

**The Functions of Literature: A Diachronic Perspective on the
British Novel on Terrorism from the Victorian *Fin de Siècle* to the
Present**

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1. Introduction

“Terrorism is here to stay”¹ is a slogan that currently reverberates in some Western media headlines. And sadly, while writing the last chapters of this study “The Functions of Literature: A Diachronic Perspective on the British Novel on Terrorism from the Victorian *Fin de Siècle* to the Present” in 2016 and 2017, a series of terrorist attacks hit France, Belgium, USA, UK, Germany, Spain, Finland, Sweden, Turkey, Afghanistan to name but a few. The atrocities caused tremendous loss of human life, inspired panic and a ubiquitous sense of fear. It has in fact become painfully clear that terrorism used by radical Islamist groups is a phenomenon that will haunt us for an unforeseeable time into the future. Fuelled by fears of the mass influx of refugees, mainly from the conflict zones in the Middle East, the backlash to these events, such as the surge in right-wing populism and Islamophobia, engendered seismic shifts in the political landscape including the ascendancy of Donald Trump as President of the United States and – to a certain extent – also Britain’s vote to leave the European Union.²

Terrorism may accordingly have far-reaching political and cultural repercussions. It may alter the political landscape and influence processes of democratic decision-making. In the roughly 150 years of modern terrorism, the phenomenon has also triggered a myriad of fictional responses by writers and film-makers, and their relevance for cultural production and meaning-making has in recent years drawn a lot of attention in Cultural and Literary Studies. Considering the current atrocities, this attention from both writers and academics offering their take on terrorism is unlikely to wane in the coming years.

This study focuses – unlike the majority of transnational and multi-generic approaches – solely on the cultural response to terrorism in the form of narrative fiction, and, more precisely, the British novel. Moreover, it takes a diachronic approach, examining the first literary responses to the dynamite terrorism of the late 19th century forward to contemporary literature on Islamist terrorism. This approach has been chosen for the following reasons: Firstly, Britain, in contrast to most countries, has experienced a great range of differently motivated terrorism since the end of the 19th century. On the one hand, the first sub-state terrorist group, the anti-colonial Irish Fenians, were responsible for a series of bombing campaigns, a struggle for independence which was continued by the IRA’s fight for a unified Irish Republic in the 20th century. On the other hand, Britain was also haunted by far-left terrorism. Many of the 19th century

¹ See, for example, Faulconbridge, Guy. “Britain’s MI6 spy chief says Islamist terrorist threat is here to stay.” In: *Reuters.com*. 21.09.2016. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-security-idUSKCN11R28L> (last accessed 19th August 2017)

Walker, Andre. “Terrorism in Europe Is Here to Stay Because We’re Soft on Immigration.” In: *Observer*. 11th April 2017. <http://observer.com/2017/04/europe-terrorism-immigration-policy-muslims/> (last accessed 19th August 2017)

² See, for example, Richard Dearlove, the former head of the British foreign intelligence service MI6 who advocated for Brexit to minimise the alleged terrorist threat posed by EU immigration. Burke, Jason. “Brexit and terrorism: EU Immigration is not the main danger.” In: *The Guardian*. 24.03.2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/24/post-brexit-immigration-controls-stop-uk-isis-attacks> (last accessed 30th June 2017)

anarchists who were responsible for a series of violent attacks on the continent sought asylum in Britain, but led a predominantly peaceful existence in their new home. Similarly, the 20th century exponents of far-left terrorism, the Angry Brigade, were, compared to their counterparts, i.e., the Weather Underground in the USA, the Red Brigades in Italy of the Red Army Faction in Germany, a comparatively harmless collective that could be stopped before any human casualties resulted from their campaigns. By solely choosing British novels representing terrorism, the particularities of both the historical and cultural contexts of the responses can be taken into account. Considering aspects such as the mentality, literary, cultural and political history of Britain, this analysis strives to illustrate how the representations have processed British terrorism discourses throughout history. This, in turn, leads us to the second important tenet of this study, which is its diachronic perspective. By discussing novels dealing with terrorism from the *fin de siècle* to the early 21st century, the continuities and differences of the novelistic representations of terrorism may be carved out.

Lastly, the novel is a seminal object of investigation as it has been the most prolific fictional medium, which has provided versatile and profound representations of terrorism in Britain ever since the phenomenon of insurgent terrorism emerged for the first time in the second half of the 19th century. For this reason, this study focuses – in contrast to many multi-generic approaches to terrorism and literature – exclusively on the genre of the novel and the specific characteristics of narrative fiction in tackling wider terrorism discourses. It centres on the question of how novels have engaged with terrorism, despite the long gestation period and absence of the visually spectacular in the genre. Hence, the questions that are at the heart of the subsequent analysis are: Which literary strategies have been deployed in novels dealing with the phenomenon? How does the novel contribute to the cultural processing of terrorist violence and, in a related field, which socio-cultural function(s) may it fulfil?

Such an analysis might reveal how the anxieties surrounding the trope of terrorism are very often closely linked to other socio-cultural developments. For example, to return to the current terrorist outrages perpetrated in the name of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), their nefarious actions exacerbate the feeling of precariousness that characterises our globalised world. In our current “age of anxiety”, bolstered by 9/11 and the financial crash, the emergence of ISIS on the global stage in 2014 captured the imagination of a horrified global audience and added to the climate of angst.³ In a globalised world, their terrorist acts are scattered across the globe, performing “a stream of unpredictable, inter-related pop-up events that attract fleeting attention, rather than a programme of large-scale, unique productions.”⁴ Hence, the world that has become increasingly complicated through globalisation becomes even more confusing, unpredictable and intimidating. One might say that the fear of ISIS which has also been co-opted by anti-globalisation, far-right movements, is inextricably linked

³ Howie, Luke; Campbell, Perri. 2017. *Crisis and Terror in the Age of Anxiety*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 10-11.

⁴ Burke, Jason. “How the changing media is changing terrorism.” In: *The Guardian* 25th February 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/25/how-changing-media-changing-terrorism> (last accessed 16th June 2017).

to the uncertainties and perceived threats of our current age. In this vein, this study seeks to delve into the ways in which terrorism discourses have aligned themselves with broader socio-political discourses, and how literature may capture and process these discourses.

To illustrate the relevance of a historical perspective and the significance of the cultural context a little further: ISIS terrorists of our current digital age deploy a method that has been harnessed ever since the phenomenon of modern terrorism emerged towards the end of the 19th century, that is, the staging of the most shocking attacks to gain the greatest media attention possible. Looking at the history of modern terrorism, it becomes apparent that no matter how unprecedented and extraordinary current terrorist atrocities might seem, they are all based on the same strategy: terrorism has always been a method where indiscriminate attacks are deployed to engender fear and suspicion among the public to further a specific cause. To this end, the culprits need to harness the media to disseminate stories and images of their actions. While ISIS might have taken their media strategy with its relentless social media propaganda to a new level, their predecessors from the 19th and 20th centuries heavily depended on media coverage as well: an increasing literate population and the mass media that emerged to serve it “breathed oxygen in the anarchist movement”⁵ at the end of the 19th century, and the 20th century terrorist movements used the power of televised images of carnage.

It becomes clear from the above that terrorism can only be effective when it receives mass media attention. From the late 19th century up to the present day, a pervasive representation in the news media has not only been the linchpin of its success but it also differs from the portrayal of other incidents such as ordinary crime or accidents. If, for instance, a van is driven into a crowd killing innocent tourists by, say, an intoxicated driver, then such an incident will receive much less media attention than the same tragedy would attract when a terrorist driver is behind the wheel. Assuming these are two events causing exactly the same damage and loss of human life, then the representation of these occurrences depends heavily on whether the driver had a motive that may be ascribed to a terrorist cause. It is thus not the actual effect and the casualties that matter, but the meaning ascribed to the incident that determine whether it is reported, disseminated and absorbed in the collective consciousness. Notably, the phenomenon is created and propped up by media attention and the interpretations ascribed to the actions, a view that is at the heart of Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS).

Even the most unfathomable events, like 9/11, which were initially thought beyond the written word, have engendered a myriad of literary responses. Hence, it may be assumed that there is an angle, a way of representing the unrepresentable inherent to literary fiction that makes the representation of terrorism in the novel a worthwhile endeavour. This brings us to another research question of this study, that is, if terrorism is a phenomenon that may only come fully into effect when it is represented and disseminated by various news media outlets, what is the value of fictional representations of terrorism? This study seeks to analyse how terrorism is dealt with in fictional texts, and, most crucially, what socio-cultural

⁵ Howie; Campbell. 2017. p. 11.

function these works may serve. Considering the propounded interplay between terrorism and the news media, what can literary fiction add to the myriad of media representations that enable the phenomenon in the first place?

Commentators like Gerrit-Jan Berendse and Mark Williams claim that literature and visual arts can anticipate catastrophic events such as terrorism.⁶ In this vein, it has, for example, become a commonplace in the scholarly discussion of post-9/11 fiction that the disaster resembles cinematic fiction to an extent that it has been foreseen in disaster movies.⁷ The attacks seemed to be choreographed by a Hollywood director⁸ and appeared to spring from the realm of fiction rather than reality. These events thus strikingly illustrate how terrorism and arts, real violence and fictional representations mesh into one another, creating multiple overlaps between literary and cinematic representations and public terrorism discourses.⁹ Michael C. Frank's hypothesis explaining the great fictional output tackling terrorism seems therefore reasonable: terrorism "is a halfway house between the real (actual attacks and their tangible aftermaths) and the imaginary (possible future assaults)."¹⁰ But not only "modern blockbuster disaster movies or dystopian science fiction narratives, catastrophes and crises have generated an avalanche of collective fantasies,"¹¹ that may render cinema an apt medium for cultural processing of terrorism, but also literary fiction is seen as sharing terrorists' plots. Margaret Scanlan claims, for example, that already the early novels dealing with the insurgent terrorism of the 19th century exhibit many of the questions of representing violence that prevailed in the 20th century, such as the "alliance between storytelling and power"¹² or "the tendency of art to convert violence into an enthralling spectacle."¹³

Any claim of an affinity of fiction and terrorism requires a closer look at the very nature of literary fiction itself. How does it relate to both reality and our imagination? Wolfgang Iser, the founder of the Constance School of reception aesthetics created a useful conceptualisation of the relationship of fiction and its context. To Iser, fictional texts are comprised of the triad of the 'fictive', the 'real' and the 'imaginary', the last of which does not relate to any real-world objects and is characterised by diffuse formlessness. In this triad, the role of the fictive is as a mediator between the real and the imaginary; that is, it transforms the diffuse imaginary into a realistic *gestalt*. Through this act of transposition,

⁶ Berendse, Gerrit-Jan; Williams, Mark. "Introduction." In: Berendse, Gerrit-Jan; Williams, Mark, eds. 2002. *Terror and Text: Representing Political Violence in Literature and Visual Arts*. Bielefeld: Aisthesis. pp. 10-11.

⁷ Pheasant-Kelly, Frances. "Authenticating the Reel: Realism, Simulation and Trauma in *United 93*." In: Bragard, Véronique; Dony, Christophe; Rosenberg, Warren, eds. 2011. *Portraying 9/11: Essays on Representations in Comics, Literature, Film and Theatre*. Jefferson/London: McFarland. pp. 147-159. p. 148.

⁸ Birkenstein, Jeff; Froula, Anna; Randell, Karen, eds. 2010. *Reframing 9/11: Film, Popular Culture and 9/11*. London: Continuum. p. ix.

⁹ Frank, Michael C. 2017. *The Cultural Imaginary of Terrorism in Public Discourse, Literature, and Film*. New York/London: Routledge. p. 1.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 9.

¹¹ Meiner, Carsten; Veel, Kristin. "Introduction." In: Meiner, Carsten; Veel, Kristin, eds. 2012. *The Cultural Life of Catastrophes and Crises*. Berlin/Boston: Walter DeGruyter. pp. 1-14. p. 2.

¹² Scanlan, Margaret. 2001. *Plotting Terror: Novelists and Terrorists in Contemporary Fiction*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press. p. 10.

¹³ Ibid. p. 10.

fiction transgresses the boundaries of both the real and the imaginary, thus creating an autonomous fictional world experienceable to the reader.¹⁴ Hence, fiction exists like terrorism between the real and the imaginary. The fictive serves as both catalyst and conduit, encapsulating existing fantasies, apprehensions, imagined scenarios of terrorism connecting them to cultural context. It may be argued that terrorism lends itself to fictional treatment as they share that land between the real and the imaginary, between established facts and speculative scenarios.¹⁵

While the affinity of fiction and terrorism may be worth considering, this study further attempts to explain the potential function(s) of literary representations of a phenomenon which veers towards the fictive. In other words, what potential effects may the creation of fictional terrorism stories have? How can literature get to the heart of a phenomenon that does only become meaningful through representation? Resorting to the German concept of *Funktionsgeschichte*, it aims to constitute a history of the changing functions of literary treatments of terrorism in the British novel.

Before 9/11 only very few scholars dealt with terrorism in British fiction: at the time of writing my thesis, a great number of studies – most of them taking a synchronic approach – have become available. Among the works that came out before or at the time of the catastrophic attacks is Scanlan's *Plotting Terror: Novelists and Terrorists in Contemporary Fiction*, which discusses a variety of modern and postmodern novels, with emphasis on the analogies between authors, terrorists as well as terrorist and fictional plots.¹⁶ Her approach differs fundamentally from the one of this study, because assumptions about affiliations of empirical authors with terrorists or any other character in their novel will be avoided in favour of an analysis of the structural elements of the text, which allow insights into the position of these literary engagements with terrorism. Moreover, Scanlan casts the 'terrorism novel' as a genre in its own right,¹⁷ without specifying what such a genre category encompasses. The question arising is thus: is there a case for such a genre category? Studying the contemporary terrorism novel, Robert Appelbaum and Alexis Paknadel analyse a great number of works that appeared from the 1970s to 2001, stating that Anglophone novels of terrorism constitute a very diverse body of literature which, however, displays continuities such as shared motifs, character profiles and political values.¹⁸ Among the authors' principal findings is that "terrorism fiction in English is not about terrorism per se; it is about the political legitimacy and moral integrity of the society to which terrorism's victims belong."¹⁹ Along this line of argument, terrorism becomes a literary trope lending itself to the discussion of the wider web of social

¹⁴ Iser, Wolfgang. "Akte des Fingierens oder Was ist das Fiktive im fiktionalen Text?" In: Heinrich, Dieter; Iser, Wolfgang, eds. 1983. *Funktionen des Fiktiven*. München: Wilhelm Fink. pp. 121-151. pp. 121-125.

¹⁵ See also Frank. 2017. p. 17, who also uses Iser's triad as a basis, but who concludes that "the cultural imaginary is decidedly *not* shapeless, and consequently demands a different approach than that suggested by Iser." (Ibid. p. 18)

¹⁶ Frank, Michael C.; Gruber, Eva, eds. 2012. *Literature and Terrorism: Comparative Perspectives*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. pp. 10-11.

¹⁷ Other commentators favour narrower categories, such as the "11 September novel" only encompassing those works directly referring to the events. Gourley, James. 2013. *Terrorism and Temporality in the Works of Thomas Pynchon and Don DeLillo*. New York/London: Bloomsbury. p. 2.

¹⁸ Appelbaum, Robert; Paknadel, Alexis. "Terrorism and the Novel, 1970–200." In: *Poetics Today* 29.3. 2008. pp. 387-436. p. 396.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 397.

and political issues. Looking at more than a century of British novels dealing with the subject, this study takes the socio-historical context of the works into account and identifies how they determine their potential social function and their cultural value. It remains to be seen in the subsequent analysis whether a claim for the genre ‘terrorism novel’ can be made, or if the fictional representations are too disparate to be subsumed under such a common label.

Other synchronic works appearing before 9/11 examine the late Victorian fiction tackling the dynamite scares of the late 19th century. Among them is Barbara Arnett Melchiori’s groundbreaking analysis of the ‘dynamite novel’²⁰ which tackles the terrorist threat posed by the Fenian bombing campaign and the terrifying presence of many of the high-profile continental anarchists in London. Most notably, however, the genre responds to the diffuse anxieties engendered by modernity, an observation that is central to Deaglan Ó Donghaile’s monograph *Blasted Literature: Victorian Political Fiction and the Shock of Modernism*.²¹ Taking her cues from Arnett Melchiori’s study, Ó Donghaile contends that “terrorism lies at the heart of the imagination of urban chaos”²² and the act of dynamiting represents modernism’s subversion of traditional literary conventions.²³

Alex Houen’s study of Anglophone literature tackling terrorism²⁴ also centres on Modernist works on terrorism, and was published in 2001, before any literary responses to 9/11 appeared. Yet, unlike Scanlan’s study of the novelist as the fictional terrorist’s double, his focus lies on the figurative aspects and discursive practices which are fundamental to terrorism, and how fiction writers have been drawn to the discussion of the symbolic nature of terrorism and its mediation.²⁵

With the emergence of a myriad of novels tackling 9/11, terrorism has been brought from the margins to the centre of literary criticism,²⁶ and the role of literature in tackling the trauma, specifically the trauma of 9/11, and its political repercussions has become a seminal point of departure for many commentators. The genre category ‘11 September novel’, which has been readily applied by critics such as James Gourley and many other scholars, comprises “a large array of both American, Western, and international authors and their responses to the paradigmatic attacks on the United States.”²⁷ Many of these studies take a transnational and multi-generic approach to fictional engagements with 9/11, which is indebted to the transnational reach and far-reaching consequences of the events. For example, the textbook *Literature After 9/11*²⁸ edited by Ann Keniston and Jeanne Follansbee Quinn has been one of

²⁰ Arnett Melchiori, Barbara. 1985. *Terrorism in the Late Victorian Novel*. London: Croom Helm.

²¹ Ó Donghaile, Deaglan. 2011. *Blasted Literature: Victorian Political Fiction and the Shock of Modernism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

²² Ibid. p. 11.

²³ Ibid. p. 10.

²⁴ Houen, Alex. 2002. *Terrorism and Modern Literature: From Joseph Conrad to Ciaran Carson*. New York: Oxford University Press.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 7.

²⁶ McClintock, Scott. 2015. *Topologies of Fear in Contemporary Fiction: The Anxieties of Post-Nationalism and Counter Terrorism*. Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

²⁷ Gourley. 2013. p. 2.

²⁸ Keniston, Ann, Follansbee Quinn, Jeanne, eds. 2008. *Literature after 9/11*. New York/London: Routledge.

the first of its kind in terms of its exploration of literary representations of the ostensibly incommensurable events by American and British writers. The experience of incommensurability entailed according to Keniston and Follanbee Quinn the need for narrative explanation, “not simply as a means for countering trauma, but as a means for refusing incommensurability, prompting attempts to place 9/11 into a historical framework.”²⁹ Their textbook delves into the specific potential for closing the gap left by the rupture induced by 9/11 in a variety of literary genres – from poems, short stories and novels to drama and hybrid forms such as the graphic novel. For, as the editors state, “the history of literature written about and after 9/11 can also be seen at least in part, as a sequence of genres.”³⁰ Short literary forms appeared first, while the first novels emerged only after some years.³¹ The novel as the most eminent and complex contemporary literary genre fosters self-reflection: it never accepts preceding texts or communicative acts as normative facts, but transforms them and reflects on this transformative process.³² It thus seems a hiatus was needed to be able to fathom and process the events of 11 September and to fill the void that was left behind with meaning. The shock of the immediate aftermath rendered any cultural acts of self-reflection impossible, and in the eyes of some commentators even indecent.

