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The Literary
Terrorist

From Conrad's Verloc to
Hamid's Changez

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0. Introduction

This thesis aims to analyse how literature has dealt and continues to deal with terrorism, and especially how the character of the terrorist is presented to the readers. The first part will be devoted to the history of terrorism. It will also deal with the efforts made to give a proper and international definition of terrorism.

The second part will in turn be devoted to the analysis of two novels that feature a terrorist as a character. In particular, the first book to be analysed will be *The Secret Agent*, by Joseph Conrad. Due to its plot, this book can be inscribed into the field of the so-called dynamite novels. The second book to be taken into consideration will be *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid. It will be inscribed into the tradition of those novels written after the event of 9/11.

The twenty-first century has experienced a huge increase in the attention dedicated to terrorism, not only media-related but also in the literary field. This has to do with the fact that several terrorist attacks had happened during the first two decades of the century. More and more documentaries and writings focused on terrorism saw the light, as a direct consequence of the boosted curiosity people have shown for the topic. Despite all this, terrorism is not something recent or strictly linked to Islam as Western a person living in the twenty-first century might think. On the contrary, it has a long history and different motivations. Despite this, the term terrorism only appeared after the French Revolution.

As Laqueur (2016) explains in the introduction of his work *A History of Terrorism Expanded Edition*, it is common to ignore the fact that terrorism has a history. This has to do with the fact that it does not always appear with the same intensity, some periods can be considered as almost free of terrorism. Exactly because of this, when terrorism

manifests again, there is a tendency to consider it as a completely new phenomenon. He goes on to say that terrorism has rarely been effective in terms of liberation throughout history, often bringing even harder repression as a result.

Law (2009) gives some examples of terrorism ante litteram. One of the first he mentions is the use of gangs made by the Roman patrician Clodius in order to intimidate those opposing him. Terrorism was also what the Sicarii, an Israelite group, did in killing anonymously some Roman officials in the first century AD, as Herman (2008) explains. Law (2009) adds that also the medieval scholars quoting the scripture only to justify killing rulers are to be considered as terrorists.

Another example that predates the birth of the word and, consequently, the French Revolution, is the Gunpowder Plot, which took place in 1605. The perpetrators, a group of rebellious Catholics, attempted to destroy the government by blowing up the actual building they were working and living in. Nowadays it would be labelled as an act of terrorism (Herman, 2018).

More recent episodes of terrorism include the deeds of the German government during the Second World War, and the attacks the Arabs and Zionists carried out in Palestine (Law, 2009). One of the most striking and more recent examples of terrorism that everyone clearly remembers are the attacks committed by Osama bin Laden against the United States of America on the 9th of September 2001. The spreading of the news has never been faster, the whole world saw the attacks happening live, through the screen of a television. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 have changed the world forever. What has always been described as implausible had just happened. These attacks led to the beginning of the war on terror, as George W. Bush claimed at the end of the same month. Their attacks against Afghanistan had support also from the NATO allies since the aim

was to kill the man behind 9/11 and his terroristic group, i.e., Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda (Roos, 2020). Furthermore, after this, other terrorist attacks took place, especially in Europe.

The definition of the word itself is as important as the history of the phenomenon.

As Herman (2018) states, the term entered the English language soon after the French Revolution as an adjective with a negative connotation used to describe the system of Terror in 1789 –1794 France. After its introduction, the word itself started shifting in meaning. An important shift happened after the invention of dynamite, and the bombing campaigns perpetrated by the radicals in the 19th century.

If at first the term was used to describe actions of terror practiced by a government, after this shift, it was used to describe the deeds of those opposing governments or specific policies perceived as tyrannical (Herman, 2018).

Defining terrorism and clearly distinguish between it and other kinds of political violence is an almost impossible task. As a result, there is no internationally accepted definition of terrorism. During the twentieth century, different official bodies attempted to agree upon a universal definition, but despite their efforts, they failed. As Houen (2002) explains, the United Nations had to approach the matter indirectly, agreeing to condemn specific types of actions, such as hijacking, hostage-taking, and attacks on diplomats. Inevitably, there is no agreement on what terrorism is and different organizations employ different definitions. For instance, the FBI considers terrorism a legal matter that needs to be dealt with by the courts. In contrast, the CIA considers terrorism as movements of insurgence against legitimate governments. Despite this, both the institutions agree on the fact that states cannot be terrorists or engage in terrorism (Herman, 2018).

In his essay *Defining Terrorism*, Saul (2019) states once more how difficult it is to agree

upon a universal definition of the word itself. There is no doubt that it involves the threat or use of violence against private citizens (as cited in Chenoweth, 2019, p. 34). There is an agreement among those involved in the studies on terrorism, which refers to the main elements that characterise terrorism. The threat or proper use of violence is usually employed "as a form of political communication" (Fridlund), since it conveys a political message to individuals or groups that do not always correspond to the victims. As Deaglán Ó Donghaile (2019) explains, dynamite novels are late-Victorian fictions, very popular and sensational, that owe their existence to the bombing campaigns of the time. When the authors were taking the Imperialist side, they often provided the reader with meaningless violence, ending with the bomber auto-destruction. Those years witnessed the birth of Stevenson's most political novel, The Dynamiter, a sort of literary counterattack to what the Fenians were doing with their bombings. In contrast, those supporting the Irish campaign used fiction to attack British imperialism and published their own tales, sympathising with the Fenians.

Conrad's *The Secret Agent* is a modernist revision of this kind of novel. The protagonist associates terrorism actions straight to the policies of the state. As a matter of fact, the novel centres on the double role of the state in terrorist deeds (as cited in Herman, 2019, p. 213).

As Morey (2011) points out, post 9/11 fictional responses took two specific forms at the beginning. It was common to deal with those events writing "trauma narratives" or "Muslim misery memoir", the latter often only serving to justify counter-terrorism. Keeble (2014) underlines that the novels have a lot to say about how the Western world responded to 9/11. Despite dedicating most of his work to the representation of 9/11 on screen, he states that novels are the means with the highest capacity of trying to let the

reader both contextualize and internalize such traumatic events. It is not random that

literature was expected to provide answers and find a meaning suitable for this new world.

1. History of Terrorism

This chapter will deal with the history of terrorism, from its beginning to the more recent movements. The main considerations wrote in this chapter derive from the works of Law, and Chaliand and Blin.

As said in the introduction, terrorism has a long history that predates the invention of the term itself. These practices of terror were different from what is typically called terrorism nowadays. First of all, the term terrorism did not exist in ancient times, even if some acts that the ancient population used to perpetrate would be called like this now. The assassination of pivotal figures, being them political or religious, went under the term tyrannicide, for example.

1.1 Terrorism in Ancient Times

As illustrated in *Terrorism, a History*, by Law one of the first communities to commit acts of terrorism was the Assyrians. They used to rule with terror those whom they conquered, to systematically terrify their enemies with enormous military formations. Those who tried to rebel against the emperor were killed after cruel torture. Moreover, these events were publicized to scare other potential enemies. For this reason, Assyrians are often cited as "the earliest practitioners of psychological warfare" (Law, 2009, p. 12).

As for what concerns Ancient Greece, warfare was taken very seriously. There were commonly accepted rules on how, when, and where to fight. Conflicts could not be held during the Olympics for example, and places such as the holy sites could not be used as battlefields. According to the Greek beliefs, those who committed acts that today would be defined as "acts of terror", were to be punished by the gods and also by history. Despite

all, these norms could be violated in case they served for military or political purposes. One should not think that the Assyrian terror was something alien to the Greeks. Alexander the Great destroyed almost the entire city of Theban in 335 BCE and sold most of the citizens into slavery. Norms like these were common all over the ancient world, apart from Ancient India, where assassination was accepted as a legitimate form of warfare.

History presents multiple examples of regicide, in real life but also in the myths people used to write and read. As Chaliand and Blin point out, political assassination found its origins in ancient Greece and Rome. Precisely in those years, the word "tyrannicide" saw the light. According to Law, contrary to terrorism, which is used to describe the use of violence in an unconventional way, this word was used to praise these kinds of actions. Moreover, tyrannicide has been considered a legitimate weapon against despotism for a long time, as Chaliand and Blin explain.

As Law further discusses, at first Greeks treated the word tyrant as a neutral one. It had no negative connotation since it was only used to describe a person who gained power by force. Notwithstanding this connotation and the tyrants' actions to gain favour, such as freeing the poor from debts and harassing the aristocrats, the term began to obtain vicious connotations as time passed. This had a lot to do with the growth of democracy in the city of Athens, which allowed people to consider tyrants as they really were, namely usurpers. This new view led Greeks to condemn tyranny as a violation of personal liberty and natural order. To the Romans, "the cure for tyranny could easily be worse than the disease" (Law, 2009, p. 19). One of the most remembered acts of tyrannicide is the assassination of Julius Caesar. His ambitious program to cancel the debts of the poor was not enough to cancel the hate the patrician felt for him. On the contrary, this hate increased

and some of them considered him a populist and demagogue. Julius Caesar's killing was orchestrated by sixty men, all extracted from the Senate, who labelled themselves as Liberatores. They aimed to restore the "constitutionalists", even if they were inspired both by patriotism and self-interest.

Chaliand and Blin describe other examples of ancient terrorism. Two classic cases in point of the first terrorist organizations are the Zealots and the Assassins. Parallels between the two are undeniable, but it must be said that there is a lack of information on the former group which makes a proper comparison challenging. The first of these two organizations was based in the Middle East during the first century and it is also the first group in history whose actions has been labelled as terrorism. A written account of what they did was made by Flavius Josephus, in which he called them Sicarii, which means "assassin". Their actions were a response to the census the Roman authorities applied to the empire, leaving the Jews to feel subdued to a foreign power after many years of independence. They were popular among the young population, and it is believed that they recruited their battlers from the working classes. They act both as a political and as a religious organization, trying to impose a particular religious rigor and to win back their independence, often with the use of force. The idea of political and religious purity that will characterise all these types of terroristic movements, starts to emerge precisely in this context.

In the year 66AD, Zealots killed several political and religious leaders and attacked archives where loan documents were stored, in order to gain the trust of the working class. They used to kill with a dagger, in crowded places, to create a strong feeling of vulnerability among the people. The same happens nowadays: it is known that terrorists could act anywhere and whenever they want.

The history of the second group, namely the Assassins, somewhat foreshadows the terrorist tactics of other movements that have risen until nowadays. They were rooted in Syria and Iran. As Chaliand and Blin explain, they owe a lot to the universalist trait of Islam and to the difficulty to separate the mere idea of struggle from the history of monotheistic religions. Religions of this kind function as communities, meaning that who follows and accepts the dogma is included, while the rest is simply excluded. They also shape every characteristic of the society their members live in. At first, these communities focus only on philosophical and religious matters, but as the numbers grow, they become more and more influential in other social areas, such as politics.

Among the monotheistic religions, Islam is the one that best succeeded in combining theological and political issues into a single structure. It has been like this since the primordial model of Islam, when the first Muslim decided to take the tribal model as their own model. This meant having religious and political power in one hand only. As for the Christian world, the Reformation is the closest instance to the Islamic case. The wars of religion, and especially the Thirty Years' War, blurred the borders between religions and politics. Despite this, the boundaries were able to survive and are clearly set nowadays, as it is possible to see in most of the European countries.

Despite their name, the terrorism exercised by the Assassins had nothing to do with tyrannicide, it was someway closer to the terrorism that shapes modern times. They adopted terror against powerful people precisely because of their powers, not because of any problem with the chosen individual. This is completely different from the assassination of leaders such as Kennedy and Lincoln. Assassins' targets, among others, were the Crusaders, against whom they used terror to hit, especially in a psychological way. The terrorists had a strong faith, which enabled them to willingly sacrifice during a

mission, being sure that they were to gain paradise. Assassins' actions against the Crusaders are stressed in the Western accounts, despite them being only a tiny part of what they did. These practices worked as a scheme for all those types of terrorism perpetrated by different groups following a particular ideology.

1.2 Terrorism in the Middle Ages

Law states that after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire in 476, the practice of terror did not stop. In fact, in the Europe of the Middle Ages, new motives for tyrannicide came to light. Together with these, more and more interest sparkled in both the theory and practice of tyrannicide. Since then, Europe started being dominated by completely different realities. The political power was effective only at the local level since all of Europe was characterised by small feudal communities. Due to this configuration, it is difficult to distinguish between political assassination and private killing.

As Isaac (2015) underlines, the problem is not the only one to be considered. The Middle Ages consist of more than a thousand years of changes in three different continents. Because of the lack of an organizing principle, it is difficult to find scenarios that would adhere to the understanding of current terrorism. It needs to be remembered that the most influential and significant institution was the Church, which used to preach pacifism while asking to defend dogma even physically, if necessary. In his essay, he states also that people living in those years undoubtedly faced acts of terror. The fall of Rome caused several difficulties, not only illicit violence became a crucial issue difficult to deal with, but also the creation of what is now very well known as the Holy War, both in the Islamic and Christian world. Moreover, the Christianity belief drew its basics from the Roman concept of "just war" (Isaac, 2015, p. 46), that is to say that wars would have to be limited to only appropriate means and just causes. According to Emperor Augustine, sin was enough of a cause to justify the beginning of a war and to ask those who defined themselves as Christians to engage in it. A cause worth an engagement would have been, for example, the defence of an innocent person.

On the other hand, Augustine made clear that every form of private or individual warfare was to be banned. Instead, they decided to appoint the Church as the new moral ruler of the Mediterranean world.

As Isaac explains, a crucial turning point is the institutionalisation of the crusading ideology, beginning with the opening statement held by Pope Urban II in 1095. On this occasion, he remarked that going to Jerusalem for the right motives, namely winning back the control of the Holy Land from the Muslims, could count as penance from sins. This justification of violence if based on faith had prompt consequences. For instance, the crusaders living in German began pogroms against the local Jews, feeling justified because faith was at the basis of their actions. Not surprisingly, the First Crusade was a success and the failure of the other crusades that were to come was always attributed to sin. Furthermore, the Church perpetrated this kind of violence for centuries before deciding to abandon it.

On the other side of the conflict, there were the Muslims, invaded by the Christian Crusaders. It took them almost twenty-five years to start using these violent invasions as a reason to fight back. Not surprisingly, the attacks on the Christians were both political and ideological. Less than a century after, Pope Innocent III authorized another crusade, specifically the fourth in the history of those acts, as a means against local foes and heretics. During this period, the Church desired to convert people using doctrinal persuasions and at the same time protect the believers. The result of these acts led to the birth of what would become known as the Medieval Inquisition. It was born with the original aim of locating and drive the heretics back to those doctrines that were accepted by the Church. In a context like this, being religiously deviant was as serious as committing political treason.

At the dawn of the Inquisition, force was not a means used by the Church to obtain some kind of confession. Unfortunately, in 1252 the then Pope Innocent IV approved the use of torture to elicit a confession. Even if torture was limited, the idea of avoiding violence went missing and it started being used as the standard modus operandi. It is reported that some heretics were killed by the use of fire. Instead of stopping this abuse of force, his successors authorised more and more of these practices. This particular kind of Inquisition established a precedent that would be later not only adopted, but also amplified, by other countries, such as Spain.

Concluding, what is today called terrorism was something that people living during the Middle Ages regularly confronted with. They received the Roman Empire's legacy on how and when to use violence, even in its lethal form, and passed it to the Early Modern Europe that was to come. Those people had to deal also with the flourishing of private violence, which was so common that could be considered as a proper trait of everyday life. For what concerns ideologically driven violence, it was not so common, apart from the Crusades and the Inquisition.

