim that it really does not matter which dramaturgical metaphor is used in the analysis of terrorism, since all of them reflect the essence of terrorism, namely, its dramaturgy and theatricality. Pedersen (2006) seems to be of that opinion when he states the following:

“Theatre, performance art or political happening? Whichever perspective you choose, it is productive to understand the Baader-Meinhof group in terms of dramaturgy. It is the sheer theatricality of their actions that fascinates”. (2006: 331)

This chapter presented a strong case against such an incomplete and superficial reading of terrorism. Instead, it argued for an in-depth analysis of terrorism, using much more thorough grounding and definitions of the dramaturgical metaphors applied to its study. Furthermore, it claimed that whereas each of the dramaturgical metaphors under consideration is rich and informative, it is only when they are brought together, with some metaphors offsetting the strengths and weaknesses of others, that their true analytical power and potential can be revealed and applied. The drama metaphor addressed the question of a terrorist script, which has been conceptualised as drama interpreted by directors and actors. The theatre metaphor highlighted how terrorist actors act out that script. The spectacle metaphor informed how the script is understood, and the performance metaphor captured the audience response to the actors’ performance of the script. All four metaphors provide an informative analysis of dramatic and theatrical terrorism, making it possible to better conceptualise it in the context of similarly dramatic and theatrical counter-terrorism.

CHAPTER FOUR

“I came here to see a country (...) What I find is a theater (...) The names are the same as everywhere else. (...) In appearances everything happens as it does everywhere else. There is no difference except in the very foundation of things”. (de Cistine cited in Kennan, 1972: 80)

“I have a dream that a new stage director will come to Grozny – a brave man who won’t be put off by fear of abduction or of all our other difficulties, who will breathe new life into our company. We are thirsting for work, for new productions, for new roles”. (Zura Raduyeva, a Chechen actress, cited in Tishkov, 2004: 210)

Dramaturgical metaphors have been used to describe both sides of the Russo-Chechen conflict. Although when it comes to application of dramaturgical metaphors in reference to this conflict, de Cistine’s (cited in Kennan, 1972: 80) comparison of Russia to theatre is possibly most famous, Tishkov (2004: 218), for one, writes of Chechnya as a stage “on which external actors deliver their performances.”

This chapter analyses how the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance can be applied to the terrorist attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan. In order to contribute to what can be depicted as a dramaturgical way of thinking about Russia and Chechnya, it describes the three attacks and investigates how the dramaturgical metaphors can be used to study them. It does so by illustrating how the categories of spectacle, theatre, drama and performance inform the “background meaning, actors, props, scripts, direction, and audience” (Alexander, 2006b: 95) through linking the “background meaning” with the category of “spectacle”; “actors” and “props” with the metaphor of “theatre”; “scripts” and “direction” with “drama”; and “audience” with “performance”.

While the theoretical discussion presented in the earlier part of this thesis focused on reviewing, explaining and categorizing what had already been written about terrorism and counter-terrorism as drama, theatre, spectacle and

performance, it is this empirical part that constitutes the main contribution of this thesis to the scholarship on the subject. By providing a much more comprehensive dramaturgical reading of the attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan, as well as the Russo-Chechen conflict, it adds to the already existing body of literature by addressing the research gaps that are identified below.

OVERVIEW OF THE EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

The literature on Russia and Chechnya is diverse. Historians (Lieven, Smith), journalists (Gall, Phillips, Politkovskaya, Seierstad), anthropologists (Tishkov), political scientists and commentators (Moore, Sakwa, de Waal) as well as people either employed by or writing for the defense sector (Oliker, Tumelty) have addressed the topic. Despite this diversity, accounts of the Russo-Chechen conflict are quite homogenous in their focus on the root causes of the conflict (such as the aggressive character of the Chechens, the heavy-handed and militaristic politics of the Russians, etc.) or on its consequences (the two Chechen Wars and Chechen terrorism, for example).

Tishkov (2004) claims that accounts of the Russo-Chechen conflict all too often suffer from their authors' tendency to draw strongly deterministic links between cultural and social experiences, attitudes and behaviours of both sides to the conflict, which he refers to as "civilizational-ethnographic Romanticism" (2004: 219-221). Such tendencies are visible in Russell's (2007) account of the root causes of the Russo-Chechen conflict, presented in his highly informative book entitled *Chechnya – Russia's "War on Terror"*, as well as in Gammer's (2006), mainly historical, writings on *The Lone Wolf And The Bear: Three Centuries of Chechen Defiance*.

Among the most popular issues addressed by those who write on Russia and Chechnya, are the following: the history of the Russo-Chechen relations; the quality of life in the war-torn Republic of Chechnya; the question of Chechnya's independence; the role of the Russo-Chechen antagonism for the domestic and international politics of the Russian Federation; the use of the mass media in the conflict as well as the place and impact of Islam in and on the Russo-Chechen antagonism. Of those, the problem of "How do the two sides use their conflict and why?" is especially relevant for the analysis of the spectacularisation of the Russo-Chechen conflict later in this chapter. Two equally important issues, which are also addressed here, are the instrumental use of religion (militant Islam) and the use of the media by the Chechens and Russians alike.

The use of religion in the Russo-Chechen conflict

The role of Islam in the Russo-Chechen conflict is addressed in the literature on the topic in more than one way. On the one hand, authors writing on the subject agree that, unlike the mainly Orthodox Russians, the Chechens are predominantly Sufi Muslims. On the other hand, there are significant differences regarding the influence of the radical – Wahhabi – version of Islam on Chechnya, and, by extension, on its conflict with the Russian Federation. Murphy (2004), for example, argues that militant Islam constitutes an important aspect of the cultural, social and political identity of the Chechens and therefore should be considered as an inherent part of their ongoing conflict with Moscow. In his opinion, militant Islam is at the very heart of the Chechen liberation struggle. Additionally, Murphy (2004) draws strong connections between the Chechen separatist movement, Al-Qaeda and other religiously motivated terrorist organizations, all of which claim to be waging a "holy" rather than an "ethnic" war.

Unlike Murphy (2004), authors such as Moore (2006), Moore and Tumelty (2008), Pape and Feldman (2010: 258) as well as Trenin and Malashenko (2004: 79) see militant Islam as a "value added" to the Russo-Chechen conflict, rather than its inherent trait. In their view, Islam is a quality that has been "played up" by some of the Chechen leaders (such as General

Dudayev at the beginning of the 1990s) to unite and mobilise the Chechens and to increase their nationalistic aspirations. It was not until Russia's invasion of Chechnya in December 1994 that some of the Chechens became more and more radicalized, and Islam itself incorporated into the initially secular pro-independence movement. In this context, Baranets (1998) compares militant Islam to "a tiger in a Moscow zoo, obediently dozing in the iron cage of Soviet power", which was "released into Chechnya, set free and enraged by Moscow" when President Yeltsin of Russia unleashed the First Chechen War (1998: 266).

Those who want to either demonise the Chechens, or, as happened in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, link them to the Al-Qaeda-led network of global Islamic terror,⁵³ often ignore the fact that militant Islam was brought to the long struggle between Russia and Chechnya rather than being inherent to it. However, this does not imply that the role of Islam in the Russo-Chechen conflict should be dismissed completely. On the contrary, its acknowledgment is important if only because "with the rise of Islamism, the conflict in Chechnya has itself mutated its causes" (Hughes, 2007: 207; also see Lieven, 1999: 355).

The discussion of how the Russians and the Chechens use religion in their conflict informs a number of ideas and issues which are at play in the forthcoming analysis of the three attacks as drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, the most important one of which is the question of whether Chechen terrorists are nationalist-separatist, i.e. "old" terrorists or religiously motivated – the so-called "new" terrorists. Dolnik and Pilch (2003) and Dolnik and Fitzgerald (2008) address this issue and argue that those who took over the theatre in Dubrovka in 2002 and the school in Beslan two years later were indeed "new" terrorists –

"a large team of highly experienced and brutalised fighters armed with fanatical religious rhetoric that worshiped the cult of martyrdom and called for the indiscriminate destruction of unbelievers". (2008: 60)

In light of the arguments presented subsequently, this thesis questions the depiction of Chechen terrorists as necessarily "new". However, it acknowledges the fact that what is "new" about them is their heavy use of the "new" media.

⁵³ For an overview of such practices see Snetkov (2004) and Russell (2002, 2005, 2007).

The use of the mass media in the Russo-Chechen conflict

Weimann (2006) credits the Chechens with being one of the first, if not the first, terrorist group to utilize the internet for terrorism-related purposes, such as broadcasting their actions, raising funds, mobilising and uniting sympathisers.⁵⁴ Weimann (2006), Eichrodt (1999), Hoffman (2006) and Goble (1999) all link Chechens' reliance on the internet with their inability to access the often heavily censored, mainly state-owned, traditional media in Russia – such as television and the press. In this regard, Goble (1999) notes that

“[s]ince declaring their independence from the Soviet Union in November 1991, the Chechens have pioneered the use of the website as a weapon to try to break the information blockade that the Russian authorities have attempted to impose over the conflict”. (1999: page number unavailable)

However, even though Chechen terrorists are especially known for their presence on the internet, this is not to say that they do not use “older” media. Russell (2005), for example, effectively demonstrates that during the First Chechen War (1994-1996) the Chechens, and not the Russians, tended to win the propaganda war on TV, primarily because the “Chechen fighters spoke Russian and were much more accommodating to both Russian and Western journalists and human rights activists than were the federal forces” (Russell, 2005: 105). In addition, the Russian media at the time were not censored, which meant that the Russian as well as the international public had free access to the news and images of the First Chechen War. This, however, changed in 1996, when “unlike during the first war, with a few brave exceptions, neither Russian nor Western media were allowed free access to the conflict zone” (Russell, 2005: 109).

⁵⁴ Numerous Chechen web sites have been in operation between 1995 and 2004, including: www.kavkaz.org, which was used by Movsar Barayev during the Dubrovka siege of 2002; Chechen Republic Online (www.amina.com); and The Chechen Times (www.chechnya.nl), to name only some. Their role in the Russo-Chechen conflict, together with the Russian online response and counter-attack to those sites, are examined by Petit (2003).

The issue of heavy censorship of the Russian press and television, alluded to in the writings of Petit (2003), is the subject of a number of scholarly accounts, such as those of Simons (2006), Hodgson (2004) and Snetkov (2004). Of the three, Simons' analysis of "The Use of Rhetoric and the Mass Media in Russia's War on Terror" seems not only the most original, but also the most relevant to the analysis presented in this thesis. While Hodgson (2004) and Snetkov (2004) discuss particular examples of the (self-) censorship of the Russian media,⁵⁵ Simons (2006: 5) observes two, seemingly contradictory, ways in which the Russian authorities use the mass media to counter terrorism. On the one hand, he speaks of the Russian authorities tendency to see the media and their audience as passive, in that people can be taken over by the terrorists and used by them to manipulate those watching. On the other hand, he argues, the same authorities activate the media to mobilise their own audience through "framing" and "priming",⁵⁶ among other means.

While Simons' (2006) remarks on the media and the audience are particularly important for the discussion of how the "old" and "new" media portray terrorism, Snetkov (2004, 2007) is one of the authors who notice the increased downplaying of the secular nature of Chechen terrorists in favour of their Islamic characteristics. She also points out the fact that while between 1999 and 2003 Chechnya was presented as the main source of instability in Russia, since 2004 the whole North Caucasus has been depicted as such. In addition,

"[e]vidence suggests that, whilst in 2002 the terrorist threat was still largely presented in the official press as a discreet and manageable problem, largely connected with developments within Chechnya, by 2004 it was presented as a much greater threat, possibly threatening the very existence of Russia, or even the 'civilised' world". (Snetkov, 2004: 1362)

Snetkov's observations will be incorporated into the forthcoming critique of the process of spectacularisation of Chechen terrorism, described later in this chapter. The following section on how the Russians and the Chechens use their

⁵⁵ Hodgson (2004), for example, notes that "Chechnya is often described as Russia's Vietnam. But while Vietnam was the first 'television war' in the US, the Chechen conflict is, say observers, barely alluded to on domestic Russian television".

⁵⁶ "Priming" means prioritizing some news and events over others by increasing their coverage.

conflict to satisfy their particular goals provides a further insight into that practice.

The use of the Russo-Chechen conflict by parties

The research into how the Chechens and the Russians use their conflict to fulfill their respective needs is quite diverse, both when it comes to its focus as well as its approach. While various authors address different aspects of the question at hand, most of them do so with regards to Russia, rather than Chechnya. Among those in the majority, there are those who discuss the irredentist conflict from the perspective of Russia's imperial tendencies (Lieven, 1999) as well as those whose analyses focus on the role of the conflict in breaking and/or making the political careers of such top Russian politicians as Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin (Sakwa, 2008). The latter will become particularly relevant for two discussions presented later in this chapter in terms of how successful the attacks were and then in regard to the performance or misperformance of their main actors.

Another issue highlighted in the literature is that of the impact of the 9/11 attacks on how Russian officials presented and reacted to the Chechens in general, and Chechen terrorism in particular. A small selection of the growing literature that takes on this pertinent topic is presented next.

The most prolific author on the subject of Chechen terrorism in the context of the post-9/11 Global War on Terror is Russell (2002, 2005, 2007), whose writings focus on how Russia manipulated its conflict with Chechnya in the aftermath of the 2001 Al-Qaeda attack on the World Trade Centre. Russell points out that while it has been common to refer to the First Chechen War as a war, the Second Chechen War (which began in the summer of 1999) was instead often referred to as a counter-terrorist operation. Russell's observations are reflected in the writings of Moore (2006: 182), Sakwa (2005: 241) and Williams (2004), with the latter author noting that while at first Chechen "separatists" were the focus, later counter-terrorism actions increasingly aimed at portraying them as "Islamic terrorists" with international connections.

According to Russell (2007) and Snetkov (2004, 2007), such a shift, to a large extent enabled by the heavy censorship of the Russian mass media, has been

especially visible in the official discourse of Putin's Administration from which Chechnya "effectively disappeared" after 9/11 (Snetkov, 2007: 1355-1356). Interestingly, it was also enacted by the Chechens themselves, who, thirteen months after the September 11th, 2001 Al-Qaeda attack on the World Trade Centre, took over a theatre in the Dubrovka district of Moscow. Their immense reliance on Islamic symbols and tactics used during that siege does not compare to any of the attacks the Chechens staged before or after Dubrovka. Arguably, Chechen terrorists, who were transformed in the shift of discourse, have acted out their new roles, which had been designed and directed for them by President Putin, his Administration and many of the Russian as well as international media.

Through an analysis of this fascinating and understudied transition and its effects on the Russo-Chechen conflict, this thesis contributes to the underdeveloped discussion of how the Chechens use the conflict with Russia to suit their particular needs. It does so by analysing the process of spectacularisation of the Chechen terrorism by the Russian Federation as well as Chechen terrorists themselves between 1995 and 2004, in which time the three attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan took place.

The attack in Budyonnovsk

When it comes to the literature on the 1995 attack in Budyonnovsk, one of the most recurrent themes is the will of its main perpetrator – Shamil Basayev – to avenge the deaths of his relations in the village of Vedeno (Gall and de Waal, 2007: 259-260; Hughes, 2007: 155-156), which various authors present as one of the main reasons behind the attack. Basayev's significant victory over the incompetent Russian army also constitutes the subject of many analyses (Gammer, 2006: 212; Trenin and Malashenko, 2004: 24). In this context Basayev is often portrayed as a hero – a Chechen able to force the former Russian empire to the negotiating table. Such descriptions are in stark contrast to the dominant portrayals of President Yeltsin, whom the majority of authors (Trenin and Malashenko, 2004: 24, 135; Gall and de Waal, 2007: 275; Seely, 2001: 275; Lieven, 1999) describe as incompetent and unable to deal with the Budyonnovsk crisis as such, not to mention the Russo-Chechen conflict in general. In those

accounts, Yeltsin is presented as a loser and accused of “losing face” – nationally as well as abroad (Gall and de Waal, 2007: 273, 275; Seely, 2001: 267, 275). Furthermore, the aforementioned authors argue, it is not only Yeltsin’s own reputation that has been internationally compromised in Budyonovsk, but that of all Russia.