In the meantime, 9/11 inspired fiction written by a great array of international writers. Another relatively early contribution to the study of literary responses to 9/11, by Cara Cilano, focuses in *From Solidarity to Schisms: 9/11 and After in Fiction and Film from Outside the US*³³ exclusively on responses by European and Asian writers. This approach was novel at the time of publication, for the first novels and critical studies were mostly self-centred trauma narratives written by US authors. Consequently, analyses of these works have often been echoed in subsequent literary studies, which predominantly focus on American art and literature in terms of their engagement with the themes of trauma and wounds.³⁴ For similar reasons, diachronic approaches encompassing earlier literary representations of

²⁹ Ibid. p. 3.

³⁰ Ibid. p. 3.

³¹ Ibid. p. 3.

³² Simonsen, Karen-Margarethe; Ping Huang, Marianne; Rosendahl Thomson, Mads, eds. 2004. *Reinventions of the Novel: Histories and Aesthetics of a Protean Genre*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi B.V. p. 17.

³³ Cilano, Cara, ed. 2009. *From Solidarity to Schisms: 9/11 and After in Fiction and Film from Outside the US*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi B.V.

One of the first attempts to gauge the cultural repercussions of the events was made by Judith Greenberg. (Greenberg, Judith, eds. 2003. *Trauma at Home: After 9/11*. Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press.), which mostly contains personal narratives on the impact the events had on individual and cultural memory. Ulrich Baer collects the narratives by New York based writers in the shadow of the events. (Baer, Ulrich, ed. 2002. *110 Stories: New York Writes After September 11*. New York/London: New York University Press.) On a related note, Ann Kaplan dedicates a substantial part of her study on the cultural impact of trauma to 9/11. (Kaplan, E. Ann. 2005. *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.) Towards the of the mid- 2000’s first literary works including novels on 9/11 appeared, and literary studies followed suit. Among them is Versluys, Kristiaan. 2009. *Out of the Blue: September 11 and the Novel*. New York/Chichester: Columbia University Press, which explores the ways in which 9/11 novels “provide a context” to the unfathomable (p.14). Further synchronic explorations, some of them taking a transnational approach and shifting their focus away from trauma to other concerns such as ethics, identity and alterity, of this kind abound: Gray, Richard. 2011. *After the Fall: American Literature since 9/11*. Malden/Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell; Däwes, Birgit. 2011. *Ground Zero Fiction: History, Memory, and Representation in the American 9/11 Novel*. Heidelberg: Winter; Banita, Georgiana. 2012. *Plotting Justice: Narrative Ethics & Literary Culture after 9/11*. Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press; Keeble, Arin.

terrorism are scarce. Among the most notable exceptions are Michael C. Frank's and Eva Gruber's edited volume *Literature and Terrorism: Comparative Perspectives*, which chooses a transdisciplinary comparative and diachronic approach to the study of terrorism. The editors make clear that assumptions about ruptures and breaks engendered by 9/11 need to be founded on a diachronic, comparative perspective.³⁵ Thus, they compare contemporary novels about terrorism after 9/11 with thematically related works of previous decades.³⁶ This epistemic interest chimes with the aim of the present study which seeks to discover the shifts and continuities in the history of the British novel on terrorism.

The latest study by Michael C. Frank with the title *The Cultural Imaginary of Terrorism in Public Discourse, Literature and Film* also seeks a diachronic analysis linking dynamite fiction to contemporary representations of 9/11 in film and literature. Proceeding from the assumption that terrorism engenders "what if" scenarios, Frank explores how such discursive practices may feed into fiction and vice versa.³⁷ In the present study, this "what if" scenario will be called the 'logic of an anticipated repetition'³⁸; a concept that describes the anticipation of future terrorist attacks underpinning political arguments and public discourse in the wake of terrorist attacks.

Such a perspective pointing to the continuities of fictional representations of terrorism is at odds with the initial framing of 9/11 as a cataclysmic and unprecedented event that dominated the discourse in the aftermath. Birgit Däwes and Dunja M. Mohr point out that the sense of a historic rupture, a cataclysm that changed the world or the perception of it has been expressed by many critics, writers, artists and scholars. With greater temporal distance to 9/11, this perspective and the sense of American exceptionalism that informed it has been increasingly replaced by more nuanced and differentiated views.³⁹ Their own publication *Radical Planes? 9/11 and Patterns of Continuity* also challenges and re-frames the initial discourses constructing 9/11 as a radical caesura.⁴⁰ Diachronic approaches underlying the above-mentioned works by Frank and Eva Gruber and the present study may also contribute to the re-framing the historical status of the events. Such a diachronic approach puts them into perspective without diminishing the scale of the disaster or its far-reaching cultural and political impact.

2014. *The 9/11 Novel: Trauma, Politics and Identity*. Jefferson: McFarland; Miller, Kristine A., ed. 2014. *Transatlantic Literature and Culture after 9/11: The Wrong Side of Paradise*. Houndsmill/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Araújo, Susana. 2015. *Transatlantic Fictions of 9/11 and the War on Terror: Images of Insecurity, Narratives of Captivity*. London/New York: Bloomsbury; O'Gorman, Daniel. 2015. *Fictions of the War on Terror: Difference and the Transnational 9/11 Novel*. Houndsmill/Basingstoke et al.: Palgrave Macmillan; Gauthier, Tim. 2015. *9/11 Fiction, Empathy and Otherness*. Lanham/ Boulder: Lexington.

³⁵ Frank; Gruber. 2012. p. 10.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 7.

³⁷ Frank 2017. p. 1.

³⁸ Young, Robert J.C. "Terror Effects." In: Boehmer; Morton, eds. 2010. Chichester/Oxford: Wiley. pp. 307-328. p. 309.

³⁹ Mohr, Dunja M; Däwes, Birgit, eds. 2016. *Radical Planes? 9/11 and Patterns of Continuity*. Leiden/Boston: Brill Rodopi.

⁴⁰ The German language study *9/11 als kulturelle Zäsur* also investigates how 9/11 has been cast as a rupture in cultural discourse, arts and media. Poppe, Sandra; Schüller, Thorsten; Seiler, Sascha, eds. 2009. *9/11 als kulturelle Zäsur: Repräsentationen des 11. September 2001 in kulturellen Diskursen, Literatur und visuellen Medien*. Bielefeld: Transcript.

Elaborating the *Funktionsgeschichte* of the British novel on terrorism shows how the literary responses have drawn from and fed into public terrorism discourses throughout the history of modern terrorism. According to Eckhard Lobsien, *Funktionsgeschichte* is premised on the following hermeneutic principles: The text is a response to a particular question and inevitably grants access to this very question, which may be responded to by genuine literary means. This question – even if it has been suppressed or forgotten – exists purely because the text articulates a response to it, and thus allows access to such a question.⁴¹ Literature may hence uncover the pressing issues of a time, and render them visible. In doing so, it may also retroact on its readers, and have an impact on wider discourses. Thus, this study of the changing functions of literature does not examine only novels tackling terrorism, but also their historical context, the interdependent relationship of literary and public terrorism discourses and their potential socio-cultural function(s). This interrelationship between text and context is a complex and multi-layered one, in particular because fictional texts form a “stream of linguistic communication”⁴² with its own rules – for example genre conventions – and its own nature of use that does not directly reference a given extra-literary reality. Equally, any understanding of culture is premised on the respective theoretical, historical and subjective factors. Still, any historical-hermeneutical approach to this relationship of literature and culture is always premised on the given subjective, theoretical and historical conditions.⁴³ This *Funktionsgeschichte* of British novels tackling terrorism can, as will be shown in more detail later on, therefore never claim objectivity, but is very much indebted to the theoretical framework of Cultural Studies applied in this study and our contemporary perspective on the phenomenon of terrorism.

To be able to analyse this relationship of the historical context of terrorism and literature, chapter 2 provides a working definition of the notion of ‘terrorism’, examines how it affects societies and cultures and illuminates in detail how the phenomenon borrows from fiction, and vice versa. Aiming at an explanation of the affinity of terrorism and fiction, the in-depth analysis of the workings of the terrorist threat, the role of the media and the oftentimes fluid boundaries between fact and fiction that characterise the phenomenon will be described. As literary discourse and generic history are inextricably intertwined with the historical and cultural context, the prevalent discourses reverberating throughout the history of modern terrorism will be highlighted. This enables the subsequent investigation of the ways in which literature potentially draws upon and influences extra-literary reality. Therefore, a historical overview of public perceptions of the terrorist agent will be presented, as will the effects of the terrorist threat. In particular, the ways in which threat narratives impinge on societies and cultures will be tackled. Terrorism has very often laid bare socio-cultural vulnerabilities and public discourses which are often interlinked with fears of modernity and progress. To fathom the evolution of this sense of vulnerability,

⁴¹ Lobsien, Eckhard. 2014. *Die Antworten und die Frage: Funktionen von Literatur – Der irische Roman 1800 bis 1850*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann. p. 8.

⁴² Vietta, Silvio. 2014. *Literatur und Rationalität: Funktionen der Literatur in der Europäischen Kulturgeschichte*. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink. p. 16.

⁴³ Ibid. pp. 16-17, 18.

the historical development of the trauma discourse in the face of terrorism will be traced from the late 19th century to the present day. Finally, a characteristic that has been frequently highlighted in British terrorism discourses is the ability to bounce back in the face of disaster, a character trait that is described by the term ‘resilience’. To understand the cultural background of this self-perception and the ways in which it affects responses to terrorism, Britons’ self-styled mentality as being resilient will be examined.

This dissertation is, as already indicated, premised on the assumption that literature not only responds to events and that literary plots share characteristics with terrorist conspiracies, but that it may also be a viable cultural force that processes wider terrorism discourses and thus affects public perceptions. It will discuss in how far literary works may modify our perception of disaster,⁴⁴ and which literary strategies are deployed to achieve such an effect. In order to gauge the history of the functions of the British novel dealing with terrorism, the comprehensive chapter 3 provides the theoretical framework for such a functionalist analysis. Defining the notion of ‘literary function’, this chapter sets out to delve into the theory to discuss some of the possible functions literary responses to terrorism may fulfil. To be clear, this analysis is premised on the analysis of the particular aesthetic features of the literary texts and the aesthetic function of the respective works. That is, traditional methods of literary criticism will be applied to examine which potential effect the strategies applied in the novels may have. This analysis may in turn grant insight into the ways in which the other external functions may be realised. These external functions are divided into three sections, firstly, the cultural function which refers generally to the interplay of literature and culture. Secondly, the mnemonic function which denotes the impact literature may have on cultural memory and explores the meaning of forgetting and the concept and theory of ‘trauma’, which has been readily applied to 21st century terrorist atrocities, and thirdly – since terrorism is not a neutral, but an overtly moral term – the ethical function, which explains how moral-philosophical questions may be addressed in literature. Yet, the ethical questions relevant to literary representations of terrorism are very multi-faceted. On the one hand, literature may be an important medium for the negotiation of values in the aftermath of terrorism. Yet, this very representation of terrorist atrocities may raise ethical questions about the legitimacy and the value of fictional and artistic responses to violence. On the other hand, questions of alterity may arise in the aftermath of terrorist attacks, casting the terrorist as the ultimate other. Therefore, the ways in which literature may negotiate notions of “self” and “other” will be addressed and furthermore the potential for eliciting empathy in the reader illuminated. Lastly, the concept of genre plays a crucial role in this study, for the changing functions of the genre of the terrorism novel and for the question whether a new genre category may be derived from the historical analysis. It will be analysed which, if any, new subgenres of the novels have emerged in the course of the history of the British novel dealing with terrorism and which existing genres have been used as vessels for the realisation of literary terrorism discourse. To this end, the link between

⁴⁴ Berendse, Williams. 2002. p. 11.

Funktionsgeschichte and generic history and the idiosyncrasies of the genre of the novel as the most popular and prototypical form of narrative fiction will be explained.

Chapter 4 deals with the actual investigation of the functions of literature of terrorism. Chronologically, the three different subsections explore the relation of the historical reality of terrorism and literary representation. It should be mentioned, on a preliminary methodological note, that the investigation of the British terrorism novel does not make a claim to completeness. This would be beyond the scope of this study: due to the enormous number of British novels tackling terrorism, this study does not explicitly discuss literature on the anti-colonial movements or ethnic conflicts that erupted in the former British Empire.⁴⁵ Instead, only works dealing with the terrorist movements operating on the British mainland will be considered. In addition, the literary responses should be relatively immediate. That is to say, this analysis will not consider historical novels dealing with terrorism because its focus on the inter-relationship of literature and its context is predicated on the need for contemporary works. Literature as a medium of cultural memory may shape the ways in which terrorism is remembered. It is in the nature of the way we remember things that they are always moulded and adjusted to suit our current needs. Hence, any retrospective literary representation would probably not do justice to the discourses and the issues surrounding terrorism at a particular moment in time.

Moreover, the conflict with the IRA and the terrorist activities of the organisation has engendered a huge number of literary responses by both British and Irish writers. However, this study will only discuss the British novels on this topic, as the consideration of Irish and Northern Irish authors would open up a different angle as well as political and cultural discourse. In doing so, the focus remains on British literature and culture. Moreover, in pursuance of an understanding of the interplay of terrorism and literature, both canonical and popular works will be considered. This is in part due to the dearth of canonical fiction dealing with particular terrorist attacks, but also because popular fiction is “fiction that most becomes its period and which is most caught in its own age,”⁴⁶ and is thus a seminal subject of investigation. Popular works are hence not only seen as an inferior “other” to high culture that constitutes the dominant literary culture,⁴⁷ but also as a dynamic cultural force that reflects on the ever-changing political and cultural environment.⁴⁸ For example, Antony Taylor’s analysis of texts imagining urban apocalypse in London, including terrorism, destruction and political unrest also resorts to popular fiction, which despite its exclusion from the traditional canon, “act[s] as a vector for many of the popular concerns of the period.”⁴⁹

⁴⁵ The only exception being the Sri Lankan civil war which features in Roma Tearne’s *Brixton Beach* alongside the attacks in London on 7th July 2005. Tearne, Roma. 2010. *Brixton Beach*. London: Harper.

⁴⁶ Bloom, Clive. 2002. *Bestseller: Popular Fiction since 1900*. New York: Palgrave. p. 15.

⁴⁷ Pawling, Christopher. “Introduction: Popular Fiction: Ideology or Utopia?” In: Pawling, Christopher, ed. 1984. *Popular Fiction and Social Change*. London: Macmillan. pp. 1-19. pp. 1-2.

⁴⁸ Berberich, Christine. “Introduction: The Popular – Literature versus literature” In: Berberich, Christine, ed. 2015. *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Popular Fiction*. London/New York: Bloomsbury. pp. 1-8. p. 6.

⁴⁹ Taylor, Antony. 2012. *London’s Burning: Pulp Fiction, the Politics of Terrorism and the Destruction of the Capital in British Popular Culture, 1840-2005*. London/ New York: Continuum. p. 8.

Finally, the British novels chosen to exemplify the literary responses to a particular historical context are emblematic works that lend themselves to such an investigation. Yet they are by no means the totality of works that appeared at a given time, addressing a specific terrorist movement. In cases like the late 19th century and after 9/11, when terrorism engendered a myriad of literary responses, only a limited number of examples will be selected. When, however, very few literary works appeared in response to a terrorist movement like the Angry Brigade or the London Bombings of 2005, all the available works will be examined.

However, this should not falsely suggest that the quantity of the responses does not matter. Already the sheer number of works that have appeared in response to the terrorist movements – the 19th century Fenians and Anarchists, the 20th century IRA, the Angry Brigade, and the 21st century 9/11 and 7/7 – give some indication of their potential literary function(s). The dynamite campaigns of the Fenians engendered prolific responses by both popular and canonical writers. However, many of the works do not mention Fenianism but feature anarchist terrorists instead. Anarchists, attracted by Britain's liberal asylum legislation, flocked to the country, which unsettled many members of the late Victorian establishment. Despite their mostly non-violent coexistence in Britain, they became the terrorists of the dynamite novels. The striking absence of Fenian characters raises questions concerning the status and overall perception of both anarchists and Fenians. Elucidating the historical background and widespread perceptions of both groups, these questions will be addressed in the analysis of some of the most well-known works representing the 'dynamite genre': E. Douglas Fawcett's *Hartmann the Anarchist*,⁵⁰ Robert Louis Stevenson's and Fanny Van de Grift's *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter*,⁵¹ Henry James' *The Princess Casamassima*,⁵² Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*,⁵³ and Gilbert Keith Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare*.⁵⁴

Both quantity and quality of literary responses to 20th century terrorist movements may hint at the popular perceptions of both groups. The Angry Brigade, a revolutionary group responsible for a series of attacks in the early seventies, has largely waned from collective memory and only B.S. Johnson's *Christie Malry's Own Double Entry*⁵⁵ and Alan Burn's *The Angry Brigade*⁵⁶ can be considered as literature inspired by the group. Both works might be considered serious endeavours dealing with the Brigade. The IRA terrorist campaign, which coincided with the Angry Brigade, might have overshadowed the actions of this comparatively harmless group that did not kill innocent civilians. The work of the IRA, in turn, has inspired more than 700 books of popular prose fiction by British and Irish

⁵⁰ Fawcett, Douglas Edward. [1892] 2009 *Hartmann the Anarchist*. Bristol: Bone.

⁵¹ Stevenson, Robert Louis; van de Grift Stevenson, Fanny. [1885] 2005. *The Dynamiter: A Second Series of the Arabian Nights*. Los Angeles: Aegypan.

⁵² James, Henry. [1886] 2004. *The Princess Casamassima*. Rockville: Wildside.

⁵³ Conrad, Joseph. [1907] 2008. *The Secret Agent: A Simple Tale*. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics.

⁵⁴ Chesterton, Gilbert, Keith. [1908] 2005. *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare*. Stilwell: Digireads.

⁵⁵ Johnson, B.S. [1973] 2013. *Christie Malry's Own Double Entry*. London: Picador.

⁵⁶ Burns, Alan. 1973. *The Angry Brigade*. London: Quartet.

writers, mostly thrillers.⁵⁷ However, serious responses by British writers are strikingly absent. In the present study, only some works out of the many have been chosen to exemplify the predominant literary discourse, among them are: Douglas Hurd's *Vote to Kill*,⁵⁸ Gerald Seymour's *Harry's Game*,⁵⁹ Chapman Pincher's *In the Eye of the Tornado*, Andrew Lane's *Forgive the Executioner*,⁶⁰ Martin Walker's *The Infiltrator*⁶¹ and Julian Romanes' *The Cell*.⁶² There are only very few British novels tackling IRA terrorism, such as Ian Rankin's *Watchman*,⁶³ David Lodge's *The British Museum is Falling Down*,⁶⁴ and Doris Lessing's *The Good Terrorist*,⁶⁵ that may not be classified as pulp fiction; a fact which may lead to conclusions about the prevalence of Irish stereotypes in 20th century British culture.