1.3 Terrorism in Early Modern Europe

According to historians, the term "early modern" designates the period between the Middle Ages and the French and Industrial Revolutions. In these years, the modern world started taking its shape thanks to several distinctive elements, and terrorism is one of these. Also, the origins of individual empowerment and belief in national identity appeared at that time. Law states that at the same time, Italy was facing its Renaissance period, where the values were individual and education. A great inspiration came from the ancient Greeks and Romans, and the revival of humanism. This explains the increase of tyrannicide episodes in Italy in those years, and the emergence of despots such as Cesare Borgia, who was known for his cruelty. In 1412 Giovanni Maria Visconti, despot of the city of Milan, was assassinated. A century later, in 1537, Alessandro de Medici suffered the same fate. Also, Venice's covert authority, the Council of Ten, systematically used assassination. Law adds that Thomas More, who was a humanist scholar, supported assassination as an alternative to war, simply because it causes fewer casualties and held the leaders responsible.

An additional boost to the obedience to authority came from the rise of royal absolutism, even if it was frequently challenged by turmoil. In France, a Huguenot called François Hotman, stated that the king gained his right to rule from the people, therefore they could revoke it if the sovereign was to become a tyrant. In 1517, Martin Luther challenged the Papal authority and the Church dogma. In a few years, the Church was divided into a variety of sects, all stating to have the monopoly on the truth. This led to the need of preserving the so-called "true religion", even through political murder. Furthermore, during this century England and France were the countries where most assassinations took place.

Law claims that between 1553 and 1558, England was dealing with the consequences of "Bloody" Mary's persecution of Protestant dissenters. Doing this, she created several apologists for tyrannicide. Following Mary I's death, the reign of Elizabeth I began, and the issue took a different turn. It would last 45 years, during which several Catholic plots were hatched against the new queen. Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth I in 1570 and also demanded to remove her from power. The issue was reiterated by Pope Sixtus V ten years later. Elizabeth I died without an heir, thus bringing James VI of Scotland to the throne, who was her cousin. He ruled in England under the name of James I and was the target of what is today remembered as the Gunpowder Plot. Guy Fawkes, an expert in munitions, gathered a group of Catholic conspirators and plotted the detonation of a consistent number of explosives on the 5th of November 1605: the opening day of the Parliament. Authorities came to know the plan and found Fawkes below Westminster and arrested him. He would later reveal all the details of the plot and the names of those involved. They were relying on the surprise-effect, and on technology to accomplish a huge attack that would provoke an enormous number of collateral deaths. Furthermore, the conspirators were also hoping to trigger a rebellion on a public scale.

In 1642 the English Civil War burst out. It saw the Parliament, dominated by Puritans, opposing King Charles I, who was Catholic. Oliver Cromwell, who was leading the army of the Parliament, defeated the King and his supporters three years later, in 1645. The monarchy was abolished, and the King was put on trial "as a tyrant, a traitor, and murderer, and a public enemy of the Commonwealth of England" (Law, 2009, p. 54). Charles was executed in 1649, an event that had no precedent. Moreover, it marked the apogee of centuries of tyrannicide theory and the beginning of a turbulent period in English history. Cromwell ended up being not only a military dictator but also imposing

a theocratic regime.

Law reports that in 1689 John Locke wrote what is now considered his most important statement of liberal political philosophy. He argued that the government existed only through the consent of the citizens, who had the right to rebel if they did not feel their natural rights protected. This statement is still today a cornerstone of modern republicanism.

Concluding, it can be said that the target of tyrannicide in early modern Europe was a single person, but a few exceptions. The person targeted was considered responsible for bad issues of national affairs. The act of death was presented as something that would restore the proper health of the affairs. Since historical eras are not divided with precise dates or lines, during the early modern periods two elements can be pointed out as foreshadowing the future of terrorism history: the existence of reigns of terror and secret societies.

1.4 Revolutionary Terrorism and Modern Terrorism

Law argues that the purpose of the violent acts and the nature of the targets are what allow the possibility to differentiate between pre-modern tyrannicide and modern terrorism. The victims of tyrannicide were usually kings and persons belonging to the high sphere of justice. The main reason was that by targeting them, there was not going to be any collateral damage because they would be the only ones to fall. On the contrary, terrorists used to target larger groups, e.g., those who benefitted from the tyrannical economic system. Their goal was to establish a whole new world.

Revolutionary terrorism has its root in the idea that revolutions could help remake the world rationally, no matter if this involved the killing of entire populations that were still tied to the old system. It should come as no surprise, since "the massacres of civilians are as old as humanity itself" (Law, 2009, p. 57).

In 1534 – 535, the city of Münster in Germany had to face the Anabaptists, a group of radical Protestants that followed some peculiar rules, such as polygamy and the abolition of money. The leaders organized ceremonies to burn books and execute the objectors. The latter were conducted almost on a daily basis. In June 1535 all came to an end because the city was taken by conquerors who killed every Anabaptist leader that survived.

Along with this, also the emergence of secret societies in Ireland two centuries later foreshadowed what was to become modern terrorism. One of these societies was called after their clothing, that were always white – The Whiteboys. Their intents were by no means revolutionary since they wanted the return to the tradition. On the other hand, the influence they exercised on the formation of groups such as the Fenians was huge.

In addition, tyranny started being understood as an outlook and not just as the actions of individuals. The English philosopher John Locke proposed to view tyranny as the suppression of the volition of the community. An expansion to this, arrived from Montesquieu, a French philosopher, who introduced the concept of the separation of powers. He claimed that despotism had its roots in an uncontrolled growth of power. The French Revolution is a turning point in the history of terrorism. It came right after the Age of Enlightenment, a period during which humanity learnt to deal with the concept of popular sovereignty (Chaliand and Blin, 2016).

In 1794, Robespierre made public his definition of "terror", saying it was a means to reach a specific end, and precisely the victory of republican democracy over all its enemies. This word had already been used in other fields, such as the juridical and military ones. The terms that derived from this definition were used only later and retrospectively since the revolutionaries wanted to distance themselves from the previous system of 1793 – 1794. Despite this, the first to state that France had just lived under a "system of terror" was Bertrand Barère, after Robespierre had been executed. As for what concerned the other revolutionaries, they hoped that this system would not be used again (Rapport, 2015).

Chaliand and Blin state that French Terror can be described as what helped founding modern terror, and as a model for violence strategically used by state organisations. Furthermore, it foreshadowed the systematic use of terror in all the great revolutions: "the exploitation of ideological fanaticism, the manipulation of social tensions, and extermination campaigns against rebellious sectors (of the peasantry)" (Chaliand and Blin, 2016, p. 102).

To understand how terror became the norm in France, an analysis of the possible uses of terror is needed. It could have taken the shape of "coercive violence to impose policy and a demonstration of the sovereign's punitive might" (Rapport, 2015, p. 63). These forms of terror established by the state were anticipated by what other institutions organized in order to fight religious dissent, e.g., the Inquisition.

Terror was justified as demonstrative violence by Machiavelli, an Italian politician of the 16th century. On the other hand, in the 20th century, Michael Foucault claimed that the public spectacle of violence became less and less used. The victims were sent to prison instead, as a punishment and discipline means.

The French Revolution played a part in this transition from spectacle to a less public use of terror. On the one hand, it affirmed authority through punitive violence, e.g., the killing of Louis XVI in 1793, leaving the power in the nation's hands. On the other hand, political oppression became something ordinary. It had not only to do with executions but also with surveillance. People were asked to be an active part of the web of terror.

Despite the revolutionaries not using Latin terms, Roman *delatores* and *censores*, that is to say those who brought evidence and those who monitored the citizens, were taken as examples.

Furthermore, terror was used by both political parties, the Jacobin and the Royalist, since it was not a principle, rather a practice. (Rapport, 2015).

The terror that France experienced in these years is what we now call "state terror" and it was directed against those citizens who were accused of being counter-revolutionary conspirators. It foreshadowed more modern forms of terror, even if its roots can be found in the past, in practice such as tyrannicide. To make it clearer, Louis XIV was killed exactly as Caesar was. Moreover, the French Revolution helped understand

that the system needed to be revolutionised, along with the need to get rid of tyranny. Another link between the past and future made by the French Revolution is that of the role of the crowds. Arno Mayer, a contemporary American historian, defines the violence that originates from the people as "primitive", or "bottom-up" terror. It indicates a return to former turmoil when the crowds sought vengeance or the defence of the traditional way of living.

Rapport claims that a truth about the regime of Terror is that it was temporary, even if nobody could tell when it was going to end. It was certain that once it was over, there would have been a return to the traditional forms of government and laws.

In the meantime, Robespierre refused to accept the legitimacy of the opposition. Those who opposed him were punished accordingly.

Furthermore, he made sure that two committees were elected. One had the task of controlling foreign affairs, the other was devoted to the internal ones. Besides, he also established a Revolutionary Tribunal, where traitors used to face trial without the possibility of appeal.

As Chaliand and Blin explain, state terrorism experienced a break until 1917, but a type of political terrorism continued to exist even in those years.

There are some differences between old state terrorism and modern terrorism. First, it was no longer based on religion. Moreover, it was practiced with no political objectives only by small and marginal groups. Their action drew inspiration from the romantic tradition of the 19th century: it was a century that faced several revolutions, and that experienced a strong revaluation of certain values. Furthermore, war became a phenomenon that involved the crowds. Lastly, it was also the century of industrialization,

making new technologies available to the population. It was in this century that explosives technology was invented.

It is important to consider the geopolitical situation of the 19th century. What had been decided in 1648 with the Peace of Westphalia, started to show the first signs of collapse, and the era of rising nationalism was indeed beginning. It was precisely in a political context like this, that the assassination of the Archduke took place, effectively starting World War I.

Despite this, terrorism was way more manifest in France and Southern Europe as anarchist movements, leading to the birth of the concept of "propaganda by deed", as Chaliand and Blin point out.

A model of terrorism came from the Soviet world, and particularly from the group of the Bolsheviks. Lenin, who was the leader of the Soviet Union, exploited state terrorism to affirm his power during the Russian Revolution, which lasted from 1917 to 1922. In 1924 when Lenin died, Stalin took his place as leader, using the same terrorism model of his predecessor, being sure that it had already been tested. This kind of terrorism was then emulated worldwide, in particular in China later in the century. Back in Europe, Ireland was experiencing its kind of terrorism. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) was fighting for independence from Britain amid WWI. In the end, they won, thanks to a strategist, Michael Collins, who was very well organised despite the limited means available to the IRA.

After World War II, several resistance movements started, alongside independence movements, following the Irish example. For what concerns the Hebrews, the movement of Zionism rose to fight against Palestinians. Twenty years later, also Palestinians chose to rely on terrorism against the Israeli State, thus giving birth to a territorial conflict.

Together with national movements, the 19th century saw the birth of several independent movements. They usually fought relying on guerrilla warfare, using terrorism as a supplement. Since the colonial empires were losing their power and legitimacy, these movements took advantage of the situation and used a kind of violence that was difficult to control.

These kinds of fights forced Britain to withdraw from India in 1947, where the "philosophy of the bomb", an approach to terrorism that combines Western and Indian culture of violence, was already advanced earlier in the century.

Later, in the 1950s, the British successfully repressed the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya. On the other hand, they were not able to overcome what the terrorist organisations did in Cyprus and Aden.

Britain was not the only one fighting with these movements. Another colonial power, France, experienced the same in Algeria.

A transition to contemporary terrorism from wars on national liberation took place between the 1950s and 1960s. Nonetheless, it is only after 1968 that terrorism as a publicity stunt became a thing (Chaliand and Blin, 2016).

The discourse on the definition of terrorism is definitely a modern issue. Different attempts to reach a general definition have been made, but every definition has proved to be somehow limited. What is certain, is that state terrorism must never be confused with genocide. Terrorism aims to particular individuals as victims but does not aim to extermination. Robespierre, for example, had clearly in mind the targets of his actions.

The logic behind terrorism is subtle: it attacks specific areas, and targets, without never providing a specific reason behind it.

As Chaliand and Blin affirm, "terror is unfair" (p. 103). It is ironic to say that since it is often used by those regimes who advocate equality. Furthermore, the example of the French Terror perfectly illustrates how a state is unsuccessful in having the mechanism of terrorism totally under control.

"It is neither courage, nor aggressiveness, nor ferocity that makes war so intense. It is the degree of the state's mechanization, its capacities to control and constrain, the number and rigidity of its structures. Throughout the course of history, state power has usually been strengthened by war. In turn, the growing power of the state has been responsible for the gradual change in the nature of warfare, steadily pushing it toward what began to be known by the early nineteenth century as its absolute manifestation." (Caillois, as cited in Chaliand and Blin, 2016, p. 103).

There is also an inclination to make a distinction between the phenomenon of terror and that of war. What needs to be always reminded, is that war is always central to the terrorist actions that a revolutionary or totalitarian state sets in motion. There are different reasons behind this. First of all, war legitimises violence against the foreign enemy, substituting with it the battle against the enemies of the revolution. Furthermore, the police take the place of the army, covering the task of internal repression, becoming the principal means of terror.

The state does not only rely on these reasons but also on the masses, manipulated with propaganda.

Chaliand and Blin point out that the example set by the French Revolution shows that it is easy to mistake total terror as a consequence of a tyrannical government. However, it does not exist to ease the despot's power. Total terror imposes itself on the proper course of history, trying to shape one history of its own. Furthermore, it becomes a campaign

against potential rivals, which it seeks to remove. To fulfil its mission, total terror exploits tools such as "political" assassination and torture.

Terror definitely lost its legitimacy when the foreign and domestic situation was brought under control. In the case of the French Revolution, it was incorporated into the figure of Robespierre. Essentially, terror died along with Robespierre.

Furthermore, Robespierre was toppled by those who used to approve his regime but were beginning to feel threatened by its power. Before that, Robespierre had in fact established two organisations, the Revolutionary Tribunal and the Committee of Public Safety, making the regime of terror even more powerful. Political theatre gained a pivotal role, usually employing high-profile trials.

Chaliand and Blin explain that the contemporary turn in terrorism history happened in 1878 in Russia and is strictly connected with the Industrial Revolution. Not surprisingly, it is indirectly related to the events of the French Revolution.

It is not a chance that the first work of literature to explore terrorism linked this issue with the birth of a science-obsessed society after the Industrial Revolution. In the "Secret Agent" by Conrad, it is possible to understand how the obsession with terrorism and science progress aimed to an unnatural acceleration of human development.

1.5 Terrorism during the World Wars

After two world wars, a genocide, and the creation of different totalitarian regimes between 1914 and 1945, Europeans were reminded that the primary source of terror and violence were the states. According to Law, one clear example is what happened in Russia in 1917. Lenin and the Bolsheviks used the French Revolution as a justification for what they were about to do in their own country since they clearly knew that terror was useful to support the dictatorship of the proletariat. For these reasons, they set up the Cheka, a police organization whose task was to defend the Revolution, even when violence was required. When Lenin died, Stalin took his place and decided that his type of terror had to flourish from paranoia. He also created the Gulag, places that were filled, amongst others, with political opposers.

In 1938, finally, the Great Terror held back. Despite this, Stalin continued to spread terror with new accusations of foreign collaborations. According to the Soviet archives, almost eight hundred thousand people were sentenced to death between 1930 and 1953, with the accusation of counter-revolutionary crimes. The use of terror as an instrument to obtain obedience from the crowd was also a characteristic of Germany. Nazi used terror in a much more explicit way, rendering it the hallmark of the regime. Not surprisingly, this led to the genocide that took place during the Second World War.

After the First World War, the SPD (Germany's socialist party) created the Freikorps, a local militia whose members were at most veterans. It aimed to defend the newborn Republic of Weimar. These veterans were vulnerable to right-wing propaganda that blamed civilians for the country's defeat. Moreover, they were keen on political violence and assassination. Those who benefited more from this particular social and historical context, were the members of the National Socialist Worker's Party of Germany,

commonly known as the Nazis, Adolf Hitler's party.

Hitler was firstly committed to erase a plot that claimed that Jews were to control Germany, and the whole world, through Soviet communism. Moreover, they believed in the need for a dictator, as Mussolini was doing for Italian fascists. In addition, the party was characterised by a strong Aryan racism and anti-Semitism (Law, 2009). The little gaining that Italy received after the Treaty of Versailles, made the situation of the country quite similar to the one in Germany. Italians felt humiliated, especially veterans and nationalists.