A significant dent in the public perception of Russia in the aftermath of the 1995 attack on a hospital in Budyonovsk is one of the most important consequences of that attack, according to Hughes (2007). However, although many authors writing about the Budyonovsk hostage-taking praise the Chechens and point to the political and strategic limitations of the Russian side, only a few (Seely, 2001) refer to the brevity of Chechen success.

The attack on the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow

One of the most detailed accounts of the 2002 attack on the theatre in Dubrovka (apart from Dolnik and Pilch, 2003) is that of Murphy (2004: 179-196) who focuses not only on the attack as such but also traces life histories of those who carried it out. It is from him that we learn why Shamil Basayev did not lead the attack himself – because he was not physically capable of doing so as his artificial leg would slow him down (2004: 181).

While Murphy analyses the reasons and people behind the attack, Souleimanov (2006: 238-246) portrays difficulties in investigating its causes. For example, he writes extensively about the problems with the “rescue” operation that included the use of an unknown gas, the mysterious nature of which made it almost impossible to cure the victims poisoned by it; the chaos outside the theatre; the cover up by the authorities, not to mention their failure to prevent the attack in the first place, despite many signs that it could occur.

The work of Moore and Tumelty (2008) takes a different perspective and positions the Dubrovka attack within the context of Islamic ideology and Arab foreign fighters for the Chechen cause for independence. Furthermore, they interestingly allude to Basayev’s personal motive behind staging the attack on the Dubrovka Theatre, which is ignored by other authors writing on the topic. As the two authors note:

“Dubrovka was also a result of a change in rebel leadership structure in 2002, with the creation of the semi-religious/semi-secular body of the Majlis-ul Shura, designed to unite the Maskhadov wing of the Chechen separatist movement with the radical Salafi elements. Basayev was appointed emir of the military committee of the shura thereby bestowing on him the authority to launch this operation”. (Moore and Tumelty, 2008: 426)

Dolnik and Pilch (2003) and Dolnik and Fitzgerald (2008) provide yet another interesting account of the attack in the Dubrovka Theatre. Their focus is on how this particular hostage taking was and could have been handled from the negotiators’ point of view. Furthermore, they provide information as to why the theatre in Dubrovka was targeted in the first place. In this context, they claim that it was because it was in the centre of the city, “only some five kilometers away from the Kremlin” (Dolnik and Pilch, 2003: 588) and it was full of people, who were mostly Russians, which was also important since the Chechens wanted to target them rather than foreigners:

“Moreover, there was also an expressive element present in attacking a theater, which had to do with the perception that Chechen children are dying while the ‘heartless pleasure-seeking Russians are having fun’. The theatregoers were thus seen as guilty by association, which was only strengthened by the highly patriotic content of the [*Nord-Ost – JS*] show”. (Dolnik and Fitzgerald, 2008: 75)

The attack in Beslan

Among the main ways in which scholars write about the 2004 attack on the School No. One in Beslan one can list descriptions of the attack (Phillips, 2008); overviews of the attack followed by counter-terrorism recommendations (Dunlop, 2006; Dolnik, 2007; Dolnik and Fitzgerald, 2008) and the literature on the attack and the consequences it has had either for the people directly affected by it, or on Russia as a state and a member of the international community (Dunlop, 2005; Stepanovna, 2004; Haraszti, 2004; Moscardino *et al.*, 2007; Lemaître, 2006; Gidadhubli, 2004: 4704-4706; Lynch, 2005; Boykevich, 2005). The majority of these sources point to the popular practice of improving one’s image and denigrating that of the adversary, employed by the Russians and Chechens alike. Furthermore, they attest to Russia’s significant efforts to manage its impression

given a fear of losing face. These two observations will be especially important for the forthcoming discussion of terrorism as drama and performance.

Dramaturgical metaphors in the Russo-Chechen context

When it comes to scholarly accounts of the Russo-Chechen conflict and their use of drama-related frames and descriptions, Tishkov's (2004: 210-223) remarks on "Chechnya as a Stage and a Role" aside, Murphy's (2005) account of *The Wolves of Islam* appears to be the most comprehensive example. Not only does Murphy refer to the "wolves" (Chechen fighters who, in Murphy's opinion, are strongly linked to Al-Qaeda) as "characters" in his story (something that Tishkov (2004: 239-246) also does), the sub-title of his book, *Russia and the Faces of Chechen Terror*, gives his readers an impression of the Russian Federation as a stage, on which Chechen "wolves" perform their *ter-acts*,⁵⁷ or, as happened in Dubrovka, they bring the theatre of the Russian war in Chechnya to the heart of Russia's capital. Furthermore, almost like a playwright who wants to induce emotions in his audience, Murphy acknowledges that "[t]he graphic descriptions of terror, acts of torture, and human cruelty in this book will disturb the reader" (2005: 6). In addition, his

"story is also about corruption, greed, money, and terror financing. It has all the ingredients and colorful characters of a good novel – powerful warlords; revolution and a struggle for independence; ethnic hatred; the mafia; Islamic extremism; perpetual jihad; international terrorism; a barbaric disregard for human life; a clash of civilisations; and yes, even Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda. The grim tale would be amusingly entertaining if it weren't so tragically true". (Murphy, 2005: 6)

Unlike in the cases of Beslan and Dubrovka, the literature making direct references to Budyonnovsk as drama, theatre, spectacle and/or performance is limited, and the work of Trenin and Malashenko (2004: 24) appears to be a singular example. Arguably, this might have to do with the fact that, in contrast to the attacks in Dubrovka and Beslan, the 1995 attack in Budyonnovsk was not framed as part of the post-9/11 "spectacle of terrorism". Instead, it was mainly

⁵⁷ "Ter-act" is a Russian word for an act of terrorism.

presented as an “internal matter” of Russia, which was to be dealt “in the house” and kept away from the public eye.

The above review provided empirical context to the analysis presented in this chapter. It began by illustrating, how the Russians and the Chechens use religion and the media in their conflict. Apart from outlining some of the reasons for the heavy reliance of the Chechens on the internet, the survey of the available literature on the topic also pointed to an important, however not inherent, place of Islam in the 1995-2004 phase of the Russo-Chechen dispute. It then focused on the main shifts in the Russian official discourse, which shaped the domestic as well as international perception of the attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan. Having described the literature on the three attacks as such, the review concluded with a presentation of how these attacks have been described as drama, theatre, spectacle and/or performance.

As was already noted at the beginning of this chapter in the context of de Cusine’s comparison of Russia to theatre (cited in Kennan, 1972: 80), and Tishkov’s (2004: 218) metaphorisation of Chechnya as a stage, it is indeed quite popular to speak of the Russo-Chechen conflict using dramaturgical metaphors. What is missing from the literature, however, is a more comprehensive analysis of the 1995-2004 phase of the Russo-Chechen conflict as drama, theatre, performance and spectacle. This chapter provides such analysis by examining the three cases in the context of the process of turning the Chechen terrorism into a political spectacle. Underlying empirical perceptions are theoretical presuppositions presented earlier in this thesis, such as the analytical potential of the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, as well as Hozic’s (1990) thesis of terrorism spectacularisation and de Graaf and de Graaff’s (2010) concept of the “performative power” of counter-terrorism.

OVERVIEW OF THE CASES

All three terrorist attacks, used in this thesis as case studies, were carried out by Chechen rebels, whose main aim was to separate the once independent Chechen Republic of Ikcheria (Chechnya) from the Russian Federation.

Chechnya, with the capital in Grozny, is one of the twenty-one republics of the Russian Federation. Located in the oil-rich northern Caucasus, Chechnya was brutally conquered by Tsarist Russia in 1861. Having incurred a number of Russian attempts to pacify and subordinate it, including the wholesale deportation of Chechens to Kazakhstan in 1944, the republic briefly regained its independence after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. The Chechen independence lasted until December 1994, when Russian President Yeltsin, in an attempt to re-pay the Russian military for their support during his 1993 *coup d'état*, launched a full-scale attack on Chechnya, the aim of which was to restore the constitutional order in the country and to re-unite the separatist Chechen Republic of Ikcheria with the Russian Federation.

The First Chechen War, which lasted from 1994 until 1996, was accompanied by a heavily nationalist rhetoric with the issue of Chechen independence depicted as nothing else but Russia's "internal matter". Not only was such perception heavily propagated at home, it was also copiously promoted and projected abroad mainly to rebuke any international criticism regarding Russia's heavy-handed politics and often military and imperialist behaviour towards rebelling Ikcheria. Despite the omnipresent propaganda, the majority of Russia's citizens did not approve of the war, with as many as 70% of them voicing their opposition to the military actions of the Russian government (Haney, 1995).

Throughout the war, Chechnya enjoyed the status of an "underdog", both domestically as well as internationally. In order to capitalise on this pro-Chechen attitude, in June 1995 Shamil Basayev – Chechen warlord and one of the leaders of the Chechen rebel movement – staged the first Chechen terrorist attack against Russian civilians. He and his troops took over a hospital in Budyonnovsk, successfully forcing President Yeltsin to evacuate his military forces from Chechnya. The Budyonnovsk attack, which will be described in detail later, marked a turning point in the First Chechen War. Not only did it alter the once sympathetic attitude towards the Chechens, on behalf of both the Russians as well as the international community, but it also significantly contributed to the signing, in August 1996, of the Khasavyurt Accords – a peace treaty between Chechnya and Russia, which signalled the end of the 1994-1996 military conflict.

In 1996 Russia left Chechnya weak, humiliated and wanting revenge. The media had become heavily censored and the process of demonizing the Chechens as Islamic fanatics had begun. While Russia's defeat in the First Chechen War marked the end of the political career of President Yeltsin, it facilitated the rise to power of his successor, Vladimir Putin, who built his political career on the very promise to "crush" the Chechens. Following Yeltsin's 1994 example, Putin successfully appealed to the Russian army, which wanted to punish the Chechens for the humiliation the Russian generals suffered in the First Chechen War. In addition, in November 1999, and in order to depoliticize the Chechens, Putin ordered the Russian media to depict the Chechen opposition as nothing else but terrorists (Russell, 2005: 108). Finally, he capitalized on the fact that the majority of Chechens are Muslim and started portraying them as Islamic *jihadists* with close links to Al-Qaeda, a portrayal he later used to justify Russia's involvement in the post-9/11 Global War on Terror.

While the First Chechen War was considered a "war" – a conflict between two political units – the Second Chechen War, which began in August 1999, was widely depicted as a "counter-terrorist" operation, the main aim of which was "to neutralize the bandits, painfully and completely" (Seierstad, 2009: 44). Chechnya ceased being the "internal matter" of Russia. On the contrary, since the turn of the twenty-first century not only has it been considered a hotbed for international, mainly Islamic, terrorism, but, as demonstrated by the counter-attacks in Dubrovka and Beslan, it has also been "dealt with" as such.

The aforementioned shift of perception of the Chechens from "nationalist-separatist" to "holy" warriors is analysed in this chapter using the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, which, applied to the terrorist and counter-terrorist attacks in all three cases, not only provide a new reading of the 1995-2004 phase of the Russo-Chechen conflict, but also enhance the understanding of why some of the three attacks and counter-attacks under consideration were more successful than others. It is with the description of the attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan that the dramaturgical analysis of these cases begins.

Budyonnovsk, Stavropol Krai

The terrorist attack in Budyonnovsk took place six months after the First Chechen War began. In carrying it out, Shamil Basayev not only wanted the Russians to suffer as much as the Chechens did during the war; he also wanted to avenge the killing, on June 3rd, 1995, of twelve members of his family, including his wife, child and sister in Basayev's home-village of Vedenov.

Eleven days after the bombing of Vedenov, on June 14th, 1995, a column of four military trucks – supposedly transporting the bodies of Russian soldiers from Chechnya, and in reality carrying more than 140 of Basayev's best fighters – crossed into Stavropol Krai and were stopped at a check-point outside the city of Budyonnovsk. Since they had run out of money to pay off the checkpoint guards, Basayev and his troops were escorted to a Budyonnovsk police station, which they soon took over by force, along with a nearby city hall on which they raised a Chechen flag. Having incurred twelve casualties, the Chechens decided to move to a hospital, which, located in a stone fortress, provided them with a place of refuge. On the way to the hospital the militants took passers-by hostage. Together with those already in the hospital, this raised the overall number of hostages to between 1500 and 1800 people. After taking over the hospital, Basayev issued three demands. He requested that the Russian troops to withdraw immediately from Chechnya; that President Yeltsin begins negotiations with Chechen General Dudayev; and that himself and his troops are granted free access to the media (Specter, 1995a).

Russian forces tried to storm the building three times during the five-day-long siege. One of the reasons for their failure in this task was the fact that the hostage-takers used hostages as human shields. The most shocking example of this tactic was putting pregnant women in the blown-out windows to stop the Russians from shooting at the hospital.

The negotiations between Russian representatives and Basayev started on June 18th, 1995. With President Yeltsin away in Canada, it was Prime Minister Chernomyrdin who became the most senior Russian official to speak to Basayev. On the same day, Chernomyrdin signed an official document in which the Russian government guaranteed an immediate cessation of combat operations in

Chechnya; appointed a delegation authorized to negotiate the terms of the peaceful settlement of conflict, including the question of the withdrawal of the Russian armed forces from Chechnya; and declared that Basayev and his group would be provided secure transport back to Ikcheria.

The attack in Budyonnovsk resulted in at least 129 civilians killed and 415 injured. Eighteen Russian policemen and eighteen soldiers died, and Basayev himself lost at least fourteen of his comrades. Furthermore, over 160 buildings in town were destroyed or damaged, including fifty-four municipal buildings and 110 private houses. While the attack on the hospital diminished President Yeltsin's role as the leader of the Russian Federation, Basayev left the city victorious.

The Dubrovka Theatre, Moscow

While the attack in Budyonnovsk took place during the First Chechen War, the take-over of the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow occurred during the Second Chechen War. Similar to the case of the 1995 attack on the Budyonnovsk hospital, when terrorists wanted the Russians to suffer at least as much as the Chechens did due to the ongoing military conflict, one of the reasons for carrying out the 2002 attack in Moscow was to bring the remote theatre of the Second Chechen War much closer to the Russian and world public at large. Through doing so, Chechen terrorists wanted to present their Russian enemies as cruel and inhumane – “heartless” and “pleasure-seeking” – who would enjoy themselves in a theatre, and at the same time do nothing about the Chechens dying in the war.

On the evening of October 23rd, 2002 forty-one heavily armed Chechen militants led by Movsar Barayev entered the stage of the ball bearing factory theatre in the Dubrovka district of the Russian capital. Having taken around 850-900 hostages, they demanded the withdrawal of the Russian army from their republic as well as an end to the Second Chechen War. Were their demands not to be met, they threatened to blow up the theatre and everyone inside it.

Those who came to the Dubrovka Theatre to watch the performance of the musical *Nord-Ost* were taken hostage, alongside members of staff and a large number of the actors who did not manage to escape before being spotted by the

hostage-takers. All hostages were told to stay in their chairs and not to move around, unless a hostage-taker allowed them to do so. The theatre's orchestra pit served as a toilet, and the hostages were fed with snacks from the theatre bar until its limited supplies ran out. Terrorists' demands to speak to various Russian officials were ignored; however, the hostage-takers were led to believe that such negotiations would start shortly.

During the three days of the Dubrovka siege terrorists shot dead two people – a young woman named Olga Romanova, whom they believed to have entered the theatre as a spy; and a man who came into the building looking for his son. The three-day ordeal terminated with the Russian OSNAZ (Special Forces within the KGB) pumping a mysterious gas into the theatre in the early hours of Saturday, October 26th, 2002. The gas resulted in those in the theatre falling asleep and, in many cases, losing their ability to breathe. It is believed that 127 people died as a result of either gas poisoning or the lack of proper health care after the counter-attack. The Dubrovka terrorists were initially overtaken by gas and then shot dead by OSNAZ.

Unlike in the case of Budyonnovsk, the attack on the theatre in Dubrovka did not lead to the Russian army's withdrawal from the breakaway republic. On the contrary, its presence there was strengthened. Also, as a result of the attack, important international peace talks, which “would have granted Chechnya a degree of autonomy within Russia, with security guaranteed by international bodies” (Sakwa, 2005: 263), ceased. Finally, after the disastrous “rescue” operation, many Russians accused President Putin of failing to protect his citizens from not only terrorists but also their country's very own security forces.