There is another imbalance between the quantity and the quality of the literary responses to 9/11 and the subsequent attacks in London, dubbed 7/7. While many works dealing with the transnational disaster of the September 11 attacks appeared, to date, only a few novels tackle the ruthless attacks on London's transport system. Moreover, while many high-profile British authors felt compelled to respond to 9/11, thus creating a versatile body of British 9/11 literature, including Pat Barker's *Double Vision*⁶⁶, Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*⁶⁷, Ian McEwan's *Saturday*⁶⁸, Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*⁶⁹ and Chris Cleave's *Incendiary*⁷⁰, the bombing of the London transport system on 7 July 2005, on the other hand, only engendered three novels: Roma Tearne's *Brixton Beach* (2010); the thriller *Without Warning*⁷¹ by Carol Smith; and John Roberts' popular romance novel *How the Dice Fell*.⁷² This already suggests a difference in the perceived significance assigned to both events: 9/11, as the transnational catastrophe that wrought shifts in the political landscape and direct consequences through the British loyalty to the USA in their commitment to the War on Terror, and 7/7, as a terrorist attack that was deemed inevitable as a result of this controversial commitment to the "special relationship".

The exploration of this discrepancy in the quantity and quality of the British novel on terrorism is therefore at the heart of the present study. It sets out to analyse how public perceptions have infused literary discourse and, for that matter, the absence of literary treatments of terrorism.

⁵⁷ Magee, Patrick. 2001. *Gangsters or Guerillas? Representations of Irish Republicans in 'Troubles Fiction'*. Belfast: BTB. p. 3.

⁵⁸ Hurd, Douglas. 1975. *Vote to Kill*. London: Warner.

⁵⁹ Seymour, Harry. [1975] 2013 *Harry's Game*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

⁶⁰ Lane, Andrew. 1978. *Forgive the Executioner*. London: NEL.

⁶¹ Walker, Martin. 1979. *The Infiltrator*. London: Granada.

⁶² Romanes, Julian. 1987. *The Cell*. London: W. H. Allen.

⁶³ Rankin, Ian. [1988] 2003. *Watchman*. London: Orion.

⁶⁴ Lodge, David. [1965] 2011. *The British Museum is Falling Down*. London: Random House.

⁶⁵ Lessing, Doris. 1986. *The Good Terrorist*. New York: Vintage.

⁶⁶ Barker, Pat. 2003. *Double Vision*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

⁶⁷ Ali, Monica. 2003. *Brick Lane*. New York: Scribner.

⁶⁸ McEwan, Ian. 2005. *Saturday*. London: Vintage Books.

⁶⁹ Smith, Zadie. 2006. *On Beauty*. London: Penguin Books.

⁷⁰ Cleave, Chris. 2005. *Incendiary*. London: Sceptre.

⁷¹ Smith, Carol. 2006. *Without Warning*. London: Time Warner.

⁷² Roberts, John. 2012. *How the Dice Fell*. Leicester: Matador.

2. Approaching Terrorism

In the wake of 9/11 not only government representatives, journalists and terrorism experts tried to assess the events and their impact on the global political, social and cultural developments, but also numerous academic studies on the new threat of transnational terrorism appeared. Even prior to these atrocities, scholars from various academic fields had strived to define the notion of ‘terrorism’ and to construct typologies of the phenomenon. Particularly since the 1970s, the number of studies on terrorism, its nature, contexts and effects has multiplied. While these theorists seem to “have spilled almost as much ink as the actors of terrorism have spilled blood,”⁷³ more than ten years after 9/11 a generally agreed definition of terrorism is still lacking. Until today, hardly any other political phenomenon has provoked similarly substantial controversies and terminological debates.

It is not within the scope of this study to discuss the scholarly debate in greater detail. Yet as the focus is on the functions that literary treatments of terrorism may fulfil, some of the definitional controversies surrounding terrorism will be the subject of the first subsection of this chapter. Taking this approach warrants the elucidation of the nature of the phenomenon, and will eventually lead to a working definition of ‘terrorism.’

Moreover, writers of fiction on terrorism have been eager to explore the terrorist agent, his mind-set and psychological disposition, and the very fabric of the society in which terrorism can thrive and, in turn, retroact on socio-cultural developments. In order to explain how a terrorist act may transpire into socio-cultural reality and what notions of terrorism and its actors have dominated the public perception of the phenomenon, subsequently, the controversial notion of ‘terrorism’ will be defined, and the relationship between the actual terrorist activity and its mediation and discursive construction will be outlined. Since the present study takes a diachronic approach, the history of modern terrorism, its mediation and the predominant discourses circulating in the aftermath of events will be outlined. In particular the historical development of the symbiotic relationship of terrorism and media will be illuminated. Moreover, with terrorists being popular characters in many of the novels tackling terrorism, the evolution of popular discourses constructing the ‘terrorist’ will be outlined. This will afford insights into the ways in which narrative fiction has grappled with prevalent stereotypes of the terrorist “other”. Furthermore, any examination of the effects of terrorism must take into account that they are comprised of interlinked psychological, social and political responses. Therefore, part of the following section will deal with the way in which threat narratives shape public perceptions of terrorism and prop up the phenomenon. Besides, the catchword ‘trauma’ has in recent years been applied to describe the sense of vulnerability perceived by targeted societies. However, since the phenomenon first emerged in the late 19th century, the understanding of what the concept ‘trauma’ means has evolved substantially. Outlining

⁷³ Schmid, Alex P.; Jongman, Albert J. 2005. *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theory & Literature*. New Brunswick: Transaction Books. p. xiii

the historical development of 'trauma' elucidates the evolution of the cultural meaning of terrorism, which has come to stand for varying degrees of the perceived precariousness and vulnerabilities of modern life. In addition to this historical dimension of the perception of vulnerability in the face of terrorism, this study will examine the cultural and historical factors at play that informs the response by the British public to terrorism. Particularly, the role of resilience as a claimed national characteristic in shaping the response to terrorist violence will be examined.

2.1. A Definitional Approach

Since the September 11 attacks, 'terror', 'terrorism' and 'terrorist' have become the buzzwords of Western political and media rhetoric. Nevertheless, as the often-cited cliché "one person's freedom fighter is another person's terrorist" indicates, the question of who is a terrorist and what counts as terrorism remains to be settled. Indeed, as has been often noted, the fact that former "terrorists" such as, for instance, Nelson Mandela or Yasser Arafat may become "today's Nobel Peace Prize winners,"⁷⁴ speaks for the elusiveness and ambiguity of the notion of 'terrorism'.

The aim of this section is initially to demarcate the meanings 'terrorism', 'terrorist' and 'terror', and, by taking a multidisciplinary approach, to explain where the definitional issues surrounding 'terrorism' stem from. The sociologist Charles Tilly, for example, explains that 'terror' and 'terrorism' and 'terrorist' have been frequently used synonymously in Western political rhetoric as well as in public and academic debate.⁷⁵ He points out that in the aftermath of 9/11 the then Secretary of State, Colin L. Powell, explained the U.S. counter-terrorist policy, famously labelled as "war on **terror**," in the U.S. Department of State's report *Patterns of Terrorism*:

In this global campaign against **terrorism**, no country has the luxury of remaining on the sidelines. There are no sidelines. **Terrorists** respect no limits, geographic or moral. The frontlines are everywhere and the stakes are high. **Terrorism** not only kills people. It also threatens democratic institutions, undermines economies, and destabilizes regions.⁷⁶ (My emphasis)

⁷⁴ Douglass, William; Zulaika, Joseba. 1996. *Terror and Taboo: The Fables, Follies and Faces of Terrorism*. London/ New York: Routledge. p. x.

⁷⁵ Tilly, Charles. "Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists." In: *Sociological Theory* 22:1. 2004. pp. 5-13.

⁷⁶ United States Department of State. 2002. *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001*. p. iii.

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/10319.pdf> (last accessed 19th August 2012)

Similarly, the then President of the United States, George Bush, explained nine days after the 11 September attacks: "Our war on **terror** begins with al-Qaida, but it does not end there. It will not end until every **terrorist** group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated." (My emphasis)

United States Department of State. 2002. *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001*. i.

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/10319.pdf> (last accessed 19th August 2012)

The terms ‘terrorism’ and ‘terrorist’ in Powell’s statement refer solely to one notion: “the enemy to be eradicated.”⁷⁷ They do not identify distinct phenomena, but have become “inseparable concepts”⁷⁸ or “coherent entities.”⁷⁹ In a similar vein, theorists struggling to evolve an analytical concept of ‘terrorism’ often blur the semantic boundaries between ‘terror’ and ‘terrorism’ by using them interchangeably.⁸⁰

However, the *Oxford Dictionaries Online* makes a distinction between these two terms. According to the *ODO*, the term ‘terror’ has two meanings. In its original sense, it denotes “extreme fear.”⁸¹ ‘Terror’ may therefore refer to an emotional state that might also be attributed to a tale of terror.⁸² Accordingly, it can be used to describe what can be labelled as “subjective terror.”⁸³ From this subjective concept derives the meaning of terror as “the use of extreme fear to intimidate people.”⁸⁴ In this sense it designates a tool used to induce extreme fear and can be regarded as “objective terror.” The term ‘terrorism’ also refers to “objective terror.”⁸⁵ It denotes, according to the *ODO*, “the unofficial or unauthorized use of violence and intimidation in the pursuit of political aims.”⁸⁶ As indicated by the suffix ‘-ism’, ‘terrorism’ refers to a systematic concept, an attitude or mode of action, like e.g. in the case of ‘fanatic – fanaticism.’⁸⁷ To avoid any ambiguity, ‘terrorism’ will be used in this study to refer to “objective terror” or a “system of terror,”⁸⁸ while ‘terror’ will refer to the induced state of fear. Suffice to say that a ‘terrorist’ is consequently to be understood as the “agent of terrorism,” or as the *ODO* describe it: “a person who uses terrorism in the pursuit of political aims.”⁸⁹

However, these short and neutral definitions of the *ODO* should not belie the fact that ‘terrorism’ refers to a complex phenomenon which often bears morally-tinged connotations. This becomes particularly clear from the plethora of academic works struggling to find an analytically useful definition that does justice to the phenomenon. The obstacles which are frequently mentioned are twofold:

⁷⁷ Tilly. 2004. pp. 5-13. p.5.

On the choice of Bush’s words referencing a very broad enemy and their implications on the following War on Terror, see: Hoffmann, Bruce. 2006. *Inside Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 19.

⁷⁸ Ibid. p.5.

⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 5.

⁸⁰ Crenshaw, Martha. “The Concept of Revolutionary Terrorism.” In: *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 16.3. 1972. pp. 383-396. p. 383.

⁸¹ *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. “Terror.” <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/terror?q=terror> (last accessed 21st August 2012)

⁸² Boehmer, Elke; Morton, Stephen. “Introduction.” In: Boehmer, Elke; Morton, Stephen, eds. *Terror and the Postcolonial*. 2010. Chichester/Oxford: Wiley. pp. 1-25. p. 6.

⁸³ Thornton, Perry Thomas. “Terror as a Weapon of Political Agitation.” In: Eckstein, Harry, ed. 1964. *Internal War: Problems and Approaches*. 2nd ed. Westport: Greenwood Press. pp.71-99. pp. 71-2.

⁸⁴ *ODO*. “Terror.”

⁸⁵ Thornton. 1964. pp. 71-72.

⁸⁶ *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. “Terrorism.”

<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/terrorism?q=terrorism> (last accessed 20th August 2012.)

⁸⁷ Schmid, Alex P. “The Definition of Terrorism.” In: Schmid, Alex P., ed. 2011. *The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research*. Abingdon: Routledge. pp. 39-98. p. 45.

⁸⁸ Crenshaw. 1972. p. 383.

⁸⁹ *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. “Terrorist.”

<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/terrorist?q=terrorist> (last accessed 20th August 2012.)

Firstly, ‘terrorism’ is a dynamic phenomenon that has been subject to great changes in the course of its history.⁹⁰ This is also exemplified by the etymological development of the term. ‘Terrorism’ was first introduced into the English language by Edmund Burke, who associated it with the Jacobin Reign of Terror from 1793-94. ‘Terrorism’ thus referred in its original sense to governmental repression, which means in the particular case of the Jacobin regime the ruthless execution of political opponents.⁹¹ Since then the meaning of the term has widened. Today it may also refer to ‘state terrorism’, which should be clearly distinguished from the oppositional terrorism of non-state, insurgent agents⁹² reflected in the literary works dealt with in this study.

Moreover, terrorism appears in a variety of forms and changes “its character and meaning”⁹³ not only “over time”⁹⁴, but also from “country to country.”⁹⁵ Hence, according to commentators such as Walter Laqueur, the dynamic character of terrorism renders the formulation of a common definition describing an overall pattern of all the different terrorist movements futile.⁹⁶ Following this stance, it seems that the different terrorist movements serving as inspiration for the literary works dealt with in the present study – from 19th century anarchist terrorism to the transnational Islamist terrorism of Al-Qaeda – could not be reduced to one single theoretical concept.

Secondly, as Sederberg points out, approaches to the phenomenon may become value-laden and take on moral overtones. Efforts to define terrorism are therefore frequently “compromised by essentially arbitrary personal or political bias.”⁹⁷ As already indicated by the above-cited statement by Colin Powell, the term ‘terrorism’ is frequently used to stigmatise political enemies and to condemn their methods.⁹⁸ Hence, ‘terrorism’ has become a “normative term”⁹⁹ rather than a “descriptive concept.”¹⁰⁰ The lack of semantic neutrality becomes obvious, when ‘terrorism’ is compared to terms describing related

⁹⁰ Ross, Jeffrey Ian. 2006. *Political Terrorism: An Interdisciplinary Approach*. New York: Peter Lang. p. 3.

⁹¹ *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. “Terror.” <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/terror?q=terror> (last accessed 21st August 2012)

See also: Tilly. 2004. p. 8.

⁹² ‘State terrorism’ refers to “violent, fear-inducing actions by the government of a country and/or its bureaucracy,” while ‘oppositional terrorism’ denotes “similar activities targeted *against* the state or against interests allied with the state or existing government.” Ross. 2006. p. 13.

See also: Goodwin, Jeff. “A Theory of Categorical Terrorism.” In: *Social Forces* 84.4. 2006. pp. 2027-2046. p. 2028.

⁹³ Laqueur, Walter. 2003. *No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Continuum. p. 232.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 232

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 232.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 232-233.

⁹⁷ Sederberg, Peter. “Terrorism: Contending Themes in Contemporary Research?” In: Gittler, Joseph B., ed. 1990. *The Annual Review of Conflict Knowledge and Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 2. New York: Garland. pp. 229-268. p. 231.

⁹⁸ Frindte, Wolfgang; Haußecker, Nicole, eds. 2010. *Inszenierter Terrorismus: Mediale Konstruktionen und individuelle Interpretationen*. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. p. 38.

⁹⁹ Rosen, Nir. “Gaza: The Logic of Colonial Power.” In: *The Guardian*. 29.12.2008. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/dec/29/gaza-hamas-israel> (last accessed 16th August 2012.)

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

phenomena. ‘Guerilla’, for instance, bears a far more positive connotation than ‘terrorist.’¹⁰¹ Contemporary oppositional groups, therefore, usually reject the label ‘terrorist’.¹⁰²

The frequent confusion of “explanation, justification and condemnation”¹⁰³ in academic and other approaches to terrorism can be attributed to an inherent characteristic of the phenomenon itself. It is, Martha Crenshaw argues, in particular the perceptual character of terrorism which is contingent upon our understanding of the phenomenon. This means that terrorism does not entirely consist of objective historical facts, but is also predicated on subjective conditions. Thus, it gains momentum through “the self-presentation of those who use terrorism and the construction governments and publics place on it.”¹⁰⁴ As a result, ‘terrorism’ has become a “polemical tool”¹⁰⁵ used to morally condemn the actions of those who are labelled as terrorists. This becomes particularly obvious in the famous statement by Yasser Arafat, who addressed the UN General Assembly in 1974:

For whoever stands by a just cause and fights for the freedom and liberation of his land from the invaders, the settlers and the colonists, cannot possibly be called terrorist, otherwise the American people in their struggle for liberation from the British colonialists would have been terrorists; the European resistance against the Nazis would be terrorism, the struggle of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples would also be terrorism, and many of you who are in this Assembly hall were considered terrorists.¹⁰⁶

Hence, the blameworthiness or praiseworthiness of terrorism is contingent upon the reasons for action,¹⁰⁷ and these reasons are predicated on the subjectivity of those who use terrorism to further their cause and those who are confronted with terrorist violence. While the former rather regard themselves as ‘freedom fighters’, their opponents usually deploy the pejorative label ‘terrorist.’

The public perception of terrorism is further influenced by media depictions which, as already indicated in the introduction, play a distinct role in the construction of the phenomenon. Terrorism as a system of “unofficial or unauthorized use of violence and intimidation”¹⁰⁸ that pursues particular political aims, first and foremost has to be perceived by the targeted public. To be more precise, terrorist

¹⁰¹ Laqueur. 2003. pp. 232-33.

The difference between ‘guerrillas’ and ‘terrorists’ lies, according to Thomas A. Mockaitis, mainly in the choice of targets. While guerrillas (Spanish for ‘small wars’) hit military units, government paramilitary forces or police, terrorist attacks include attacks of the general population. Mockaitis, Thomas R. 2008. *The “New” Terrorism: Myths and Reality*. 2nd ed. Stanford: Stanford University Press. p. 6.

¹⁰² Crenshaw, Martha. “Introduction: Relating Terrorism to Historical Contexts.” In: Crenshaw, Martha, ed. 2007. *Terrorism in Context*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press. pp. 3-26. p. 8.

See also, for example: Frindte; Haußecker. 2010. p. 38.

Laqueur. 2003. p. 232.

¹⁰³ Sederberg. 1990. p. 234.

¹⁰⁴ Crenshaw. 2007. p. 7.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ Arafat, Yasser. “Un cahier spécial sur le Proche-Orient Yasser Arafat, Speech at UN General Assembly.” In: *Le Monde Diplomatique*.01.01.2006.<https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/cahier/proche-orient/arafat74-en> (last accessed 14th February 2017)

¹⁰⁷ Corlett, Angelo J. 2003. *Terrorism: A Philosophical Analysis*. Dordrecht: Kluwer. p. 122.