Benito Mussolini set up the Italian Combat League in 1919. Members of this league were taken from veterans' groups and were given arms. Because of their uniform, they became known as Blackshirts. They did not fight according to a political idea but looked at terror simply as a way of life. It is said that Blackshirts were far more attracted by the idea of violence and camaraderie, rather than from the fascist ideology.

Law explains that soldiers and nationalists of Germany found shelter in what was known as the Brownshirts or the Storm Division. It did not differ much from what happened just a year earlier in Italy. They used to go in the streets inciting confrontations, that could more appropriately be called an act of terrorism.

After the Great Depression of 1929, more and more Germans decided to turn to the Nazis, mostly because they blamed democracy for the economic failure of the country. Despite all this, Hitler needed a way more dramatic event to activate his supporters and terrify his opponents. This event was offered by Marinus van der Lubbe, who set the Reichstag on fire in February 1933. The police quickly found him guilty and declared that he acted solo. Nonetheless, Hermann Goering started claiming that this act was the start of a "communist campaign of terrorism that would destroy public buildings and electrical

works" (Law, 2009, p. 174).

After this event and Goering's claim, Hitler had the country in his hands. In 1934, he killed several political opponents in what is now known as "the Night of the Long Knives". He also killed members of the Brownshirts who were allegedly considered a threat to the Party's domination. Successively, he abolished all opposition parties by declaring all the members as criminals. They were arrested and sent to concentration camps. Dachau was the first to be established, soon after Hitler was elected chancellor.

In order to maintain control over opposers, Hitler created the Gestapo and the Sicherheitsdienst, whose task was to recruit informers that had to protect the country from its enemies. Nonetheless, the beginning of the Second World War did not stop Germans to use the term "terrorism" as a justification for what they were perpetrating in the whole country (Law, 2009).

Near the end of the Second World War, when the Nazi regime was starting to fade, the Germans came up with the Operation Werewolf. It aimed to perpetrate the war through terrorist strikes, even after the official surrender of Germany. Despite thousands of soldiers trained for this operation, it never saw the light. During the Nuremberg Trials, the term "terrorism" has been used several times to indicate different crimes, e.g., the attempt of the Nazi regime to overthrow Germany's Government using a supported form of "terrorism". It has also been used as a synonym for "state terror". Moreover, the concentration camps were defined as a part of the "terroristic policy" of the Nazi regime. The trial helped to understand that the Nazi regime and its actions committed from the 1920s to 1945 were perceived as "terrorism".

1.6 Ethno-Nationalist Terrorism

Religion was not the only reason behind terrorism. Some organisations used such types of violence in order to achieve specific ethno-nationalist goals. A primary difference between the two different forms of terrorism is that the latter usually lasts longer than the former. This is true because it is easy to find rigid traditionalists who would support the operation. It is important to point out that ethno-nationalist terrorism gives out a different message since every attack aims at pinpointing the existence of different ethnic identities. Despite the goal of ethno-nationalists being provocation, they also seek polarized reactions from governments and violent reactions from other ethnic communities.

Law states that ethno-nationalist terrorism can be divided into two groups. The first group is characterized by the will to put an end to their colonial status, Law uses the struggle of Algeria to free its territory from French dominion as an example. Nevertheless, these kinds of anti-colonial fights usually end when the colonizer understands that its presence in the colony is no longer worth the price. The second group consists of those groups fighting for independence within the borders of a much bigger state. An example of this is the case of the Basques of Spain.

Before the 1930s, terrorism had commonly been associated with specific revolutionary ideological causes, e.g., anarchism and socialism. Sub-state terrorism was to become a trend in the central decades of the 19th century among those groups whose pursuit was the creation of independent nation-states.

Two distinct developments triggered independence movements in the so-called "third world". The first was the success of Japan against Britain, Holland, France, and the United States during the Second World War. The second one was the public accusation of European imperialism by the United States. Law explains that the Cold War strongly

influenced anti-colonialism, as it did with all international relations during the post-war period. For this reason, the developed world was divided between the United States and the Soviet Union. Furthermore, terrorism played an important role during the Cold War. Socialist agendas had always been supported by terrorists, but in this new wave, the novelty was them embracing Marxism while seeking independence from their colonial rulers. The pairing sounds unusual since Marxists were known to consider nationalism as a device to distract people from economic interests.

The Irish Republican Army played a pivotal role in the introduction of ethno-nationalist terrorism in the first decades of the twentieth century. However, it was only in the last decades of the twentieth century that the IRA started being observed, because of its horrifying nature. Law describes the IRA as "the pre-9/11 world's most iconic terrorist organisation", second only to the PLO that had its roots in Palestine (Law, 2009, p. 233). Later, in 1967, the IRA was short on public support. This was due also to the organization's decision to side with the Nazis since the United Kingdom was an enemy of both.

The Basque population has been fighting for several decades for independence, often resorting to terrorism. The Basque Nation and Liberty (ETA in Basque) is the protagonist of one of the longest ethno-nationalist struggles that is still unresolved today. They live in the Northern part of Spain, in the Pyrenees. Their culture, language, and identity have remained distinct even if they had not had an independent state for more than a thousand years. Moreover, Francisco Franco tried to assimilate the Basques into Spain during the 1950s. In 1965, ETA leaders decided to adopt the "action-repression-action spiral theory", which is a strategy for the use of terrorism. The spiral theory claimed that, even though there was not a revolutionary movement, one could be created out of its lack. In

1968, terrorist attacks began being launched according to this theory: agents of the organisation kidnapped and killed government and police officials, and also those Basques who opposed either the independence or the use of violence.

In 1970, ETA's popularity reached its peak among Basques. In this year, sixteen ETA suspects exploited a trial in Burgos to bring their cause to public attention. Six of them were sentenced to death, but the demonstrations that followed, which portrayed the defendants as martyrs, led to the reduction of the sentences. The spiral-theory seemed to be successful, and ETA started gaining support also from the Spanish socialists and communists, especially after the assassination of Luis Carrero Blanco, Franco's heir, and prime minister, in 1973.

1.7 The era of Leftist and International Terrorism

After several decades of recession into the background, where state and ethno-nationalist terror were dominating, leftist-inspired terrorism came back to its previous importance in the 1960s and 1970s.

The rebirth of this kind of terrorism happened thanks to the clash of different factors in the 1960s. First of all, the anti-colonial movement and its sense of possibility led to the independence of a lot of countries in Asia and Africa.

In this context, a new generation of theorists aimed to make Marxism relevant in these conditions. They found a keen audience in the massive groups of students that have risen thanks to the growth of the middle class. This was soon to become the central feature of the new tradition of revolutionary terror, that is groups of educated students wishing to make revolutions on account of the masses, from them considered to be poor and ignorant. These movements in the United States resulted in violence, while the state-sponsored reactions were less violent and also less anti-democratic. As for the radical groups, they had a weaker impact.

1.8 Terrorism after the Second World War

As Chaliand and Blin point out, after World War II there is a break with the past, including the past of terrorism, which had been transformed into an instrument of resistance. The kind of terrorism defined as contemporary saw the light in the 1960s, but it was born during the national liberation wars that followed World War II.

The decades that followed the end of the war saw a great improvement of nuclear technology on the one hand and the surfacing of limited warfare on the other. The Cold War, which began next to the end of the war, made total warfare an obsolete strategy, leaving space for limited and indirect warfare to develop. Furthermore, this context also gave space for psychological warfare to come into existence, which, according to Chaliand and Blin, is the most violent manifestation of terrorism.

This happened for different reasons. First of all, civilian populations were at the same time the centre of national mobilisation and its target. Secondly, they were not hit through weapons, but using propaganda and psychological violence.

Interbellum theoreticians began talking about a new concept, namely the doctrine of strategic bombing. This means that hitting civilians would trigger such a strong feeling of terror in them that they would give up the idea to fight and indeed forced their governments to abandon the war. In this context and on such doctrine, the decision to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki was taken. The psychological sphere of war became primary with the creation of nuclear weapons, and in particular of the hydrogen bomb.

Albert Wohlstetter, an American political scientist, is famous for his phrase "balance of terror", which he wrote for the first time in 1958 in a RAND paper. This is based on the hope that someone's adversary would be dissuaded by the threat of the use of nuclear weapons. National liberation movements, exploiting the polarized context, were situated

in a "Marxist-Leninist" context. Therefore, these movements tended to base their attacks on terrorism and guerrilla warfare.

1.9 From 1968 to Radical Islam

Chaliand and Blin state that according to different historians of contemporary terrorism, four turning points correspond to four different years: 1968, 1979, 1983, and 2001. The first year stands for when Latin American launched what was to be called urban guerrilla strategy. The same year Palestinians launched a new tactic of terrorism that transformed the attacks into publicity stunts, which in turn turned into violence very quickly. It is also important to point out 1967 since it is the year in which Israel demonstrated its military superiority.

1979 marks another milestone in terrorism history, the Iranian revolution with the stunning victory of radical Shiite Islamism. Its influences made suicide bombings rise, done in order to reach the glorification through martyrdom, thus becoming an inspiration for following radical Sunni Islamist of Hamas, and al Qaeda, among others.

In 1983, 241 American Marines were killed in one of the suicide bombings happening in Beirut led by Hezbollah. The Western troops were forced to withdraw, making this attack the sole and most important development in international terrorism between 1968 and 2000.

In 1986 and 1995 France experienced two different terrorist campaigns, the first conducted by Iranians, and the second by the Armed Islamic Group. Looking back at these attacks, some historians agree that the third turning point should be set between 1991 and 1993 when Afghanistan was experiencing a series of important changes.

Radical Islamism has for years been exploited by the United States as a tool to weaken the Soviet Union, thus resulting in it evolving into an "independent political-military movement" (Chaliand and Blin, 2016, p. 223). Jihad found an appropriate ground to develop in Algeria, Bosnia (during the wars between 1993 and 1995), Chechnya, and

Kashmir. The first attack on the World Trade Centre took place in 1993, it did not reach its goal but made it clear for the United States that Islamist fighters were targeting the country.

Chaliand and Blin claim that the fourth and last turning point corresponds, of course, with the attack of September 11, 2001, and it marks the last stage of the evolution of classical terrorism. Furthermore, it contributed to the birth of the biggest counterterrorism operation that was ever set in motion, that is the war against Afghanistan, considered the shelter-country of terrorists. Unsurprisingly, the situation in Baghdad after the United States attacks proved to be far more complicated than it was thought to be at the beginning, even though no one could have ever imagined that the consequences of this offence would be so adverse. This conflict has become a painful trial for the United States since it portrays the image of the greatest military power unable to handle a low-intensity war situation.

Italy was the country most hit by terrorism. The common enemy, both for the extreme right and the extreme left, was the Italian political system, dominated by the Christian Democrats, discredited because of their corruption and opposition to change. The Italian Communist Party was far from being free from critiques, since it was also criticized by the Italian extreme left for its tendency to compromise with the conservative majority. As far as the extreme right was concerned, its fear was that the centrism offered by the Christian Democrats was going to let the extreme left to rise. The attacks were carried out mostly to trigger a reaction from the Italian government, known for its laxity in this regard. On the other hand, the extreme left was represented for most of the actions by the Red Brigades, targeted multinational corporations and aimed to humiliate their own state in order to get the working class to divert from the Communist Party and return

to its revolutionary vocation. The bombings that took place in Milan and Rome, inaugurated what is now defined as the "strategy of tension", beginning with the attack on a bank in Milan in December 1969 resulted in sixteen victims. Less than two years later, the Red Brigades spread their first press bulletin, claiming that their aim was to raise awareness among the proletariat, using a system of violence and repression. Starting from 1972, several chiefs of different companies were kidnapped by the Brigades, e.g., the executive of Alfa-Romeo. Furthermore, in 1974 they kidnapped a judge, which was sadly going to become the first of a series.

Despite things were going well for the Red Brigades, the repression began as soon as one of the founding fathers, Renato Crucio, was arrested at the end of 1974. Between 1976 and 1978 all the kidnappings planned by the organisation took place with almost total exemption from punishment. The atmosphere that came out of this was one where the Communist Party was just enjoying its power, thus provoking an internal crisis between those believed that the state needed support and those who condemned its decisions of deal-making. Precisely in this atmosphere, in March 1978 the Red Brigades proceeded with the kidnapping of Aldo Moro, Italy's Prime Minister from 1963 to 1968, and from 1974 to 1976, just before he entered the National Assembly to vote his confidence in the Christian Democratic government, and the assassination of his escort. The kidnapping last two months, during which the organisation's founding members were being tried in Turin, while hitting almost every headline. Eventually, Moro's body was recovered in May, abandoned in a car in Rome. That year six more assassination were committed.

Despite all the efforts and the resonance that the Moro affair had, the objectives in the political field of the Red Brigades were not achieved since the masses remained still and

the state did not collapse. Furthermore, following the kidnapping of an American general, the movement claimed that it was going to be disbanded. Terror victims in Italy almost reached the figure of 450 in just a decade, leaving aside those daily recurrence of political violence such as kidnappings, bombing of facilities, sabotages and so on.

1.10   The Rise of Jihadist Terrorism

The group behind the 9/11 attacks was al-Qaeda, an organisation formed in the 1980s by Osama bin Laden, an Arab Muslim extremist who was fighting the Soviets back in Afghanistan. Law claims that the doctrine of this group is known under many different names, but the most known one is jihadism, which has taken the place of both ethnonationalism and revolutionary leftism as the dominant force behind today's terrorism.

The central precept of Islam is the oneness of God, which means that God is the fount of all authority and believers are demanded to respect strict monotheism. More precisely, every Muslim must be guided only by Allah's will expressed in the Quran, which is known under the name of sharia, and by what the Prophet has said and done, that is to say the hadith. Because of this, every Muslim has the ideal of one figure handling both the spiritual and political authority as it was at the beginning of the Islamic Empire. Despite this, after Muhammad's death in 632 BCE, his successors, who are called caliphs, started claiming his authority in the political and spiritual sphere. In the 1920s, after the collapse of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, the last caliph was lost.

In the Western world it is usually perceived that the prevalent anger that most Muslim societies feel today traces back to them being not only military powerful but also more sophisticated both culturally and intellectually than the European contemporary societies. Starting from the end of the 18th century, European powers, and in particular France and England, began to impose their authority in the principal Islamic territories, resulting in only a few countries inhabited by Muslims left independent.

In 1957, jihad's most amounts of financial support came from Osama bin Laden, a young millionaire. At first, he was only a recruiter and fundraiser, but after thirty years

he began travelling around Afghanistan together with small groups of guerrillas. In 1988, he started to develop a structure where to train and maintain these fighters dedicated to jihad. The group was to be called al-Qaeda, which translates to "the base", i.e., the place where the group training would take place. Bin Laden was not the only leader of this group, and most of the others were Egyptians. At some point in his life, bin Laden abandoned jihad for a brief period and settled in Sudan. More precisely, it coincided with the fall of Kabul in 1992, when jihadists and Islamists found themselves stateless and entered Sudan, where Al-Turabi opened his territory in the hope of creating a new centre for jihad. Three different factors led bin Laden back to fighting and transformed him from an insurgent against communist into a terrorist on an international level. The first, as Law explains, was the constant presence of American military forces in Saudi Arabia. The Gulf War, which expelled Saddam Hussein from Kuwait, ended more than a year before, but the United States troops seemed not intentioned to leave the territory. The second reason was his meetings in Sudan's capital with the highest representatives of jihadi groups that came from all the Muslim world groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah convinced bin Laden that the times were mature enough to think of international jihad. It has been speculated that his alleged meeting with the leader of Hezbollah led him to the conviction that suicide bombings were the most suitable attack to hit an enemy with technological superiority. The third factor had to do with his own re-reading and deep study of the Quran and the history of Islam. He eventually read into the scriptures an authorisation to kill innocent people, provided that their deaths made the elimination of infidels possible.