School Number One, Beslan, North Ossetia-Alania

Two years after the attack on the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow, often referred to as “Operation *Nord-Ost*”, Chechen terrorists linked to Shamil Basayev and his Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs staged yet another terrorist “spectacular”, which Basayev himself dubbed “Operation *Nord-Vest*” (Russell, 2007: 115-116). On September 1st, 2004 they took over School No. One in a North Ossetian town in Beslan, located 1000 miles

south of Moscow. As in the case of Budyonnovsk and Dubrovka, the hostage-takers – four or five Chechens, one Arab, one Ossetian and some Ingush (Wood, 2007: 153), once again demanded the withdrawal of the Russian military forces from the Chechen territory.⁵⁸

Over 1,000 people (infants, children, adults and seniors) were held hostage in the school's gymnasium for three days – in unbearable heat, deprived of food and water. As in the Dubrovka Theatre, the hostages in the school in Beslan were not allowed to move, nor were the youngsters allowed to scream or cry to the point that at least one person was killed by a terrorist when he tried to silence some of the children. Terror in the gym was further increased by the display of active bombs that were placed around the room. The hostages could also hear the sounds of beatings and shootings that occurred in and around the school during the three-day long siege.

On its last day (September 3rd, 2004) an explosion inside the gym led to an uncontrolled exchange of fire between the terrorists, armed civilians and Russian Special Forces stationed outside the school. Fierce gun battles, bomb blasts and the fire that ensued resulted in the death of more than 300 hostages comprising 156 adults and 176 children (Dolnik, 2008: 1), which made Beslan “not only the largest ever terrorist takeover of a school, but also the third deadliest terrorist attack in world history” (Dolnik and Fitzgerald, 2008: 3).⁵⁹

The attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan share several commonalities. Not only were they all directly led, inspired and/or masterminded by a Chechen rebel and warlord Shamil Basayev, but also they all aimed to force the Russian military forces to withdraw from the independence-hungry Chechnya. Furthermore, they all resulted in revealing the former Russian empire's inability to protect its own citizens.

⁵⁸ However, this does not appear to be the only reason behind the attack. According to Wood (2007: 153) the masterminds behind the attack on the school might have wanted to stir up ethnic grievances in the region, too. For that reason they attacked the School No. One which “had been used in 1992 as a holding pen for Ingush expelled from their homes. Chechens might also have had motives for vengeance against the town: planes dropping bombs on Chechnya in 1994-1996 had flown from Beslan's airbase”.

⁵⁹ Even though the origins of the explosion are still debated (Dolnik, 2008: 35-36), it is likely that it was triggered by Russian secret services – FSB (Russell, 2007: 80-81).

The three attacks can be regarded as terrorist “spectaculars” in that they resulted in high levels of death and destruction. The attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan also resonated widely in Russia as well as internationally due to the venues and victims Chechen terrorists had chosen for their attacks. A hospital with a large maternity ward, a theatre and a school, respectively came under attack in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan. This, combined with terrorists’ choice of very powerful and culturally and symbolically charged targets, such as toddlers, children, pregnant women and the sick, resulted in the three attacks under consideration being one of the most symbolic and lethal and therefore best known examples of Chechen terrorism against Russia to date.

However, despite their many similarities, the three hostage-takings produced different results for the Russians and the Chechens alike. Firstly, while Budyonnovsk marked the end of Yeltsin’s political career, its long-term aftermath served as a trampoline to power for Vladimir Putin. Secondly, in Budyonnovsk the Chechens achieved a strategic victory in that, unlike in Dubrovka and Beslan, their demands were met. Finally, already negatively influenced by Budyonnovsk and Dubrovka (Dolnik and Fitzgerald, 2008: 96), the pro-Chechen attitudes were weakened even more in the aftermath of the Beslan attack. The main purpose of the analysis presented below is to demonstrate the extent to which the application of the dramaturgical metaphors to the three attacks under investigation can shed light on how some of the aforementioned successes and failures came about.

APPLYING METAPHORS TO THE CASES

The main analytical promise of the drama metaphor is its capacity to shed light on how terrorist and counter-terrorist actions are conceptualised, structured, directed and framed. The metaphor of drama also captures roles which different terrorist and counter-terrorist dramas and scripts prescribe for their respective actors. At the same time, the theatre metaphor focuses on how various dramas of terrorism and/or counter-terrorism are enacted. However, unlike the metaphor of drama, which is considered most helpful in capturing the “making of” the terrorist or counter-terrorist message, the theatre metaphor focuses primarily on the process of transmitting that message using various symbols and props.

For a performance to be successful, the audience interpretation of what they watch needs to be in keeping with what it is that the actors want to show – to paraphrase Alexander (2006b: 96), the “dramatic reception” of the audience needs to match the “dramatic intention” of the directors and actors. This can be difficult to achieve, especially when the audience is diverse and approaches a performance from different social, cultural and political angles. A positive reception of a performance is facilitated when members of its audience share a set of “background meanings”, which allow them to interpret particular actions in a similar way. To that end, those in charge of writing and directing political scripts shape and facilitate people’s understanding of certain concepts and actions by manipulating their perceptions thereof. They often do so through the means of spectacle.

One of the main arguments of this thesis is that audience reactions to terrorism and counter-terrorism are at least as important as the actions of terrorists and counter-terrorists themselves. Given that both aim at *changing* political behaviour of people, the concepts of terrorism and counter-terrorism imply some form of *action* on behalf of those watching. It was demonstrated in Chapter Three that of the four dramaturgical metaphors under consideration, the category of performance is best equipped to capture the ability of an audience to move “in and out of passivity” (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998: 67-68) and to evaluate the performance such audience observes. This is further illustrated empirically in this chapter, which demonstrates that of the four dramaturgical metaphors analysed in this thesis, it is the performance metaphor that is most helpful in analysing the role of an interactive audience in terrorism and counter-terrorism. Such audience is conceptualised here as one which not only gives meaning to terrorism and counter-terrorism, but that also adjusts its political behaviour based on its understanding of the two phenomena.

As already noted, there are a number of factors that contribute to the success of a performance, one of which is a script, the main role of which is to provide a narrative framework in which the audience can interpret what actors show to be doing. The following sub-section outlines the main ways in which the drama metaphor sheds light on the various scripts that influence the terrorist-

and counter-terrorist actions in the Russo-Chechen context as well as their perception.

Drama

A number of personal and social dramas shape the Russo-Chechen conflict. One is that of Russia – a failing empire, which finds playing the role of a super-power it once was increasingly difficult. The other is that of Chechnya – once a sovereign state, which was later taken over and subdued by a culturally different neighbour. Numerous dramas of the victims of the Russo-Chechen conflict can also be added, especially of those who lost their relatives as a result, such as the mothers of the Russian soldiers who died in either of the Chechen Wars or the so-called Chechen “Black Widows”, to name only a few.⁶⁰

Both sides of the conflict drew on the aforementioned dramas in creating their respective roles, be they of soldiers or rebels, terrorists or counter-terrorists, hostages or hostage-takers, actors or audiences. Moreover, both sides of the conflict equipped particular dramas with certain explanations and interpretations, turning dramas into scripts, which then served as a base for Russian as well as Chechen performances. This becomes especially visible upon examination of the mass media accounts of the attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan, which often frame the three hostage-takings by using a variety of personal, social, cultural and historical references that have a significant impact on how the terrorist and counter-terrorist attacks under consideration were perceived, interpreted and acted on.

Apart from general analogies linking the situation of the (Muslim) Chechens in (mainly Orthodox) Russia with that of the (Catholic) Republicans in (predominantly Protestant) Northern Ireland, or with that of the Kurds in Turkey (Politkovskaya, 2001: 189), a reference that is prevalent in the mass media reports on the Dubrovka Theatre siege is one which draws close links between the

⁶⁰ The “black widow” misnomer refers to Chechen women who lost their loved ones (mainly husbands, brothers and/or sons) to the Russian presence in Chechnya and who wear black robes and veils as a sign of their grief. This constitutes an interesting twist in meaning since up to quite recently it was common to use the term “black widow” primarily to describe female serial killers who murder their husbands or boyfriends.

leader of the Dubrovka terrorists – Movsar Suleimanov (better known as Movsar Barayev) and the infamous Barayev family, especially Arbi Barayev (Movsar's uncle) and Khava Barayeva (Movsar's aunt). While Khava Barayeva was the first Chechen female suicide bomber, Arbi Barayev was a Chechen field commander whom the media often portrayed as “the most odious figure of the Chechen war”, “reported to have boasted that he had personally killed 170 people”, “the most ruthless hostage-taker of Russians and Westerners in the breakaway republic”, “responsible for the beheading of three British and one New Zealander British Telecom workers in 1998” (BBC News, 2002b), to list only some of his descriptions. By portraying Movsar Suleimanov as a member of the “Barayev clan” – which the author of the article on the “Rebel leader's notorious family” describes as a “desperate bunch” – the media wanted people to believe that “Movsar Barayev and his people might be suicide attackers this time round” (BBC News, 2002b). This then re-enforced the script that saw the Chechens as suicide Islamic terrorists, and allowed Russia to deal with them as such.

Another reference, which served a similar purpose, is that which draws a comparison between the attacks in Dubrovka and Beslan and the 9/11 attacks against the United States. This particular analogy was used most heavily by the Russian administration, which at the beginning of the twenty-first century sought a close alliance with Washington. The latter will be discussed further later in the chapter – in the section that investigates how Russia has spectacularised Chechen terrorism to serve its national and international political needs.

The most general analogy used to describe the position of the Russian counter-terrorists during the 1995-2004 phase of the Russo-Chechen conflict is that which compares the French involvement in Algeria, which ended, after an 8-year long war (the Algerian War of Independence, 1954-1962) and a number of terrorist attacks carried out by the National Liberation Front (FLN), with the French withdrawal from Northern Africa. A number of authors, especially in their Beslan-related commentaries, call on President Putin to be brave like de Gaulle who, thanks to his bravery, “was able to end the war in Algeria” (Lewandowska, 2004). In the same context Michnik (2004) asks:

“Will he [Putin] have the courage of de Gaulle, who understood that it is better to grant Algeria independence, rather than to entangle France in this dirty war without any end?”. (Michnik, 2004)

Interestingly, even Basayev used de Gaulle as an example in his personal appeal to Putin, which read:

“Vladimir Putin, you were not the one to start the war, but you could be the one to end it, that is if you find the courage and resolve to act like [French statesman Charles] de Gaulle [who pulled France out of Algeria]”. (BBC News, 2002a)

Even though it is difficult to establish whether Michnik and Levada were familiar with Basayev’s statement before they made theirs, Russell (2007) finds their comparisons of Chechnya to Algeria not only striking but also highly counter-productive. He argues:

“[a]lthough the French military succeeded in crushing the wave of Algerian terrorism, it [was – JS] done by using such means (torture, indiscriminate killings, etc.) that the entire indigenous population, not to mention a good proportion of the French, was alienated, and, within a few years, Algeria was liberated”. (2007: 172)

The poignancy of Russell’s (2007) remarks is reflected in other historical references used to depict the counter-attacks in Dubrovka and Beslan, such as the Holocaust, the war in Vietnam, or the sinking of the Kursk submarine,⁶¹ all of which point to either the inability or unwillingness of the Russian state to go to considerable effort to rescue its own citizens. The latter is also evident in Bovt’s (2004) description of the Beslan attack, which he compares to the one in Dubrovka:

“*Nord Ost* all over again, but a whole lot worse. Not just because there are children among the hostages being held in the school in Beslan, North Ossetia. And not just because the school building, unlike the Dubrovka Theater, isn’t a concrete cube that can be stormed following a gas attack. Gas would simply

⁶¹ “Kursk” is the name of a Russian nuclear-powered cruise missile submarine that sank in the Barents Sea on August 12th, 2000, leaving all of its crew – 118 people – dead. Russia’s unwillingness to accept international rescue offers, combined with the fact that it has taken President Putin five days to comment on the accident (he was on holiday at the time) accounted for the sinking of Kursk to become one of the major PR disasters of Putin’s presidency.

disperse in the school. And the hostage-takers will have learned the lessons of *Nord Ost*, making sure that the explosives strapped to the female suicide bombers in their ranks go off if and when the building is stormed. But also because the ongoing hostage crisis is not an isolated, nightmarish incident, but the latest in a whole string of terrorist strikes that have been allowed to happen recently all across the country". (Bovt, 2004)

Bovt (2004) was right in claiming that those who took over the school in Beslan had learned their lesson from Dubrovka – they did indeed smash the upper windows in the gym, in case the Russian special services wanted to once again use gas in their efforts to combat terrorists. They also brought many more gas masks and had two sniffer dogs at their disposal (Dolnik, 2007). From the framing of Beslan-as-Dubrovka perspective, however, what matters most is the fact that linking the two attacks brought back the memories of how the Dubrovka attack had ended. The analysis of the mass media accounts of the Beslan attack suggests that almost from the very start of the siege of the school, many people were expecting a bloody end to the Beslan crisis, despite the initial promise from the authorities that the building itself would not be stormed. As stated by an anonymous (2004) author writing for *The Economist Global Agenda*,

“Indeed, most of the victims of the 2002 theatre siege and the 1995 hospital siege died as a result of the security forces’ botched attempts to rescue them.

Lamentably, there is a risk that the hostage crisis at the North Ossetian school will turn out the same way, though for now the authorities have promised it will not be stormed. Whatever the outcome, Mr Putin will, once again, try to pass it off as part of a global phenomenon. But in truth, Russia’s terrorist problem is overwhelmingly homegrown. The willingness of foreign leaders to endorse his arguments and to turn a blind eye to the abuses in Chechnya and elsewhere can only contribute to making it worse”. (Anonymous, 2004)

Eyal (2004) is even more explicit in expressing his doubts about the ability of the Russian counter-terrorists to save the hostages: “sadly, the Russian concept of rescue usually comes in a coffin”, he writes.

The above discussion demonstrates that there are a number of dramas and scripts which shape, and sometimes even determine, the Russo-Chechen conflict. They do so primarily by manipulating people’s perceptions of various concepts and events, which later have an impact on how various audiences respond to them. As illustrated by the examples recounted above, terrorism and counter-

terrorism are indeed social constructions and products of discourse, as it is through rhetoric that their meaning is constructed. The drama metaphor captures this process by looking at how certain actions are scripted and directed. Furthermore, it also provides a structure, within which those actions can be framed and interpreted.

Arguably, the Russo-Chechen conflict can be depicted as a struggle for dominance between conflicting dramas and scripts, each of which facilitates a particular interpretation of various social, historical and political events and issues, and in doing so, influences the actions and reactions of those watching. Two examples illustrate such struggle very well. The first is the ongoing attempt on behalf of both sides of the Russo-Chechen conflict to deprive their respective enemy of political legitimacy (i.e. the power to write and direct political scripts) by branding them “true terrorists”.

For example, after the attack in Budyonnovsk, Basayev (cited in Hughes, 2007: 159) stated that “there are no innocent Russians”. In 2006 he also said that “We are terrorists for them, and they are terrorists for us” (Basayev cited in Russell, 2007: 110). Moreover, he argued that in Dubrovka as well as Beslan all the Chechens were doing

“was holding people, demanding an end to the war and the genocide in Chechnya, and it was the Russists who killed their own people. It was not we (the Chechens – JS) who poisoned them with binary gas (banned from use by international law) at *Nord Ost*, nor was it us who set fire to them with flamethrowers (also banned from use by international law) in Beslan”.⁶² (KavkazCentr, 2005)

While during the attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan Russia was enforcing the script casting the Chechens as terrorists, attackers and savages, the Chechens in turn portrayed Russia as the “real terrorist” and depicted themselves as Russia’s “real hostages”. In doing so, the Chechens were heavily reliant on the view that “the Russian terror was a midwife to Chechen terror” (Hanbiyev, 2002), which they used as a justification for their own terrorist actions.

Another example, which demonstrates that the Russo-Chechen conflict can indeed be perceived as a struggle for dominance between conflicting dramas and

⁶² “Russist” is a pejorative description of a Russian national, used by some of the Chechens.

scripts, or a “war of representations” as defined by Moore (2010: 101), is Russia’s post-Budyonnovsk effort to change the status of the Chechen struggle for independence from an “internal matter” of Russia to an “Islamic threat” that needs to be addressed internationally. Inherently linked to this is Russia’s attempt to brand Chechen rebels as “Islamic terrorists” or *jihadists* and, through doing so, to deprive them of their previous status of nationalist-separatists.