¹⁰⁸ See the definition of the *ODO*

activity has to be mediated to become effective. The American TV journalist Ted Koppel, therefore, made a good point in claiming that:

the media [...] and terrorists need one another. [...] They have what is fundamentally a symbiotic relationship. Without television, terrorism becomes rather like the philosopher's hypothetical tree falling in the forest: no one hears it fall and therefore it has no reason for being.¹⁰⁹

Accordingly, terrorism can be understood in terms of a media event that gains significance only after being presented. Terrorist acts, therefore, need to be carefully staged and choreographed in order to attract as much media attention as possible. Hence, terrorist violence is not primarily aimed at the victims it causes actual harm to, but at the people watching. It is for this reason that Brian Jenkins famously asserted that “terrorism is theatre.”¹¹⁰

Furthermore, the discrepancy between the actual opponent, e.g. the state, and the immediate targets and actual victims tells much about the symbolic nature of terrorism. The victims of terrorist attacks are just “symbolic intermediaries,”¹¹¹ randomly chosen, because they themselves or the targeted location are supposed to represent the system sought to be obliterated.¹¹² Terrorism can therefore be regarded as a communication strategy and the use of violence as a means to send out a signal.¹¹³ To borrow from the British novelist Martin Amis, terrorism may be regarded as “political communication by other means.”¹¹⁴

The media have therefore been fundamental in shaping public responses to terrorism – from the 19th century sensationalist newspaper stories to the “stimulus-flooding scenes”¹¹⁵ reaching a global audience¹¹⁶ and threatening the global bystanders with secondary traumatisation.¹¹⁷ Susan Sontag, for example, purports in her essay “Regarding the Pain of Others”¹¹⁸ on modern war photography from its beginnings in the 19th century until 9/11 that being a spectator of calamities taking place in another country is a quintessentially modern experience:

[...] Wars are now also living room sights and sounds. Information about what is happening elsewhere, called ‘news’, feature conflict and violence [...] to which the response is compassion, or

¹⁰⁹ Koppel, Ted. “Terrorism and the Media: A Discussion.” In: *Harper's*. October. 1984. pp. 47-58. p. 47.

¹¹⁰ Jenkins, Brian M. 1974. *International Terrorism: A New Kind of Warfare*. Santa Monica: Rand. p.4.

See also: Tsafati, Yariv; Weimann, Gabriel. “www.terrorism.com: Terror on the Internet.” In: *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 25. 2002. pp. 317-332. pp. 318-19.

¹¹¹ Horgan, John. 2005. *The Psychology of Terrorism*. Abingdon: Routledge. p. 2.

¹¹² Thornton. 1964. p. 77.

¹¹³ Waldmann, Peter. 2005. *Terrorismus: Provokation der Macht*. 2nd ed. Hamburg: Murmann. p. 15.

¹¹⁴ Amis, Martin. “Fear and Loathing.” In: *The Guardian*. 18.09.2001.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/sep/18/september11.politicsphilosophyandsociety> (last accessed 7th February 2013.)

¹¹⁵ Hartman, Geoffrey. “Trauma Within the Limits of Literature.” In: *European Journal of English Studies* 7.3. 2003. pp. 257-274. p. 258.

¹¹⁶ See, for example, Luc Boltanski, who has coined the term ‘distance suffering’ describing the consequences of modern media on political culture, which allow modern spectators to “to cultivate themselves through absorption in their own pity at the spectacle of someone else’s suffering.” (Boltanski, Luc. 1999. *Distance Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. xiii-xvi.)

¹¹⁷ Hartman. 2003. p. 258.

¹¹⁸ Sontag, Susan. 2003. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. London/New York: Penguin.

indignation, or tillation, or approval, as each misery heaves into view.¹¹⁹

In this sense, the effect of such images depicting remote calamities depends on the respective propensities of the receivers. Moreover, not only the representation of the violence itself, but also the dissemination of the terrorist propaganda plays an important role in the “theatre of terror.” For example, the Thatcher government’s broadcasting ban, announced in 1988, that restricted the media presence of organisations in Northern Ireland believed to be involved in terrorist activity, illustrates the significance granted to the media as a terrorist mouthpiece. Particularly representatives of Sinn Fein, the parliamentary wing of the IRA, were intended to be deprived of the opportunity to shore up public support for their activities through the airwaves.¹²⁰

While terrorists need media publicity to spread their message and to further their cause, the media exploit the most shocking and dramatic aspects of terrorism. Thus, terrorism is described as the “dramatic, outrageous, objectionable.”¹²¹ Consequently, the public perception of terrorism is fundamentally influenced by media depictions which usually focus on the newsworthy aspects of the phenomenon and tend to oversimplify it.¹²²

As a result of these definitional and representational issues, the concept of ‘terrorism’ has become “elastic”¹²³ and “vacuous.”¹²⁴ Its vagueness may further reinforce the “tendency [...] to interpret many individuals and groups as ‘terrorist’ and their actions as ‘terrorism’.”¹²⁵ The overinclusivity¹²⁶ of the term becomes particularly manifest when put to practice. For instance, in the UK government’s “Terrorism Act (2000)”, “terrorism” means the “use or threat of action [...] designed to influence the government [...] or to intimidate the public.” In this case, “action” refers to “serious violence against a person” as well as to “serious damage to property”¹²⁷ and serious interferences such as the disruption of an “an electronic system.”¹²⁸ The widening of the definition of ‘terrorism’ including “serious damage to property” has drawn severe criticism from many commentators who regard the act as a possible means to label UK based activist groups as terrorists.¹²⁹ Lord Carlile of Berriew, who reviewed the British anti-terrorist laws, for instance, argues in his report on “The Definition of Terrorism” that the formulation:

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p. 16.

¹²⁰ Cooke, Tim. “Paramilitaries and the Press in Northern Ireland.” In: Norris, Pippa; Kern, Montague; Just, Marion, eds. 2003. *Framing Terrorism: News Media, the Government and the Public*. London/ New York: Routledge. pp. 75-90. pp. 85-86.

Welch, Francis. “The ‘broadcast ban’ on Sinn Fein.” In: *BBC News*. 05.04.2005. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4409447.stm> (last accessed 3rd January 2012)

¹²¹ Crenshaw. 2007. p. 8.

¹²² Ibid. p. 8.

¹²³ Guelke, Adrian. 1995. *The Age of Terrorism and the International Political System*. London: Taurus. p. 1.

¹²⁴ Sederberg. 1990. p. 231.

¹²⁵ Ross. 2006. p. 5.

¹²⁶ Ibid. p. 5.

¹²⁷ The Home Office. 2000. “Terrorism: Interpretation.” In: *Terrorism Act 2000*. pp. 1-2.

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11/pdfs/ukpga_20000011_en.pdf (last accessed 22nd August 2012.)

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ “Terrorism Act 2000”. In: *The Guardian*. 19.01.2009.

might include a political protester such as the suffragette Emily Wilding Davison, who threw herself under a horse at Epsom racecourse on the 13th June 1913; or the eco-protester 'Swampy'. Each of them arguably caused the risk of danger to other people who might have attempted to rescue them. Another example might be an imitator of the leading British contemporary artist Cornelia Parker, whose work *Cold Dark Matter: an Exploded View* [1991] consists of the exploded remains of a garden shed and contents. Her explosion was with the assistance of the Army, but an unauthorised imitator might fall foul of the definition in the Terrorism Act 2000.¹³⁰

Considering the terminological vagueness of 'terrorism' pervading approaches to the phenomenon taken from different perspectives – medial, political, academic and legal – the formulation of a concept that summarises what has been explained so far, becomes all the more significant. Drawing on the definition given in the comprehensive study on the medial staging of terrorism by the German social scientists Wolfgang Frindte and Nicole Haußecker, the literature examined in this study deals with a phenomenon that can be regarded as:

- a. a calculatedly staged violent communication strategy
- b. used by (non-state) actors to harm society, states, state institutions or particular social groups
- c. and/or to spread the sense of terror and fear
- d. in order to achieve political aims.¹³¹

2.2. Terrorism – Events, Discourses and Mediation

The preceding subsection indicates that terrorist incidents are “given meaning through cultural, political, economic and social processes.”¹³² Therefore, writers of terrorist fiction are faced with a twofold phenomenon which is the factual event, on the one hand, and the perceptions and attributions of meaning on the other. The political theorist Peter Sederberg asserts in his constructivist oriented analysis of the relation between meaning, politics, and the making of social reality that “the ground of meaning in human communities lies not in the events, whether humanely or naturally produced, but in the responses to them.”¹³³ Accordingly, it is not the violence of the terrorist event itself, but the mutually shared meaning “which is not immanent in the event,”¹³⁴ but “becomes a creation, a possession of human beings”¹³⁵ that defines the responses to violence.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/libertycentral/2009/jan/19/terrorism-act> (last accessed 23rd August 2012)

¹³⁰ Lord Carlile of Berriew. 2007. *The Definition of Terrorism: A Report by Lord Carlile of Berriew Q.C. Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation*. pp. 25-26.

<http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm70/7052/7052.pdf> (last accessed 23rd August 2012)

¹³¹ Frindte, Haußecker. 2010. p. 39. (My translation)

¹³² Mythen, Gabe; Walklate, Sandra. “Communicating the Terrorist Risk: Harnessing a Culture of Fear?” In: *Crime Media Culture* 2. 2006. pp. 123-142. p. 131.

¹³³ Sederberg, Peter C. 1984. *The Politics of Meaning: Power and Explanation in the Construction of Social Reality*. Tuscon: University of Arizona Press. p. 2.

¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 2.

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 2.

In a similar vein, the assumption that the events of political violence comprise both material damage and the mutually shared meaning embodied in narratives and discourses constructed around them has become a commonplace in a great number of approaches. David E. Apter, editor of *The Legitimization of Violence*, for example, makes an attempt at conceptualising the relationship of the event itself, on the one hand, and the responses it engenders on the other. In his distinction between ‘event’ and ‘process’, Apter defines the actual ‘event’ as a prerequisite for interpretations, while the attribution of meaning to it is a ‘process’. In his view, ‘process’ is the “linguistic alchemy” by which violent events gain sustainable significance. Expressed differently, only when “events are incorporated into interpretive discourses embodied in discourse communities, [...] political violence [...] becomes self-validating and self-sustaining.”¹³⁶ A similar view has also been adopted by the recently emerged Critical Terrorism Studies approach (CTS) whose adherents regard terrorism as “a social fact rather than a brute fact.”¹³⁷ This epistemological shift away from conventional approaches seeking to analyse the “objective truth” of terrorism is based on the assumption that what terrorists say or do is always mediated by the interpretations of the addressed group. The receivers of the terrorist message are the ones who attribute meaning to it, and it is this meaning that constitutes reality.¹³⁸

In this sense, as Joseba Zulaika and William Douglass point out, terrorism is created through discourse, and it is only within discourse that it can exist meaningfully. Discourse, in turn, is not a mere mirror of events, but rather creates its own reality.¹³⁹ That is, language is not an isolated linguistic system but, as Norman Fairclough puts it, “part of social processes and practices.”¹⁴⁰ Discourses as “diverse representations of social life”¹⁴¹ consequently form a dialectical relationship with social practices, for they do not only represent, but also shape and re-shape what people do.¹⁴² Consequently, discursive practices constituting terrorism also have a powerful reality-making effect.

Thus, discourse is crucial to an understanding of the ways in which terrorist violence may transpire into socio-cultural reality. Particularly Michel Foucault’s notion of ‘discourse’ underlying his interpretation of “culture as a power-driven ‘discursive formation’¹⁴³ grants valuable insights into the ways in which terrorism may affect cultures and societies. In the Foucauldian sense, discourse is constituted of a “group of statements which provide a language for talking about – i.e. a way of

¹³⁶ Apter, David E. “Political Violence in Analytical Perspective.” In: Apter, David E., ed. 1997. *The Legitimization of Violence*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press. pp. 1-33. p. 11.

¹³⁷ Jackson, Richard. “The Core Commitments of Critical Terrorism Studies.” In: *European Political Sciences* 6.3. 2007. pp. 244–251. p. 247.

¹³⁸ Hülse, Rainer; Spencer, Alexander. “The Metaphor of Terror: Terrorism Studies and the Constructivist Turn.” In: *Security Dialogue* 38. 2008. pp. 571-591. p. 575-576.

¹³⁹ Zulaika, Joseba; Douglass, William A. “The Terrorist Subject: Terrorism Studies and the Absent Subjectivity.” In: *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 1.1. 2008. pp. 27-36. p. 29.

¹⁴⁰ Fairclough, Norman. 1989. *Language and Power*. London/New York: Longman. p. 23.

¹⁴¹ Fairclough, Norman. 2001. “The Dialectics of Discourse.” www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/norman/2001a.doc (last accessed 10th January 2013.)

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Grabes, Herbert. “Literary History and Cultural History: Relations and Differences.” In: Grabes, Herbert, ed. 2001. *Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature: Literary History/Cultural History: Force-Fields and Tensions*, Vol. 17. Tübingen: Gunter Narr. pp. 1-34. p. 4.

representing – a particular kind of knowledge about a topic”¹⁴⁴ Such a form of knowledge production and regulation is inextricably linked to power, for the boundaries of what is to be regarded as “truth” are determined by regulatory discursive practices defining what Foucault calls ‘episteme.’ Such an ‘episteme’ “may be suspected of being something like a world-view, a slice of history, common to all branches of knowledge, which imposes on each one the same norms and postulates, a general stage of reason, a certain structure of thought that the man of a particular period cannot escape.”¹⁴⁵

In this sense, the cultural perception of terrorism can be regarded as being determined and controlled by medial, political and academic discourses, all of which shape its “reality.” As Zulaika and Douglass argue, “terrorism has become the Foucauldian ‘*épistémè*’ of our times, the epistemological gatekeeper that determines which ideas are allowed currency.”¹⁴⁶ Such a rather instrumental view of terrorism discourse has also imbued the works of CTS scholars like Richard Jackson, who contends that the use of a particular language, a particular discursive strategy, may alter the perceptions of individuals to comprehend, for instance, the need for employing military force. Following his stance, counter-terrorism discourse is designed to generate public support and legitimation for the policy deployed against the terrorist enemy. It is accordingly “the discourse of counter-terrorism [that] constructs the practice of counter-terrorism,”¹⁴⁷ rather than vice versa.

Yet the discursive construction of terrorism not only informs counter-terrorism practices, but is also likely to have an impact on the terrorist organisations themselves. As Hülse and Spencer point out, in the post-9/11 era, Western constructions of Al-Qaeda induced the organisation to react to the attributions placed on them. This interaction between terrorists and the agents of counter-terrorism followed a simple pattern: when the West speculated about Osama bin Laden’s death, Al-Qaeda published a video tape that proved that he was still alive.¹⁴⁸

It is because of this “theatre of terror,” the ceaseless interplay of the actual event, its mediation and discursive formations surrounding it, that the phenomenon has been suspected of bearing an air of the fictive. Particularly the media are seen to have created a perceived lack of reference between the representation and the factuality of terrorist violence. Significantly, modern terrorism in Great Britain emerged towards the end of the 19th century, after the recently emerged cheap press had facilitated the dissemination of news stories and mutually shared meaning including previously excluded strata found in “such unedifying places as inns and street corners.”¹⁴⁹ Even then, the distinction between factual and fictional accounts of social reality and news was not as clear-cut as one might assume, for as the phrase

¹⁴⁴ Hall, Stuart. “The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power.” In: Hall, Stuart; Gieben, Bram, eds. 1992. *Formations of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press. pp. 275-333. p. 291.

¹⁴⁵ Foucault, Michel. 2002. *The Archeology of Knowledge*. London/ New York: Routledge. p. 211.

¹⁴⁶ Zulaika; Douglass. 2008. p. 29.

¹⁴⁷ Jackson, Richard. 2005. *Writing the War on Terrorism: Language, Politics and Counter-terrorism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. p. 24.

¹⁴⁸ Hülse; Spencer. 2008. p. 572.

¹⁴⁹ Jones, Aled. 1996. *The Powers of the Press: Newspaper, Power and the Public in Nineteenth-Century England*. Aldershot: Scholar Press. p. 3.

“news story” already suggests, the commercialisation of the British press led to an increasing focus on the entertainment of its readers, and, according to its critics, to an emphasis on sensationalism.¹⁵⁰ In this vein, the “terrorist story” disseminated and staged in the Victorian press could transpire into collectively shared meaning, into a common scare haunting the national psyche. Novelists, on the other hand, used newspapers in a variety of ways, ranging from the integration of events reported by the press to the portrayal of the individual reader’s reaction to the news.¹⁵¹ Hence, the news media served as an inspirational source for fiction writers who ever since the emergence of mass mediated modern terrorism have been eager to explore and reflect on the effects of the symbiosis between terrorism and its mediation.

The distinction between terrorism and its mediation, between the factuality of violence and the medial representation of the “terrorist story,” is seen to have become increasingly distorted in the wake of the emergence of the electronic mass media in the 20th century. Commentators like Anthony Kubiak, for instance, argue that the distinction between fact and mediation, “between immediate violence, and mediated images of violence”¹⁵² has become indistinctively blurred. In this sense, the perpetual repetition of the mediated images has rendered the factual event remote and abstracted.¹⁵³ In this vein, Kubiak’s perspective on the mediation of violence is fundamentally embedded within the postmodernist rationale.

The notion that the audio-visual imagery of violence exceeds the boundaries of reality lies also at the heart of Jean Baudrillard’s media theory. Baudrillard controversially argues in *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*¹⁵⁴ that TV representations and technological warfare have reduced the factual violence to hyperreal scenarios, in which the distinction between reality and simulacral copies of the real, between form and content, has become increasingly blurred.¹⁵⁵ Particularly, the visual spectacularity of 9/11, the Baudrillardian “ ‘mother’ of all events,”¹⁵⁶ has reinforced discussions about the relation between the mediated image and the reality it references.¹⁵⁷ In fact, to borrow from Baudrillard again, on 11 September reality seemed to have outstripped fiction,¹⁵⁸ an impression shared by many other observers, bystanders and television audiences. Thus, writers eager to explore the 11 September attacks were

¹⁵⁰ Rubery, Matthew. 2009. *The Novelty of Newspapers: Victorian Fiction After the Invention of the News*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 11, p. 84.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 11-12.

¹⁵² Kubiak, Anthony. 1991. *Stages of Terror: Terrorism, Ideology, and Coercion as Theatre*. Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. p. 157.

¹⁵³ Ibid. p. 157.

¹⁵⁴ Baudrillard, Jean. 1995. *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*. Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

¹⁵⁵ For the relation between the “real” and the “hyperreal”, between representation and simulation, see: Baudrillard, Jean. [1981]. 1994. *Simulacra and Sju=imulation*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. pp. 1-42.

¹⁵⁶ Baudrillard, Jean. “The Spirit of Terrorism.” In: Baudrillard, Jean. 2003. *The Spirit of Terrorism and Other Essays*. 2nd ed. London/New York: Verso. pp. 1-34. p. 4.

¹⁵⁷ Schüller, Thorsten. “Kulturtheorien nach 9/11.” In: Poppe; Schüller; Seiler. 2009. pp. 27-60. p. 33.

¹⁵⁸ Baudrillard. 2003. p. 28.

presented with the problem of how to tackle an event that had seemingly transgressed the boundaries between fact and fiction.