Bin Laden fully believed that Islam could truly be re-created only by expelling American troops out of the Middle East. His goal was to portray the United States as the

contemporary heir of Crusaders and imperialists, blaming them for the history of victimisation that characterises the Middle East. furthermore, he hoped that the United States would answer in turn with terrorism, or even better, by invading an Islamic country. Law underlines that despite all these beliefs, al-Qaeda was not the first jihadist group to attack the United States. Instead, the first attack was carried out by a small group of men led by Ramzi Yousef, which had no name. He was a 24-year-old boy whose hope was to punish America for the support given to Israel. The attack was hatched in 1993, aiming for the collapse of the World Trade Centre. Yousef found himself homeless after Saddam had invaded Kuwait in 1990, two years after he decided to move to New York City to look for potential targets. Once there, he started attending one of the mosques run by Omar Rahman, an Egyptian Sheikh leader of the Islamic Group. Yousef's final goal was to place a huge bomb in the parking lot below the World Trade Centre, that was to be big enough to make one tower collapse into the other. His idea was to kill the same amount of people he thought the Americans killed in backing Israel during the Palestinian fight. Regardless of all the planning, when the bomb was placed and then detonated, it did not make any of the two towers collapse, instead, it created a seven-floor deep crater and killed six people in the parking lot. Furthermore, more than a thousand people got intoxicated because of the smoke that filled the buildings, and the damages cost more than a half-billion dollars.

Law explains that Yousef immediately escaped from the United States reaching the Philippines, but the other terrorists were captured mostly because of their negligence. Despite this, they did not receive an appropriate sentence if not the year after, because the authorities thought they were dealing with a bunch of amateurs. Still convinced that his plan to attack the United States was right and determined not to stop after his failure,

Yousef started working on a bomb that could be transported illegally on airplanes, re-assembled in the bathroom and left to detonate only after the terrorist had left the plane. The first attempt failed, leaving behind a victim and an intact aircraft. He then decided to place twelve bombs to be detonated on twelve flights leaving almost simultaneously to the United States through the Pacific Ocean. However, the day before the attack, he accidentally set a fire in his flat in Manila where he was working on the bombs. This led to a second escape, but he was then captured by the Pakistani police and transferred to the American authorities, where he was put on trial and sentenced for his attack on the World Trade Centre and his other conspiracies.

Back in Egypt, from 1992 and 1997 more than twelve hundred civilians, including some members of the Egyptian parliament, were killed during a jihadist attack. The terrorist groups behind this terrorist offence were the Islamic Group and al-Jihad, the latter being an organisation whose leader was Ayman al-Zawahiri. Not many years later, his organisation was dismantled when the director of the membership was captured by the Egyptian police. In the meanwhile, in 1996, bin Laden went back to Afghanistan where he started to lay the foundations for what was soon going to become the greatest terrorist campaign, making him the most wanted terrorist in the whole world only five years later. Here he issued his "Declaration of War" against America, his first issue being the constant presence of United States troops on Saudi Arabia soil. Al-Zawahiri, who was in Afghanistan as well, decided to merge the majority of al-Jihad's organisation into al-Qaeda, due to the wealthier condition of bin Laden's group. He declared that it was "an individual duty for every Muslim" (Law, 2009, p. 306) to kill both Americans and their allies.

Both the declarations reached individual fighters that began to arrive in

Afghanistan, where cells were formed to train these people to combat. An Islamic revolution was about to start also in Chechnya and Kashmir, where bin Laden's followers were returning after training. It is believed that approximately twenty thousand men attended bin Laden's camps between 1996, when war was declared, and 2001, when these facilities were destroyed ahead of the attacks of 9/11. These men were trained to use weapons, building bombs, together with methods of conspiracy. As Law underlines, they were mostly middle-class men, well-educated who lived in the West side of the world for the majority of their adult life, and because of this they felt suspended between their religion and the place where they lived, still feeling like they did not belong to either of them. Furthermore, they were even more susceptible to the radical teachings of the camps, since they had little to no background on Muslim history, they only shared a desire for martyrdom. Law states that Al-Qaeda's first attacks took place in 1998, when two truck bombs hit simultaneously the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, in Kenya and Tanzania, respectively. The world reaction was one of confusion since the attacks had nothing to do with American doings in Iraq or Saudi Arabia, instead, most of the casualties were Africans. A couple of days later, the United States struck three targets, including two al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan.

1.11 America's Reaction

Law explains that the Clinton administration (1993 – 2001) did not strongly react to the threat of jihadism for different reasons. The Cold War ended just a few years before, and the Americans thought it was time to deal with their domestic issues. Furthermore, they still believed that terrorism found its prime reasons to exist in a "covert extension of enemy states' military and foreign policy" (Law, 2009, p. 307). In addition to this, the American government was also convinced that hijacking-based terrorism was meant to publicize a cause, not to inflict a huge number of casualties, especially because bin Laden was still not linked to any terrorist attacks, he was simply perceived as a propagandist and a financier.

1.12 Alternative Terrorisms

Law claims that the dominant wave of ethnonationalism, revolutionary leftism, and jihadism did not characterise the last part of the twentieth century. The number of groups that embraced terrorism usually fit into one of two different categories. The first one consists of those groups that use terrorism as a strategy for pursuing a private war against those who are perceived as enemies, usually being inclined towards an apocalyptic rhetoric, e.g., right-wing militias. The second group, instead, is made up of those who commit to broadly accepted political goals but with intense conviction, that is the case of anti-abortion and eco-terrorist activists.

1.12.1 Leaderless Resistance

The presence of a single issue that usually polarises the opinion and a principle of an organisation now known as leaderless resistance is what a lot of these varieties of terrorism share. This means, as explained by Law, that there are no hierarchies providing

guidance, their benchmarks are usually novels, seminal events, or individual acts. The members generally communicate through the internet, or via informal associations. Their goal is not to plan and stage a revolution, but they are still sometimes capable of causing chaos.

1.12.2 American Militias

The political far right side of America saw the emergence of a number of extremisms in the last decades of the twentieth century. As far as leaderless resistance is concerned, the Posse Comitatus is the perfect example since they used to refuse to fulfil any business or social regulation, e.g., they refused to pay taxes. They ended up being a militia movement, that is to say they were "paramilitary organisations devoted to survivalism and weapons training" (Law, 2009, p. 317). Their strongest belief was that the biggest threat to democracy was the practice of federal gun control.

1.12.3 White Supremacy, Christian Identity, and Aryan Nations

The Ku Klux Klan has been obscured by organisations that proved to be way more dangerous due to their linking to gun shows, and now the internet. Law cites the Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord; White Aryan Resistance; the World Church of the Creator; and the National Alliance as examples. The core features of all these groups were anti-Semitism, white supremacy, and race hatred. Furthermore, they frequently had a religious component.

Christian Identity was a group around which also many white supremacists gathered. Roots of this movement trace back to the 19th-century belief in the Anglo-Israelism doctrine, i.e., a belief well spread among the English elite that Jesus was not a Jew but Anglo-Saxon. This doctrine was in turn embraced also in the United States in the

twentieth century. This movement found its centrepiece in the Aryan Nations. On the website of the organisation, it was possible to read several pamphlets where they stated that violence was the only way to a whites-only state. Culturally speaking, the touchstone of the Christian Identity was a novel, written by William Pierce a neo-Nazi and white supremacist, called *The Turner Diaries* published in 1978. Several paramilitary organisations have been influenced by the Aryan Nations, the most symbolic one known as the Order. They also emulate Pierce's novel.

1.12.4   Christian Patriotism vs. the US Government

Law explains that the extreme far-right came to be even more radical in the first years of 1990 resulting in new sympathies between the militias and the Christian Identity groups. The union of the two produced a new movement often called Christian Patriotism. The threat of communism was, according to the many on the far right, the main (and probably the only) issue that justified the existence of a US government. Almost simultaneously, the US Congress passed a law that introduced mandatory waiting periods for the purchase of guns, together with the declaration of military weapons being illegal to be sold to civilians.

In 1992 a deadly confrontation between militia groups and federal agents took place in Idaho, when US Marshals started investigating Randy Weaver for gun violations, he was also linked to Aryan Nations and Christian Identity. In 1993, a similar event took place in Texas, where agents from the ATF fought against the Branch Davidians, a "weapons-hoarding apocalyptic cult" (Law, p. 320). They were not directly linked to the Christian Identity but were adopted by far-right groups as martyrs.

In 1995 Timothy McVeigh, a Gulf War veteran, carried out a domestic terrorist attack, the deadliest one in US history. Contrary to what was true for the Branch Davidians, he

had several ties to Christian Identity and a number of militias, even if he never truly belonged to a group. Despite this, some people that knew him admitted that Pierce's novel was "his bible". With the help of Terry Nichols, a friend of his, he gathered what was needed to build an ammonium nitrate/fuel oil bomb, weighing almost 5,000 pounds. The attack took place on the 19th of April, when McVeigh left a truck in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, home to two federal agencies he saw as guilty for the tragedy that happened two years before in Texas. He took inspiration from the attack against an FBI building described in Pierce's novel. The detonation of the bomb made the northern building collapse for a third of its entirety. Less than an hour later McVeigh was arrested due to a traffic violation and connected to the attack only two days later. He was eventually found guilty and then executed, his friend Nichols was punished with a life sentence without parole.

1.13   Planning 9/11 and American Failures

Law asserts that the human tendency to give more importance to psychological musings rather than to proclaimed threats is nothing new. This is exactly what has happened with Osama bin Laden, who has come to be habitually defined as a madman or as one jealous of American freedoms. If that was the case, as bin Laden has pointed out, why did al-Qaeda not attack Sweden?

Osama bin Laden has always hoped for a strong military intervention of the United States in Afghanistan, but it did not happen even after the attacks on the US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. He believed that such an attack would convince the whole Muslim community to forget about their internal differences and to unite in a campaign to expel US troops from the Middle East. Ramzi Yousef's uncle, the jihadist Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, shared with bin Laden in 1999 the idea of hitting symbolic points of interest. At first, the founder of al-Qaeda was not convinced of the plan, especially after the attacks on the embassies failed to make America react.

Law points out that compared to the previous attacks done by al-Qaeda, this operation was going to be aggressively larger and far more complicated. As a result, planners did make several mistakes, out of sloppiness and out of ignorance, and by the summer of 2001 FBI agents were more and more concerned with the possibility of jihadists trying to enter their flight training schools. Many mistakes were also made by the American organisations, since the CIA and NSA refused to share information with the FBI. Furthermore, terrorism was not at all a priority of President Bush's administration.

On September 11, 2001, nineteen al-Qaeda agents, divided into four different teams, hijacked four commercial planes, using only box cutters. The passengers likely

assumed that the planes were going to be redirected to a different airport after the hijackers' demands since this was the pattern that had been followed for decades. But that day the events went in a different direction: the terrorists directed the planes towards the World Trade Centre, crashing into both towers, and the Pentagon. It took less than two hours for the towers to fully collapse. The fourth and last plane, according to the plan, was hijacked a bit later, giving the passengers the possibility to learn what was happening outside and understand their sad fate. The plane did not reach its target, which was the US Capitol or the White House since the passengers tried to enter the cockpit. The response from American officials was prompt: they reacted as if the country was under attack, and NATO invoked for the first time Article Five of its charter, that is to say that if one member received an attack, it was an attack on all the members. Almost three thousand people were killed or went missing after the attacks of 9/11. Furthermore, the economic cost was also catastrophic, so much that the International Monetary Fund estimated that the events had an impact of $75 billion on the gross domestic product of the United States.

America's nightmare was far from over. In the weeks that followed 9/11, five American media outlets and the offices of two US senators received their normal post, but this time the letters were filled with spores of anthrax. Biological weapons were not commonly used by terrorists, this was in fact only the second time they used them. The attack resulted in the temporary closure of a number of post facilities, together with the US Senate, the White House, and the Supreme Court. Law explains that even if it seems that these attacks were not connected to the 9/11 hijackings, such events contributed to amplifying in American the sensation of being under siege. Americans were not beginners when it came to terrorism, but they were accustomed to domestic terrorism, therefore

considering terrorism to be a problem of other countries, such as Northern Ireland and the Middle East. This is exactly why the attacks of 9/11 became a moment used to define a specific era of American history, as it had been before for events such as the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour.

1.14   The War on Terror and The Iraq War

One of the immediate reactions of the American people was to gather around President Bush, approving his work as head of state. In a speech to the Congress held less than ten days after the tragedy, the President introduced the phrase that came to be a definition of America's response to these difficult times, i.e., war on terror. He went on explaining that their "war on terror" was to begin with al-Qaeda but was not going to end there. His goal was to drive out every terrorist group of the entire globe. Some weeks later, Bush was firm in saying that in this war people had to decide whether to be with them or against them, giving no space for in-between positions. There had been an attempt by other people working under Bush's administration to use the expression "Global Struggle Against Islamic Extremism" but it did not find any audience despite it being way more accurate.

As for what concerns the terminology used, Bush's umbrella phrase hit the public and was also embraced by the media, but it has different problems. First, as many critics pointed out, "war" is usually fought between states and on an explicit territory, with the aid of organized military forces, and none of these characteristics applied to the so-called "war on terror". Not only using such a word lifted terrorists to the level of legitimate combatants, but also obliged the United States – that signed the Geneva Conventions – to provide those captured with the status of "prisoner of war", promising to repatriate them as soon as the conflict would be over. Terrorists are commonly described as criminals rather than soldiers, so the place where their cases should take place are the criminal courts. The Bush administration refused to use such a system that would entitle terrorists not only to legal rights but also to protections. In the first months of 2002, the US Government opened a prison camp inside the military base of Guantanamo, where

prisoners were qualified neither as prisoners of war nor as criminal suspects.

The first action made by the US under the plan of War on Terror was to launch an ultimatum to the Taliban, who were sheltering bin Laden and other leaders of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. After receiving an official refusal, Us and Britain forces were introduced – enjoying the support of other countries around the world – and aerial bombings started, also with the assistance of the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance. After this, bin Laden recorded a speech directed to the Muslim world, calling for a brand-new jihad, aiming to defeat the United States, but it did not happen, and Kabul fell after less than two months to the Northern Alliance. However, bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders were able to escape.

In October 2002, the President of the United States stated that Iraq was guilty of sheltering terrorism and that the country has had contacts with al-Qaeda for many years. According to the President, this would have allowed Iraq to attack his country without leaving any trace behind. Later, it was cleared that no evidence came out linking al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, Iraq's leader. Despite this, the Congress authorised military forces to force Hussein to give up his weapons of mass destruction. A huge wave of international opposition started, but that did not stop the US from proceeding with their plan – in 2003, they invaded Iraq together with other allies. The invasion did not last long since the leader was soon captured and executed at the end of December 2006. The fight formally ended in May 2003, but violence had just started since most of the combatants, former members of Hussein's party, used guerrilla tactics against the invading forces.

1.15   Counter-Terrorism in the US

After 9/11, new agencies to contrast terrorism were created in the United States. Airline security procedures were embittered and standardised, as a matter of reaction more than precaution. Quantities of liquids allowed on board were limited when the American authorities understood that some al-Qaeda members were trying to use explosive fluids. However, several studies claimed that stringent rules fail to spread safety on passengers, giving them instead a sense of constant fear. As for the other ways to enter the country, such as the ports, little has been done.

1.16   Jihad and ISIS

As stated by Chaliand and Blin, the Iraq War added oil to the fire, giving jihadists one more reason to fight against Western power. Nevertheless, jihadist terrorism had changed, together with the attacks they were planning. Al-Qaeda still developed plots against the West, but most of the jihadist terrorism of the last years of the 2010s came from homegrown groups, that show no link to bin Laden. Elsewhere, he and his organisation function as "godfathers of terror" (Law, 339). Clear examples can be found in Europe, where small groups of Muslims gathered around some radical clerics. The combatants, as in the past, normally come from educated backgrounds. In March 2004, several trains in Madrid were hit by a series of explosions, killing almost 200 people. Spain, as said by a group who claimed responsibility for the attacks and that was linked to al-Qaeda, was to be punished for backing the US in the Iraq War.