Even though in Budyonnovsk the Chechens used some Islamic symbols (for example, Basayev labeled the attack “Operation Jihad” and had his troops wear green ribbons around their arms, which identify Chechen suicide fighters or Islamic *shahids* in general) (Murphy, 2004: 21), they portrayed themselves primarily as nationalist-separatists and were treated by the Russians as such. However, in Dubrovka, their strategy changed dramatically and, instead of continuing to portray themselves as ethno-nationalist warriors, the Chechens took on the role prescribed for them by the Russians at the time and presented themselves as no one else but Islamic terrorists. This interesting shift, which is often unjustly omitted in the literature on the subject, can be captured by the “drama of resistance” metaphor, which implies that when people find themselves outside of a certain political, legal or social framework, they tend to adjust their behaviour to new circumstances and either take on the roles that have been prescribed for them or rebel against those roles. The Dubrovka hostage-takers chose the first option in the hope that their actions, heavily flavoured by Islamic scripts, symbols and props, would earn them much-needed support among militant Islamic communities. However, in doing so, they also reinforced the Russian script, which no longer saw them as fighters for independence but instead as ruthless *jihadists*. The latter perception of the Chechens was so strong that in Beslan, two years after the attack in Dubrovka, they were still perceived as motivated primarily by religion, despite the absence of visual links by the Chechens to *jihad* or, as it is better known in the Chechen language, *ghazawat*.⁶³

In looking at all of this together, the attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan illustrate a number of important transitions, which were greatly

⁶³ According to Hafez (2007: 107), “The term *ghazwah* is an intentional allusion to battles in early Islamic history when Muslims fought against the unbelievers and ultimately triumphed over them”.

facilitated by a change in political discourse – in the dramas and scripts the Russians and the Chechens were enacting. One of those shifts has to do with the elevation of the political status of the Chechen struggle for independence from domestic to international that is closely linked to the change in how the Chechens themselves have been perceived. While during the attack in Budyonnovsk they were regarded and treated as nationalist-separatists, during the subsequent attacks in Dubrovka and Beslan their main identity was that of religiously motivated terrorists.

The language used to constitute the aforementioned shifts has undergone a number of transformations. As already mentioned, while the First Chechen War was depicted as a “war”, the Second Chechen War was referred to as a “counter-terrorist operation”. This shift has important bearings on the situation under consideration. For example, in order for the Chechens to be the subject of war, they needed to be considered political actors, as, according to the international law, only political actors are allowed to wage wars. At the same time, the term “counter-terrorist operation” gives political agency to one side only – the “counter-terrorist”, as the other, who is constituted a “terrorist”, is deprived of political standing and legitimacy. Finally, as noted by Sakwa (2005),

“[t]here is some utility to the Russians, (...) in presenting the conflict as part of the war against terrorism (in which, by definition, only the other side can be accused of employing terror) rather than a war against Chechnya (in which the rules of war would apply to both sides)”. (2005: 240)

The rhetorical transformation of the Chechens from national-separatists to religiously motivated fighters also plays an important role. Were it not for this change of discourse, President Putin would not have been able to link his fight against the Chechens with the U.S.-led counter-terrorist campaign, launched in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, which were masterminded and carried out by an Islamic terrorist organisation. This is not to say, however, that it is only the Russian Federation that benefited from the aforementioned shift of discourse. The Chechens did too. By being recognized as Islamic “holy warriors” they earned access to the triangle of political communication in Russia, not to mention significant support from radical Muslims worldwide.

Given drama's ability to structure events and frame them according to a particular convention, the drama metaphor is most useful for analysing the scripts that underlie people's interpretations of those events, such as terrorist attacks as well as counter-terrorist responses to them. In this section of the chapter the Russo-Chechen conflict was analysed as a struggle for domination between conflicting dramas and scripts, some of which have been composed and directed by the Russians, whilst others have been authored and "put in the scene" (*mise-en-scène*) by the Chechens. In creating various scripts, not only have the two sides of the conflict provided foundations for their respective performances, but in doing so they also structured and framed their respective actions. In addition, they have also established numerous conventions and frameworks, through which their antagonistic and oftentimes violent behaviour could be interpreted and understood. An insight into how the Russians and the Chechens acted out the roles prescribed for them by the most dominant dramas and scripts is provided in the next section, which analyses the attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan using the metaphor of theatre.

Theatre

A number of scripts were played out in Russia and Chechnya between 1995 and 2004. In each of those, the actors were given a task to perform the roles prescribed for them by those scripts. In Budyonnovsk and Beslan some of the actors refused to act out the roles designed for them by those who had written the dominant scripts, which then had a significant impact on how their performances were received and acted on. In Dubrovka, however, the actors did perform what was expected of them, which partially explains why it is the attack in Dubrovka, more so than the one in Budyonnovsk or Beslan, that arguably is best captured by the theatre metaphor. Another reason why the metaphor of theatre fits the Dubrovka attack best is because Dubrovka, in the ways it was choreographed and presented, did indeed constitute the "theater of terror' actualized" (Weimann, 2006: 39).

As already noted, the end of the twentieth- and the beginning of the twenty-first century saw a significant shift in how the Chechens were perceived

domestically as well as internationally. This change had largely to do with how the Chechens were presented by the Russian officials, who, in order to fulfill their own political needs, depicted the Chechens as religiously motivated rather than nationalist-separatist terrorists. In doing so President Putin deprived the Chechens of political legitimacy, through successfully severing their access to the triangle of official political communication. Even though the Chechens had the internet at their disposal, which largely helped them achieve their “internal” and organisational goals (such as recruitment and planning), they were still in need of “showing their doing” externally and communicating their messages/dramas world-wide. Having found themselves outside of the triangle of official political communication in Russia and abroad, the Chechens took on the role of Islamic militants, in order to reclaim their position on the political stage. They gave their most memorable performance as religiously motivated terrorists in October 2002 in the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow.

Even though the demands of the Dubrovka hostage-takers were of highly nationalist-separatist nature, i.e. they wanted the Second Chechen War to stop and the Russian army to withdraw from Ikcheria, the way they acted and the props they used in their performance made the Chechens come across as religiously motivated terrorists who were willing to die for their cause. While all male terrorists bar Movsar Barayev wore balaclavas, female hostage-takers wore veils. On the one hand, this choice of attire can be explained on a purely strategic level by the attempt, on behalf of the Dubrovka terrorists, to avoid recognition and to save their families from being punished for their actions. On the other hand, balaclavas and veils worn by the Dubrovka terrorists can also be regarded in terms of theatrical costumes and masks – props used to facilitate the perception of terrorists as Islamic militants, which they were hoping to use as a leverage to access the triangle of political communication, which, at the time, both in Russia as well as internationally, was preoccupied with the threat of Islamic terrorism. Given the political climate at the time, the second rationale gained prominence over the first one. Moreover, and in keeping with Butler’s (1990) observations on the role of performance in creating identity, by self-presenting as Islamic, the Chechens came to be perceived as such.

A number of authors support the claim that in Dubrovka the Chechens were “playing Islamic terrorists” rather than “being” them. For example, Antonenko (cited in Charles, 2002) notes that thanks to the Saudi-Arabian-looking “costumes”, worn especially by female hostage-takers, the Dubrovka terrorists “are presenting themselves now as a very much part of the global Islamic struggle against the so-called ‘infidel’”. Furthermore, and pointing to the Dubrovka hostage-takers’ proclaimed readiness to die for their cause, Nivat (cited in Schmemmann, 2002) suggests that “there is definitely a 9/11 element in this new way of *acting*. They [the Chechen hostage holders] saw that it was really possible to have a huge impact by being ready to lose their lives” (emphasis mine – JS).

Interestingly, an argument in favour of Chechen terrorists acting as if they were not Chechens *per se* but internationally-linked Islamic militants, is also raised by a number of their compatriots opposed to the use of terrorism in Chechnya’s ongoing quest for independence. Usmanov (2002) is one of them. At the time of the Dubrovka siege Usmanov was a representative of the Chechen President Maskhadov to the United States. He claims that the Dubrovka hostage-taking was indeed a Russian provocation, especially since “Chechens are against any form of terrorism”. Furthermore, alluding to how Chechen terrorists presented themselves in the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow, Usmanov (2002) also argues that not only do the “Chechen women never wear veils”, but also “in Moscow it is impossible for even three Chechens to get together, let alone in camouflage clothes”. In spite of the arguments put forward by Usmanov, the Dubrovka terrorists were largely regarded as religiously motivated. This is further demonstrated by La Guardia’s comment, according to which the fact that the Dubrovka hostage-takers “wore Saudi-style black veils, or chadors, with Arabic writing on their heads (...) was a clear sign of Arabic influence on the Chechen fighters” (2002).

For reasons which will become clear in the “spectacle” part of this chapter the perception of Chechen terrorists in Dubrovka as linked to Islamic radicals and Al-Qaeda was facilitated not only by the Russian propaganda but also by the Dubrovka terrorists themselves. However, out of the three terrorist attacks under consideration in this chapter, Dubrovka is the only case, where the roles of terrorists and counter-terrorists were enacted in unison with the roles prescribed

for them by the dominant script. For example, in Budyonnovsk the Russians portrayed the Chechens as nationalist-separatist, despite the latter's use of a variety of Islamic props in their performance. At the same time, in Beslan, despite Russia's continuous attempts to present the Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs (RAS) as an Islamic terrorist organisation with strong links to Al-Qaeda, the Chechens did not resemble the "holy" warriors, especially in comparison to their performance two years earlier in Dubrovka.

Of the group responsible for the attack on the Dubrovka Theatre as well as the 2004 takeover of Beslan's School No. One Dolnik and Fitzgerald (2008) write:

"[d]ue to its originality with regards to employing large-scale suicidal hostage-taking operations, the systemic use of female suicide bombers, past involvement in radiological terrorism, indiscriminate targeting logic, extreme lethality, the use of suicide bombers on airplanes, RAS falls into the category of the most spectacular terrorist organizations of all time". (2008: 102)

However, according to Gunaratna (cited in Chulov and Higgins, 2004), RAS would not be able to carry out an attack this spectacular, if it was not for the help ("the co-operation and input") obtained from "foreign mujahidin who are also more experienced in staging such spectacular and theatrical events". In Gunaratna's opinion (cited in Chulov and Higgins, 2004), the fact that the attack in Beslan was highly spectacular can be considered a proof that Al-Qaeda "had played an integral role" in its preparation.

So far, the theatre section of this chapter has focused on how Chechen terrorists used various props to create, project and perform their identity. Another aspect of Chechen terrorism, which can be studied using the theatre metaphor is not only how Chechen terrorists choreograph their actions to gain the attention of the mass media, but also how the mass media report on these actions.

In Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan terrorists relied on the tactic of hostage-taking, which the previous chapters of this thesis described as the most "theatrical" – attention-generating and televisable – of all terrorist tactics. What also increased the "theatricality" of the three attacks was that in all three cases terrorists targeted groups of people who rank very highly in Moeller's (2009)

“hierarchy of innocence – a hierarchy of those we learn about” and thus generate a great deal of interest on behalf of those watching. Among these groups, as listed by Moeller (2009: 71), are (in decreasing order of importance): “the natives of the country being attacked” – *vide* the predominantly Russian audience in the Dubrovka Theatre; infants and young children, who were targeted in the Beslan’s school; and pregnant women, that were attacked during the siege of a maternity ward in the Budyonnovsk hospital. However, despite the ability of direct victims of all three attacks to draw in viewers, their selection, especially in the case of Beslan, proved highly detrimental to terrorists and negatively affected the overall success of the Beslan attack.

By terrorising children, Beslan terrorists overplayed “their hands in displaying unspeakable cruelty” (Nacos, 2006: 11). In addition, by using children for political purposes and by degrading a school to a place of violence (UNICEF, 2004), the Chechens made their attack not only about those watching but also about its direct victims – “those killed”. Subsequently, their actions can no longer be considered as an example of terrorism “aimed at those watching and not at those killed” (Jenkins, 1988), which points to a limited applicability of the “terrorism is theatre” metaphor to that particular case.

Another possible shortcoming of the theatre metaphor can be identified in the context of counter-terrorism. Earlier it was mentioned that what differentiates terrorism from other forms of political violence is its requirement of an audience – “those watching”. This, however, does not apply to counter-terrorism, which, like war or torture, can take place regardless of whether somebody is watching or not. In other words, while terrorists rely on a display of their actions in order to generate attention, only some of the counter-terrorism efforts are “shown”, with others remaining hidden from the public view. The attacks and counter-attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan confirm this observation.

For example, in Budyonnovsk, counter-terrorist actions were heavily publicised, to the extent that even the phone negotiations between Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and Shamil Basayev were televised (Murphy, 2004: 23). On the one hand, this enhanced “visibility” of counter-terrorism was facilitated by the fact that the mass media in Russia at the time were uncensored and therefore free

to report on the Budyonnovsk attack from both sides of the Russo-Chechen barricade. On the other hand, an increased display of the counter-terrorist efforts on behalf of the Russian Administration (Prime Minister Chernomyrdin in particular) can be explained by its urgent need to restore Russia's image as a state that not only looks after its citizens but is competent and pro-active in fighting any threats to their security.

During the attacks in Dubrovka and Beslan, the censorship of the Russian media was much heavier, compared to that during the 1995 attack in Budyonnovsk. This has led to a situation in which the images of Russia's counter-terrorist efforts in the Dubrovka Theatre as well as the Beslan's school were much less accessible to the public. Another reason why the counter-terrorist actions in Dubrovka and Beslan were not as heavily showcased as they were in Budyonnovsk might have to do with the fact that, unlike the siege of the hospital in Budyonnovsk, the hostage-takings in Dubrovka and Beslan were part of the process of Russia spectacularising Chechen terrorism to fulfill its political needs. As part of this undertaking, Russia was careful to highlight only certain aspects of the terrorist problem, while downplaying others. Very keen to be perceived as potent and capable by its supporters and potential allies, Russia could not allow itself to be linked to the lack of success on either the Dubrovka or the Beslan front. Moreover, it could not afford to be perceived as a state, which promises to save the world from global terrorism, whilst being shockingly unable to deal with terrorism at home.

In order to protect its positive image, Russia went to extreme lengths, such as preventing a number of journalists from reporting on the attack in Beslan, which subsequently limited how "theatrical", i.e. mass-mediated their counter-terrorist actions were. Among the best-known examples of such practice one can list the poisoning of Politkovskaya on her way to Beslan, the arrest of Babitsky – a fellow investigative journalist – before he arrived at the school and the dismissal of *Izvestia's* editor Shapirov in the aftermath of the paper's publication on the Beslan hostage-taking.⁶⁴ Even though not all counter-terrorism is theatre, and not

⁶⁴ In this context Moeller (2009: 176) invokes the words of *The New York Times Magazine's* reporter Scott Anderson who asks: "After two rounds of a scorched-earth war in Chechnya that has left at least 5 percent of the civilian population dead and another 30

all counter-terrorists are players, there are indeed times when, to paraphrase B. Jenkins (1975: 5), counter-terrorism is choreographed to either attract or distract the attention of the media. Moreover, on some occasions, counter-terrorism is aimed at the “people watching” not the actual victims. For this reason, counter-terrorism can be theatre.

The theatre metaphor informs various aspects of terrorist- and counter-terrorist attacks in Budyonovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan. It sheds most light on how terrorists and counter-terrorists enact roles prescribed for them by particular political scripts. Furthermore, the theatre metaphor increases the understanding of how terrorists and counter-terrorists stage their respective actions to generate the interest of those watching. It does so by informing what props they use, or ought to use, to assure the right interpretation of the drama as well as the actions they are performing. This concerns the backdrop, masks or costumes terrorists or counter-terrorists employ but also, and arguably even more importantly, the victims they choose as “generators” of their respective messages.