Hence, throughout its history, the phenomenon of terrorism has been suspected of borrowing from fictionalisation, and fiction writers, on the other hand, have been eager to explore and reflect the mediation and discourses surrounding terrorism. More concretely, as the phrase “terrorism is theatre” already suggests, the staging and discursive construction of terrorism has led some commentators to assume that the phenomenon shares certain affinities with theatrical performance or narrative fiction. John Orr, for instance, describes the dynamics of terrorism and counter-terrorism in his introduction to *Terrorism and Modern Drama* in terms of dramatic staging:

Acts of violence against property or people are staged for different audiences simultaneously, sometimes to frighten, often to intimidate, usually to provoke the state enemy into excessive and unpopular counter-terror, but always to ensure that the act itself cannot be ignored. Such outrages would be nothing without their dramatic impact.¹⁵⁹

Zulaika and Douglass describe terrorism in their study *Terror and Taboo* as “an event, a news story, a social drama, a narrative. It is a genre of ‘emplotted’ action in which narrative sequence is a moral and discursive construct.”¹⁶⁰ Accordingly, it is this gap between the mediated material damage, or actual ‘event’ that happened at some point somewhere, and the ‘process’ of representing and interpreting terrorism which makes for what Zulaika and Douglass deem as fictionalisation.

In a similar vein, Margaret Scanlan notes that “bombings and hijackings begin with a few people plotting violence for maximum exposure, come to us on television, where distinctions between news and entertainment are ever more tortuous and quickly pass into the popular imagination, into blockbuster movies and paperback thrillers.”¹⁶¹ Following Scanlan’s stance, terrorist and literary plots share certain affinities. According to her, there is a “paradoxical affiliation between our violence and our fictions.”¹⁶²

Nevertheless, one needs to bear in mind that no matter how mediated and constructed the “terrorist story” may appear, the violent event itself, the representation of violence and the discourses constructed around it, have a material impact on human lives. Therefore, instead of pointing to the semblances of terrorism with performances and literary plotting, this study of the fictional works tackling terrorism is aimed at examining how the twofold nature of terrorism – that is, the factual disaster, on the one hand, as well as the narratives, attributions and images surrounding it on the other – and their effects on individuals and societies have been represented in British fiction throughout the history of modern terrorism. Rather than proceeding from the presumption of an affinity between fiction and terrorism, it is based on the premise of a specific literary potential to reflect on, or even debunk, the socio-cultural reverberations of the representation and discursive construction of terrorism.

¹⁵⁹ Orr, John. “Introduction.” In: Orr, John; Klaić, Dragan, eds. 1990. *Terrorism and Modern Drama*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. pp. 1-15. p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ Zulaika; Douglass. 1996. p. 65.

¹⁶¹ Scanlan. 2001. p. 1.

¹⁶² Ibid. p. 1.

2.3. Approaching the Terrorist Agent

In order to understand in how far prevailing discourses on the terrorist subject have influenced the perception of the terrorist perpetrator from 19th-century terrorism until today, some of the landmarks of the academic analysis and dominant notions of the terrorist personality will be examined in this section. Particularly the notion that terrorists must be in some way or another ‘deviant’ or ‘pathologic’ is certainly among the dominant ideas that have shaped the public perception of terrorists since the 19th century.

On the face of it, the terrorist’s deviance seems to provide the most obvious explanation for their actions. When confronted with the horrific images and accounts of terrorist attacks, the audience tends to be blinded to the fact that they only represent the aftermath of a wider and interlinked set of activities. As a result, efforts to make sense of the dreadful atrocities frequently lead to judgments about the “abnormal” behaviour of the perpetrators. Statements like “they must be mad” often seem to be the only plausible explanation for the display of extremely violent behaviour.¹⁶³

The question of why individuals get involved in terrorism and are willing to use violent means against innocent civilians already concerned the 19th-century Italian physician and criminal anthropologist Cesare Lombroso. He was among the first scientists to develop highly influential theories on the criminal man and anarchist terrorism, which flourished in the Italy of his time. Embracing 19th-century positivist ideas, the confidence in natural sciences as the key to social advance, Lombroso’s scientific criminology endorsed a fatalistic view of the delinquent.¹⁶⁴ More specifically, his criminal anthropology was based on the belief in the existence of a connection between crime and physiology. Lombroso discovered in the post mortem examinations he performed on criminals that their bodies share many physical anomalies and deformations such as “jug ears, thick hair, thin beards, pronounced sinuses, protruding chins and broad cheekbones.”¹⁶⁵ He further identified particular character traits of the criminal such as idleness, cowardice, passion for vengeance and tattoos as a sign of the primitive, which seemed to reinforce his hypothesis.¹⁶⁶ Criminality was, according to Lombroso, not an act of free will, but an atavistic phenomenon, the reproduction of a primitive form of nature within advanced society. The criminal thus did not choose his fate, but was seen to be afflicted with a hereditary disease. Anarchism, in particular, was regarded as a form of epidemic disease and disease metaphors reverberated in contemporary discourses.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Horgan. 2005. pp.47-48.

¹⁶⁴ Pick, Daniel. 1989. *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1948-c.1918*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.p. 109, p. 131.

¹⁶⁵ Lombroso, Cesare. [1911] 2006. *Criminal Man: Translated and with a New Introduction*. Durham/London: Duke University Press.p.53.

¹⁶⁶ Paramelee, Maurice. “Introduction to the English Version.” In: Lombroso. [1899] 2006. *Crime: Its Causes and Remedies*. Boston: Little Brown. pp. xiv, xviii.

¹⁶⁷ Pick. 1989. p. 131.

A similar construction of anarchism as a form of hereditary illness, diagnosable through the examination of the anarchist's physiognomy, also informs an essay published by Lombroso in *The Popular Science Monthly*. Therein, he describes the "craniological determinations"¹⁶⁸ of a prisoner convicted of anarchism. Lombroso argued that particular characteristics of his subject are typical of the "born criminal"¹⁶⁹ and the "foolhardy and sanguinary anarchist."¹⁷⁰ The convict showed the same skull deformations and physical anomalies as other criminals and, most notably, resembled the infamous French anarchist Ravachol. Despite his ominous physiognomy, the man seemed to possess an inoffensive character. However, as Lombroso was to discover by means of an alcohol experiment, the anarchist's mentality was not harmless, but rather marked by falsehood and a double personality. After having been administered eighty grams of alcohol, the anarchist indulged in anarchistic ravings and "a general mania for regicide."¹⁷¹ The following day, however, the anarchist could not remember any of his alcohol-induced verbal outbursts. His amnesia seemingly revealed that the physiognomy of apparently harmless men "bears a prophetic relation to the crime which breaks out on the first determining circumstance."¹⁷² While Lombroso's fatalistic view of the terrorist agent may appear bizarre from today's point of view, it certainly had a coherence and credibility at his time, and his ideas had important ramifications in law, public debate on crime and politics in and beyond Italy.¹⁷³

Moreover, Lombroso's deterministic view of terrorists is in fact not as unfamiliar as it initially appears. The notion that terrorists show abnormal characteristics, or are at least psychologically different from non-terrorists, reverberates in 20th-century academic terrorism discourse. Many of these studies suggest that the reasons for individuals to join a terrorist group lay outside the realm of free will, and can, instead, be attributed to psychopathological predispositions.¹⁷⁴

In the 1970s, the view of terrorists as psychopathic individuals was widespread. A psychopath can be typified "at the broadest possible level by an unwillingness to conform to social or communal rules"¹⁷⁵ shows behavioural analogies to terrorists. Similarly, a terrorist seems to lack the ability to feel remorse or guilt and has an exclusively egotistical world view.¹⁷⁶ Indeed, the cruelty of terrorist violence often suggests that the perpetrators, like psychopaths, need to have "a highly-insulated conscience or a certain detachment from reality."¹⁷⁷ Assuming that terrorist violence can be attributed to psychopathic

¹⁶⁸ Lombroso, Cesare. "A Paradoxical Anarchist." In: *The Popular Science Monthly*. January 1900. pp. 312-315., p. 312.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Lombroso. 1900. p. 315.

¹⁷² Ibid. p. 315.

¹⁷³ Pick, Daniel. "The Faces of Anarchy: Lombroso and the Politics of Criminal Science in Post-Unification Italy." In: *History Workshop: A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Historians* 21. 1986. pp. 60-86. p. 81.

¹⁷⁴ Horgan. 2005. p. 46.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 49.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 49.

¹⁷⁷ Cooper, Anthony. "The Terrorist and the Victim." In: *Victimology* 1.2. 1976. pp. 229-239. p. 232.

anomalies, it is not only the “fierce faith in his credo,” but also the “blessed retreat into a comforting, individual madness”¹⁷⁸ that enables a terrorist to kill innocent victims.

During the 1980s and 1990s the understanding of terrorism as psychopathology was widely displaced by the view that terrorists are afflicted with other deviant personality traits such as narcissism and paranoia. Richard Pearlstein, for example, purports the view that political terrorism becomes psychologically attractive to individuals whose experience of narcissistic injury and disappointment has engendered substantial damage to their self-image.¹⁷⁹

Martha Crenshaw analyses one of the most extensive profiling studies performed under the auspices of the West German Ministry of the Interior in 1981¹⁸⁰, which is also informed by the popular notion that terrorists are psychologically different from non-terrorists. This study was aimed at the identification of common personality traits in 227 terrorists, mainly belonging to the Red Army Faction. The research project incorporated versatile information on the terrorists’ lives, e.g. interviews, educational records and accounts of family members and friends, and compared these with the data of a group of non-terrorists. Crenshaw states that the main finding of the study indicates that the incidence of psychological disorders in terrorist movements do not exceed the rates within the comparison group.¹⁸¹ Hence, terrorism cannot be interpreted as the result of the psychopathological conditions of those involved.¹⁸² However, the German researchers promoted the assumption that some personality traits are particularly salient among terrorist groups. For example, one of the scientists, Lieselotte Süllwold, identifies two personality types as prevalent among terrorists. The first type is marked by extremely extrovert characteristics and tends to display impulsive, ruthless, and callous behaviour. Blinded by their emotional deficiencies, such personalities are incapable of foreseeing the consequences of their action. The second personality type is described as neurotically hostile.¹⁸³ Their behaviour is characterised by suspiciousness, intolerance, aggressiveness, and defensiveness.¹⁸⁴ In addition, the researchers detected further psychological traits abetting the involvement in terrorism. These include the attraction to violence as a result of childhood traumas and adolescent conflicts for which the archaic

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. p.232.

¹⁷⁹ Pearlstein, Richard M. 1991. *The Mind of the Political Terrorist*. Wilmington: Scholarly Resources. p. 20, p. 28. See also Horgan on Pearlstein: Horgan. 2005. pp. 59-60.

¹⁸⁰ Victoriouff, Jeff. “The Mind of the Terrorist: A Review and Critique of Psychological Approaches.” In: *Conflict Resolution* 49.1. pp. 3-42. p. 9.

¹⁸¹ Crenshaw, Martha. “The Psychology of Political Terrorism.” In: Hermann, Margaret G., ed. 1986. *Political Psychology*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. pp. 379-413. See also: Horgan. 2005. 54.

¹⁸² Jäger, Herbert; Schmidtchen, Gerhard; Süllwold, Lieselotte. 1981. *Lebenslaufanalysen*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag. p. 101, p. 235. See also Ken Heskin, who concludes in his study on the psychology of Northern Ireland that “the behaviour of terrorists cannot be attributed, in any significant degree, to their psychopathic nature.” Heskin, Ken. 1980. *The Psychology of Northern Ireland*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 86.

¹⁸³ Crenshaw’s translation. Crenshaw. 1986. p. 389.

¹⁸⁴ Jäger; Schmidtchen; Süllwold. 1981. p. 105. Following Crenshaw’s translation: Crenshaw. 1986. p. 388.

structure of the terrorist group represents an outlet,¹⁸⁵ a lack of self-esteem,¹⁸⁶ neurotic reaction to failure and clinging to irrational goals,¹⁸⁷ or the need to belong to a group to compensate for the lack of security and familial devotion.¹⁸⁸

While these psychological predispositions may play a role in the individual's involvement in terrorism, today, many scholars suggest that the reasons why individuals engage in terrorism are manifold and cannot be explained by means of a psychological classification. Instead, the motivations for terrorists are heterogeneous and "terrorism often seems to be the only connecting link among widely varying personalities."¹⁸⁹ Those who engage in terrorism might feel attracted to violence, feel the need to compensate an inferiority complex, or the need to belong to a group, and even be afflicted with mental disorders. However, general conclusions about the existence of a terrorist-prone personality type or even an underlying pathology cannot be drawn,¹⁹⁰ since, as Crenshaw puts it, "the outstanding common characteristic of terrorists is their normality."¹⁹¹

Despite this shift in perspective reverberating in many academic approaches, the view of terrorists as non-pathological, "normal" human being has yet to permeate public debates on terrorism. This may be partly due to the fact that the denigration of terrorists as psychopaths and lunatics, or the assumption that terrorists are the products of early childhood and adolescence traumas may be used for political ends.¹⁹² Along these lines, terrorists can no longer be regarded as rational agents pursuing a political cause, but as lunatic or irrational personalities whose message cannot be taken at face value. Hence, any serious consideration of the political and social issues addressed in the rationale of the terrorist movement is rendered obsolete. That is to say, the cause itself becomes discredited.

Bob Brecher and Mark Devenney, for instance, point in the introduction to their edited collection of essays on discourses on terrorism to Tony Blair's speech in response to the 7 July attacks. His public address was designed to persuade the British people that the UK's foreign policy, and in particular, the controversial co-invasion of Iraq was completely unrelated to the terrorist assaults:¹⁹³

¹⁸⁵ Jäger; Schmidtchen; Süllwold. 1981. p. 222-224.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 86.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. pp. 91-93.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 222.

¹⁸⁹ Crenshaw. 1988. p. 390.

¹⁹⁰ See, for example:

Borum, Randy. 2007. *Psychology of Terrorism*. Tampa: University of South Florida.
<http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a494527.pdf> (last accessed 17th October.2012)

Crenshaw. 1986. p. 385.

Horgan. 2005. p. 63.

Gupta, Dipak K. "Exploring Roots of Terrorism." In: Bjørge, Tore, ed. 2006. *Root Causes of Terrorism: Myths, Reality and Ways Forward*. 2nd ed. pp. 1-32.

¹⁹¹ Crenshaw. 1986. p. 390.

¹⁹² Horgan. 2005. p. 48.

¹⁹³ Brecher; Brecher; Mark Devenney. "Introduction: Philosophy, Politics, Terror." In: Brecher, Bob; Devenney, Mark; Winter, Aaron, eds. 2010. *Discourses and Practices of Terrorism: Interrogating Terror*. Abingdon: Routledge. pp.1-4. p. 2.

If it is the plight of the Palestinians that drives them, why, every time it looks as if Israel and Palestine are making progress, does the same ideology perpetrate an outrage that turns hope back into despair?

If it is Afghanistan that motivates them, why blow up innocent Afghans on their way to their first ever election? If it is Iraq that motivates them, why is the same ideology killing Iraqis by terror in defiance of an elected Iraqi government?¹⁹⁴

The rhetorical questions Blair poses in this speech strongly suggest that the deeds of “those terrorists” can by no means be explained rationally. On the contrary, those who resort to terrorist violence against innocent victims “are fundamentally different, and do not conform to the rational norms of civilisation.”¹⁹⁵ In this speech, terrorists are constructed as crazed, irrational actors who cannot be stopped by any policy change or advancement in peace processes. Being faced with the terrorist retaliation on the British mainland, Blair thus sought to justify his foreign policy, and to gain public support by denying the terrorists’ rationality and sanity. This view has been, as will be explained in the section on the “new” terrorism of the 21st century,¹⁹⁶ rather common in the years after 11 September. The perpetrators of these atrocities were oftentimes constructed as being deluded fanatics with a non-negotiable cause.

Yet there are also scholars like Crenshaw, who purport the rational choice theory of terrorism,¹⁹⁷ argue that terrorism is not purely expressive violence, but rather instrumental. Accordingly, the involvement in terrorism is tactical and strategic rather than emotional and aberrant. From this perspective, terrorists are goal-oriented, rational agents who might be influenced, but not determined by their psychological conditions.¹⁹⁸ This notion of terrorism as a “rational problem-solving strategy”¹⁹⁹ requires the consideration of the “terrorists’ point of view”.²⁰⁰ Bearing in mind that terrorism is to some extent premised on the subjectivity of both those who engage in it and those attacked, an understanding why terrorism takes place can only be achieved by taking a perspective which transcends the dichotomy of “us” versus “them.” The consideration of the terrorists’ worldview, their subjective logic and morality may lead to an understanding of why these individuals, as irrationally as they may seem to behave, act the way they do.²⁰¹ In the aftermath of terrorist attacks, such an empathy exercise may be difficult to demand from political leaders and the public. Hence, this study seeks to explore in how far this may be regarded as a function of literary representations of terrorism.

¹⁹⁴ Blair, Tony. “Full Text Blair Speech on Terror.” In: *BBC News*. 16.05.2005. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4689363.stm (last accessed 12th October 2012).

¹⁹⁵ Brecher; Devenney. 2010. p. 2.

¹⁹⁶ See 5.3.

¹⁹⁷ Rational choice theory “offers an economic evaluation of individual decision making.” Thus, rational choice theory of terrorism is based on the assumption that terrorism is a “rational strategy geared towards maximizing an agent’s expected utility.” McAllister, Bradley; Schmid, Alex P. “Theories of Terrorism.” In: Schmid. 2011. pp. 201-293. p. 221., p.256.

¹⁹⁸ Crenshaw. 1986. p. 386.

¹⁹⁹ Moghaddam, Fatahi M. 2006. *From the Terrorists’ Point of View*. Westport: Praeger Security International. p. 3.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 2.

²⁰¹ Ibid. p. 2.

2.4. The Workings of the Terrorist Threat

Terrorism, as we have seen before, may only become an effective communication strategy through the meaning that is ascribed to it by the targeted audience. The phenomenon is largely propped up by threat narratives circulating in the aftermath of attacks. Such threat narratives are often characterised by a forward-looking perspective, which Robert Young convincingly pinpoints as the “logic of an anticipated repetition.”²⁰² That is, the trauma of terrorist violence is anticipated to be repeated in the future. Terrorism, hence exploits the anticipatory nature of fear of an event that is yet to occur. As Frank argues, “what characterises terrorism is less the single act of violence than the fact that this act is perceived to be the beginning, or part, of a potential series.”²⁰³ According to him, the perception of the threat posed by terrorism therefore exceeds other hazards to an extent that terrorism becomes a halfway house between the real (actual attacks) and the imaginary (possible future attacks). For example, after a successful attack, the questions arising usually centre on the prevention of future attacks. The future-orientedness of counter-terrorism discourses makes it, to Frank, increasingly difficult to discern fact from fiction. For example, terrorism discourses in the aftermath of 9/11 often conjured up the next possible attack, involving weapons of mass destruction or bacteriological offensives which would be even more spectacular and devastating than 9/11.²⁰⁴ Thus, as Frank put it, “by repeatedly summoning of the spectre of the next, even more terrible, attack, counterterrorism officials make a substantial contribution to the terrorists’ intended effect.”²⁰⁵

Thus, the perpetuation of such “what if” scenarios in the wake of terrorist atrocities nurtures an over-proportionate sense of precariousness among societies. As the survey conducted by Roxane Silver and her co-authors indicates, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, almost two thirds of the interviewees reported fears of future terrorist attacks and almost 60% were afraid of their families being harmed.²⁰⁶ Hence, even though a relatively small proportion of the US population was directly affected by the 11 September attacks, the risk posed by terrorism was significantly overestimated by large parts of society. Such an enhanced risk perception terrorist attacks may, for instance, induce individuals to change their behaviour to reduce exposure to risk, such as the avoidance of public transport or air travel.²⁰⁷ Considering the very small likelihood of dying in a terrorist attack in a plane or the underground, this behaviour seems to be an irrational overestimation. Already in 1988, Edward Said criticised in his essay

²⁰² Young, 2010. Chichester/Oxford: Wiley. pp. 307-328. p. 309.