Despite bin Laden's great announcements, as Chaliand points out, jihadism did not gain a huge track of record in the first fifteen years of the 21st century. At least, this is true for the West part of the world, the attacks of Madrid, London, and Paris never reached the 200 victims. Raymond Aron, a French philosopher, was correct in predicting that the psychological impact was going to be far more devastating than the physical one. In Muslim countries, the attacks resulted in a higher number of victims. In the meanwhile, al-Qaeda lost its top leaders, the majority of whom have been killed or jailed. Ayman al-Zawahiri is the only one that survived, and he is today's al-Qaeda leader.

Overall, aside from the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*, the satirical French periodical, and the other one perpetrated by ISIS in Paris on November 13, 2015, the West has been sporadically hit by this organisation. The media also play a paramount role in the indirect spread of the propaganda of terrorists because of their eagerness to sell what distresses

the audience. This emphasizes the role that terrorism plays in people's minds.

The repeated terrorist attacks are not the novelty that ISIS brought to the contemporary scene, instead, the novelty is the quick entrance they made on the international stage in 2014. These new actions took place both in Syria and Iraq, and are a consequence of the Arab Springs, that began in 2011. This movement began in Tunisia as a protest one, characterised by peaceful demonstrations that caused the fall of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, the then-president of the state considered by the people as a dictator and accused of perpetrating censorship. These movements reached Egypt, where demonstrations in Cairo made the regime collapse, leading to new elections. The domino effect also reached Syria, with the initial form of peaceful demonstrations but the regime answered with confrontation, and the United States' attempt to support the Free Syrian Army proved to be weaker than the numerous Islamic groups supporting the regime. Other states such as Jordan and Morocco, opted for financial measures meant for avoiding social protest from spreading. At the end of this period, three regimes saw their end: those of Egypt, Yemen, and Tunisia. The fourth one, those of Libya led by Colonel Gadhafi, fall because of external interventions. Nonetheless, none of these events was aligned with the kind of jihadism that took inspiration from al-Qaeda.

In mid-2015, German and French magazines published some documents on the genesis of a new movement, that would later be known as ISIS. The documents highlighted that it began years before in Iraq, with the foundation of "al Qaeda in the Country of Two Rivers" by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and their invasion of Syria in 2012. In 2013, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi renamed the movement that was known as "The Islamic State of Iraq" into "The Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham". Only a year later, he would put an end to its allegiance with al-Qaeda. In 2011, the movement found shelter in Syria, where the chaos

caused by the Arab Springs was still evident. The founder had to face several confrontations with other Islamist groups, but in the end the movement gained control in Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor. The first offensive took place in 2014 when during a blitz they took control of Mosul, an important city in Iraq with almost a million citizens. No more than a few days later, the caliphate was proclaimed, with al-Baghdadi as the leader, who asked al-Zawahiri to restore the allegiance with al-Qaeda, but he refused. The second attack was launched against the Kurds, who were not able to defend their territory, and asked for emergency assistance by the US troops, who were able to momentarily stop ISIS's progression. Furthermore, in order to reduce ISIS's financial resources, a number of oil dwells under their control have been bombed. ISIS strategy is to fight in order to build a new state, and it is precisely here that it differs from al-Qaeda, which was instead trying to destroy other states. Nonetheless, the most important concept to remember is the ideological impact that ISIS had especially among young people. ISIS attacks are usually orchestrated in order to come out as spectacular, so to impress people and gain more front pages as possible. Western populations have proved to be rather easy to destabilize when it comes to attacks that are horrific but do not produce a huge number of victims.

2. Terrorism and Literature

The impact of 9/11 hit not only the historical and political field but also the literary one. In the aftermath of the attacks, a debate arose in the press about the existence of different forms of entertainment, such as action movies and satirical TV shows, but also about novels. Therefore, this chapter will deal with the analysis of the current situation of literature on terrorism.

2.1 The End of Irony

On September 16, 2001, as Frank and Gruber write, Roger Rosenblatt – an American writer and journalist – announced the end of irony, that is to say that particular attitude to life where nothing was taken seriously or believed to be true, simply because nothing was real. His positions traced back before 9/11, but this context seemed the perfect one to expose the cynicism of those whom he called "ironists". He harshly criticized those people, even if no one had called into question the reality of what happened just a few days before. His writing, as Frank and Gruber point out, has to be seen as a reaction against the "perceived moral relativism of post-modernism with its constructivist epistemology" (p. 1). The question that emerged was if 9/11 would allow the non-ironic narratives to remerge. James Wood, an American literary critic, wrote an essay for *The Guardian*, entitled *Tell Me How Does It Feel*, asking for a renewal of the American novel. He disliked some genres for their aesthetic grounds and was hoping that the terror attacks would let them change or disappear. He also hoped that after 9/11, writers could once again focus on the individual characters of their novels and give more space to their emotions and personal experiences. In other words, critics were expecting more sincerity and a deeper understanding of feelings. After the publication of the first

New York-set novels, which had the attacks and their emotional aftermath as a central topic, the debate about fiction and its future also reached the academic environment, where several scholarly conferences were held, and in academic volumes.

2.2 Studies on Literary Terrorism

A fundamental question that must be addressed is what the object of studying the relationship between terrorism and literature is. Frank and Gruber cite Kubiak's essay, in which he gives three possible answers to this question, pointing out that not all the writings about terrorist and terrorism are the same. The first type is what is written by terrorist groups themselves, in which they formulate their agendas, plan the calls for the use of violence, or also start the training of individuals that would later execute the attacks. The second one is constituted by the narratives that talk *about* terrorism, which include the fictional writings that explore terrorism and its critical studies, and all the academic literature about terrorism. Lastly, the third kind is constituted by those types of writings which disrupt the basic components of narrativity, and that audience may feel like calling narrative terrorism.

Margaret Scanlan analyses the relationship between writers and terrorists in her pioneer work *Plotting Terror*, written in 2001. She introduced the concept of the "terrorist novel", which has been later used by other scholars. She does not focus on the contents of the novel; she rather compares and confronts terrorists and novelists. She argues that in novels such as Don DeLillo's *Mao II* the terrorist is depicted as the writer's double, putting into question also the common view of the writer as a person in whose hands lays the power to change human traditions. She concludes that those who see a connection between the personality of a terrorist and that of a writer usually assume that both are isolated and not able to let the world hear them in the standard and civic language.

Francis Blessington analyses the "terrorist novel" starting from Henry James to the post-9/11. He focuses on a different aspect, which is the fact that, while reading such novels,

readers are focused on the perpetrators, with whom they found themselves to sympathize with for a moment, but still not offering forgiveness.

Both authors base their analysis on a limited number of texts. It is therefore not difficult to apply their studies to novels that share the same concerns, but they are not very useful in a possible investigation of all the terrorist fiction available. As for Kubiak's definition of the main purpose of such fiction as one that explores the ideas behind the acts of terrorism, it cannot be used in its general sense since it excludes almost all the post-9/11 literature, where the focus is on the impact of those attacks on Western societies and not on the perpetrators.

Zulaika and Douglass, both social anthropologists, wrote something that proved to be suggestive for literary studies purposes. They claim that "terrorism", as commonly understood and discussed, relies on a process that makes facts and fiction almost impossible to distinguish, implying that terrorism relies on myth. Therefore, a specific method of analysis is required, which they called "mythography of terror". The ones who produced this myth are the media, the academia, and also the activists and the government to whom the attack is aimed. In order to legitimize counterterrorism measures, the latter exploits this myth by enlarging the danger and creating stereotyped images of the terrorists.

This approach is also paramount in a 2008 study written by Robert Appelbaum and Alexis Paknadel. The question they try to answer is how fiction contributes and responds to this "mythification" process. According to the two scholars, the novel renders terrorism a phenomenon that can be inserted into the possible worlds, rendering it at the same time symbolic. They conclude by saying that terrorism is nothing but the violence of an "other", an illegitimate kind of violence performed from an illegitimate position.

Furthermore, it is important to remember that fiction, meant as a literary invention, is the only means capable to openly fictionalize terrorism. Media representations, together with the political and scholarly one, are mainly focused on the depiction of the terrorists' attacks and the subsequent counterterrorism activities, whereas almost all the narratives on the topic opt for the depiction of imaginary conspiracies, perpetrators, and victims. This is still true, despite the change that took place in fiction after 9/11. In conclusion, literature only possesses the great ability to narrativize terrorism in the form of fiction.

2.3 Critical Studies

Robert Appelbaum, in *Terrorism Before the Letter: Mythography and Political violence in England, Scotland, and France*, explores the field of critical studies about terrorism. He adds that his work will contribute by giving an understanding of a more specific historical period, that is to say the early modernity of France and Britain, and also by demonstrating how literary studies can enhance the cause of critical terrorism studies. Lastly, his work aims to clarify some of the terms and traditions that are currently used in such fields of study. He argues that the term "critical terrorism studies" implies the existence of several terrorism studies which are not "critical" or "self-critical" enough. Therefore, he proceeds by listing how to behave to render those studies equally critical. Firstly, terrorism study needs to be aware, and sceptical of the binary oppositions that occur in this field – friends against enemies, for example – and through which the idea of terrorism is almost always built. Not only this, but also being able to differentiate between the prevention of terrorism and the understanding of the phenomenon itself. Appelbaum uses Walter Laqueur's metaphor as an example. The latter often describes terrorism as an illness, rendering terrorism always the invader. Secondly, terrorism must be recognized not only as a phenomenon but also as a signifier since its impact goes way beyond the attacks and the violence. Therefore, the problematic relation between it being a phenomenon and a signifier deserves attention because it induces political and social activities and practices, constitutes not only a legal subject but also a cultural taboo, an object of fear. The particular aspect of terrorism as a signifier is well described by Zulaika and Douglass, who define it as a system of mythography. Talking about terrorism, then, means not only talking about the proper thing, but also about what it does to the people implicated in it, together with talking about what it does and has done to others. Thirdly,

terrorism studies should be free to use all the other human sciences as resources, from philosophy to sociology and anthropology, and of course literary studies, in order to be critical enough in a human culture that simultaneously "draws upon and intervenes in the committing of violence" (Appelbaum, 24).

Literary writers played a great role in the construction of terrorism as a signifier, and in analysing the pure phenomenon. According to Appelbaum, the two most important works ever written about terrorism are *Demons*, written by Dostoevsky in 1872, and *The Secret Agent*, written by Joseph Conrad in 1906. Long before 9/11, the American author Don DeLillo started drawing attention to terrorism as a signifier, giving particular attention to American life.

Critical writings about the phenomenon of terrorism saw a significant growth since 9/11, because of the prominence of it becoming a signifier, and focused on a range of different texts, from popular literature to more elitist poems. More and more scholars discovered that terrorism has its own writerly dimension since it is one of terrorism characteristics to deliver messages, and that it also has a long history in the literary field. Henry James, worldwide known as an apolitical writer, found terrorist violence fascinating. This makes it even more obvious that scholars are dealing with something old, that has always been part of our history, and that demands deeper investigation. Appelbaum claims that little has been said about terrorism in the early modern period, but it constantly surfaces in pieces of literature, from Shakespeare to Milton.

As a matter of fact, the historical side of terrorism has not experienced a great development, and has some "gaping holes" (Appelbaum, 26). Literary history needs to be taken into consideration because it definitely has something to add to the critical terrorism studies, according to Appelbaum. After all, terrorism is considered as an un-historical

discipline. It is important to remember that "Western culture has been a part of, not apart from, the spread of terrorist violence and its mythographies" (Appelbaum, 27).

Using the terrible attack perpetrated in Oklahoma City in 1995, Appelbaum explains that violence directed to a Western power "can derive their semiotics from Western power and the discourse that has emerged from it and about it" (Appelbaum, 27). Immediately after the attacks of 9/11, Derrida and other scholars who agreed with him, claimed that when terrorists decide to attack such a system, they do it in the same language used by those whom they are hitting. Derrida in particular used a metaphor to describe terrorism, defining it as an auto-immune disorder. In fact, 9/11 was nothing more than a repetition with a difference, and this probably was the most awful side of it. It is the West that had developed those technologies, semiotics, and violent fantasies through which enemies could perpetrate terror on their own territories. It cannot be argued that terror is a part of the system of modernity, even if it is not considered as a general condition of it. Furthermore, political violence is almost always preceded by a language of political violence, that originates from the very roots of human history. McVeigh, the man responsible for the Oklahoma City Bombing, used to wear a shirt with the slogan that was first used by Wilkes Booth, the protagonist of the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, which is "Sic semper tyrannis", a sentence traditionally attributed to Marcus Brutus when he killed Julius Caesar. Thus, McVeigh employed a sentence that recalled tyrannicide and that has very ancient roots, that nonetheless has become "part of the American discourse of sovereignty in the eighteenth century" (Appelbaum, 28). As for the hijackers of 9/11, they also drew from fantasies that have ancient roots, more precisely in the sixteenth-century theatre. This is not to say that contemporary terrorism was directly caused by something that took place more than four centuries ago. It is undeniable

that a line of descent exists from the different eras since mythography was present also in the past and it is related to the contemporary one.

Literary studies have not directly contributed to the critical terrorism studies, rather they just lay beside them. Furthermore, when it comes to imaginative literature it only adds complications to the study of terrorism. This kind of writings have the power to shape the common understanding of terrorism and the language that is used to represent it. By using literary devices such as irony and allegory, the signifier and the signified get modified, and shape in turn the way readers interpret what they are reading. Furthermore, also grasping the psychological motivation and the search for ideological, theological, and spiritual ends becomes more complicated when imaginative literature joins the scene.

2.4 Novels on Terrorism

As aforesaid, terror has been part of the human tradition since a long time ago. It was 1797 when an anonymous reviewer wrote a letter to the editor of a journal essay deploring what has become a vogue in the period, namely the "terrorist novel writing". He referred to the texts such as *The Castle of Otranto*, written by Horace Walpole, a tradition of writing that is now labelled as "gothic", following Walpole's own definition. The writer claimed that a huge number of novels were creating a wave in which terror was the order of the day, especially after Ann Radcliffe's success, by keeping the protagonists closed into old and gloomy castles, where ghosts and spirits were present too. This period saw a revaluation of affect, following Edmund Burke's aesthetic writing, entitled *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. He argued that sublimity caused stronger emotions than beauty usually does, and it was precisely terror that triggered the sublime and ruled it. According to Burke, terror is delightful in being related to potentially dangerous situations that do not have the ability to harm a person

because they are usually perceived from a distance, e.g., a person looking at a piece of art or a person reading a novel. Thanks to his writing, a period of positive understanding of terror began, as it was a "prime source of aesthetic enjoyment" (Frank, 42).

Despite this, the term "terror" and all its derivation, experienced a semantic shift, beginning with the publication of the anonymous essay. As explained before, the term "terror" originated in the context of the French Revolution to describe the Jacobin behaviour. In the English context, Burke was one of the first to condemn the revolutionary kind of terror.

The answer from gothic fiction writers to the French events was prompt, one of the first being the novel of Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*, written in 1796. The event of the convent put to fire and the lynching of the prioress of St. Clare described in the novel are meant to evoke what happened to the Bastille in France. According to Brantlinger, from 1789 on, what is depicted in gothic novels is simply revolutionary terror. However, the concept of terrorism was still far from entering the literary stage since the term "terrorism" still shared a strong bond with Robespierre's actions. It is not known when the contemporary meaning of "terrorism" was first used and entered the Oxford English Dictionary, what is sure is that it was with this meaning that it was applied to literature by literary critics. It is quite obsolete to refer to gothic fiction as "terrorist novel writing", the phrase "terrorist novel" has instead entered the common language. Frank explains that it is now linked to a sub-genre that first emerged in the late 19th century, and that was temporarily stopped because of the two world wars but gained back its importance starting from the 1970s. Notable periods of splendour happened in the 1990s and, of course, in the years following 9/11. Frank, by quoting Margaret Scanlan, explains that the history of the genre traces back to older novels that set the structure of what became the 20th-century terrorist

fiction, such as *Devils* and *Princess Casamassima*, together with *Under Western Eyes*, written respectively by Dostoevsky, James, and Conrad.