Spectacle

In the Russo-Chechen context, the spectacle metaphor seems well-fitted to capture the process of spectacularisation of Chechen terrorism by the Russian state and Chechen separatists alike. As noted in Chapter One, Hozic’s “spectacularisation of terrorism” theory stipulates that a weak state or a weak terrorist group can turn terrorism into a spectacle – understood in terms of a display of power – in order to prove themselves to their respective constituents and, as a consequence, gain their allegiance and support (Hozic, 1990: 74). This is achieved in three phases. Firstly, the state deprives terrorists of their political agency and legitimacy by describing them as outcasts. Secondly, terrorists stage spectacular attacks in order to prove their worth to their constituents and to re-enter the triangle of political communication. Finally, the “spectacularised” state

percent displaced, why does the rest of the world seem willing to accept President Putin’s characterization of that conflict as a winding-down police action against ‘bandits’ and ‘terrorists’? Because by helping turn Chechnya into a killing field for journalists – 15 dead, by latest count, often at the hands of Russian soldiers – the Russian government can now characterise that conflict pretty much any way it wants to”.

and “spectacularised” terrorists compete against each other in a “war of representations” (Moore, 2010: 101).

Having positively tested Hozic’s spectacularisation theory against the case studies, this section evaluates the analytical potential of the spectacle metaphor to enhance the understanding of terrorism and counter-terrorism alike. It shows that the spectacle metaphor captures the very interesting process in which terrorism is transformed into a spectacle to serve one’s political aims. Furthermore, the spectacle metaphor provides those who evaluate the success of a terrorist or counter-terrorist performance based on the coming together of Alexander’s “performative elements” (2006b: 95) with an insight into how the “background meaning” is generated and shaped.

Spectacularisation of the Chechen terrorism – phase one

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 left Russia weak and in need of reinvention both at home and abroad. Once an empire controlling a vast amount of land and peoples, by the early 1990s Russia found itself struggling to hold onto its territory, with many of the former-Soviet Union republics, such as Chechnya, wanting to secede. Moreover, having lost its super-power status with the end of the Cold War, Russia also needed a new international role, which would help it keep its prominent place on the stage of an increasingly globalised world politics. The 1995-2004 phase of its conflict with Chechnya demonstrates that Russia attended to its domestic issues first and to the international ones later, with the separatist Republic of Ikcheria remaining an important factor in both.

As already noted, the First Chechen War (1994-1996) was an attempt by President Yeltsin to reinforce Russia’s statehood. Not only did President Yeltsin aim to restore constitutional order in the country; he also wanted to prevent Russia’s disintegration, using Chechnya as a severe warning to any Russian territories expressing separatist tendencies. However, his heavy-handed policy towards the Republic of Ikcheria was not received well, as many Russians believed that the “re-emerging” Russian state had more pressing issues to deal with at the time than to launch a costly war in the northern Caucasus.

Furthermore, they perceived the war as serving no one but President Yeltsin himself.⁶⁵

Another factor that contributed to the poor perception of the First Chechen War by the Russians was the fact that, mainly due to the – at the time – uncensored mass media, they were able to witness the true brutality of the war, which claimed the lives of approximately 50,000 Russian soldiers – more than the eight-year long Soviet campaign in Afghanistan in the 1980s (Cornell, 2003: 170).

In order to capitalise on anti-Russian sentiments and to gain even more attention and sympathy for the Chechen cause, six months into the First Chechen War Shamil Basayev and his troops staged a “terrorism spectacular” in Budyonnovsk. Terrorists issued three demands, all of which were met. The Budyonnovsk attack forced Russia to leave Chechnya, as stipulated in the Khasavyurt Accords signed in 1996, which many perceived as humiliation,⁶⁶ and some even as a “tombstone of Russian power” (Lieven, 1999; also see Moore, 2010: 131).

Having “lost face” in Budyonnovsk, the Russians strengthened their anti-Chechen policies and actions. From now on, the Russian mass media were heavily censored, making it much easier for Russia to spectacularise Chechen terrorism and to influence the ways in which it was perceived and acted on. In keeping with Hozic’s (1990) characterization of the first phase of terrorism spectacularisation, partially thanks to the controlled media, the Russians intensified the process of demonizing and delegitimizing the Chechens, who were now depicted as “spooks”, “monkeys”, “blacks” and “people of Caucasian nationality” (Russell, 2005: 106).

The Chechens, however, were not without blame. The attack in Budyonnovsk cost them a lot of public support. Moreover, the first military encounter with Russia proved very profitable to a number of Chechen warlords,

⁶⁵ Speaking of the main reasons for the First Chechen War Russia’s Security Council Secretary Oleg Lobov stated: “we need a small, victorious war to raise the President’s ratings” (cited in Wood, 2007: 60).

⁶⁶ According to Russell (2005: 109), one of the reasons behind the Second Chechen War was the will on behalf of the Russian military to avenge the embarrassment suffered in 1996 (also see Williams, 2004: 19).

who were not interested in ending the conflict, as to do so would deprive them of their status, not to mention a very good source of income. As a result, they undertook a number of illegal activities (such as kidnapping people for ransom), which were mainly aimed against Russia and those whom they considered to be its allies. In order to perpetuate the cycle of violence, some of the aforementioned warlords also sought support from radical Muslim communities in the Middle East and used a radical, Wahhabite version of Islam as a weapon against its Orthodox opponent. The latter became most visible on August 7th, 1999, when the so-called Islamic International Brigade, led by Shamil Basayev and Ibn al-Khattab, invaded Dagestan, Chechnya's eastern neighbour. Russia considered this a *casus belli* and on August 26th, 1999 the Second Chechen War began.

A few days into the Second Chechen War the so-called "Russian apartment bombings" took place. As a result of the explosions in Buynaksk (on September 4th), Moscow (on September 9th and 13th) and Volgodonsk (on September 16th) around 300 people died and more than 650 were injured. While there is a body of literature that suggests that the apartment bombings were not carried out by the Chechens,⁶⁷ they were widely blamed for them. Moreover, the bombings were soon branded "Russia's own 'Black September', after which the public mood swung decisively against the Chechens" (Russell, 2005: 106; also see Russell, 2007: 93 and Evangelista, 2002: 67).

Having lost their positive appeal, which they enjoyed before the First Chechen War and the attack in Budyonnovsk, the Chechens needed to prove themselves to their "interest' third party" (Münkler, 2005: 102). To that end, they developed a "spectacular' self-consciousness" (Hozic, 1990: 74), that is symptomatic of the second phase of the spectacularisation of terrorism, which is described next.

⁶⁷ Evangelista (2002: 67, 80-84) and Sakwa (2005: 16) are some of the authors who provide arguments in favour of the hypothesis that the "Russian apartment bombings" were staged not by the Chechens but by the Russian secret services (FSB) in order to provide Russia with a reason to declare another war on Chechnya.

Spectacularisation of the Chechen terrorism – phase two

In the second half of the 1990s, and having previously attended to some of its domestic issues, Russia was ready to focus on reinventing itself internationally. One of the priorities of its foreign policy at the time was to reshape Russia's once antagonistic relations with Europe and the United States. With the West increasingly concerned about the threat of Islamic terrorism, President Putin decided to once again use the situation in Chechnya to satisfy Russia's political needs. To that end, he launched an intense campaign to rhetorically re-brand Chechen terrorists, described earlier as nationalist-separatists, and to portray them from then on as ruthless and omnipresent Islamic *jihadists*. This then allowed Putin to claim that Russia was indeed involved directly with combating global terrorism, which makes it a perfect ally in the U.S.-led post-9/11 Global War on Terror.

Russia's attempts to portray itself as a country committed to fighting international terrorism is exemplified by two incidents in which the Russian Federation accused the Netherlands and Denmark of directly supporting international terrorism in light of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 passed on September 28th, 2001. The Netherlands was accused of supporting terrorism by hosting the launching of the newspaper *Chechen Times* at the Newspoort Press Center in the Netherlands on October 24th, 2002 (the day when the Dubrovka Theatre was taken over). Denmark, on the other hand, was charged because it had agreed to hold the World Chechen Congress on its territory around the same time.

On October 24th, 2002 Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexander Losyukov addressed the Netherlands Ambassador to Moscow, Tiddo P. Hofstee. According to the Press Release issued after the meeting by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the Russian Federation, Russia "has repeatedly conveyed its extreme concern over the presentation of the newspaper *Chechen Times*" and "wants to prevent the carrying out of an obviously anti-Russian action on the territory of the Netherlands" (MFA of the Russian Federation, 2002). According to the Dutch representative, the Netherlands had no legal basis to suppress such action. However, Hofstee acknowledged the political character of

the *Chechen Times*' launch as it collided with President Putin's visit to the Netherlands. In Russia's view this could not be regarded in any terms other than "as direct support of terrorism" (MFA of the Russian Federation, 2002).

On October 30th, 2002 the World Chechen Congress was to take place in Copenhagen, Denmark. It was at this meeting that a Peace Plan for Chechnya was to be endorsed, granting Chechnya autonomy within Russia, with security guaranteed by international bodies. This would have allowed the Chechens to reintroduce aspects of traditional custom (*adaat*) into their socio-political structure, whilst reducing their dependence on *sharia* law (Sakwa, 2005: 263). However, "the fall out from the *Nord-Ost* theatre siege effectively aborted this process" (Russell, 2005: 111). Russia opposed such a gathering, calling it an "anti-Russian-get-together".

According to Alexander Losyukov, this "provocative" and "anti-Russian" "congress" was organized by "extremist forces" seeking to "undermine the process of political settlement in Chechnya and detach it from Russia" (MFA of the Russian Federation, 2002). Losyukov also warned that holding the congress in Copenhagen "will have serious consequences both for Russia's further cooperation with the Danish EU Presidency and for Russian-Danish relations" (MFA of the Russian Federation, 2002). In the same statement, the Russian government linked the attack on the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the U.S. and the attacks in Bali.⁶⁸

By playing the "Dubrovka as Russia's 9/11" card, Putin managed to strengthen his position in relation to the United States. His efforts were facilitated by the fact that at the time the U.S. was also interested in a closer relationship with Russia. One of the reasons why the U.S. wanted to have the Russian Federation "at hand" was because it wanted Moscow to back the resolution the U.S. had sponsored on disarming Iraq. In addition, the U.S., already heavily engaged in the post-9/11 War on Terrorism, could not afford to refuse the privileges offered by President Putin, such as: military assistance to the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance; access to Russian intelligence data collected during its

⁶⁸ The Bali attacks took place on October 12th, 2002, and consisted of two explosions carried out by two Jemaah Islamiyah suicide bombers nearby (Sari Pub) and in (Paddy's Pub, opposite Sari) a busy nightclub, leaving 202 people, mostly from Western countries, dead, and 240 injured.

war in Afghanistan in the 1980s; and the permission to use Russian airspace as well as basing rights in the ex-Soviet Central Asian republics (Williams, 2004: 21). The United States reciprocated by significantly limiting the anti-Russian discourse, the majority of which had to do with Russia's violations of human rights in Chechnya. It further discredited Putin's Chechen adversaries and, what is more, gave him the chance to "establish a personal rapport with the powerful American president" (Williams, 2004: 21).⁶⁹

What strengthened the pro-American position of Russia in the immediate aftermath of the attack on the Moscow theatre, was a very strong link used by politicians as well as the media, which rushed to describe it as Russia's very own 9/11. According to the *Associated Press*, the situation in the theatre "can be compared only to 9/11 because of its scope and how extreme it is" (The Associated Press, 2002). This comparison worked on political as well as social level. Speaking of social responses to the Dubrovka attack, Buchsteiner (2006) noted that the Russian government "compares the Moscow hostage crisis with the attacks of September 11th in New York. In both cases it is considered 'unpatriotic' to discuss the causes of terrorism or to look for nonviolent solutions". In addition, on September 3rd, 2010 (6 years after the attack in Beslan) the families of some of the 9/11 victims attended Russia's Day of Solidarity in the Fight against Terrorism. They accompanied those who survived the Beslan siege in remembering victims of the deadly apartment building blasts in Moscow and Volgodonsk in 1999, as well as those killed in a terrorist attack on the Dubrovka Theatre in 2002 (Artyom, 2010), thereby maintaining the link between the two terrorist attacks in question.

It was not only the audacity and lethality of the attack on the Dubrovka Theatre that triggered and fed its comparisons to the attacks of 9/11. The fact that Movsar Barayev and his team staged the siege as a suicidal act which was to please Allah, was also of particular importance, especially given the highly

⁶⁹ On October 24th, 2002 the Russian news agency *Interfax* reported that during the Dubrovka siege, the U.S. Consul General in St. Petersburg, Morris Hughes, called to release hostages (one of whom was American). In addition, he offered the Russians his support and prayers on behalf of the consulate staff and the American people. Finally, speaking in the name of the American government, the Consul General denounced any forms of terrorism. He said that the United States perceives terrorism to be a common threat that can be rebuffed only by common, i.e. international efforts (Interfax, 2002).

securitized climate of the War on Terror at the time. The Dubrovka attack took place 13 months after the Al-Qaeda's attack on New York and Washington, 12 months after the American attack on Afghanistan and only 5 months before the beginning of the counter-terrorist campaign in Iraq.

As already noted in the context of the Chechen "drama of resistance", and as demonstrated by the 2002 attack in the Dubrovka Theatre, Chechen terrorists, having found themselves outside of the nationalist-separatist framework, adjusted their behaviour to the post-9/11 circumstances and fully took on the role of Islamic terrorists that was prescribed for them by President Putin and his associates. In spectacularising themselves as Islamic terrorists, which found its most powerful expression in the heavy reliance of the Dubrovka terrorists on Islamic symbols, they wanted to create a "crisis situation", which they hoped would enlarge their audience and strengthen international support for their cause.

Given that the Dubrovka hostage-takers wore Islamic clothes, displayed posters praising Allah around the theatre hall, and used the Black Widows in the attack, one could argue that they were indeed Islamic terrorists – *shahids* and *shahidas* – who came to the Moscow's theatre to die. However, their willingness to do so remains debatable, given their failure to activate the explosives during the 50 minutes that lapsed between the moment that the gas was pumped into the building, and the storming of the theatre by Russian counter-terrorist forces.

The majority of the literature on the subject points to Islam as a result rather than a cause of Russian violence in Chechnya (see, for example, Hughes, 2007: 277). In this light, the use of Islam by the Dubrovka terrorists can be seen as instrumental, that is, employed to achieve their political goals, rather than because they were themselves Islamic. It is possible that, had the Dubrovka terrorists not worn Islamic clothing and had they avoided making religious references, they would have been still regarded as "freedom fighters" or nationalist-separatist terrorists, as was the case in Budyonnovsk. This would then have significantly limited their influence and international appeal. The situation in Chechnya would then most likely have remained the "internal matter" of Russia in the eyes of the domestic as well as international public.

The above observations point to what Hozic (1990: 66) refers to as “spectacularity”, conceptualised as a value added to terrorism, rather than its inherent characteristic. Despite their heavy reliance on Islamic symbols in Dubrovka, in Beslan Chechen terrorists did not use them to half as great an extent, arguably, to appeal to those of their constituents who supported them in their “ethno-nationalist”, rather than a “holy” war against Russia. Russia, however, only partially adjusted to this change. Even though it now perceived the threat of Islamic terrorism to be coming from the entire northern Caucasus and not from Chechnya alone, it continued to disregard the re-emerging “nationalist-separatist” status of Chechen terrorists and persisted in labelling them *jihadists*. As will be acknowledged in the forthcoming analysis of the 1995-2004 phase of the Russo-Chechen conflict through the prism of the performance metaphor, in Beslan the Chechens failed to perform their role as Islamic terrorists, which partially made the attack unsuccessful. What also contributed to its failure was Russia’s inability to adjust their reactions to post-Dubrovka circumstances.

Spectacularisation of the Chechen terrorism – phase three

In the third stage of spectacularisation the spectacularised state and spectacularised terrorists compete against each other (Hozic, 1990: 74). Even though the level of terrorism spectacularisation on behalf of the Russian state and the Chechen hostage-takers was not as high in Beslan as it was in Dubrovka, Beslan signals a distinct “war of representations” between the two. As already mentioned, terrorists’ reliance on Islamic symbols, so prominent in Dubrovka, was hardly noticeable in Beslan. However, even then, their perception as Islam-motivated, Al-Qaeda-linked terrorists was high. That the latter proved detrimental to those who took over School No. One in Beslan is demonstrated by the fact, that despite the Beslan terrorists claiming to be fighting for the independence of Chechnya, the audience did not interpret their actions as such. One of the reasons the Chechen actions were not read as nationalist-separatist, despite the Beslan terrorists voicing the ethno-nationalist rationale for their attack, is because of the background meaning imposed on the audience by the Russian script, which was dominant at the time and which cast the Chechens in

the role of holy-, and not ethno-nationalist warriors. The latter was so strong and widely resounding that despite the Chechens not playing the role of Islamic terrorists, they were widely perceived and responded to as such. At the same time, the fact that in Beslan the Chechens did not self-present as *jihadists*, who Russia portrayed them as, undermined the strength of the Russian script. Unlike in Dubrovka, where the Chechens enforced the Russian script by playing the role the Russians had prescribed for them, in Beslan, they acted out a different script, and, in doing so, they also weakened the appeal of the message projected by the Russian counter-terrorists.