²⁰³ Frank, 2017. p. 8.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. pp. 8, 12.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 57.

²⁰⁶ Silver, Roxane et al. “Nationwide Longitudinal Study of Psychological Responses to September 11.” In: *Journal of the American Medical Association* 288. 2002. pp. 1235-1244. p. 1240.

²⁰⁷ The survey conducted by Rubin et al. on the subway bombings in London shows that the attacks induced alterations in the behaviour of a significant proportion of the population: 32% of the Londoners reported that they would reduce the use of public transport and 46% were concerned about their safety while travelling by tube. Rubin et al. 2005. p. 6.

“The Essential Terrorist,” “the elevation of terrorism to the status of a national security threat,”²⁰⁸ for “more Americans drown in their bathtubs, are struck by lightning or die in traffic accidents.”²⁰⁹

The enhanced risk perception following terrorist events is thus not a new phenomenon. In fact, it has made for its effectiveness ever since modern terrorism surfaced in the 19th century. As Phillips in his study *Nightmares of Anarchy*²¹⁰ convincingly argues, already during the age of anarchist terrorism in Europe, “the fear of anarchists was far out of proportion to the threat they presented or the actual plots they carried out.”²¹¹ In comparison to other terrorist groups such as the Irish Republican Brotherhood, anarchists were particularly dreaded. They questioned the very fabric of society, and, thus, evoked extreme “fears [...] of cultural decline and the ascendancy of working class power.”²¹² The threat posed by terrorism is accordingly not solely determined by the factual event or the scale of the disaster, but also by the perception of the threat of terrorism and what it culturally signifies and represents.²¹³ Moreover, the response to terrorist violence is less determined by “the risk itself” than by the “perception of the risk.”²¹⁴

Daniel Rothbart and Karina Korostelina provide a very useful approach to the social mechanisms of threat which elucidates the social responses to terrorism. In their essay, the authors examine the effect of threat narratives circulating in societies that attempt to accord meaning to seemingly senseless acts of violence by conveying the “truth” about the perpetrators. They identify three themes which are particularly salient in threat narratives: Firstly, threat narratives are usually infused with moral indictment and normative judgements about the perpetrators. Secondly, threat narratives focus on the unpredictability of further violence. In other words, they give expression to the “fear of the unknown” and “the unknowable consequences of future violence.”²¹⁵ Thirdly, threat narratives concern “the normative standing in relation to the threatening Other.”²¹⁶ That is, the morally degenerate perpetrators become a reference point for the targeted society that, in turn, allows the moral separation from them.²¹⁷ Hence, threat narratives underpin the demarcation of “self” and “other.” Emphasising “the immorality

²⁰⁸ Said, Edward. “The Essential Terrorist.” In: Hitchens, Christopher; Said, Edward W. 1988. *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question*. London/New York: Verso. pp. 149-158. p. 149. Similarly, John E. Mueller quite poignantly illustrates that statistically speaking, the likelihood of dying in a terrorist attack in the USA lies below the risk of dying from a bee sting or to be drowned in a toilet. Mueller, John. 2006. *Overblown: How Politicians and Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them*. New York: Free Press. pp. 13-14.

²⁰⁹ Said. 1988. p. 149.

²¹⁰ Phillips, Wm. M. 2003. *Nightmares of Anarchy: Language and Cultural Change, 1870-1914*. London: Associated University Press.

²¹¹ Phillips. 2003. p. 68.

²¹² Ibid. p. 69.

²¹³ Gabe, Walklate. 2006. p. 131.

²¹⁴ Beck, Ulrich. “The Cosmopolitan State: Towards a Realistic Utopia.” In: *Eurozine.com*. 12.05.2001. http://www.world-governance.org/IMG/pdf/Beck_-_O_estado_cosmopolita_EN.pdf (last accessed 14th October 2012)

²¹⁵ Rothbart, Daniel; Korostelina, Karina V. “Moral Denigration of the Other.” In: Rothbart, Daniel; Korostelina, Karina V. 2006. *Identity, Morality and Threat*. Plymouth: Lexington Books. pp. 29-57. p. 33.

²¹⁶ Ibid. p. 33.

²¹⁷ Ibid. p. 33.

and unpredictability in the actions of the Other,” these narratives further contribute to a “sense of instability in the world.”²¹⁸ For this reason, they may on the one hand have a substantial impact on sociocultural realities, and are, on the other hand, often used to corroborate political responses to terrorism.

Moreover, “overblown”²¹⁹ terrorist threat narratives may be harnessed to justify political decisions and policy-making processes. Kathryn Fisher, for instance, points out that due to the construction of a “particular threat and referent identities [...] in official British discourse,”²²⁰ the temporary counterterrorism law in Britain from the 1970s could be transformed into the permanent Terrorism Act 2000. When the temporary version was introduced during The Troubles, the terrorist activities were referred to as a “serious threat to the maintenance of peace and order, stemming from hooligan gangs and subversive unrest.”²²¹ Hence, terrorism at that time was constructed as an illegal activity similar to crime. To justify a permanent law, terrorism had to be established as a hazard superseding the threat of “ordinary crime.” Thus, during the 1990s, when “the ‘Muslim’ gradually replaced the ‘Irish’ as the new terrorist threat of the century,”²²² the danger was constructed rhetorically by deploying a language that facilitated the construction of the threat identity of terrorists as the “evil” “other” not solely threatening Britain but the “self” of the whole “civilised” society.²²³

Individual threat perception, discourses of threat, identity construction, othering and policymaking processes thus all mesh into the making of the perceived reality in the aftermath of terrorist assaults. Discursive appeals to identity, and the demarcation of the “evil or demented terrorist Other,” may foster a climate where group generalisations and stereotyping are common. Expressed differently, terrorism may generate a cultural atmosphere replete with absolute moralisms, and characterised by the irreconcilability of the dichotomies of the “traumatised victims” versus the “insidious aggressors,” of “us” versus “them,” “good” versus “evil,” or “civilisation” versus “barbarism.” The trauma inflicted by terrorist attacks and the fear of future harm, affecting both individual and community responses may thus have a substantial impact on cultural, social and political developments alike. This study will therefore discuss how these narratives interweaving trauma, threat and othering have seeped into literary discourse at different times, and what ethical-cultural function literary texts have fulfilled throughout history.

²¹⁸ Ibid. p. 35.

²¹⁹ See, for example, Mueller, who discusses how the threat of terrorism has become “overblown” to such an extent and what role politicians, academics, experts etc. as members of the so-called “terrorism industry” play. Mueller. 2006. pp. 13-14.

²²⁰ Fisher, Kathryn. “Terrorist Threat Construction and the Transition to Permanent British Counterterrorism Law.” In: *The Journal of Terrorism Research* 2.3. 2011.
<http://ojs.st-andrews.ac.uk/index.php/jtr/article/view/225/241> (last accessed 16th October 2012)

²²¹ Fisher. 2011.

²²² Bourke, Joanna. 2005. *Fear: A Cultural History*. London: Virago. p. 365.

²²³ Fisher. 2011.

2.5. Terrorism and Trauma Discourse

Particularly since 11 September, the term ‘trauma’ has been frequently used in the same breath with accounts of terrorist violence. Ulrike Tancke therefore contends that “9/11 is considered the collective trauma of post-millennial humanity.”²²⁴ ‘Trauma’ has thus become the catchword applied to grasp the events of 9/11 and the ensuing atrocities in Bali, Madrid and London. Nonetheless, the pervasiveness of the global trauma discourse in the wake of the new millennium should not belie the fact that the phenomenon has elicited much scholarly interest well before 9/11.

Clearly, trauma is not “formulated by medical and psychological discourse in isolation.”²²⁵ Rather, it has also been used to describe cultural processes in response to human suffering. It can therefore be regarded as a social construct which is also highly contingent on “social and cultural ideas about suffering, accountability, responsibility, reparation and victimhood.”²²⁶ Thus, historicising ‘trauma’ seems a worthwhile endeavour to give consideration to the different perspectives from which terrorism has been tackled in the different works of this study. This section, therefore, seeks to elucidate the origins and history of the concept of ‘trauma’, thus delineating both the development of the term and the cultural ideas attached to it. The shift from initial notions of “shock” in response to modernity to a postmodern “wound culture,”²²⁷ which is outlined below, elucidates why contemporary writers have been eager to focus on the trauma of the victims of terrorism, while their precursors around the Victorian *fin de siècle* tackling the then newly described phenomenon associated it with the perceived overall rupture and alienation brought about by modernity. In the 19th century, the city, as the “classic site of modernity”²²⁸ had swallowed the majority of the British population. Worries grew about an overstimulation and exhaustion caused by a prolonged immersion in the urban landscape.²²⁹ Friedrich Engels, for instance, describes London in 1844:

After roaming the streets of the capital a day or two, making headway with difficulty through the human turmoil and the endless lines of vehicles, after visiting the slums of the metropolis, one realises for the first time that these Londoners have been forced to sacrifice the best qualities of their human nature to bring to pass the marvels of civilisation which crowd their city.[...] The very turmoil of the streets has something repulsive, something against which human nature rebels.²³⁰

²²⁴ Tancke, Ulrike. “Uses and Abuses of Trauma in Post-9/11 Fiction and Contemporary Culture.” In: Cilano, Cara, ed. 2009. *From Solidarity to Schisms: 9/11 and After in Fiction and Film from Outside the US*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi B.V. pp. 75-92. p. 77.

²²⁵ Matus, Jill L. 2009. *Shock, Memory and the Unconscious in Victorian Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 7.

²²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 7.

²²⁷ Seltzer, Mark. “Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere.” In: *October* 80. 1997. pp. 3-26. In fact, originating from Greek, ‘trauma’ is a concept that literally denotes a ‘wound’. *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. “Trauma.” <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/trauma> (last accessed 19th June 2013)

²²⁸ Luckhurst. 2008. p. 20

²²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 20.

²³⁰ Engels, Friedrich. “The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844.” In: Marx, Karl; Engels, Friedrich. [1845] 2008. *The Communist Manifesto with The Condition of the Working Class in England, and Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. London: Wordsworth. pp. 37-328. p.70.

Thus, the tension between the downside of progress and the “marvels of civilisation”²³¹ particularly manifested itself in the cityscape. Walter Benjamin also describes the “intrinsic ambivalences of modernity”²³² in his account of 19th-century Paris with its overpopulation, the shock experience engendered by the crowds, fast-paced lifestyle and the telephone as a new means of communication.²³³

Unsurprisingly, it is the 19th century, an age marked by the process of industrialisation and the unprecedented destructiveness that it ensued, which formed the socio-cultural background in which the concept of a psychological trauma is rooted. Trauma is thus “seen as inherently linked to modernity,”²³⁴ and the unparalleled dangers emanating from the processes of industrialisation and technologisation.

As Wolfgang Schivelbusch in his study of the history of the railway journey shows, the experience of manmade catastrophes and technological accidents ushered in an epistemological shift in medical sciences. The psychopathological symptoms precipitated by what is now considered a traumatic event were first described in the mid-1860s,²³⁵ when physicians became interested in the investigation of events that were both physically and psychologically destructive. In Victorian Britain, the “acceleration of the pace of everyday life”²³⁶ was epitomised by the railway, and it was because of the “new potential for harm”²³⁷ of this “vehicle of modernization”²³⁸ that medical scientists became interested in both the physical injuries and psychopathological symptoms such as insomnia, anxiety, nightmares. Hence, the discovery of a condition termed “railway spine”²³⁹ and later “nervous shock”²⁴⁰ or “traumatic neurosis”²⁴¹ is indicative of the prevailing sense of disruptiveness engendered by modern life.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Luckhurst. 2008. p. 20.

²³³ Benjamin, Walter. “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire.” In: Benjamin, Walter. 1973. *Illuminations*. London: Collins/Fontana Books. pp. 157-196.

²³⁴ Kaplan. 2005. p. 24.

²³⁵ Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. 1993. *Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise: Zur Industrialisierung von Raum und Zeit im 19. Jahrhundert*. 3rd ed. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuchverlag. p. 125.

²³⁶ Daly, Nicholas. 2004. *Literature, Technology and Modernity 1860-2000*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 37.

²³⁷ Ibid. p. 37.

²³⁸ Ibid. p. 37.

²³⁹ Schivelbusch. 1993. pp. 122-123.

See also: Esther Fischer-Homberger who traces in her essay the development of ‘railway spine’ from a term initially denoting the concussion of the spine to the concept of the ‘traumatic neurosis’ which shifted the focus to the psychological causes. The term ‘railway spine’ was first printed in John Eric Erichsen’s 1866 study of *Railway and Other injuries of the nervous system*. Fischer- Homberger, Esther. “Railway Spine und traumatische Neurose – Seele und Rückenmark.” In: *Gesnerus* 27. 1970. pp. 96-111. http://fischer-homberger.ch.galvani.ch-meta.net/fileadmin/pdf/Railway_Spine_und_traumatische_Neurose_-_Seele_und_Rueckenmark.pdf (last accessed 04.02.13.) Erichsen introduced insofar a new paradigm as he did not solely observe the physiological impact of railway accidents, but also observed their psychological effects such as the “perturbation of mind that must disturb the bravest.” Erichsen, John Eric. 1866. *Railway and Other Injuries of the Nervous System*. London: Walton and Maberly.p. 9. See also: Schivelbusch. 1993. pp. 126-130.

²⁴⁰ Page. Herbert William. 1885. *Injuries of the Spine and Spinal Cord without Apparent Mechanical Lesion, and Nervous Shock, in their Surgical and Medico-Legal Aspects*. London: J. & A. Churchill.

²⁴¹ For the evolution of the concept of ‘traumatic neurosis’, a term introduced by Hermann Oppermann, see: Fischer-Homberger. 1970. pp. 98-99. Fischer- Homberger, Esther. “Zur Medizingeschichte des Traumas.” In: *Gesnerus* 56. 1999. pp. 260–294. pp. 267-270.

Thus, early notions of trauma aimed at describing the effects of “events so overwhelming and inassimilable that the ordinary processes of registration and representation were suspended or superseded”²⁴² which were bound to “processing speeds (excitation, activation), rather than the wound.”²⁴³ In other words, early notions of trauma and shock were associated with the acceleration of the pace of everyday life.

Terrorism as a novel and unprecedented form of political violence emerged in a time when the interest in the psychological damage caused by manmade disasters had already been kindled. It was therefore, as will be shown in greater detail later, associated with the generally perceived ferocity and degeneration of modern life. In this sense, terrorism was regarded as one symptom epitomising the sense of disruption pervading all spheres of society. However, in late Victorian public discourse, the consequences for the victims were of secondary importance. It was rather the criminal “other” than the victims that pervaded popular culture and sparked the imagination of both the public and fiction writers,²⁴⁴ or, to borrow from Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben, “the disturbed nineteenth-century psyche constituted the exception”²⁴⁵ in culture. By contrast, in postmodern discourse, the wounded psyche “functions as a veritable paradigm of modern subjectivity in the context of our so-called ‘trauma culture’, as all individuals become (at least *en potential*) ‘lost’ and traumatised others-to-themselves.”²⁴⁶

This cultural shift of focus from the perpetrators to the victims was primarily induced by the unprecedented experiences of catastrophic events and global cross-cultural conflict²⁴⁷ in the first half of the 20th century, also dubbed the “Age of Catastrophe.”²⁴⁸ Most notably, the First World War and the new realities of modern warfare which precipitated psychic mass traumatisation – this time termed ‘shell shock’ – ²⁴⁹ reinforced the interest in the exploration of neuroses induced by the exposure to unparalleled external force.²⁵⁰ Sigmund Freud, for instance, who initially associated the concept of

²⁴² Matus. 2009. p. 20.

²⁴³ Armstrong, Tim. “Two Types of Shock in Modernity.” In: *Critical Quarterly* 42.1. 2000. pp. 60-73. p. 64.

²⁴⁴ Ní Flathúin, Máire. “The Making of the Master Criminal: The Chief of Thugs in Victorian Writing on Crime” In: Maunder, Andrew; Moore, Grace, eds. 2004. *Victorian Crime, Madness and Sensation*. Aldershot: Ashgate. pp. 31-44. p. 31.

²⁴⁵ Kohlke, Marie-Luise; Gutleben, Christian. “Introduction: Bearing Witness to the Nineteenth Century.” In: Kohlke, Marie-Luise; Gutleben, Christian, eds. 2010. *Neo-Victorian Tropes of Trauma: The Politics of Bearing After-Witness to Nineteenth-Century Suffering*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi. pp. 1-34. p. 3. See also: Seltzer. 1997. p. 4.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Kaplan. 2005. p. 24.

²⁴⁸ The British historian Eric Hobsbawm divided the 20th century, which he regards as the “Age of Extremes”, into “The Age of Catastrophe” comprising the period from 1914 until the aftermath of the Second World War, followed by “The Golden Age” of economic growth and social transformation. The “Age of Catastrophe” for the Western hemisphere was marked by war, breakdown and crises. It crumpled “the great edifice of nineteenth-century civilisation” in the “flames of world war.” Hobsbawm, Eric. 1995. *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991*. 7th ed. London: Michael Joseph. pp. 6-7, p. 22.

²⁴⁹ The term ‘shell shock’ was coined by the British war psychiatrist Charles Samuel Myers. Fischer-Homberger, Esther. 1999. p. 280.