The terrorist novel has a long history, even though some studies tend to consider the terrorism fiction of the turn of the 19th century as the starting point. Frank suggests looking at narrative terror not as a fixed genre, but rather as a "transgenic mode", that changes along with the concept of terror itself. When the understanding of "terror" experiences a historically determined change, literary terror follows it by creating new kinds of narrative of terror. It is for these reasons that the tradition started by the gothic novels were updated when the first anarchist and dynamite novels appeared in the early twentieth century. The old castles full of ghosts have been replaced by the conspiracies of the anarchists and the set of Victorian London, and later also with explosions caused by dynamite. Nevertheless, it was not only an update, rather a combination of Gothic elements with the new understanding of "terror".

Frank too highlights the importance of the study done by Zulaika and Douglass and the term they came up with, namely "terrorism discourse". Furthermore, the two anthropologists add that the displaying of terrorism leads to giant leaps into discursive fantasy. Since terrorism relies on the belief that the next attack is always behind the corner to reach its aim – a collective fear – it can be located between the real and the imaginary. Moreover, this is reinforced by the feelings of the perpetrators being both mixed with normal people and invisible, elusive as persons but still "omnipresent in public discourse" (Frank, 45).

2.5 Imaginary Literature on Terrorism

Imaginary literature writers were the quickest to answer to the advent of terrorism at the end of the 19th century, depicting fictional attacks, conspiracies, and also perpetrators, thus creating real possible plots in an imaginary world. This kind of novels, according to Frank, elucidate the "cultural imaginary of terrorism" (Frank, 46), that is the stories regarding both the actual and the potential terrorism. Furthermore, this is shaped not only by the recurrent pronouncements of media and politicians, but also by the narrativization of terror.

Frank quotes *Terrorism in the Late Victorian Novel*, written by Barbara Melchiori, as the first comprehensive account of fiction written at the end of the nineteenth century. In particular, he explains two general notes she made in the introduction of the book. Firstly, she distinguished three different movements of terrorism, active in different countries and that had specific aims: the Russian Nihilist, the Fenians, and the anarchists. The target of each of the movements was particularly specific, e.g., public buildings, but also public figures or the public in general. Frank claims that this distinction is utterly too precise since it is impossible to relate the groups with only one particular target, but still helpful. The public perception of terrorism is shaped by the knowledge about terrorist groups and the target they are aiming at. Secondly, she focused on the choice of villains, which fell back into the anarchists. London, and even Britain at large, never denied the entrance of people in the territory. In this way, several Russian dissidents, who came from all over Europe, found a safe place in Britain. For this reason, villains were usually depicted as being anarchists or Nihilists, trying to attack the British soil. To confirm that literature plays a huge role in the shaping of the cultural imaginary of terrorism, it is sufficient to say that in the Victorian Age it was dominated by the figure of a stranger, and more

precisely of a foreign anarchist.

Frank uses *The Dynamiter*, a novel co-authored by R.L. Stevenson and his American-born wife, as an example of a novel that engages the Irish question and answers to the Fenian campaigns of the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Since Stevenson was threatened by blindness due to an eye disease, his wife started telling stories to entertain him and used the news of the Fenian attacks as inspiration for a frame narrative. A year later, being short of money, they decided to write the stories down and publish them as a sequel to *New Arabian Nights*, an 1882 volume. The stories are set in a different London, a city where encounters are a daily occurrence, and are connected through a frame narrative that describes the adventures of three young gentlemen, not trained for occupation. They meet and decide that they have to hunt a man who was sought by the police since they were convinced that being detectives perfectly fitted their personalities. The role of terrorist is given only to three characters, Zero being the man wanted by the police, another man named Patrick M'Guire, and a woman named Clara Luxmore.

At first sight, as Frank claims, terrorism seems to play a marginal role in the novel. However, two recurring themes emerge from Stevenson's work: the indiscriminate characteristic of dynamite terrorism and the unreliability of the bomb. Both are related to the figure of Zero, whose origins are not disclosed in the novel.

According to Frank, at the end of the 19th century all the novels written had in common the theme of dynamite. The number was so huge that they ended up constituting a new literary genre, namely the dynamite novel. Nevertheless, apart from the dynamite theme, they often had not very much in common. The dynamite theme was exploited and modified in the last two decades of the nineteenth century to fit pre-existing genres, from science fiction to popular romance. Terrorism and its representation were influenced by

each of these works in a very specific way. This highlights that the figure of the terrorists in fiction did not in fact produce a new genre but shaped itself according to the genres involved. Nevertheless, these genres gave rise to conflicting images of terrorism and all that comes along with it, such as its perpetrators and motivations.

It is important to also consider the figure of the writer that, according to Frank, responsibly creates terrorist plots that happen in the novel, making it even more clear that the plotting of fictional perpetrators is an ingredient for the true author's plot, the one who really sets the terroristic story in motion.

Frank uses as an example two novels written in English at the end of the nineteenth century, namely *The Princess Casamassima* and *The Secret Agent*. The two stories share the common trait of being based on something that has truly happened, confirmed by newspaper reports. In Conrad's novel, the connection between the fictional plot and the real Greenwich Bomb Outrage of 1894 is pretty clear. However, James' novel was not inspired by a particular event that really happened, but he decided to write using the interest that international terrorism generated as a background, using a huge amount of contemporary accounts, as Frank explains. However, this is not the only link that the two books share. Both the authors, in fact, wrote an autobiographical note on the origins of their work after their publication – James wrote a long Preface to the 1909 Edition, Conrad added his "Author's Note" in 1920 – and the narratives that come out of these notes are significantly similar.

Whereas Conrad's novel is going to be analysed in the next chapter, James' novel offers an important case study. The author, as Frank clearly explains, was amazed by Victorian London and its environment as a metropolis. James seems to suggest that it was enough for him to wander in the streets to come up with all the ingredients for the story as if

London itself was writing itself through his person, but the novel conveys a different version of the facts. The terrorist conspiracy that constitutes the basis of the novel is an invention of the author, and the same goes for the protagonist's vision of London as a city constantly undermined by revolutionary activities that happen in secret in the undergrounds of the city. Yet, this motif is in contrast with what James said in his preface because not even the best wanderer could be aware of something going on secretly or underground. James has never denied his use of the poetic license, because as he said in his 1909 Preface, the city provides him with possible stories, therefore the plot was not an actual one, but only a potential one, and he just took advantage of its potentiality. In other words, the London he describes is already marked as a literary one, being a "city belonging to the cultural imagination" (Frank, 64). The reader has therefore to read the novel in this context, forgetting the actual Victorian city.

3. Joseph Conrad and *The Secret Agent*

This chapter will be devoted to the analysis of Joseph Conrad's literary career and life in the first part. The second part will be devoted to the analysis of his novel *The Secret Agent*. In particular, it will be focused on the context that contributed to the birth of the novel, and to the ideas circulating at that time that had shaped his writing. The novel focuses on a historical event, namely the anarchist attack in Greenwich Park, London. However, the bomb did not reach the side and exploded in the anarchist's hands, causing his death. It is a famous attack since it was the first anarchists' act among the "propaganda by deed" programs that happened in Britain during the period of bombings.

This was not the first bombing attack of the period, since the Fenian campaign that aimed to gain the independence of Ireland started years before. The attacks led to an environment of anxiety and constant fear that the novelists quickly picked up as the theme of their writings.

This attack, however, led some people to believe that England was going to face a terror campaign. Since then, England was not threatened by any anarchist attack, since it provided (more or less) a "neutral political home to European dissident voices" (Mulry, 2). This does not mean that England was ignored by anarchist groups, on the contrary, as pointed out in Conrad's novel, several attacks were executed on the British soil, not only planned there. In this way, London became the safe place for modern socialist figures and at the same time diminished the probability of domestic anarchist attacks to happen.

3.1 Life

Joseph Conrad was born in a small village that was part of the Kingdom of Poland, but that it is nowadays part of Ukraine. As one of his biographers states, at the age of only six he already sensed himself in multiple ways: he felt like a Pole, Catholic, Gentleman. Knowles (1996) writes that in 1874, Conrad was an adolescent described by some of his contemporaries as a betrayer of his country because he desired to flee Poland to become a seaman in France. Only 4 years later, he sailed with the British Merchant Service, as a Russian that was still not able to speak English. Twenty years before his death, he published what is now known as the "most radically experimental English novel of the early Modernist period" (Knowles, 1), entitled *Nostromo*. It should come as no surprise that he was a well-established English writer by the time of his death since during his life he experienced several cosmopolitan realities that made him a novelist that made vast use of paradoxes and riddles. Some stages of his life are challenging for the biographers, since he used to disappear for long periods of time, especially during the first period of his life. Nonetheless, there are two glimpses, coming from intimate sharers, that help understand Conrad as a person and as a writer, introducing his distinctive cultural and literary position.

The first glimpse comes from his wife Jessie, sixteen years younger than him, and is focused on their unusual marriage and subsequent honeymoon in 1895. She describes this period of their life as if she had embarked on an adventure with a man who had never known any form of maternal love or care and did not know anything about home life. Their honeymoon in Brittany, France, instantly made Conrad's social side come alive. As for the English Language, it remained for private use between him and his wife, since she

spoke no French and he had to translate anything that people told her. For this reason, they were known by the inhabitants as "the English".

The second glimpse comes from one of Conrad's collaborators, Ford Madox Ford. He stresses on particular traits of his personality, in particular he provides more clues that explain why Conrad is thought to be multifaceted and elusive. In this way, it is understandable that the figure of him being an Anglo-Polish is no longer of use. On the contrary, he has been influenced by three different languages and cultures, namely Polish, English and French. Furthermore, both Ford and his wife, suggest that he did not experience "any easy trans-cultural rites of passage" (Knowles, 3). He could be easily mistaken for an English gentleman, as well as a French dandy or a Slav. As his wife underlines, this made him feel like a stranger even in England. As a matter of fact, his past as a Polish emigrant and seamen shaped in him the traits of what has come to be identified as the "marginal man", one who lives in two different worlds feeling as a stranger in both.

Knowles traces a more chronologically accurate account of Conrad's life, claiming that his first years are even darker than those of other writers such as Dickens and the Brontë's. Though they have been tough years, they came out as giving him a "cosmopolitan literary and linguistic atmosphere" (Knowles, 6), encouraging him to experiment with writing and language learning, French especially, together with offering him the opportunity to become a great reader, especially thanks to his father work as a translator that gave him access to different national works of literature. Despite all these inputs, it is presumed that he missed important processes of socialization that take place in institutional schooling.

When he was only three years old, both his parents were arrested and charged for revolutionary activity. Furthermore, they were given mandatory internment in Vologda, and Conrad had to go with them. At the age of twelve, he had lost both of his parents, mostly because of the harsh conditions of the exile, and was therefore forced to move to his uncle. Used to be around his father, who was a convinced revolutionary man, he found himself dealing with a man who strongly believed in the traditional conservatism, worshipping a future autonomy of Poland. It is highly probable that also this situation contributed to render Conrad a *homo duplex*, since he found himself suspended between several dichotomies - revolutionary and conservative, romantic and pragmatic. However, as Knowles explains, later in his life, he turned away from his family's traditions, especially the religious ones. When Conrad was in his last years of adolescence, he expressed several times the desire to go to sea to his uncle, and in 1874 he travelled to Marseilles to become a seaman. The theme of "betrayal" was going to haunt him even later in his life, but he left his native land for a specific practical reason - he was the son of a political prisoner and therefore faced the possibility of twenty-five years conscription in the Russian army. Furthermore, 19th century Paris had become a centre for expatriate Polish writers. Knowles goes on to explain that his four years in Marseilles surely represented a kind of romantic initiation but brought along some disappointments. In 1878 he was unable to continue his service in French ships, so he made the first contact with the British Merchant Service, marking another sharp change in his life by looking for an identity and a vocation on these ships. Sea-life soon lost its romance but still introduced him to tradition that he would associate with his idea of home. His passage into English life was not as drastic as the French one but was still momentous as an event even in his slowness and uncertainty.

Conrad gained the English naturalization in 1886, when he was already twenty-nine years old, after having learnt English and passed some marine examinations, and more importantly the release from Russian nationality. There must be a confrontation with the fact that until the age of twenty-one, Conrad seemed to not know any English, and that less than fifteen years later he would become an English writer, beginning a narrative that would accompany him around the world, ending to be his first novel to be published. In 1890 he visited the Belgian Congo and seemed to be finally convinced to go back to a life ashore. His sea-career lasted twenty years and took him to some very remote corners of the world, as it was known by the time. Even Henry James, as Knowles points out, commented on his experiences, claiming that nobody has known things he did know. It was 1895 when his first novel was published, *Almayer's Folly*, and the following year he married Jessie George, settling with her in rural Essex near the Thames. The next years saw the development of the man now known as Joseph Conrad, with his prolific career as a writer. In the end, Conrad was a man divided between two different careers - one that was fixed in its standards on the sea and the other that was potentially anarchic in the field of writing. Therefore, he experienced no certain vocations in his adult life. As if it was not enough, as Knowles underlines, he was going to write in his third language and the last one he learnt.

3.2 Literary Career

As far as Conrad's literary career is concerned, as Knowles explains, there usually is a division into three periods: an early and relatively short period of Malay fiction ending in 1896; the longer phase that lasts from 1897 to 1911; and a completed diverse phase of fiction that is commonly divided by the critics into two further phases - a transitional writing period from 1911 to 1917, and the decline of his last years from 1918 to 1924, the year of his death. As Knowles clarifies, the period that is usually called "apprenticeship" might more correctly be defined as the "first act of settlement by an already mature individual and precociously gifted writer within a literary culture largely strange to him" (Knowles, 9). It must be noted that until 1898, Conrad was still trying to decide between a career as a writer or his return to the sea.

Conrad was lucky especially in his early years as a writer in having beside him a tight web of friends and contacts, forming the support group that he needed. Edward Garnett, John Galsworthy, and Edward Sanderson were important influences. In 1897 he made contact with Henry James and other American writers, and also with a Scottish socialist writer, that provided him not only with a great sense of friendship but also as a support in literary connection. Such was this support, that when his first two novels were published and received with favour, it added to the propitious signs of his future as a writer in the niche of English literature, without renouncing to his artistic ambitions.

By the end of 1896, a number of dark signs revealed that this happy period was soon to end. He was trying to write a new novel - that would soon be abandoned - and in one of his letters Conrad said that he was missing those days when he wrote without sophistication, because he felt he was becoming more and more complicated day by day,

and this made him uncertain. This came along with another realization, that is to say that good reviews did not guarantee successful commercial books.

The beginning of his major phase is marked by *The Ni**er of the "Narcissus"* and especially by its preface, where Conrad explained his artistic belief. It shows an author that was obliged to negotiate with his different traditions in the search for a larger readership. Garnett influenced him in writing sea fiction for the first time, thinking that it would be easy to sell in England, due to the subject that was felt among the English readership. Despite this, the English elements are not of the best quality. Moreover, in depicting the sea and the family on board he implicitly affirms the kind of spiritual ties that led him to England. Not only this, but also the language used and the several borrowings in the text show closeness with French writers long admired by Conrad and depicts a writer whose linguistic roots lie not in England. In the end, this novel is an example of Conrad's position as a writer, struggling between the beginning of his great period and the fresh start with the English readership. Between 1898 and 1902, Conrad underwent a period of maturity and formation, when it seemed his life had finally been socialized and also domesticated, he also became a father and went to live in Kent. In 1900, he signed a contract with J.B. Pinker, a literary agent, thus beginning a twenty-year-long relationship in which the agent also played the role of a friend and a generous banker, as well as a father figure. Despite all these happy events, the following ten years were going to be affected by severe difficulties, also afflicting his career. One of these was his frustration regarding the constant sense of estrangement from the traditions of the other English-native speaker writers. This sense of isolation led to some illnesses, them being real or psychosomatic, that almost brought him to a physical and mental breakdown when trying to conclude a novel. From the outside, it took the shape of what Conrad

himself came to call "the runaway novel" (Knowles, 12), i.e., a piece of writing that was originally conceived as a short story that by expanding and complicating itself ended with the impossibility to finish the work in the period of time prearranged. Such agonies remained true until the writing of his last novel, *Under Western Eyes*. Knowles points out that these setbacks are not to be considered as an interruption of his creative process, but rather as some kind of conditions that became essential to the process itself. In short, these negative obstacles generated in Conrad an energizing, though painful, momentum.