The above discussion points to the role of the spectacle metaphor in analysing the process of using terrorism to achieve political needs by the Russian state as well as Chechen terrorists opposing the latter's jurisdiction over their republic. What it also demonstrates is that spectacularity is not an inherent quality either of terrorism or counter-terrorism. Rather, it is employed by a weak state or a weak terrorist organisation to prove itself to its audience. This is achieved by directing the attention of the audience towards particular issues or aspects of one's identity and away from others. In doing so, those "spectacularising" terrorism provide their respective audiences with a "background meaning" – a framework or logical structure that imposes a particular interpretation of certain events onto an audience and relieves it from having to come up with it themselves. On the one hand, this unites the audience – makes it less fragmented and more likely to interpret something in a similar way. On the other hand, this also deprives the audience of the ability to think critically, making it much more prone to political manipulation.

Performance

Arguably, the aforementioned process of turning Chechen terrorism into spectacle by both the Russian Federation as well as Chechen terrorists themselves can be linked to the "performative power" of both. For example, in Dubrovka, which can be considered the apogee of the spectacularisation process on behalf of the Russians as well as the Chechens, the "performative power" of terrorism and counter-terrorism was comparably high. Just as the Dubrovka terrorists have

gone to great lengths to “show” their terrorist “doing”, the Dubrovka counter-terrorists also put a lot of effort into publicly displaying some of their counter-terrorist actions. For example, with the public relations disaster of Kursk still a vivid memory, President Putin did everything he could not to lose face again. In order to self-present as a strong yet caring leader, not only did he publicly promise to “finish off the terrorists”, in the aftermath of the Dubrovka attack Putin was also seen visiting its victims in Moscow’s hospitals. Moreover, unlike President Yeltsin, who was in Canada at the time of the Budyonnovsk siege, President Putin made sure he was in Moscow when the Dubrovka attack unfolded – he “called off a trip to Germany and Portugal to deal with the drama on his doorstep” as “the spectacular attack was a stinging blow to him” (Reuters, 2002).

Nevertheless, there were some aspects to the Dubrovka counter-terrorist attack that were hidden from the public view. For example, the nature of the gas used to overpower those in the theatre was not revealed until almost a week after the attack. According to the Russian officials, this was due to security reasons. The “security” argument was quickly disproved, however, on the basis that by keeping the chemical make-up of the gas secret, the Russian state actually endangered its citizens who, having been exposed to the potentially lethal gas, could not be cured, as the doctors treating them did not know what antidote to use.

Even though only some of Putin’s counter-terrorist actions were displayed during and after the attack on the Dubrovka Theatre, the “performative power” of Russian counter-terrorism in Dubrovka was higher compared to that exercised by President Yeltsin in Budyonnovsk. Arguably, this can be related to the fact that, unlike the attack in Dubrovka, which was portrayed as Russia’s war against international terrorism, the attack in Budyonnovsk, often depicted as an “internal matter” of Russia, was not spectacularised at all.

As already acknowledged above, when the assault in Budyonnovsk began President Yeltsin was on his way to the G7 summit in Halifax, Canada.⁷⁰ As noted by Specter (1995b),

⁷⁰ According to Seely (2001: 275), the “timing of the attack, which took place as Yeltsin was flying to Canada to attend a conference of the G7 (Group of Seven) industrialised

“He has rarely been seen in public this year, never even made a statement in the first two weeks of the Chechen war last December, and has seemed increasingly detached from his job and his country. Parliament voted on Friday to call him back. Although they have no real power, the vote was unanimous”. (Specter, 2005a; also see Yuryev, 1995: 6-7).

However, President Yeltsin did not respond positively to that call, which was met with fury on behalf of many of the Russian citizens who felt abandoned and believed that “Mr. Yeltsin should have come here. ‘Your President Clinton went to Oklahoma City’, one woman said” (Erlanger, 1995a).

The image of “passive” and “uninvolved” Yeltsin (Erlanger, 1995b) stood in stark contrast to the one presented by his Prime Minister at the time – Chernomyrdin, who took over the Budyonovsk negotiations with Shamil Basayev. Chernomyrdin was perceived as “operating independently” yet “willing to compromise” (The New York Times, 1995). In addition, he

“suddenly came alive for most Russians. He transformed himself from a colourless Soviet-style manager to an anguished statesman, working hard to protect the lives of the hostages and bring a faster end to the debacle in Chechnya”. (Erlanger, 1995b)

It was also claimed that Chernomyrdin

“captured the imagination of the nation by single-handedly negotiating the end of Russia’s most demoralizing recent episode: the seizure of more than 1,000 hostages in the southern town of Budyonovsk by a band of Chechen guerrilla fighters”. (Specter, 1995b)

The aforementioned descriptions were contrasted with those of President Yeltsin who, at the time of the attack in Budyonovsk, was coming across as “tired, vague and on the wrong side of these crucial events” (Erlanger, 1995b), instead of being “tough, capable of facing down the fierce rebel soldiers of Chechnya, and willing to use force when he needs to” (Specter, 1996), as his Russian public expected him to be.

That President Putin was much more successful than President Yeltsin in self-presenting as a “good tsar” with some “bad servants who were responsible for

nations, was a humiliation for the Russian leader as it projected the war to the centre of Russian and world politics”.

all the failings of the government” (Pain, 2005: 71) is reflected by the fact that even though during the terrorists’ seizure of the school in Beslan Putin’s support fell by 2-4 per cent, it had returned to pre-Beslan levels within a month (Pain, 2005: 71). Moreover, in less than two weeks after the Beslan siege (on September 13th, 2004) Putin was strong enough to impose a number of changes on Russia’s government and judiciary, and to introduce a variety of counter-terrorism measures, such as a “crisis management system” designed to conduct the war against terror (Sakwa, 2008: 141-142), all of which contributed to the further strengthening of the “performative power” of Beslan’s counter-terrorism.⁷¹

One of the reasons why the “performativity” of Beslan’s counter-terrorism was so high can be explained by the fact that in Beslan the Russian state had to work very hard on keeping its audience focused and interested in the threat of Chechen terrorism, which Putin presented as “spectacular”, even though, as will be noted below, this was not necessarily the case. As part of making Chechen terrorism a much bigger threat than it was in reality, Putin insisted that it was not just Chechnya that was a hotbed of international terrorism, but the Caucasus as a whole (Snetkov, 2007: 1353). This shift is best reflected in the fact that President Putin did not mention Chechnya in any of his statements after the attack on the North Ossetian school. While this can be interpreted as Russia’s attempt at making Chechen terrorism more “international” and therefore less “domestic”, it can also be regarded in terms of an endeavour, on behalf of the Russian power-holders, to save their face. The latter was poignantly reflected in Putin’s efforts to blame the Beslan attack not on the wrongs of any of his decisions and policies, but on the weakness of Russia itself – the once huge and great country which “unfortunately turned out to be nonviable in the conditions of rapidly changing world” (BBC News, 2002c).

⁷¹ Lemaître (2006) describes the aforementioned attempts by Putin in terms of “the rollback of democracy in Russia”, whereas Sakwa (2008: 141-143) describes them as Putin’s “constitutional coup”. While the majority of authors link those changes to Beslan and its aftermath (Boykevitch, 2005; Lynch, 2005), Sakwa (2008: 118) demonstrates that a number of legal changes eventually enforced after the attack in Beslan had been drafted before September 2004. However, he also acknowledges that Beslan provided a favourable climate for these reforms to be passed and implemented.

Performance, misperformance and counter-performance

For a terrorist or counter-terrorist performance to be successful the audience needs to give it a meaning that is in keeping with the script terrorists or counter-terrorists enact. For that to happen, actors need to convey the script using appropriate props. Of the three terrorist attacks under consideration in this chapter, terrorists' ability to "achieve verisimilitude through effective *mise-en-scène*" (Alexander, 2006a: 29) is best exemplified by the 2002 take-over of the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow, during which the Chechens effectively self-presented as Islamic. To that end, not only did they dress like Islamic terrorists, they also proclaimed their willingness to die for their cause. What further contributed to the success of their performance was the fact that the actions of the Dubrovka terrorists were read in keeping with the dominant Russian script, which also saw them as Islamic terrorists.

Two years after the attack on the Dubrovka Theatre Shamil Basayev's forces took over a school in Beslan. However, despite still being portrayed as militant Islamists, in Beslan terrorists' reliance on Islamic symbols and props was limited, compared to the one they demonstrated in Dubrovka or even Budyonnovsk. Because in Beslan terrorists did not play the role that was prescribed for them by the dominant – Russian – script, the effectiveness of their actions as well as the credibility of the very script were significantly compromised. At the same time, the Beslan terrorists neither presented nor enacted an alternative script that would have been strong enough to replace the one promoted by President Putin and his associates after the events of September 11th, 2001. Furthermore, the fact that in Beslan it was not just the Chechens who were the terrorist actors, but also the Ossetians, the Ingush and the Arabs, contributed to the weakening of their "Chechen identity" as well as their message – the determination to bring about the independence of Chechnya from Russia. However, even though the Beslan terrorists struggled to convince their audiences that their actions were aimed primarily at liberating Ikcheria from the Russian Federation, the fact that their group was composed of terrorists of a few nationalities, rather than just the Chechens, played to the hands of President

Putin, who, in the third phase of turning Chechen terrorism into a spectacle, portrayed the entire northern Caucasus, and not only Chechnya as a hotbed for international, mainly Islamic, terrorism.

What the aforementioned discussion illustrates is that, unlike in the case of Dubrovka, where the “background meaning, actors, props, scripts, direction, and audience” (Alexander, 2006b: 95) came together, in Beslan they did not. Despite Russia’s efforts to present Chechen terrorists as Islamic, the Beslan hostage-takers did not play that role very convincingly, which then made it difficult for the audience to believe the anti-Chechen script written and directed by President Putin. Apart from failing to perform the role prescribed for them by the Russian script, Beslan terrorists were not successful in enforcing an alternative script that would allow their audiences to read their actions as being first and foremost about making Chechnya independent. Based on those examples one could claim that in Beslan both terrorists and counter-terrorists misperformed. Not only were their actions not successful in changing the political behaviour and attitude of their audiences, but they also failed in making the audience arrive at a united interpretation and understanding of terrorist and/or counter-terrorist actions, which would be in keeping with the way terrorists and/or counter-terrorists had intended them. This inability of the Beslan terrorists as well as counter-terrorists to generate an “interpretive unison” on behalf of their audiences can be regarded as an argument in favour of looking at the Beslan terrorist and counter-terrorist attacks in terms of a misperformance. What further contributed to the two being unsuccessful was the choice of the direct victims/props used in the Beslan attack – children.

Few terrorist attacks have been as emotion-laden and heavy in symbolism as the one in Beslan. This is mostly because, to paraphrase the words of the UNICEF director Carol Bellamy condemning the attack, in Beslan children were used for political purposes and a school was degraded to a place of violence (UNICEF, 2004).⁷² In most cultures children are given a special status – unable to protect themselves, they need to be protected; innocent – they cannot be punished; being guarantors of a future for a family line or a nation – they cannot

⁷² Bellamy’s exact words were: “Children must never be used for political purposes, and schools must never be degraded to places of violence”. (UNICEF, 2004)

be killed. The universal need for special safeguards and care for the children is acknowledged and turned into an all-abiding law by such documents as the United Nations General Assembly 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child (United Nations, [1959] 2012). In addition to those, in the Russo-Chechen context a special status granted unto children also springs from religious assumptions regarding the innocence of a child (present in many religious traditions, including the Islamic one) as well as the biological and sociological need of protecting a severely depopulated nation (in this case Chechnya) in a time of war.

Attacking a school and killing the children – who enjoy an almost holy status in the war-torn Caucasus – have cost the Beslan terrorists the support of a considerable number of Chechens on whose behalf Zakayev, London-based envoy to Chechnya's President Maskhadov, said: "A bigger blow could not have been dealt on us. (...) Now people around the world will think that Chechens are beasts and monsters if they could attack children" (cited in Korchagina, 2004). The actions of the Beslan terrorists resonated widely not only in Chechnya, but also among Muslims worldwide, who "spoke out against the perpetrators of these savage deeds and the fact that they claimed to act in the name and defense of Islam" (Nacos, 2006: 11).

The Russian counter-attack was met with a comparable disapproval. After all, as in the case of Dubrovka, it was the Russian rescue operation that once again contributed to most deaths amongst the Beslan hostages. The fury of the Chechens, Ossetians, Dagestanis but also of some of the Russians who commented on the Russian counter-terrorist efforts in Beslan are reflected in the following excerpt from the already mentioned theatrical play called *September.com*: "BLOODY SHOW of Russia. EXECUTION of CHILDREN in Ossetia. Scriptwriter, director and executive producer – V. V. PUTIN. Glory to Allah!" (Gremina and Ugarov, 2005; emphasis original).

As demonstrated by the above examples of audience negative reactions to the terrorist as well as counter-terrorist actions in Beslan, neither the terrorist-nor the counter-terrorist attack in Beslan can be considered successful. Moreover, given the amount of attention devoted to the fact that it was the children who suffered as a result of both, it seems justifiable to argue that while on one level the Beslan attack can be considered a misperformance, it can also be depicted as a

counter-performance, in which audience reactions have primarily to do not with what terrorists or counter-terrorists want or aim to “show”, but with something else, in this case endangering the lives of innocent children.

The above section presented different ways in which the category of performance can shed light on the terrorist attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan. First, it highlighted some of the similarities between the idea of turning terrorism into spectacle and its “performative power”. In doing so, it pointed to the fact that “performative power” of counter-terrorism has a lot to do with how spectacularised terrorism is. As demonstrated by the degree of counter-terrorism “performativity” in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan, “performative power” tends to be lower when terrorism is not spectacularised and higher when it is. However, “performative power” of counter-terrorism does not necessarily affect “performative power” of terrorism. While the “performativity” of the Dubrovka terrorism was affected by the “performative power” of Russia’s counter-terrorism, which was significantly increased in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, similar relation has not been identified in the Beslan case.

Apart from performance’s ability to complement the analysis of the process of turning terrorism into a spectacle, another way in which performance enhances the understanding of terrorism and counter-terrorism is by providing an insight into when the two succeed. This can be achieved through investigating the processes through which Alexander’s (2006b: 95) “performative elements” – “background meaning, script, actors, props, direction, and audience” become “fused”.

Chapter Four has demonstrated that a number of dramaturgical metaphors apply to the conflict between Russia and its breakaway republic of Chechnya. It has also shown that Russo-Chechen dispute has its scripts, *dramatis personae*, theatres and actors. Not only are the latter politically- and “socially perceptive” (Goffman, 1983), but also politically- and “dramatically aware” (Goffman, 1959). These actors perform for an audience, which judges them, based on how convincing they are in conveying the drama they enact.

People perform various social and political roles – some of which they choose themselves, others in which they are cast. The roles vary from those of the

empire or the barbarians; colonizers or colonized; occupiers or freedom lovers; soldiers or *bojeviki*; dogs or wolves; hostages or terrorists, to name only a few, and largely depend on the drama(s) and script(s) in use at a given time. Furthermore, not only is there a strong link between actors' roles and identities, but, as attested to by the Dubrovka's hostage-takers' heavy reliance on Islamic symbols, their actions can also re-enforce the scripts.

From a dramaturgical perspective, one of the reasons why the relationship between Russia and Chechnya appears to be so complex is because of the amount of different scripts simultaneously at play. Some of them present the Russian Federation as an empire and the Chechens as the barbarians at that empire's southern gates. In acting out the role of the empire, Russia is then trying to tame the barbarians and oppose their political claims to independence, on the grounds that a) as barbarians the Chechens have no political rights, and b) fighting the (Chechen) barbarians is exactly what makes the (Russian) empire. At the same time, there are scripts which cast Russia in the role of the "real terrorist" holding Chechnya hostage, and which portray Chechnya as a captive, or, to use Pushkin's phrase, a "prisoner of the Caucasus" (cited in Moore, 2006: 196). The love of freedom is an inherent and indeed a very strong trait of Chechen identity (Russell, 2007: 18). Because of that, the Chechens cannot accept the "hostage" status imposed on them, which is one of the reasons why they rebel against their Russian "captors" and "oppressors".