From 1898 to 1902, the so-called Blackwood's' period, marks another stage of his struggle with the English audience and, of course, cultural identity. Furthermore, in those years the figure of his most famous narrator, Marlow, saw the light out of Conrad's need to find an English voice and identity. 1902 saw the beginning of different feelings for Conrad himself towards his literary power, and he did feel more powerful as his successive novels show. Those novels - *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent*, and *Under Western Eyes*, all share an air of "dangerous audacity in their subjects and experimental techniques" (Knowles, 14). The major change was that those individuals did not have the protection offered by sea life anymore, they live ashore where societies are rapidly changing, sometimes unfriendly and subject to modern politics. In opposition with his English contemporaries, Conrad seemed at home in exploring the effects that the aggressive Weltpolitik had on individual lives. Furthermore, Marlow is no longer present as the figure of the narrator, depriving Conrad of a figure who could speak as an English representative. As Knowles explains, these novels all share a more radical relationship between the world and the self, especially when it comes to ironic paradox and contradiction, and the fact that all borders on the tragic farce.

From 1902 onwards, Conrad made a connection between new literary products and suffering, confirmed by his difficult experiences both in composing and in paying his debts. In 1904, another load weighed upon his shoulders, when he found himself obliged to divide his life between serious projects and more easy-to-sell works that would allow him to buy himself time and money. As an example, in 1905 when he was in between *Nostromo* and *The Secret Agent*, he dedicated almost all his time to the writing of short stories and journalistic material.

The majority of Conrad's literary works belong to a period that spans from 1897 to 1911, after this year he experiences a setback due to exhaustion and enervation. As Knowles points out, according to many critics between 1910 and 1914 there have been three crucial changes suggesting that this can be seen as a watershed period.

Firstly, there is evidence of Conrad's own sense of creative and physical fatigue after 1910. This translated in an attempt to bring back old techniques that made him reach some achievements, e.g., the resuscitation of Marlow as a narrator in a novel published in 1914, and also the publication of works he started working on earlier.

Secondly, in 1910 his older circle of friends gradually disappeared and was replaced by another group, this time of young admirers, some of whom would end to be his first critics. Their support proved to be fundamental in consolidating Conrad's reputation, but it came along with an idea of idolization, creating the legend of Conrad the Great Man. Knowles explains that according to some other evidence he was so pleased with this legend of his own that when he made his visit to Poland, he made something similar to a triumphal homecoming of a famous native and internationally renowned writer.

Thirdly, he finally moved towards financial independence and security, and also a more relaxed attitude towards the expectations of the readership. His work featuring Marlow turned out to be a great success, both in popularity and in a commercial sense.

During the years of the First World War, he published one major work, *The Shadow-Line*, where it is possible to recognize his anxiety about his son, who was on active service. Furthermore, Conrad felt as if broken Europe during the war "mirrored the terms of his own nightmarish disintegration" (Knowles, 18). Furthermore, according to his wife, this feeling was even more intensified by the fact that the war brought back his past thoughts about his native land. Thinking about literary art in the period of the war had an impact on all the artists. They spent the time of the conflict from a position of "helpless inactivity" (Knowles, 19), feeling that this was a sort of defeat of their own liberal consciences.

The last ten years of Conrad's literary career show what is known as the "testamentary acts", as defined by Michale Millgate, typical of those writers who feel that death is approaching and then decide to write reflections about "aesthetic perceptions, moral discriminations, and creative choices they have arrived at late in life" (Knowles, 19). In the attempt to fashion himself for economic success, Conrad accepted to be interviewed, sculpted, and also painted. Furthermore, in 1923 he went to America and entered the worlds of public reading and speech-making. He was involved in several events where he signed copies and sold manuscripts, together with the production of limited-edition copies for the collectors, thus participating in the growth of what can be described as the Conrad industry. Together with all these draining activities, he also agreed to prepare a canon of his all production in order to gift his future readers with a collected edition. As Knowles claims, it is as if in the last years of his life Conrad was a

willing spectator of the construction of his own museum, until when on 3 August 1924 he died of a heart attack.

In later life, Conrad was a very productive author, mostly because he wanted to fulfil his publishing contracts in order to leave his wife and sons with financial security. Knowles claims that it is possible to compare his later years of activity with the earlier ones, being fundamentally consonant.

3.3 The Secret Agent

The publication of *The Secret Agent* turned out to be a "strangely uneasy event" (Berthoud, 100). Conrad was still struggling with his financial issues and his illnesses, but the draft of the novel was written in nine months, an incredibly short period of time between February and October 1906. Despite this, as soon as he reached the serialization stage and added almost 30 thousand words to the original draft, he acted as if he had lost confidence in the novel. The proof about this confidence loss lies in his letters, which acquire a sort of defensive tone anytime the novel is mentioned.

In a letter he wrote to John Galsworthy, who had already received a part of the manuscript of *The Secret Agent*, Conrad explains that he had no idea he was going to consider anarchism in a political way. As Berthoud explains, anarchism turned out to be an incidental element, since the novel focuses on individuals that are anarchists but could as likely be Fenians or Mormons. In the book, these persons are criticized because of their moral behaving, not because they are representatives of specific ideologies or politics. This is not completely true, since Conrad always denounced that particular kind of fiction in which the author's convictions were not admitted, although he never appreciated literary and theoretical programmes. Furthermore, the novel includes different national mentalities - the Russian embodied by Mr. Vladimir, the American embodied by the Professor, and the British represented by Mrs. Verloc. Moreover, there are also characters that represent "humanitarian enthusiasm, social atheism and even intellectual despair" (Berthoud, 101). These people are not at all revolutionaries, instead they are pretenders, as Conrad points out in one of his letters. In the novel he is able to turn what is political into something psychological, also reducing intentions into causes, making it possible to see the Profess as a person that is "genuinely mad, not genuinely wrong" (Berthoud, 101).

Being this a novel with a huge satirical aspect, it should come as no surprise that there are elements of satire regarding the Establishment, that he justified by saying that things were like this at the time. On the other hand, when it comes to the London anarchists and their entrance on stage, these satirical intentions are just denied. This is again explained in Conrad's letters, where he explained that his fear was to offend his correspondents, belonging to the left-wing. It must be said, as Berthoud points out, that Conrad was usually not inhibited by political disagreement.

Conrad's worries about the reception of his new novel were not only grounded on the diplomatic sphere. He had always been very economical in disclosing the real-life sources on which he based his works, but with *The Secret Agent* he was even more careful. Nonetheless, it was impossible for him to deny that the plot had been drawn from the only anarchist attack that hit Victorian England, i.e., the accidental explosion of a bomb near the Greenwich Observatory in 1894. For this reason, he admitted to his publisher that his new work was indeed based on his inside knowledge of an event that could be inscribed into the history of anarchism. In his Author's Note of 1920, he remarked that this revelation was supposed to disarm curiosity, not to satisfy it. Despite Conrad's claims, before starting to write *The Secret Agent*, he undertook an entire programme of research, looking for information from documents, journals, and anarchist literature, and also interviewing his friend, Ford Madox Ford, known to have anarchist connections in his youth. Furthermore, he also talked with Ford's cousin, who during her adolescence was the editor of an anarchist journal. For example, the idea behind the character of the Professor came directly from American pamphlets. According to Berthoud, Conrad built a structure of evasiveness in which his refusal to take responsibility for the political

content of the novel became a refusal to admit the huge work of documentation on which

the novel is based.

3.4 Critiques about *The Secret Agent*

Berthoud lists the opinion of some of Conrad's critics who agree on saying that the novel lacks an intellectual challenge. Jocelyn Baines, who is the first modern biographer of Conrad, thinks that first of all the novel is devoid of a unifying theme, rendering it a mere succession of superficially related scenes. Albert J. Guerard, who is one of the first modern critics of Conrad's work, claims that *The Secret Agent*, cannot be described as a work of exploration and discovery. Other critics, such as J. Hillis Miller, are determined to find a unifying theme and are sometimes driven into vacuities by claiming that the theme seems to be the separation between spirit and matter. Critics like Fleishman and Schwarz deal with the issue by becoming formalists and claiming that in this particular novel the essential quality of the fictional world is the metaphor. Furthermore, the more recent commentaries on the novel continued to take for granted that it remains a low-powered work, as Berthoud explains. This means that Conrad's intention to write nothing more than a simple tale has worked. But this further complicates the situation, since by admitting that this novel is not as simple as it seems, critics found themselves obliged to face the question of "how can a work of literary fiction be simultaneously a technical tour-de-force and an intellectual void?" (Berthoud, 104).

In his letters, Conrad always said that this was going to be a "mere tale", in order to confirm the political innocence of his writing, consequently he added "Simple Tale" as the subtitle of the novel. Therefore, readers were informed that what they had in their hands was not a political or philosophical essay, but a literary work. Furthermore, the subtitle has been read by many as a joke at the reader's expense, since what is described as "simple" turns out to be, on the contrary, very complicated. As far as the political

sphere is concerned, Conrad explained that *The Secret Agent*, in being a work of fiction, is repudiated from politics.

As Berthoud underlines, Conrad claimed that those emotions encouraged by the practices of civilization are true enemies to true compassion, which requires an important effort of imaginative attention if the object of feeling needs to acquire any reality. This feeling will not lead to a political programme, but it will help politics escape the realm of theory and vacuity. According to this view, the novel plays a definite role in justifying politics, but by the same token the latter should impart seriousness to the fictional work. Furthermore, Conrad insisted on saying that *The Secret Agent* has nothing to do with the refusal of anarchism, the operation it performs is to relocate this movement into a discourse of narrative realism. The author challenges the response to anarchism and the mindset of the average reader, more than the movement itself.

Conrad's defensiveness about the novel becomes even more excusable when it acknowledges that the majority of the recipients of his letters were members of the intellectual left, as pointed out by Berthoud. It is undoubtedly true that Conrad held his friends in the highest regard, but at the same time he wanted to maintain his political independence, even when exchanging letters with them.

However, the novel does not revolve around the judgement of anarchism, rather on what it reveals about Victorian England. Conrad is right in claiming that *The Secret Agent* does not attack anarchism at all, it rather drops this phenomenon in London life and shows how life loses its transparency. By doing so, the English left's dedication to social change is foregrounded and described as genuine. This is once more something that explains Conrad's decision to be evasive with his friends in his letters since the novel threatens friendship more seriously than a difference of opinions.

It is now clear that Conrad perfectly knew what he was trying to do with this novel. He told his agent that the story was going to have "an ironic intention but a dramatic development" (Berthoud, 107). It is important to remember that irony's main purpose is to destabilize the settled notions of its recipients. It is often described as a language appealing to two different audiences within one person, the first seeing the meaning on the surface, the second instead catching the hidden meaning. The whole novel is pervaded by the motif of un-ironic discourses, including those late-Victorian terrorist fiction conventions, the language usually belonging to the daily press – that saw a huge growth between 1890 and 1910 – and also the different modes of the detective thriller. The mode, brought to fame by Conan Doyle, requires a criminal mystery that, in order to be solved, demands the intervention of some sort of intelligence by the appointed investigator. Even if in terms of mere plot, the investigation seems to have a perfect conclusion, in terms of the author's irony this is all but conclusive. Conrad inserted in his narrative the assassination of Verloc by his wife's hands right after the final report of the Assistant Commissioner. In this way, readers are able to fully taste the incomprehension that is implicit in the joke made by the Commissioner: "From a certain point of view we are here in the presence of a domestic drama" (*The Secret Agent*, 163).

Despite being clear that Conrad's intentions were not to denigrate the police, his undercuts on the behalf of the police make it impossible to read the novel as a celebration of "the power of intelligence or the values of law and order or even the virtues of the English tradition" (Berthoud, 108). Furthermore, even his engagement with the discourse of the anarchist novel is not conservative at all.

Berthoud quotes Melchiori by claiming that much of this kind of fiction ended in confirming the political status quo, presenting as terroristic all forms of social protest.

The anarchist novel usually featured some tropes and figures - the dynamiter-chemist, the secret agent, a secret society, and an international conspiracy - aiming to spread alarm and cause a reaction. *The Secret Agent* features all these elements. The only difference is that Conrad's terrorists are presented as harmless and impotent, and not able to threaten society for real. All the revolutionaries but the Professor are built as conformists, lacking energy and power of initiative to the point that they are fully dependent on the women of the novel, exploiting them whenever they can.

Anarchism in terrorist fiction is normally thought of as hyperactive, a movement that can agitate the crowd. Nothing of this sort is featured in Conrad's novel, on the contrary, it insists that the multitudes that constitute London are "as inert, indifferent, and unconscious as an organic phenomenon". (Berthoud, 109). The only revolutionary act present in the narrative is that of an enforced and premature explosion, caused by Stevie, an a-political boy with a mental disability, who ended up just killing himself. This confirms once again that the kind of anarchism that Conrad decided to put in his novel does not pose any political threat. Historically speaking the author is right, because in late-Victorian England the majority of anarchists were only desperate refugees seeking to preserve the kind of tolerance that offered them a shelter. The reason for this lies in the fact that England did not introduce an anti-immigration law until the end of the century, being therefore threatened by its own permissiveness. The question on how dangerous the Greenwich explosion could be, raised by the terrorist fiction conventions to Conrad's novel, has been answered and subjected, as well, to the author's irony. The truth is that an explosion aimed to reinforce the security of a single person destroys an entire family. The novel clearly demonstrates that ordinary life is frightfully insecure and that London is far from being a safe haven as other European capitals used to believe.

Berthoud continues by claiming that *The Secret Agent* presents a kind of anarchism that is politically impotent. The Greenwich bombing, the novel's central event, comes out as an anti-anarchist gesture since its effects can be seen almost only in the domestic sphere. The anarchists in the novel "are made vacuous by their dependence on the props and comforts they theoretically despise" (Berthoud, 114). However, there is an exception, the figure of The Professor, who wholeheartedly repudiates all social institutions as demonstrated in his brief appearance in "The Informer", a story published at the end of 1906, regarding the political illusion of the wealthy part of the society. Furthermore, he understands that an attack on a social system needs to remain uncompromised by the system itself, and therefore cannot be justified, because justifications exist thanks to those established norms. Moreover, the Professor's view is one that links life with multiplicity and death with individualism. The fact that he always carries a bomb in his pocket demonstrates that death is sometimes more powerful than life itself since the latter is vulnerable to the will of terrorists. This is his version of what is now known as "propaganda of the deed".

As Berthoud states in the last part of his work, Conrad himself was an opponent of the Enlightenment, claiming that it favoured the authority of reason over that of tradition, also having the social role under the natural heart. He was particularly hostile to anarchism, one of Enlightenment's more extreme legacies. Conrad clearly understood that anarchism was meant to fight cultural institutions in order to gain a naturalistic view of society, one that saw humankind as able to live free and in social concord thanks to all its attributes. However, the target of *The Secret Agent* is way more general than anarchism only, as it deals with the "dogma of rationality that characterizes the modern world" (Berthoud, 117). This dogma in the novel is represented by the belief in the autonomy of

science. Vladimir's justification regarding a possible attack on the Greenwich Observatory is correct in assuming that those belonging to the middle class are devoted to science more than they are to religion or art. Representative of the dogma in the novel is Ossipon, a former medical student and a follower of Lombroso's theories on the genetic origins of criminality. Because of his strong belief in science and his extreme rationalism, when dealing with Stevie, he eliminates from the context everything that makes the child precious to his family, treating him as "an identity without content" (Berthoud, 117). Verloc is a rationalist as well, and this issue is central in the eleventh chapter. Although, contrary to what Ossipon did, he was able to stay out of the consequences of Stevie's death, by being much more pragmatic and exploiting the boy's sensitivity in order to fulfil Vladimir's requests.

4. Mohsin Hamid and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

This chapter examines Mohsin Hamid's novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. The first part will be focused on introducing the contemporary author. The second part will be devoted to the novel, which is written in the form of a monologue. This particular work of fiction is often inscribed in the field of literature post-9/11. The novel is et in Lahore, a city in Pakistan where the narrator, and the protagonist, were born. The second character that takes part to the monologue is an American man, who is silent and never speaks. An important theme in the novel is the question of identity, which gained even more importance after the Twin Towers attacks, therefore the last part of the chapter is going to be devoted to the analysis of this theme.

4.1 Life and Literary Career

Mohsin Hamid is a Pakistani author born in Lahore in 1971, who holds also British citizenship. During his life, he lived both in the East and in the West. His father was a Professor at Stanford University, therefore when he was a child he moved to California. As for his academic experience, he studied at Princeton University and Harvard Law School and therefore moved again towards the East Coast of the United States. Once he completed his studies, he started working in New York in the business field and began his career as a writer. In his 2007 novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, his experiences of a Muslim living in the United States after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 came to light. The novel is an international bestseller and has been translated into more than 25 languages. After the publication of the novel, he moved to London to work not only as a novelist but also as a journalist. Two years later, in 2009, he went back to his birth city, Lahore. He published two other novels, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* in 2013, and the latest entitled *Exit West* in 2017.

4.2 The Reluctant Fundamentalist

Hamid's 2007 novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, is set as a story within a story narrated in the first-person viewpoint by Changez, a young Pakistani man, who is at a café in Lahore having a conversation with a stranger, that the reader understands to be American. The frame story is a conversation between Changez and the stranger, but the only voice that can be heard is that of the Pakistani man since the American man does not speak. Therefore, the conversation becomes Changez's monologue. The conversation aim is to introduce the second narrative, the framed story. Changez tells his American listener about his past in the United States as an immigrant and the enchantment he initially had about that country, that turn into disillusionment in the last period of his stay. Despite his

very polite way of speaking, it becomes clear that he suspects the stranger to be sent from the American government to assassinate him.

The Changez of the framed story is a young man who after graduation enjoys his new job in the United States and the feeling of being in love with Erica, an American woman. Later, the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers take place, making the American people doubt national security. The young narrator's American dream is ruined, and his entire world is changed by this dramatic event. As Pei-Chen Liao explains, the attacks led to Erica's disappearance and the resurgence of American patriotism in the United States. Furthermore, the war in Afghanistan and the Indo-Pakistan conflicts began. For these reasons, Changez decided to return home to Pakistan, determined to stop what the United States were doing to the Eastern part of the world.

It is important to notice that the protagonist of Hamid's novel is part of the elite class both in Pakistan and in the United States. Changez's experience at Princeton University ends with his graduation with honour and he starts working for an important company in New York. Despite this, he admits that his first reaction to the collapse of the Twin Towers was not one of shock, instead he felt pleased and smiled. Several critics, as Liao writes, find his reaction almost despicable and describe his smile as uncanny, since it reveals a familiar, even if strange, side of himself that he repressed in order to fulfil his American dream. This allowed him to see 9/11 from a different point of view, one that Americans did not see or acknowledge. Therefore, Hamid's novel shows the complexity that characterizes the issues of terrorism and identity, paying special attention to those belonging to the privileged part of society. A second important feature of Hamid's novel is that it does not only describe the process of a young man leaving his host country to become an immigrant, but also the other part of the story, that of the identity shift that

happened to Changez when he becomes a host in Pakistan after having been a guest in the United States.

As White explains, that the novel is part of the post-9/11 literature associated with cultures, languages, and faiths of Islam, it is announced from the very title. The assumptions of the readers are manipulated from the very beginning by the expression "fundamentalist": it states that it belongs to exotic literature as well as to post-9/11 literature, by drawing upon the stereotypes about terrorism. Furthermore, the fact that the writer is Pakistani almost immediately recalls the association between Islamic nations and fundamentalism, thus implying that the novel is about terrorism. Nonetheless, the term "fundamentalist" becomes problematic as soon as the reader discovers that it has to do with the company Changez is working with, Underwood Samson. Readers usually approach the book expecting the protagonist to be a terrorist (even if a reluctant one), but the novel instead links fundamentalism with the "economic mode of domination that is responsible for the vast inequalities within the globalized world" (White, 445).

White argues that Changez's story is told by Changez himself, resulting in an unsettling of the novel's veracity, since there is no way to confirm the truth of what it is said by the narrator. The latter slides between frames of reference by constructing Changez as a victim of colonialism, globalization, and American imperialism. Changez, at the behest of the narration, is at the same time a postcolonial victim of globalization and a beneficiary of the neoliberal globalization and the deracialization of success that it brought along. In this way, the narrator explores the different ways in which globalization has widened the opportunities and intensified class division, as well as the ways in which it has rendered hostility, vengeance, and envy easily to develop among the people.

As for the political perspectives, White underlines that those presented in the

principal narrative are fractured as well since Changez is presented both as a victim and as a perpetrator of capitalism. White's idea is that Hamid has created a character, the narrator, whose aim is to combat the paranoias usually associated with the context following 9/11, i.e., those fears related to terrorism and uncertainty. "The narrative itself becomes an allegory of the post-9/11 milieu" (White, 453). The frame narrative in particular is crucial in this project since here is where the narrator claims his authority in stabilizing his paranoia. The frame narrative is far from what is usually defined as authentic, since the narrator is a first-person one, and like all fictional first-person narrators the truth they are claiming to tell can only be seen as fictitious since they are the very products of the authors' minds. This is, by extent, true for all narratives since they are representations and are not objective. Since the only narrator is Changez, his story, voice, and perspective are established in the main narrative. Therefore, the story of Changez is not necessarily trustworthy, since it is a product of his own voice, story, and personality. The absolute control that the narrator has on the framed story translates into having no other source to verify what the narrator is telling. White defines the function of the frame narrative as being a "strategy of authority" since it frames readers into believing that what they are reading in the main narrative is authoritative, and simultaneously admitting the narrator's quest to obtain authority as control.

The control the narrator has on the story is clear from the very beginning. He exploits the foreigner's lack of self-assurance due to him being in a foreign environment, and imposes his assistance to the American man, whether he requires it or not. The words he chooses are very polite, but the American finds himself obliged to accept. The narrator's polite words are reminders that they are in his city, and therefore he is the one in control and the American man is just a tourist that is vulnerable.

Towards the end of the novel, the narrator and the foreigner leave the local café where they spent their evening. In so doing, the narrator starts describing the surroundings, underlining especially to the buildings along the streets. Pointing out the retailer of guns and ammunitions is a way to incite anxiety in the American man by letting the stereotypical links between terrorists, terrorism, and Pakistan to come out in his tour-guide diction. The narrator guides the attention of the stranger towards the buildings and the streets, perhaps in order to distract him from possible dangers that may be closer than he thinks. The American has no way to know if the narrator is plotting with the waiter to assassinate him. Once again in a very covert way, the narrator refers to the stereotype of Pakistan as a country known to be a terrorist haven.

White continues by saying that, towards the end of the novel, the escalation of threat can be a suggestion for the possibility that the narrator is fighting with internal impulses that are way beyond his control. This behaviour may induce a feeling of frightening in some readers, since he is dealing with a man that, after all, is just a tourist. Furthermore, the end is ambiguous: the narrator denies that he has been signalling to the waiter who is following them, and the American reaching into his jacket eventually suggests that he could have hidden a weapon for all the storytime, even if the narrator says out loud that he hopes he is only looking for his business cards. In the end, the frames of the novel are destroyed, "for the action of the novel overflows its own boundaries" (White, 456). In the end, it is also clear that the narrator is ready to say anything, the unclear fact is what he is willing to do. In order to render the American even more anxious, the narrator contradicts himself, by remarking that he is a trustworthy man, even if he admits that what makes a great narrative is the thrust of the one narrating it, and not the accuracy of its details. White explains that this instability problematizes every aspect

of the story about Changez narrated by the narrator. Moreover, this instability functions as an allegory of those uncertainties that characterise such a globalized world. Another allegory, the narration itself, functions as a way to fight the paranoia by trying to maintain control in front of a global space that is becoming uncertain. Hamid, thanks to this narrator, presents an allegory of the post-9/11 world, where "friends and enemies, paranoia and activity, activism and terrorism are increasingly indistinguishable" (White, 457).

Morey starts his analysis of Hamid's work by quoting the former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who announced new measures to deal with the threat of Islamist terrorism after the London attacks of 2005. He announced that "the rules of the game have changed" (Morey, 135) suggesting a shift in attitudes towards matters of cultural differences. This shift also encompassed the realm of culture, and one of the earliest responses came from Martin Amis, who wrote an essay that appeared on *The Guardian*. Amis claimed that the rules have changed for writers after 9/11. As he explains, writers were already forced out of their comfort zones when they were asked to write for a wider public in the form of journalistic and commentary pieces of writing.

As far as the fictional responses to 9/11 are concerned, they initially took the form of trauma narratives, trying to trace the psychological consequences of the Twin Towers attacks. Another form was the one trying to underline the injustice perpetrated by Islamic terrorists while giving a reason for American intervention to exist. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, according to Morey, destabilizes the dominant categories of the post-9/11 novel by depicting a character that begins as a "fundamentalist" capitalist only to end as subject to racial suspicion. As White already did, Morey underlines the allegorical and unreliable aspects of the novel as well. Furthermore, he claims that the novel

defamiliarizes the readers' relation to those projects of national identification perpetrated through literature, forcing every person to feel deterritorialized. Hamid's novel is seen by Morey precisely as a sort of "deterritorialization of literature which forces readers to think about what lies behind the totalizing categories of East and West, […] those categories continuously insisted upon in "war on terror" discourse" (Morey, 138).

The Reluctant Fundamentalist also answers the call for a new kind of writing that challenges those critical categories that are well established. Starting from the title once again, the reader is led to think that the novel is going to be a confession, expecting to read about what forces drove the protagonist (and narrator) to join some kind of radical Islamist terror cell. But, as the reader almost immediately understands, Changez is not and never has been a religious fundamentalist. There is not even a trace of a later awakening of his faith after the discrimination he experiences in the second part of the book.

Morey also considers the novel's form to be a peculiar one, a dramatic monologue that was heavily influenced by Albert Camus's *The Fall*, a novella wrote in 1956 about confession and guilt. Hamid's novel deals with the experience of alienation to a historical trigger and the subsequent political responses. This use of the dramatic monologue allows the reader to see the world through Changez's eyes, while preventing the discovery of the American interlocutor's point of view. In so doing, it refuses the canonical consolation of the dialogue, since it takes the reader into the head of one character only. Morey claims that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* can be described as falsely polyphonic. The voices of the other characters, e.g., Erica, Jim, et al., are all ventriloquized by Changez, who may as well be an unreliable narrator and one whose story is biased due to its own political views. In the conventional form of the novel, the reader is introduced to a fictive world

inhabited by characters whose integrity and ontology are usually not questioned by the ones reading. None of this happens in Hamid's novel, even though the reader may be provided access to Changez's story but lots of doubts are cast on whether what he is telling is true or false, he may also be telling only the part of the story that he finds more suitable for the interlocutor. As Morey points out, this does not mean that the novel is of less quality, it only makes the reader feel abandoned without the identifications that are usually made with one protagonist or the other. As aforesaid, the reader expects a conclusion where Changez becomes a radical Islamist, instead a true confession is constantly postponed, resulting in the doubts one develops about the narrator. Changez, as Morey claims, is a first narrator that resembles a delusional and particular modern protagonist, such as Holden Caulfield.

As for the other characters, they are given by Hamid's narrative simultaneously a depth and also a superficiality. Once again, the reader is made to question the narrator, and the characters in turn, as it is the case with Changez's lover, Erica. This girl symbolizes human vulnerability, but at the same time she embodies the whole fate of the United States after 9/11. Her relationship with Changez is seen by Morey as representing the possibility of a reconciliation between East and West in a cosmopolitan city such as New York. Despite this, towards the end of the book, she disappears into a "dangerous nostalgia", exactly as the United States did in comforting the people with the promise of a successful military response. Another trait that Erica shares with her native country is her fixation with the past.

4.3 The Question of Identity

The reading that Morey proposes seems to place *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* in the field of postcolonial literature, one that writes back to imperial and neo-imperial centres. Its political engagements with the key questions of our times constitute a reinvigoration of what can be defined as political postcolonial writing. Nonetheless, the plot of the novel shifts between the United States, Latin America, and South Asia, the sub-theme of "intercontinental business acquisitions and the reach of global capital" (Morey, 142) let it be open to an interpretation through another lens.

More recently, critics all around the world started considering the idea of introducing a new category, one that should be called "world literature". The most optimistic thinkers understand that literature can, and does, participate in the re-creation of the world we live in. Since the world itself is open to change, culture follows the same process. Despite this, all the books follow the same path from manuscript to publication, being subject to those economic pressures that their authors are so kin to critique in their plots. Pakistani literature seems to be driven by a kind of post-9/11 cultural curiosity. Indeed, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* addresses the contemporary question about the struggle between the national and the globalized structures of power.

As for Hamid's novel, it is not at all correct to define it as celebratory of the globalized work, as Morey points out. On the contrary, it comes to be a story about the impossibility to maintain such a globalized and post-political position while the forces of resurgent nationalism are developing. Following the attacks of 9/11, Changez faces culturally-based suspicion and a renewed American patriotism, which resulted in his political sense of himself to quickly vanish. He becomes subject to the new laws of entry in the country, a victim of "racial profiling at a US airport" (Morey, 143), feeling also

discomfort about his own face. Towards the end of the novel, Changez learns about the Janissaries, the Christian children captured by the Muslims of the Ottoman Empire and trained to combat against their own people. This new knowledge led him to think that he is a modern-day version of those Janissaries, who had been unwittingly turned against his own country. The issue of "side-taking" and the feeling to have to make a choice after 9/11, is put under scrutiny in the novel. Particularly, the term "fundamentalism" in Hamid's novel underlines that addiction to fundamental principles contributes to animate the forces of global capitalism. Changez decided to leave the universe of Underwood Samson because he refused to focus on the company's fundamental putting the broader political picture in the second place. As Morey claims, in this precise sense Changez is a reluctant fundamentalist.

The reader is free to decide whether to interpret the book as a deadlock between neo-colonizer and neo-colonized. Changez encourages this interpretation, especially when he speaks about his Pakistani identity as suppressed, even if it surfaces again when he starts feeling out of place after 9/11. It is as if after the attacks his reactions are guided by a strong Muslim identity which sets him in conflict with his Western way of living. A recurring theme of the novel is that of acting. The protagonist has always acted as an American, therefore the reader should not be surprised by his decision to grow a beard in order to show his real essence. He has always embodied the idea of the "poor-boy-made-good" (Morey, 144), but eventually came to acknowledge that his identity was constructed thanks to the gaze of other people. Despite this, Morey admits that in the first part of the book there is no trace of such a need for an essential identity. Changez's perspective changes and realizes that his Pakistani essence was invisible to others. He built an image of himself of a good American young man, working for an elite company,

that came to an end as soon as he went to Manila and a fellow driver stared hastily at him.

Concluding, Morey claims that Changez's sense of identity, in being "provisional and shifting" (Morey, 144), avoids the certainty that allows battle lines to be drawn in binary cultural terms. The protagonist's journey that led him to his partisan position, gives the reader a snapshot of the bifurcation experienced by the entire world after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, confirming that old colonial instincts are far from dead in the West, maybe only cloaked under the rhetoric of globalization.

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