For many years this second script resonated more strongly with the Western, and partially Russian, audience, which heavily romanticized and mythologized Chechen resistance (Hughes, 2007). The perception of the Chechens as first and foremost victims of Russian oppression was further enhanced by the post-1991 liberation of the Russian media, thanks to which many people were able to see the brutal reality of the first Russian military campaign in Chechnya that lasted from 1994 until 1996. However, after the spectacular terrorist attacks in Budyonnovsk (1995), Dubrovka (2002) and Beslan (2004) and the ongoing campaign of Chechen suicide bombings (which began in 2000) the script casting the Chechens predominantly as hostages and Russia as a greedy and ruthless terrorist was called into question. Therefore, after the First Chechen War the two sides had to re-write and contextualize their respective dramas to

better suit the new political reality – at home and abroad. To that end, between the attacks in Budyonnovsk and Dubrovka, the Chechens developed a new script, which made them heavily reliant on Islamic plots and props. At the same time, and especially after the 9/11 Al-Qaeda attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon, Russian President Putin constructed and propagated a social drama which saw his country not only as a direct victim of the international, Islamist terrorism, but also as a potent actor very eager to star in the post-9/11 War on Terror “megaspactacle” (Kellner, 2003, 2005), alongside the United States and its allies.

In readjusting their respective roles and identities, both the Chechens and the Russians wanted to “satisfy some of their particular needs” (Hozic, 1990: 65). The Chechens wanted to internationalize and dramatize their cause. By doing so, they were hoping to draw in the much-needed resources, predominantly financial and material, rather than human (Moore and Tumelty, 2008: 418).⁷³ Russia, on the other hand, having been humiliated in the First Chechen War (Russell, 2005: 110), needed to save its face and, if possible, regain its former grandeur and appeal, which was heavily dented after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. In addition, Russia’s Prime Minister and, as of December 1999, President Vladimir Putin wanted to use Chechnya to gain and keep his power alongside mobilising public support for his heavy-handed policies in the breakaway region (Russell, 2005: 107-110). To that end, he presented the Chechen struggle for independence as “an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure” (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 23-24). Finally, Russia needed to appease international criticism towards its poor human rights record in the northern Caucasus, as it was very eager to increase its international standing by self-presenting to the West as its reliable partner and ally.

⁷³ The vast direct involvement of the Arabs in fighting the Russians in Chechnya is persuasively questioned by Moore and Tumelty (2008: esp. p. 412 and 421-422). Their argument against the numerous presence of such foreign fighters in Chechnya is based on the fact that Samir Salih Abdallah al-Suwaylim (“Emir Khattab”) himself refused to allow large number of foreign fighters to enter Chechnya, claiming that with their distinctive looks and poor knowledge of the Chechen language and terrain they were a bigger liability than help.

In Russia, separatist tendencies of the Chechens have almost always been heavily politicised and frequently also securitised. The Second Chechen War and the September 1999 bombings of apartment buildings in several Russian cities (including Moscow) were only some of the incidents surrounding the attack in Dubrovka, which directly led to Russia's suspension of "politics as usual", as they were all described as "crisis situations" justifying the violent behaviour of both sides involved in the conflict.

While the Russian "spectacle" promotes the idea of the united, "one Russia", the Chechen "spectacle" highlights differences between Orthodox Russia and Muslim Chechnya – different in religion as well as culture. The Chechens would say that the Russians occupying their land are degenerates, drunks and bandits. At the same time, the Russians would say that they are only in Chechnya because it is full of dangerous terrorists with strong links to Al-Qaeda and cannot govern itself. This just confirms Moore's (2010: 101) observation that the Second Chechen War "has been a 'war of representations' with the contestation over the control of 'representation' providing an altogether different front line".

A significant portion of the processes described above has to do with how certain dramas are written, what roles they prescribe, who directs them, who acts them out and how. Not only does this confirm the observation that terrorism is an audience-orientated strategy of communication, highly interlinked with counter-terrorism, but also that it is a product of an ever shifting discourse, which can be successfully analysed using the metaphors of drama, theatre, performance and spectacle.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS

“In the theatre of politics, as in dramatic theatre, breaking conventions tends to unleash an enormous amount of energy and power”. (Jakovljevic, 1999: 11)

The energy and power of terrorism results from the breaking of political conventions and rules. The “unconventional” nature of terrorism often requires “non-conventional” thinking in order for terrorism to be understood. This thesis is an example of such “non-conventional” thinking. It has examined how terrorism scholars have used dramaturgical metaphors to enhance critical analysis.

The popularity of dramaturgical metaphors in the context of terrorism was explored in the first chapter of this dissertation, which presented a lengthy review of the scholarly sources that refer to terrorism as if it were like drama, theatre, spectacle and/or performance. In light of that review it has been concluded that even though terrorism scholars utilize dramaturgical comparisons in their work, more often than not those comparisons serve as embellishments rather than analytical tools. This is partially due to the fact that not many authors who write of terrorism as drama, theatre, spectacle or performance explicitly define the meaning of the dramaturgical terms they rely on in their studies. At the same time, those who do, tend to refer to the most common and quite conservative understanding of drama, theatre, spectacle or performance. They hardly ever invoke the broader conceptualisation and contextualization of these concepts as found in the literature on drama, theatre, spectacle or performance. On the one hand, those who study theatre, drama, spectacle or performance, and who more often conceptualise terrorism as theatre in a literal rather than metaphorical manner, would be inclined to see this tendency as a sign of ignorance on the part of terrorism scholars and thus a major limitation of their work. On the other hand, those who use the most common understanding of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance as metaphors for terrorism, as advocated by Eco (1995), could also be commended for making their analyses more accessible and

thus more likely to be read and comprehended by a larger and more diverse audience.

This thesis has found that even the most common understandings of the dramaturgical terms (such as the *proscenium* theatre, for example) have analytical potential when it comes to the study of terrorism and counter-terrorism as means of political communication, social constructs and products of political discourse. The metaphor of drama explains the emergence of terrorism and counter-terrorism as well as who enacts it and how. The behaviour of terrorist and counter-terrorist actors is well captured by the theatre metaphor, which focuses on the way in which actors enact a drama, to which audiences respond. Furthermore, the metaphor of theatre sheds most light on what terrorists and counter-terrorists do to stage and choreograph their actions to bring about desired effects. The category of performance focuses mainly on the influence of those actions on those who see them performed. Finally, the metaphor of spectacle is especially useful for examining the process of shaping the understanding and interpretation of terrorism and counter-terrorism by the audience, which considers certain terrorist and counter-terrorist actions as legitimate and others as wrong – without merit or sense. The following discussion aims to tie together a number of themes that have been highlighted through the course of this investigation.

Chapter Three examined the established use of the theatre metaphor in terrorism scholarship. Those who write on terrorism and counter-terrorism as theatre tend to conceptualise the latter either as the *proscenium* theatre or as a force that stimulates and mobilises the audience – Apter's (2006) "theatre from below". The two conceptualisations of theatre differ significantly when it comes to the actor-audience dynamics they facilitate or generate. In the *proscenium* theatre the focus is on the actors who perform for an audience that watches, whereas in the "theatre from below" those watching are themselves given the opportunity to act.

The ability of terrorists and counter-terrorists to stage their respective dramas to the public constitutes the main similarity between terrorism, counter-terrorism and theatre. This similarity can be further demonstrated using the example of how terrorist attacks, especially those relying on the highly dramatic

tactics of hostage taking or kidnapping, are presented on the *proscenium*-theatre-like television.

The *proscenium* theatre metaphor, which remains highly actor-focused, conceptualises terrorism and counter-terrorism as the domains of terrorists and counter-terrorists, respectively. Subsequently, it helps to explain the process by which terrorists and counter-terrorists self-present to their audiences. However, where the *proscenium* theatre metaphor is less successful is in explaining how terrorist and counter-terrorist audiences interpret what they watch. For this reason, and by highlighting actors' role in acting out their respective dramas, the theatre metaphor focuses on the communicative aspect of terrorism and counter-terrorism, rather than on the ways in which the two are socially constructed through discourse. Another weakness of the *proscenium* theatre metaphor is its limited ability to analyse how terrorist and counter-terrorist audiences change their political behaviour – either by doing what terrorists want them to do or by ceasing their terrorist actions, in the case of counter-terrorism. This is largely because the *proscenium* theatre metaphor conceptualises the audience as passive – watching rather than doing.

At the same time, the ability of a terrorist and counter-terrorist audience to act is much better captured by the “theatre from below” metaphor, which relies on Apter's (2006) conceptualisation of theatre as a force that stimulates and mobilises those watching. The “theatre from below” metaphor sheds light on the emergence of non-state terrorism. With its focus on the feedback loop between actors and audiences, the “theatre from below” metaphor is also useful for analysing the mutual relationship between terrorism and counter-terrorism.

It has been argued in this thesis that the applicability of the theatre metaphor largely depends on how one conceptualises terrorism and counter-terrorism. If one considers the main goal of terrorism to be to make people panic and do nothing, and the main goal of state counter-terrorism to fight terrorism singlehandedly and without any interference from its citizens, then the *proscenium* theatre metaphor fits well to both. However, if the primary aim of terrorism and counter-terrorism is to alter the behaviour of those watching, then the applicability of the “theatre from below” proves much higher.

Of the four dramaturgical metaphors analysed in this thesis, that of performance was described as best suited to critically evaluate the role of the audience, whose ability to change the levels of its passivity and activity remains an important aspect of terrorism and counter-terrorism dynamics. Using “performative power” (de Graaf and de Graaff, 2010) both terrorists and counter-terrorists can stimulate and mobilise their respective audiences to suit their particular needs, which makes the audience an inherent aspect of both.

Arguably, the main role of the audience is to provide meaning to terrorist and counter-terrorist actions. If that meaning is in keeping with what terrorists and counter-terrorists intend, their respective performances can be considered a success. However, it is possible for the audience not to interpret terrorist or counter-terrorist actions according to the aims its directors and actors hope to achieve. This usually happens when the drama that is being enacted is not convincing, its direction is misguided, the props ill-fitted, the acting poor and/or the audience fragmented – in other words, when the “dramatic intention” is different from “dramatic reception” (Alexander, 2006b: 96).

In light of the analysis presented in this thesis terrorism and counter-terrorism can be depicted as social dramas or products of political scripts. Because dramas and scripts very often determine who terrorists and counter-terrorists are, what are they to do and how, the category of drama tends to be prescriptive. Drama is an analytical tool that is relatively easy to use. But it is also an analytical tool that highly determines the outcome of the analysis. Another weakness of the drama metaphor applied in the political context lies in its proclivity for favouring scriptwriters and directors with unlimited access to the means of political communication. It is they who have a better chance of making their respective drama or its particular interpretation (script) prevalent. Where terrorism and counter-terrorism are understood less as a social drama and a textual base for a performance, but instead through a metaphor of “drama of resistance,” this weakness is partially ameliorated (Lyman and Scott, 1975).

Terrorists and counter-terrorists use various dramas to provide a rationale for their respective actions. To be most effective, they enact these dramas in front of an audience, which they hope will interpret their actions in according with their intentions. Apart from being well written, directed and enacted, the

interpretation of drama is shaped by the make up of the audience and the degree to which it is fragmented. As has been argued throughout this thesis, both terrorists and counter-terrorists have multiple audiences, some of whom already understand and support them and some of whom need to be “made-to-believe” in what terrorists and counter-terrorists aim to do. Especially where the latter group is concerned, terrorists and counter-terrorists need to alter the audience perception of political reality. They usually do so by using, or in some cases creating, the context in which their performances take place. In other words, in order to maximize the likelihood the audience will share an understanding of their actions, terrorists and counter-terrorists manipulate the “background meaning” of the audiences to which those actions are directed. They often do so by turning their respective actions into spectacle. While terrorists spectacularise their actions predominantly to increase their impact on those watching, counter-terrorists spectacularise terrorism to earn themselves a right to counter it using means that most likely would not otherwise be accepted.

Hozic’s (1990) spectacularisation theory stipulates that spectacle is most often used by states and/or terrorist groups that are weak and in need of political support. It was demonstrated in Chapter Four that in the early 1990s Russia was indeed weak. Not only was it suffering from a number of domestic issues, it was also struggling internationally. In order to improve its image as a territorially strong and politically effective state, in 1994 Russia launched a war on the separatist Republic of Chechnya. The inefficiency of the Russian state and its leadership was most clearly demonstrated half way through the First Chechen War – in June 1995 – when a group of Chechen separatists led by Shamil Basayev took over a hospital in Budyonnovsk. Despite their initial success, Chechen separatists soon lost their positive appeal, which was largely due to the Russian efforts of portraying the Chechens as “spooks”, “monkeys”, “blacks” and “people of Caucasian nationality” (Russell, 2005: 106). In accordance with Hozic’s (1990) theory, this then led the weakened and “demonized” Chechens to spectacularise themselves in order to regain the much-needed support they required but no longer enjoyed. Seven years after the attack in Budyonnovsk, which had transformed the Chechens into nationalist-separatist terrorists, the Dubrovka hostage-takers self-presented as Islamic terrorists with strong links to Osama bin

Laden and Al-Qaeda. Their performance was so memorable and influential that two years after the attack on the Dubrovka Theatre, those who took over the school in Beslan were still perceived as predominantly Islamic terrorists. Neither the script enacted by the actors, nor the props they used, were intended to convey this interpretation, however. While in Dubrovka terrorists and counter-terrorists were acting out the prevailing script, in Beslan only the Beslan counter-terrorists enacted that script.

The dramaturgical analysis of the Russo-Chechen relations between 1995 and 2004 demonstrates the extent to which dramas and scripts guided the political actions of Russians and Chechens alike. Not only do dramas equip various actors with their roles (be they of “true terrorists” or counter-terrorists), in many cases they also determine how their respective actions will progress as well as what outcome they will generate. Moreover, it is largely thanks to manipulation and direction of a script that the previously described shift of perception – of the Chechens from “nationalist-separatist” (in Budyonovsk) to “holy” warriors (in Dubrovka and Beslan) and Russia from a state with a poor human rights record to one that is at the forefront of fighting against global terrorism – can not only be achieved, but also analysed – theoretically as well as empirically.

It has been argued throughout this thesis that in order to have an effect on those watching, a particular drama needs to be performed. There needs to be a director who interprets drama and turns it into a script. Subsequently, the script needs to be staged and choreographed using appropriate backdrop, costumes and props. Finally, there need to be actors who act the script out. The empirical analysis of the attacks in Budyonovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan presented in this thesis has demonstrated that it was the Russians rather than the Chechens who were more successful in making their respective dramas dominant – ones through which political actions of both the Russians and the Chechens were later interpreted. This observation further substantiates the claim made in the theoretical part of this dissertation that, when used metaphorically, drama tends to favour state-terrorists and state-counter-terrorists – those with unlimited access to the means of political communication as well as those that have the ability to impose a drama or its interpretation on its public, sometimes, as in the

case of terrorism and counter-terrorism, by force. Those deprived of such power can either rebel against the dominant script (*vide* the Chechens in Budyonnovsk) or they can “play along”, as Chechen terrorists did in Dubrovka. Sometimes, however, those without access to the triangle of political communication have no control over the script that is being played out, which ultimately results in them becoming props rather than actors in a particular drama, as was very much the case in Beslan.

In Dubrovka all of Alexander’s “performative elements” came together - “background meaning, actors, props, scripts, direction, and audience” (Alexander, 2006b: 95). This, however, was not the case in Beslan, where, despite the background meaning, script and direction remaining very similar to those used in Dubrovka, the actors failed to convince their audience that what they wanted to achieve was indeed Chechnya’s independence. The appeal of their political message was strengthened neither by the international make-up of their troupe, nor by the props they had used – a-political and innocent children. The Russian script, dominant at the time, portrayed Chechnya as an inherent part of the terrorism-prone north Caucasus, rather than a cohesive political entity that could aspire to be sovereign, which further detracted from the message of the Beslan terrorists.

The above discussion reiterates that there is indeed merit in studying the terrorist attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan dramaturgically. In doing so, one not only gains a more comprehensive understanding of the complex socio-political process of the Russo-Chechen conflict, but one also notices close links between terrorism and counter-terrorism. Furthermore, by looking at Chechen terrorism and Russian counter-terrorism as drama, theatre, performance and spectacle, one also notes how the four metaphors inform one another. In doing so, one fulfills the potential of the “case plus study” method of investigation, used in this analysis, which not only presents the application of a particular theory, but which also allows for a further elaboration of that theory (Hansen, 2006: 11).

The purpose of this dissertation was four-fold. Firstly, it aimed to provide an overview of the literature that analyses terrorism and counter-terrorism using the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance. Secondly, it set out to define the four and to explain relationships between them. Thirdly, it strove to

build a new analytical framework by linking the dramaturgical categories with Alexander's "performative elements" (Alexander, 2006b: 95). Finally, this thesis worked towards critically applying such framework to the attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan. It concluded that dramaturgical metaphors represent a valuable research tool for the study of terrorism and counter-terrorism. Even though they cannot capture every aspect of the two phenomena, they do shed light, to a much greater extent than other popular metaphors (such as war, crime or illness) on the important interaction between terrorist and counter-terrorist actors and audiences. They also succeed in capturing the socially constructed nature of the two phenomena, which were described in this thesis as strategies of communication and products of political discourse. The following summary provides insight into how the aforementioned argument was developed in each of the chapters of this thesis.

Summary of the chapters

The metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance add greater depth to the understanding of terrorism as a socially constructed strategy of communication. They do so by providing insight into the process of communication, including scope and dynamics, through outlining how terrorism can be staged, presented and responded to. They additionally help to identify, illustrate and examine the interplay between those who design, send, transmit and receive a terrorist message.

By reviewing a wide selection of the relevant literature that uses dramaturgical metaphors in the context of terrorism and counter-terrorism, Chapter One provided a theoretical background as well as a rationale for the heavily literature-based analysis presented in this thesis. Furthermore, it pointed to a number of research gaps that were later addressed therein.

Firstly, the review of the theoretical literature has helped to identify a shortage of in-depth analysis of the meaning of the most popular dramaturgical metaphors used in the study of terrorism (such as theatre, drama, spectacle and performance) as well as lack of investigations into how those metaphors describe and construct various relationships between actors and audiences in state- and

non-state terrorism and counter-terrorism alike. The insufficiency of theoretical conceptualisations of terrorist and counter-terrorist audiences as able to fluctuate from passive to active has also been ameliorated. In addition, Hozic's (1990) argument regarding the process of turning terrorism into spectacle, together with de Graaf and de Graaff's (2010) concept of the "performative power" of counter-terrorism, are, it was argued, too narrow and in need of elaboration.

While Chapter One outlined the main ideas and arguments that have influenced the analysis presented in this dissertation, Chapter Two shifted the focus towards problematizing the key terms and concepts used in this thesis and outlining various connections and relations between them. Apart from a general discussion of metaphors and ways in which they can be employed to study political phenomena, Chapter Two also contained definitions and analysis of such crucial, yet complex, notions as: drama, theatre, spectacle, performance, terrorism and its relationship to other forms of political violence, counter-terrorism and the mass media – "old" and "new". Moreover, it presented the "case plus study" method of analysis employed in this dissertation, described the types of sources consulted therein and provided an overview of the three case studies together with the rationale behind their selection.

In Chapter Two terrorism and counter-terrorism were defined as actions that aim at altering the political behaviour of its indirect victims in the case of terrorism, and terrorists and their supporters in the case of counter-terrorism. Furthermore, in Chapter Two it was established that, in order for terrorism to work, terrorists' indirect victims need to do what terrorists want them to do, whereas for counter-terrorism to work, terrorists need to stop their terrorist actions. Both groups do so as a direct result of having been exposed to a visual display of power on behalf of terrorists or counter-terrorists, respectively.

Using those actor- and audience-orientated definitions and conceptualisations, in Chapter Three terrorism and counter-terrorism were analysed as theatre, performance, drama and spectacle. The four metaphors were linked by Alexander's (2006a, 2006b) argument that in order for any performance to be successful, actors need to use the right props to enact a script in a way that generates a similar interpretation of their actions on behalf of their audience. In light of Alexander's notion of the "performative elements" becoming

“fused” (Alexander, 2006b: 104), in Chapter Three the theatre metaphor was used to illustrate how terrorist and counter-terrorist actors act and what props they use to enact a script, the ability of which to determine who are the actors and what do they do was subsequently discussed using the metaphor of drama. At the same time, the metaphor of performance served to shed light on how the audience arrives at a similar understanding of various terrorist- and counter-terrorist actions and events, which is often facilitated by using spectacle to manipulate the audience focus and thought patterns by interfering with the “background meaning” of terrorist as well as counter-terrorist performances.

What Chapter Three also demonstrated is that dramaturgical metaphors are rich, although not holistic, and that each one of them has strengths and weaknesses when it comes to deepening the understanding of terrorism as well as counter-terrorism. Most often the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance complement each other by presenting similar aspects of the same phenomenon in a different way or from a different perspective. Sometimes, as in the case of the “theatre from below” and performance or the “theatre from above” and spectacle, they even overlap. However, in order for their analytical potential to be utilized to the fullest, they need to be defined. Furthermore, their individual as well as relations-based assumptions need to be acknowledged, too. Not only does such approach assist in understanding the phenomena the metaphors are used to describe, but it also helps to avoid a number of misunderstandings and misinterpretations that might occur if those relying on metaphors are not linguistically coherent.

While the focus of Chapter Three was on the theoretical analysis of interpretations of and problems with the comparison of terrorism and counter-terrorism to drama, theatre, performance and spectacle, the aim of Chapter Four was to apply dramaturgical metaphors to the events in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan. There, the four metaphors under consideration in this thesis were used to explain how and why the three attacks were directed, staged, presented and responded to. Using the metaphors of drama, theatre, performance and spectacle, the 1995-2004 phase of the Russo-Chechen conflict was analysed in the context of the process of terrorism spectacularisation, which was initiated by the Russian Federation after the 1995 Chechen attack on a hospital in Budyonnovsk

and which culminated seven years later in Dubrovka, where a radical change occurred in how Chechen terrorists were perceived and how they self-presented.

That “spectacularity” is a “value added” rather than an inherent characteristic of terrorism and counter-terrorism (Hozic, 1990: 66) was further illustrated by the 2004 attack in Beslan, which failed to generate support and understanding on behalf of the audience for either of its “spectacularised” protagonists. Moreover, based on the empirical analysis presented in Chapter Four, what was also demonstrated was the all-important “feedback loop” between terrorist and counter-terrorist actors and audiences as well as the interplay between Russian counter-terrorism and Chechen terrorism. In Chapter Four the events in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan were analysed as drama, theatre, performance and spectacle. This dramaturgical analysis identified a much broader process of turning Chechen terrorism into the “megaspectacle” of the post-9/11 Global War on Terror, the dramaturgical depiction of which was thus far missing from the literature on the subject.

Main findings

The application of the dramaturgical metaphors to terrorism and counter-terrorism revealed that the metaphors of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance apply not only to the two phenomena, but also shed light on the feedback loop between their respective actors and audiences facilitated or hindered by the “new” and “old” media respectively as well as the close link that exists between terrorism and counter-terrorism. When applied to terrorism and counter-terrorism, the categories of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance are much more than just embellishments. On the contrary, they can serve as useful analytical tools with which one can capture how terrorism and counter-terrorism are enacted, by whom, to whom and to what effects. However, in order for the dramaturgical metaphors to fulfill their analytical potential, their meaning needs to be explained and the relationship between the metaphors defined. Not only do the ways in which “theatre”, “drama”, “spectacle” and “performance” can be understood vary, but also the discrepancies between their respective meanings

have a crucial impact on the possible interpretation and understanding of terrorism and counter-terrorism *as* theatre, drama, spectacle and performance.

This dissertation has also demonstrated that the dramaturgical metaphors complement, by offsetting each other's strengths and weaknesses. For example, while some metaphors have been found to be better equipped to analyse terrorist and counter-terrorist actors (the *proscenium* theatre or spectacle), others (such as the "theatre from below" and performance) have proven much better at capturing characteristics of their respective audiences. In addition, and based on the analysis presented in this thesis, some metaphors (performance, for example) are better able to reflect the socially constructed nature of terrorism and counter-terrorism, whereas others (like theatre) seem much more successful in capturing the communication aspects of the two.

Application of the dramaturgical metaphors to terrorism and counter-terrorism largely depends on who the actor is, who the audiences are, and how restricted their access to political communication is. This was found to be of particular relevance in the case of the metaphor of the "theatre from above" or spectacle, which most authors conceptualise as "the exclusive patrimony of the official power" (Allegrì cited in Hozic, 1990: 66).

On a less theoretical and more empirical level, and in an attempt to broaden de Graaf and de Graaff's (2010) analysis of the "performative power" of counter-terrorism, it was further demonstrated that just as state-counter-terrorists exercise their "performative power", so do state-terrorists (*vide* theatricality and spectacularity of Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy) as well as non-state terrorists and counter-terrorists. By applying Hozic's (1990) "spectacularisation" theory to the 1995-2004 phase of the Russo-Chechen conflict what was also expanded here were her observations on how terrorists other than left-wing and states other than those of Western Europe spectacularise terrorism to suit their particular needs.

Wider applicability of the research

Given that the analytical framework presented in this thesis rested on four dramaturgical metaphors, its further application is arguably broad. Each one of

the metaphors under consideration in this analysis is more or less comprehensive, but all are suitable for the study of different aspects of terrorism and counter-terrorism as performed by state- as well as non-state actors. Depending on one's preferred focus and the purpose of one's research, dramaturgical metaphors can be used on their own or together. In other words, they may constitute an analytical framework in their own right, used to study specific aspects of terrorism or counter-terrorism, or they may be used as elements of a much more holistic analysis.

Given their ability to shed light on the dynamic interaction between actors and audiences in terrorism and counter-terrorism, dramaturgical metaphors can be incorporated into other studies whose focus is on "dramaturgically aware" (Goffman, 1959) political actors performing a script to an audience in order to influence its political behaviour and allegiance, such as the study of political campaigns or the examination of how the "old" and "new" media are used for political ends. This can then be linked to yet another possible application of the research presented in this dissertation, namely its ability to contribute to the study of the process of politicization and/or securitization of terrorism by state- and non-state actors. In other words, the analysis of terrorism and counter-terrorism as drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, as presented in this thesis, can inform the examination of the process of presenting terrorism either as a political problem or as a matter of utmost importance to one's national and/or international security. Last but not least, the survey of how terrorism scholars use dramaturgical metaphors to study their subject, reflected in this dissertation, can inform and complement other areas of research that also look to dramaturgical metaphors for ideas, answers and solutions, such as Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology or Organisational and Business Studies.

Limitations of the study

As an interdisciplinary study, this thesis shares the strengths as well as weaknesses of any interdisciplinary approach. While those who study theatre, drama or performance may consider this analysis to be insufficiently detailed, those who study terrorism may see this dissertation as too "theatrical", and thus

detached from the “real” subject matter. Furthermore, just as the dramaturgical metaphors could not explain all aspects of terrorism and counter-terrorism, this dissertation could not address all the matters related to the dramaturgical reading of the two phenomena. For example, the very interesting question of how terrorism and counter-terrorism are presented in drama, theatre or performance was not addressed, as it was considered to be outside the scope of this dissertation. As the focus of this thesis was more on the socio-political aspects of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, the aesthetic qualities of the four were given less attention, also.

On a more empirical level, the main limitation of this thesis has to do with its conceptualisation of who, in the Russo-Chechen context, is a terrorist and who is a counter-terrorist. Despite acknowledging that in the Russo-Chechen conflict the Chechens could be described as either terrorists or counter-terrorists, which then makes their Russian opponents either counter-terrorists or terrorists, the dramaturgical analysis presented in this dissertation cast the Chechens in the role of a terrorist and the Russian Federation in the role of a counter-terrorist. This was done in order to apply Hozic’s (1990) and de Graaf and de Graaff’s (2010) respective notions of terrorism spectacularisation and the “performative power” of counter-terrorism, both of which see the state as a counter-terrorist.

Ideas for future research

Studying the drama, theatre, spectacle and performance of Russo-Chechen violence by conceptualizing the Russian state as a terrorist and the Chechens as counter-terrorists is only one of many possible avenues of future research contained in this thesis. The process of turning Chechen terrorism into a political spectacle by the Russian Federation, which facilitated its participation in the “megaspectacle” of the U.S.-led post-9/11 Global War on Terror, also calls for an investigation into the American response to such processes, not only in Russia, but also in other parts of the world. On a more theoretical level, the relationship between the “performative power” of terrorism and counter-terrorism and the process of terrorism spectacularisation, carries significant potential for further innovative and meaningful research, as does the issue of expanding the *repertoire*

of those using the metaphors of drama, spectacle, performance and theatre in the context of terrorism to include less Westernized and conservative definitions and understandings thereof.

As mentioned above, an area of research which emerges from this thesis has to do with the American response to Russia's efforts to turn Chechen terrorism into spectacle in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington. In this context, the most pertinent questions would be whether those efforts were at all acknowledged in the U.S., and if so why, and to what end? Such a new project would potentially contribute and crucially inform the following questions: a) how did U.S. officials react to Russia's "rebranding" of Chechen terrorism from a "nationalist-separatist" to an "Islamic" and "international" phenomenon?⁷⁴ b) did they question it at any point in time, and if so, on what grounds?; c) how was the American reaction to Russia's "performative" politics perceived domestically as well as internationally, including in Russia itself? By focusing on the often over-looked "Chechen front" of the Global War on Terror, such a project would contribute to a general discussion of its discourse and practice. In doing so, not only would it expand the range of the debate, but it would also have a strong potential to develop into an even larger academic endeavour devoted to the significant problem of how various states turn their respective theatres of terrorism into the still ongoing "megaspectacle" of the post-9/11 Global War on Terror.

Using the attacks in Budyonnovsk, Dubrovka and Beslan as case studies, it was also claimed in this thesis that just as counter-terrorism has "performative power", so does terrorism. Moreover, it was noted, the "performativity" of counter-terrorism tends to be higher when terrorism is spectacularised and lower when it is not. Based on this, an argument was made that the process of turning terrorism into spectacle can have an impact on the performative capacities of terrorism and counter-terrorism. The comparison of terrorism's spectacularity and the "performative power" of counter-terrorism, as conceptualised by Hozic (1990) and de Graaf (2011), respectively, seems even more feasible, given that the two authors look at them using the same case studies, namely the 1970s terrorism

⁷⁴ Williams (2004) provides some answers to that particular question.

in Italy and Germany. The fact that both scholars look at the same examples makes the aforementioned comparison easier. At the same time, the assumption that there is a positive relationship between how terrorism is spectacularised and how “performative” counter-terrorism is, might need to be tested using more diverse cases. Further consideration could also be given to the reliance of Hozic’s (1990) theory of spectacularisation on a passive audience, especially given that de Graaf and de Graaff’s (2010) definition of the “performative power” of counter-terrorism implies the ability of counter-terrorists to mobilise and activate their audiences.

A much more in-depth examination of terrorism as drama, theatre, spectacle and performance may be in order. While this dissertation focused on the most common and popular understandings of drama, theatre, spectacle and performance, as they are presented and understood by scholars who approach terrorism dramaturgically, there is a need to expand those definitions, to include various ways in which Theatre and Performance scholars understand them. Therefore the next step would be to expand the definition of drama and theatre, in particular, to incorporate their less conservative meanings and applications, such as, for example, modern drama as understood by Szondi (1987), the Epic Theatre of Brecht, which aims to destroy the illusive effect of the theatre (Brecht, 1964) or the postdramatic theatre of Lehmann (2006), which strives to produce an effect in its spectators, even at the cost of remaining true to a dramaturgical text. In doing so, an even better and more in-depth understanding of terrorism and counter-terrorism as drama, theatre, spectacle and performance could be achieved, which would reflect a number of changes that terrorism, counter-terrorism, drama, theatre, spectacle and performance continue to undergo.

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