²⁵⁰ Schivelbusch. 1993. p. 133.

psychic trauma with sexual assault in his seduction theory, focused after World War I on the ‘war neuroses’ he observed in shell-shocked soldiers.²⁵¹

Furthermore, the increasing interest in the victim was also explained by the emergence of a discipline called victimology after World War II, the first academic field dedicated to the study of victims, which was initially a branch of criminology and since the 1980s also of psychiatry, dealing with psychic trauma in victims of crimes.²⁵²

The ensuing “age of trauma”²⁵³ has been attributed to postmodern discourse, or as Kohlke and Gutleben put it, “the knowledge of the relativity or impossibility of all knowledge, the fraught certainty of the uncertainty of any cognitive system, and the insistence on the aporetic nature of signification all help nurture our culture of loss and dispossession.”²⁵⁴ Trauma became the new paradigm, pervading the “understanding of subjectivity and experience in the advanced industrial world”²⁵⁵ and since the 1970s, the interest in psychic trauma had already boosted and taken root in psychoanalysis, sociology,²⁵⁶ and had even become “a powerful tool”²⁵⁷ of the humanities and literature. Thus; already before ‘trauma’ entered the post-millennial terrorism discourses, the focus had shifted from the sense of disruptiveness of modern life and processing of speed to the focus on the wound inflicted on the victim,²⁵⁸ from the perpetrators representing the evils of modernity to the affected targets. Moreover, as Mark Seltzer contends, the public sphere has become inseparable from wounding and trauma. According to him, “trauma serves as another name for the subject in wound culture,” constituted by a public that gathers in the spectacle of disaster.²⁵⁹ Anne Rothe, in addition, describes contemporary culture as being fundamentally infused by survivor tales recounting their traumatic memories to the extent to where narratives of catastrophe verge on the melodramatic. According to Rothe, popular trauma culture harnesses kitsch as an aesthetic and ethical category to promote simple moral truths and banal assumptions of complete innocence, thus precluding any critical distance from events.²⁶⁰

²⁵¹ Leys, Ruth. 2000. *Trauma: A Genealogy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 18-23.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle – first published in 1920*, Freud deals with the phenomenon of ‘war neurosis’ which shares some symptoms with the “ordinary traumatic neurosis” precipitated by accidents.

Freud, Sigmund. 1950. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. 4th ed. London: Hogarth. p. 9.

²⁵² Fassin, Didier; Rechtman, Richard. 2009. *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p. 122.

²⁵³ Miller, Nancy K.; Tougaw, Jason Miller. “Introduction: Extremities.” In: Nancy K., Miller; Tougaw, Jason, eds. 2002. *Extremities: Trauma, Testimony and Community*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. pp. 1-24. p. 1.

²⁵⁴ Kohlke; Gutleben. 2010. p. 4.

²⁵⁵ Luckhurst, Roger. 2008. *The Trauma Question*. London/New York: Routledge. p. 1.

²⁵⁶ Caruth, Cathy. 1995. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press. p. 3.

²⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 3.

²⁵⁸ Matus. 2009. p. 22.

²⁵⁹ Seltzer. 1997. p. 24.

²⁶⁰ Rothe, Anne. 2011. *Popular Trauma Culture: Selling the Pain of Others*. New Brunswick/New Jersey/London: Rutgers University Press. pp. 44-46.

2.6. Britain and the Discourse of Resilience

The sense of victimisation and vulnerability expressed in the post-9/11-era is just one way of reacting to trauma. Responses may also be informed by the “ability of individuals or communities to bounce back in response to an acute trauma,”²⁶¹ a capacity also known as ‘resilience.’ Yet ‘vulnerability’ and ‘resilience’ are not dichotomous, but rather dialectical concepts, since “resilience presupposes tragedy and rests upon the assumption of vulnerability.”²⁶² The ways in which individuals respond to adversity is fundamentally determined by cultural and contextual factors.²⁶³ Thus, the examination of the British reactions to terrorism requires the consideration of the socio-cultural characteristics shaping them. The examination of the national character, constituted of a set of features that the British have attributed to themselves,²⁶⁴ is apt to illuminate the specifically British response to terrorism.

To begin with, ‘Britishness’ as the catchword designating Britain’s national character is a contested category, for it has is often conflated with Englishness,²⁶⁵ or moreover, the existence of a British national character, comprising the UK in its whole as a “composite nation”²⁶⁶ has been completely denied.

Therefore, also with regard to the subsequent analysis of the functions of British fiction dealing with the situation in Northern Ireland and IRA terrorism, we need to define what the term ‘Britishness’ is to encompass in this study. According to Jayne Steel, ‘Britishness’ can be seen as a coded term originally referring to whiteness and Protestantism. Hence, ‘Britishness’ “binds together the Scottish, the Welsh and the Loyalist Northern Irish in a subordinate relation to the white Protestant Englishness of which they form an inferior copy.”²⁶⁷ This definition is useful for the underlying functionalist approach of this study, as it centres on the white and Protestant mainstream discourse. It is thus conducive to the endeavour of demarcating the cultural function of literature which may diverge from such a narrow conception of ‘Britishness’.

²⁶¹ Bean, Hamilton; Keränen, Lisa; Durfy, Margaret. “‘This is London’: Cosmopolitan Nationalism and the Discourse of Resilience in the Case of the 7/7 Attacks.” In: *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 14.3. 2011. pp. 427-464. p. 431. See also: Kahan, Jerome H.; Allan, Andrew C.; George, Justin K. “An Operational Framework for Resilience” In: *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management* 6.1. 2009. Article 83.

²⁶² Bean; Keränen; Durfy. 2011. p. 446.

²⁶³ Henderson Grotberg, Edith. “From Terror to Triumph: The Path to Resilience.” In: Stout, Chris E, ed. 2004. *The Psychology of Terrorism: Coping with the Continuing Threat*. Westport: Greenwood. pp. 199-224. p. 204.

²⁶⁴ In the wake of the Enlightenment, the national character of Britain and the nation states became something that could be observed and compared with the characteristics of other societies. Mandler, Peter. 2006. *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press. p. 17.

²⁶⁵ See, for example, Fortier, Anne-Marie. 2008. *Multicultural Horizons: Diversity and the Limits of the Civil Nation*. Abingdon/New York: Routledge. p. 110.

²⁶⁶ Ware, Vron. “Perfidious Albion: Whiteness and the International Imagination.” In: Brander Rasmussen, Birgit; Klinenberg, Eric et al., eds. 2001. *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness*. Durham: Duke University Press. pp. 184-213. p. 186.

²⁶⁷ Steel, Jayne. 2000. *Representations of the Provisional IRA in British Film, Fiction and the Media: 1968 – 2000*. Lancaster: Lancaster University Library. p. 5.

The inception of Britishness, and the invention of a national character can be traced back to the Victorian age. It was then that the ideas of the national self turned into a serious “category of self-analysis”²⁶⁸ that has influenced the notion of the British national character until the present day. The self-avowed virtues and values defining Victorian Britishness²⁶⁹ rooted in the unfettered trust in liberty and rationality, and thus included the virtues of “self-control, reason, honesty, love for order and freedom, manliness, character, respect for the law, sobriety, and a firm dislike for enthusiasm or emotionalism.”²⁷⁰

This study argues that the famous phrase of the “stiff upper lip,” used to refer to the ideal Victorian male who keeps “silent, reserved, and unshaken by waves of emotions”²⁷¹ at the face of adversity has shaped the British responses to terrorist violence ever since its emergence in the second half of the 19th century. Expressed differently, it has rather been the evocation of the “stiff upper lip” mentality than blatant hysteria that has defined the British response to terrorism.

While the language of a national character is not static, but rather “slippery and flexible,”²⁷² for it is apt to be reinterpreted and contested from different ideological and historical angles, it may, on the other hand, also inspire a sense of cohesiveness and timelessness among multifaceted and pluralistic imagined national communities. That is to say, national traits refer to certain “deep-seated structures in the minds of people”²⁷³ that provide orientation and construct “long-term continuities.”²⁷⁴ Thus, although contemporary Britain, comprising a great diversity of ethnic and cultural communities, has changed fundamentally since the forging of the ideal circumscribed by the “stiff upper lip,” this mentality is still evoked and embraced whenever it is convenient²⁷⁵ as, for example, in times of war, conflict and terrorism. In particular the myth of the *Blitz* spirit which centres on stories of “triumph and courage, overcoming the odds against a powerful enemy”²⁷⁶ during the German bombing raids in London perpetuates the self-ascribed trait of resilience.

²⁶⁸ Mandler. 2006.. p. 59.

²⁶⁹ Considering the various cultural communities and nationalities Britain encompasses, a monolithic notion of ‘Britishness’ is a controversial concept in contemporary cultural studies. See, for example: Korte, Barbara; Schneider, Ralf. “Introduction.” In: Korte, Barbara; Schneider, Ralf. eds. 2002. *War and the Cultural Construction of Identities in Britain*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi B.V. p. 4. Paul Ward, for instance, also stresses the complexity and instability of the notion of ‘Britishness’, for it subsumes diverse cultures and nationalities. Ward, Paul. 2004. *Britishness since 1870*. London/New York: Routledge. pp. 2-4. Yet, it is not within the scope of this study to disentangle the different identities which are united under the umbrella term of ‘Britishness’.

²⁷⁰ De Nie, Michael. 2004. *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.p. 23.

²⁷¹ Tosh, John. 2007. *A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press. p. 184.

²⁷² Mandler. 2006. p. 1.

²⁷³ Mandler. 2006. p. 2.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 3.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 2.

²⁷⁶ Kelsey, Darren. 2015. *Media, Myth and Terrorism: A Discourse-Mythological Analysis of the ‘Blitz Spirit’ in British Newspaper Responses to the July 7th Bombings*. Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 16.

Moreover, as Barbara Korte and Ralf Schneider contend, narratives of violent conflicts and war are pivotal to the formation of contemporary ‘Britishness’. The collective remembrance of past war experiences and the circulation of myths about British resilience in times of violent conflict “is a prerequisite for the shaping of a national identity.”²⁷⁷ Thus, narratives and myths of war are drawn upon “to teach us the gentlemanly endurance of the stiff upper lip.”²⁷⁸ In the latter half of the 20th century, for instance, the Second World War has held a central place in Britain’s national narratives, and thus engendered new myths of ‘Britishness’. Thus, the endurance of the *Blitz* and standing up to Hitler have been deemed “the last time when Britain was truly great.”²⁷⁹ As will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5.3.4, the Blitz spirit was revived as a concept by the British media in the wake of the 7/7 bombings,²⁸⁰ and it has been drawn upon in the wake of subsequent terrorist attacks to define the morale of British people, and Londoners in particular, as extraordinarily resilient.

In this vein, the terrorist attack in London on 24 March 2017 also sparked a sense of fervent resilience in the face of adversity. After a British born, 52-year-old man drove into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge and subsequently stabbed a police officer, public discourse centred on the nation’s and its capital’s determination to carry on as usual. Evoking the unwavering spirit of the British people, Prime Minister Theresa May declared that life continues with “millions of acts of normality.”²⁸¹ And Mayor of London Sadiq Khan refers to the recent history of terrorist violence when he speaks of Londoners’ solidarity and resilience:

We Londoners have experienced horrific attacks and tragedy before. We’ve suffered terrorist attacks in the heart of our city over many decades, including the 7/7 bombings and the cowardly murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby in Woolwich. Every time, without fail, those seeking to destroy our way of life have failed. Every time, Londoners have come together to show our resilience, our resolve and our determination: we will never be cowed by those who use terror to try to break us.²⁸²

Drawing similar parallels between the terrorist threat posed by the IRA in the seventies and eighties and current terrorist movements, Josh Lowe comments in *Newsweek*: “The British public, politicians and security services have much work to do in combating the terror threat, but they can perhaps take some comfort by remembering this: The country has survived it before.”²⁸³

²⁷⁷ Korte; Schneider. 2002. p. 3.

²⁷⁸ Duffy, Maureen. 2001. *England: The Making of the Myth*. London: Fourth Estate. p. xi.

²⁷⁹ Korte, Barbara. “Wars and ‘British Identities’ – From Norman Conquerors to Bosnian Warriors: An Overview of Cultural Representations.” In: Korte, Schneider. 2002. pp. 9-24. p. 12.

²⁸⁰ Kelsey. 2015. p. 61.

²⁸¹ Dearden, Lizzie. “Theresa May speech in full: Prime Minister says London terror attack suspect ‘tried to silence our democracy.’” In: *The Independent*. 23.03.2017.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/theresa-may-london-terror-attack-speech-in-full-suspect-british-born-silence-democracy-mi5-a7645491.html> (last accessed 24th March 2017)

²⁸² Khan, Sadiq. “Londoners will stand together against this attack on democracy.” In: *The Evening Standard*. 23rd March 2017. <https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/sadiq-khan-londoners-will-stand-together-against-this-attack-on-democracy-a3497286.html> (last accessed 24th March 2017)

²⁸³ Lowe, Josh. “London Isn’t Burning: How Britain’s History with the IRA Made It Resilient in the Face of Attack” In: *Newsweek*. 24.03.2017. In: *Newsweek*. 24.03.2017. <http://www.newsweek.com/london->

In this vein, the declaration of the adapted Tube sign which circulated online in the aftermath of the attacks and was regarded as speaking for the whole country declared: “All terrorists are politely reminded that THIS IS LONDON. And whatever you do to us, we will drink tea and jolly well carry on. Thank you.”²⁸⁴ It may be argued that this statement has been widely shared in social media because it associates the typical British tradition of drinking tea and the self-avowed national characteristics of politeness and resilience. This tongue-in-cheek Tube sign evokes a version of Britishness that fashions itself as favouring calmness over hysteria in the face of disaster. As shall be shown in this study of literary approaches to terrorism, responses to terrorism have often been shaped by the memory of past national resilience. Instead of expressing a sense of vulnerability, many of the mainstream public narratives have traditionally centred on bravery and defiance, and this has also been reflected in literary discourse.

3. Terrorism and Literature – A Functionalist Approach

The material violence of terrorist incidents, as has been expounded before, gains momentum through media representations and the ascription of meaning to it by various non-fictional voices to the extent that the phenomenon itself has been compared to and associated with fiction. This, in turn, raises questions about the value literary representations of terrorism may hold. In other words, are fictional representations of terrorism relevant, given the profusion of narrative and iconic portrayals of the phenomenon? May these works fulfil any particular socio-cultural functions? To come to an answer to this question, the specific functional potential of literary discourses, which distinguishes them from other forms of representing and attributing meaning to terrorist violence, is at the heart of this study.

This epistemic interest in the relevance of literature tackling terrorism requires a prior theoretical elucidation of the potentials and functions of literary texts in general. To this end, the subsequent section provides a theoretical framework for gauging the ways in which literature can offer an idiosyncratic perspective on the “polemical tool” of terrorism, and may thus influence the cultural reception of terrorist violence. Beginning with a definitional approach to the concept of ‘literary function’, the following subsection seeks to delineate the meaning of functionality in everyday language and normative notions of the function of literature from the vantage point of a cultural studies approach to

[attack-ira-terror-threat-severe-bomb-terrorism-573629](#) (last accessed 20th February 2018).

²⁸⁴ Diebeliu, Georgia. “Fake tube message speaks for whole country after terror attack, says MP.” In: *Metro*. <http://metro.co.uk/2017/03/23/fake-tube-message-speaks-for-whole-country-after-terror-attack-says-mp-6529254/> (last accessed 24th March 2017)

the specific socio-cultural potential held by literature. Additionally, to further delve into the specific potential of literary texts, the functional polyvalence of literature, and in particular the relationship between their aesthetics and their socio-cultural value will be outlined. This, in turn, leads to notions of the ‘historical effect’ of literature and ‘authorial intention’, both of which will be distinguished from the concept of literary function. Following this introduction of the concept of ‘function’ from a Cultural Studies perspective, the different functions literary texts may fulfil will be outlined. Beginning with the aesthetic function, which has a special position among the diverse functions literature may serve, this theoretical part further seeks to delve into the potential effects of literature within a culture, including the mnemonic and the ethical. Lastly, since we are exclusively dealing with narrative representations of terrorism, the functions of the genre of the novel will be elucidated.

3.1. Literary Functions – A Definitional Approach

Any interpretation of literary texts automatically implies assumptions about their functions.²⁸⁵ The notion of literature’s ‘function’ is thus intrinsic to the study of literature. However, despite the relevance of the concept of ‘function’ for literary studies, notions of what the term actually denotes are both ambiguous and highly contingent on the respective theoretical perspective applied. Firstly, the term ‘function’, often referring in everyday language to “the purpose of a person or thing,”²⁸⁶ suggests a cause-and-effect relationship between an intended end a literary discourse is to serve and the actual purpose it fulfils. Yet such a pragmatic view of literature would be at variance with the oft-repeated assumption that literature “is ‘non-pragmatic’ discourse”²⁸⁷ which “unlike biology textbooks and notes to the milkman [...] serves no immediate practical purpose.”²⁸⁸ Hence, as will be shown below, such a pragmatic understanding is bound to fall short of accounting for the specific potential of fictional texts.

²⁸⁵ Fluck, Winfried. “Funktionsgeschichte und Ästhetische Erfahrung.” In: Gymnich, Marion; Nünning, Ansgar, eds. 2005. *Funktionen von Literatur: Theoretische Grundlagen und Modellinterpretationen*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier. pp. 29-53. p. 31.

²⁸⁶ *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. “Function.” <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/function?q=function> (last accessed 21st May 2013)

²⁸⁷ Eagleton, Terry. 2008. *Literary Theory: An Introduction: Anniversary Edition*. 3rd ed. Oxford/Malden: Blackwell. p. 7.

On the elusiveness of the term ‘function’ in Literary Studies, see also: Gymnich, Marion; Nünning, Ansgar. “Funktionsgeschichtliche Ansätze: Terminologische Grundlagen und Funktionsbestimmungen von Literatur.” In: Gymnich; Nünning, eds. 2005. pp. 3-28. p. 5.

Sommer, Roy. “Funktionsgeschichten: Überlegungen zur Verwendung des Funktionsbegriffs in der Literaturwissenschaft und Anregungen zu einer terminologischen Differenzierung.” In: *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch* 41. 2000. pp. 319-341. pp. 321-322.

Rupp, Jan. 2010. *Genre and Cultural Memory in Black British Literature*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag. p. 58.

²⁸⁸ Eagleton. 2008. p. 7.

Secondly, assumptions concerning the relevance and functions of literary texts are as old as the very critical engagement with literature itself, and have been subject to substantial epistemological changes. As Wolfgang Iser remarks, “throughout its history, literature has always stood in the need for justification,”²⁸⁹ and since Aristotle a branch of literary criticism has striven to analyse what functions literature should serve.²⁹⁰ Literary functions have accordingly been understood as bound to a particular purpose, as set to a predetermined aim. Such a prescriptive and normative understanding of literary functions has found reverberations in many of the programmatic literary prefaces, epilogues, manifestos and poetics. Particularly Aristotle’s notion of the cathartic function of tragedy and Horace’s dictum, identifying two essential functions of literature – the entertaining and the didactic function – have instilled notions of literature’s functionality throughout history.²⁹¹

Clearly, such a narrow view of the functions of literature, postulating a specific given intent, cannot do justice to the epistemic interest of gauging the functions of the literary representations of a complex phenomenon such as terrorism. Likewise, the autonomy postulate held by 20th-century formalist approaches²⁹² would render the pursuit of identifying the specific functional potential of literary representations of terrorism impossible. Analysing the relevance of the literary representation of terrorism presupposes that literary texts cannot be conceived of as self-sufficient entities whose function solely amounts to their formal-aesthetic value. Conversely, an exclusively sociological approach to literature, regarding literature as a “pure history of ideas,”²⁹³ would prove equally one-sided. Instead, the aim of gauging the specific potential and socio-cultural relevance of literature on terrorism may be best achieved by means of a cultural studies oriented approach subsumed under the German term *Funktionsgeschichte*, which could be translated as the “history of the changing functions of literature.”²⁹⁴ This approach mediates between the two tenets of New Criticism and literary sociology.²⁹⁵

From this Cultural Studies perspective, literature cannot be understood as mere evidence of socio-cultural processes. Resonating neo-historicist perspectives, instead, literary works are seen to form an

²⁸⁹ Iser, Wolfgang. “Why Literature Matters.” In: Ahrens, Rüdiger; Volkmann, Laurenz, eds. 1996. *Why Literature Matters: Theories and Functions of Literature*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter. pp. 13-22. p.13.

²⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 13.

²⁹¹ Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. p. 6.

²⁹² The theoretical currents postulating a formalistic approach exceeded their zenith in the 1970s, when the new functional-historical approach emerged, on which the theoretical framework of this study is predicated. (Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. p. 5.) Particularly reception aesthetics is seen as having ushered in a “paradigm shift in the study of literature” in the 1970s. Fluck, Winfried. “The Role of the Reader and the Changing Functions of Literature: Reception Aesthetics, Literary Anthropology, *Funktionsgeschichte*.” In: *European Journal of English Studies* 6.2. 2002. pp. 253-271. p. 253.

²⁹³ Stratmann, Gerd. “The Contextual Functions of Literature: The Concept and its Prophet.” In: Broich, Ulrich; Stemmler, Theo; Stratmann, Gerd, eds. 1984. *Functions of Literature: Essays Presented to Erwin Wolff on His Sixtieth Birthday*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer. pp. 1-20. p. 1.

²⁹⁴ Fluck, Winfried. “Why We Need Fiction: Reception Aesthetics, Literary Anthropology, *Funktionsgeschichte*.” In: Bieger, Laura; Voelz, Johannes; Fluck, Winfried, eds. 2009. *Romance with America? Essays on Culture, Literature, and American Studies*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter. pp. 365-384. p. 366.

²⁹⁵ Stratmann. 1984. p. 1.

interdependent relationship with the historical context from which they emerge. They constitute, hence, a historical factor *sui generis*. That is, on the one hand, literature reflects and draws upon the extra-literary context it emerges from, and on the other hand, literary texts may have an impact on societies and cultures by means of fostering new modes of perception, thought, and sensibility.²⁹⁶ As such, they are not mere mirrors of reality, but engender their own ways of fictional worldmaking.²⁹⁷ That is to say, due to the poietic character of literature, its functions are not exhausted by the mimetic²⁹⁸ representation of reality. Rather, fictional texts constitute an “active cognitive power”²⁹⁹ that contributes to the generation of attitudes, discourses, ideologies and patterns of thought, values, and perception, and, in turn, play an independent part in the making of sociocultural processes.³⁰⁰ In this sense, Eckhard Lobsien views literary texts as a response to a question which emerged in a particular historical situation. According to Lobsien, this situation becomes (at last) apparent to the recipient through the literary response. However, literature is not to be analysed as a mere document. Rather, Lobsien regards literature as a creative force that engenders through genuinely literary means, forms, configurations and models of the world.³⁰¹

Accordingly, literary texts are conceived as autonomous poietic forces which form an interrelationship with their historical background. Consequently, literary functions are not static categories valid for any historical era. Rather, they are historically variable factors, shaped by their context, on which they, in turn, have an impact, thus shaping reality as historical elements in their own right. This, in turn, implies that – like their historical background – the functions of literature have evolved substantially throughout history.³⁰² Hence, literature has, on the one hand, “lost certain functions which had formerly been so integral that they were taken for literature itself,”³⁰³ and, on the other hand, literary texts have acquired new functions, responding to new historical realities.

²⁹⁶ Nünning, Ansgar. “Narrative Form und fiktionale Wirklichkeitskonstruktion aus Sicht des *New Historicism* und der Narrativik: Grundzüge und Perspektiven einer kulturwissenschaftlichen Erforschung des englischen Romans im 18. Jahrhundert.” In: *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 40. 1992. pp. 197-213. p 199.

²⁹⁷ See, for example: Nünning 1992. See also: Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. p. 13. The phrase “ways of worldmaking” was coined by Nelson Goodman, whose same-titled work develops a theory of the “types and functions of symbols and symbol systems” constructing “universes of worlds.” (Goodman, Nelson. 1978. *Ways of Worldmaking*. Indianapolis: Hackett. p. 5) Goodman assumes that there is no “given” world, but that the world we perceive “always starts from worlds already on hand.” (Ibid. p. 6.) Goodman’s *Ways of Worldmaking* has had substantial ramifications in literary and cultural theory. See, for example, the collection of essays edited by Vera Nünning, Ansgar Nünning and Birgit Neumann in which – referring to Goodman’s philosophy of worldmaking – ways of cultural worldmaking are examined from different disciplinary perspectives. Nünning, Vera; Nünning, Ansgar; Neumann, Birgit, eds. 2010. *Cultural Ways of Worldmaking: Media and Narratives*. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.

²⁹⁸ Fluck, Winfried. 1997. *Das kulturelle Imaginäre: Eine Funktionsgeschichte des amerikanischen Romans 1790-1900*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp. p. 13.

²⁹⁹ Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. p. 14. (My translation)

³⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 14.

³⁰¹ Lobsien. 2014. p. 11.

³⁰² Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. p. 14.

³⁰³ Iser, Wolfgang. “Changing Functions of Literature.” In: Grabes, Herbert; Diller; Hans-Jürgen; Bungert, Hans, ed. 1985. *The Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature*, Vol. 3. pp. 1-22. p. 1.

Literary responses to sociocultural processes and changing mentalities are thus not static but historically variable.³⁰⁴ It is this dynamic of text and context and “the relevance that artistic signifying practices have [had] for human culture”³⁰⁵ throughout different literary eras, against the backdrop of different political and historical contexts, that lies at the heart of the study of literary representations of terrorism. In other words, this analysis of the fictional representations of terrorism will focus on the functional continuities and changes of the ways in which literature has drawn on different historical events of terrorism and the ensuing discursive alchemies that have impinged on political processes and sociocultural realities in the course of the history of modern terrorism in Britain.

What becomes clear from the above is that the relationship between literature and its cultural background relies on dynamic and complex, intertwined processes. One particularly pertinent model for pinpointing this dynamic relationship is Paul Ricœur’s ‘mimetic circle’. Ricœur’s model will be relevant to many of the functional aspects discussed in the course of the subsequent chapters.

To begin with, the attribute ‘mimetic’ as used by Ricœur does not suggest that literature solely mirrors reality.³⁰⁶ Instead, it refers to a threefold model allowing for a differentiated analysis of the ways literature relates to its cultural context, or, as Ricœur puts it, ‘mimesis’ does not refer to “some redoubling of presence, [...] but rather the break that opens the space for fiction.”³⁰⁷

The first level, ‘mimesis 1’ or ‘prefiguration’, describes the “symbolic articulations of action,”³⁰⁸ or the relationship of literary texts to a pre-existent historical and cultural background. For example, on this level, we deal with the question of how the historical background of particular terrorist violence is incorporated into the fictional text. That is to say, which real world discourses, ideas, ideologies and values are reflected in the text.

Secondly, through ‘mimesis 2’ or ‘configuration’, the represented action is transformed into fiction. It thus “opens the kingdom of the *as if*.”³⁰⁹ Ricœur ascribes a mediating and integrative function to literary emplotment, because it moulds events into narrated story by bringing different factors such as, e.g. agents, circumstances, interaction, together.³¹⁰ That is, the telling of the story through emplotment renders “explicit what was implicit”³¹¹ in the extra-literary world. Yet, as will be shown in greater detail in the following theoretical section, due to its specific aesthetic potentials and fictional status, literature

³⁰⁴ Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. p. 14.

³⁰⁵ Wolf, Werner. “Towards a Functional Analysis of Intermediality: The Case of Twentieth-Century Musicalized Fiction.” In: Hedling, Erik; Lagerroth, Ulla-Britta, eds. 2002. *Cultural Functions of Intermedial Explorations*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi B.V. pp. 15-34. p. 16.

³⁰⁶ Erll, Astrid; Nünning, Ansgar. “Where Literature and Memory Meet: Towards a Systematic Approach to the Concepts of Memory Used in Literary Studies.” In: Grabes, Herbert, ed. 2005. *Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature: Literature, Literary History, and Cultural Memory* 21. pp. 261-294. p. 281.

³⁰⁷ Ricœur, Paul. 1984. *Time and Narrative: Vol. I*. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press. p. 45.

³⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 54.

³⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 64.

³¹⁰ Ibid. p. 65.

³¹¹ Vanderveelde, Pol. “The Challenge of ‘such as it was’: Ricoeur’s Theory of Narrative.” In: Kaplan, David M. ed. 2008. *Reading Ricoeur*. Albany: State of New York University Press. pp. 141-162. p. 148.

does not solely translate the world of life into stories, but may furthermore portray and disseminate “socially sanctioned or desired, yet more often unsanctioned, excluded and repressed forms of life.”³¹² In this light, we will deal with questions of how literary representations stabilise or undermine dominant medial representations, worldviews and discourses.

Thirdly, with the last level of ‘mimesis 3’ or ‘refiguration’, the mimetic circle returns to its origin in the pre-existent world. It marks “the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the reader,”³¹³ thus taking an active part in socio-cultural processes.³¹⁴ ‘Refiguration’, hence, encapsulates the core epistemological interest of this study; that is, the potential influence of literary texts tackling terrorism on prevalent notions of terrorism and its perpetrators and dominant worldviews and value systems. In other words, we address the question of whether these texts can possibly become an active, albeit hardly assessable cultural force.

For that matter, literature will be regarded as a poietic, cultural force that draws on a pre-existent reality, that is, events, discursive processes, notions, and values surrounding terrorism, and moulds these given events and processes into stories, fictional plots and literary worlds which may possibly have an impact on its readers.

3.1.1. Gauging the Functional Polyvalence of Literature

The poietic energy inherent to literature described above allows for leeway in the treatments of extra-literary reality. For this flexibility in approaches to the context, single literary texts may potentially serve a variety of functions. The value of literary works can therefore not be reduced to a single aspect like the social-cultural function, on the one hand, and the aesthetic function on the other. Instead, they are distinguished by their functional polyvalence,³¹⁵ and, in addition, by the interdependence of the aesthetic and the contextual functioning.

Harald Fricke’s distinction between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ function, for example, accounts for this complex functional structure of literature. He describes the complex link between the immanent structural relations of the text, the ‘internal function’, on the one hand, and the ‘external function’, i.e. the relation between literature and the extra-literary world on the other.³¹⁶ Thus, Fricke combines a

³¹² Baumbach, Sybille; Grabes, Herbert; Nünning, Ansgar. “Values in Literature and the Value of Literature: Literature as a Medium for Representing, Disseminating and Constructing Norms and Values.” In: Baumbach; Grabes; Nünning. 2009. pp. 1-15. pp. 4-6.

³¹³ Ricœur. 1984. p. 71.

³¹⁴ Baumbach; Grabes; Nünning. 2009. pp. 4-6.

³¹⁵ Fluck. 1997. p. 7.

³¹⁶ Fricke, Harald. “Funktion.” In: Weimar, Klaus, ed. 1997. *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, Vol. I. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter. pp. 643-646. p. 643.

formalist approach focusing on the functionalisation of textual structures and a sociological perspective on literature's functions.³¹⁷

The internal structural-aesthetic function and the external social functions of literature should not be understood as absolute opposites, however. They rather constitute what Květoslav Chvatík refers to as a “dialectical opposition.”³¹⁸ In this sense, the structural-aesthetic function interrelates with the functions that literary texts derive from the external world. Similarly, Winfried Fluck contends in his seminal study of the changing functions of the American novel that the external functions of literary texts may be realised solely through the specific formal-aesthetic structure of literary works.³¹⁹ Hence, particularly formal-aesthetic aspects assume a special role among the multiple functions of literature, for they are essential to the realisation of the potential social effects of literature.³²⁰ In this vein, proceeding from the assumption that “form is immanently and intrinsically an ideology in its own right,”³²¹ Fredric Jameson proclaims in *The Political Unconscious* that “it has become possible to grasp such formal processes as sedimented content in their own right, as carrying ideological messages of their own, distinct from the ostensible or manifest content of the works.”³²²

This notion of the “semantisation and functionalisation of form”³²³ is also at the heart of reception aesthetics, an approach that provides further valuable insights into the make-up of literary functions.³²⁴ Starting from the proposition of the “non-identity of text and meaning,”³²⁵ reception aesthetics is predicated on the assumption that “no matter how well crafted a literary text is, it cannot fully determine its meaning.”³²⁶ That is to say, since fictional texts are distinguished by their capability to link the context with the imaginary, there cannot be any identical equivalent of the literary world in extra-literary reality.³²⁷ Although, according to Wolfgang Iser, founder of the Constance School of Reception Aesthetics, literature “tells us something about reality, [...] the conveyer cannot be identical to what is conveyed.”³²⁸ In this sense, literature does not copy existing thought systems, nor does it deviate from them. “Instead, it represents a reaction to the thought systems which it has chosen and incorporated in

³¹⁷ Ibid. p. 646.

³¹⁸ Chvatík, Květoslav. 1981. *Tschechoslowakischer Strukturalismus: Theorie und Geschichte*. München: Wilhelm Fink. p. 136. (My translation)

³¹⁹ Fluck. 1997. p. 10.

³²⁰ Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. p. 11.

³²¹ Jameson, Fredric. 1981. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, 2nd ed. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press. p. 141

³²² Ibid. p. 99.

³²³ Sommer. 2000. pp. 329-330. (My translation)

³²⁴ Fluck, Winfried. 2009. p. 375.

³²⁵ Ibid. p. 375.

³²⁶ Ibid. p. 375.

³²⁷ Iser, Wolfgang. “The Reality of Fiction: A Functionalist Approach to Literature.” In: *New Literary History* 7.1. 1975. pp. 7-38. p. 7.

³²⁸ Ibid. p. 7.

its own repertoire.”³²⁹ A fictional text thus represents a fictionalised analogon of the empirical world which allows the reader to view reality from the perspective of its fictional imitation.³³⁰

As such, literary texts engage in a process of communication with the reader,³³¹ who “can only actualize a literary text whose reference is ‘fictionalized’ by drawing on his or her own associations, mental images and feelings as an analogue.”³³² Such a reader-centred perspective based on the assumption of the non-identity of text and meaning entails that propositions about literary functions can only be based on hypotheses, for the effect of the reader’s transfer is inextricably bound to his or her individual disposition and “own social or philosophical background.”³³³ The meaning of the text – albeit determined by the textual strategies along which the text is actualized³³⁴ – is not a fixed category, for it “can never cover all the semantic potentials of the text, but can only open up one particular form of access to these potentials.”³³⁵

Conclusions about the actual effect of literature on its readers can therefore not be drawn.³³⁶ To borrow from Harald Fricke, the function of literary texts is not to be understood as an “empirical observational,” but rather as a “dispositional concept.” According to this view, the text or a particular textual element bears a specific potential to precipitate a specifiable effect in the reader.³³⁷ This potential effect can solely be deduced from the structural-aesthetic organisation of the text itself. The identification of the potential effects of literary treatments of terrorism will therefore be based on plausible assumptions on the semantisation of the literary strategies deployed.³³⁸

3.1.2. Distinguishing ‘Function’ from ‘Effect’ and ‘Authorial Intention’

Functions are accordingly attributions on the parts of the recipients and not inherent to the text itself. This further suggests that this study cannot be aimed at gauging the actual historical effects of the literary works tackling terrorism. Such an exercise would require an empirical approach, for the historical reception of only very few exceptional works can be hermeneutically deduced.³³⁹ Hence, this study will abstain from assessing the actual impact of the works dealing with terrorism on their recipients. In addition, considering the representational supremacy held by the news media, literary depictions of terrorism are relegated to a niche status, and their actual effects on the ways in which their recipients

³²⁹ Ibid. p. 23.

³³⁰ Iser, Wolfgang. 1983. p. 145, p. 149.

³³¹ Iser. 1975. p. 7.

³³² Fluck. 2009. p. 375.

³³³ Iser. 1975. p. 25.

³³⁴ Ibid. p. 35.

³³⁵ Ibid. p. 35.

³³⁶ See, for example: Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. p. 8.

³³⁷ Fricke. 1997. p. 643.

³³⁸ Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. p. 8.

³³⁹ Ibid. pp. 8-9.

perceive and assess terrorism and its sociocultural impact in the real world is impossible to capture by means of a Cultural Studies functionalist approach.

The turmoil surrounding the publication of Salman Rushdie's controversial novel *The Satanic Verses* represents an exceptional example of a literary work whose impact has become visible. The "Rushdie affair" therefore offers valuable insight into the functionality of literature. The effects of the fictional text imbued with a magic realist style that retells the foundational myth of Islam, and touches upon the phenomenon of terrorism materialised in the fatwa launched against the author, book-burning demonstrations, and allegations of blasphemy. The "Rushdie affair" further allows drawing conclusions about the concept of 'authorial intention'; a concept that – regardless of Michel Foucault's³⁴⁰ affirmation of the disappearance of the author and Roland Barthes' influential proclamation of the "Death of the Author"³⁴¹ as well as the generally decreased interest in autobiographical approaches – has been frequently subsumed under notions of the functions of literature.³⁴² One may well argue that Salman Rushdie in all likelihood did not intend to cause such a storm of indignation with his novel. In fact, Rushdie himself has been eager to declare that he "had no intention to be disrespectful towards the religion itself or its founder"³⁴³ Instead of a "literal attack on Islam" his text was aimed at a "discussion about some of the themes which arise out of the religious experience."³⁴⁴ According to Rushdie, the novel "rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure," and does not contain the alleged insults and abuse.³⁴⁵

This chasm between the actual reception on part of some members of the Muslim community and the author's self-avowed intention illustrates that the concept of 'authorial intention' is for the purpose of this study rendered irrelevant. It is not the meaning the author intends to convey in his work that determines the functionality of literature, for this meaning – even despite the availability of extra-literary authorial comments and documents – may never be received by its readers, whose access to the text is primarily determined by their individual disposition and the sociocultural code they share.³⁴⁶

This becomes particularly clear from the arguments presented by Rushdie's lawyer, Geoffrey Robertson, who defended the author in the blasphemy case. Pointing out that the phrases put in the mouth of the fictional characters do not represent the author's beliefs, Robertson juxtaposes the prosecutor's literal interpretation of the allegedly blasphemous passages with a secular interpretation

³⁴⁰ Foucault, Michel. 1998. *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*. New York: The New Press. pp. 205-222.

³⁴¹ Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." In: Barthes, Roland. 1977. *Image – Music – Text: Essays Selected and Translated by Stephen Heath*. London: Fontana. pp. 142-148.

³⁴² Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. p. 7.

³⁴³ Cited in: Pollard, Lawrence. "Satanic Verses: Polarising Untruths." In: *BBC News*. 14.02.2009. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/7889974.stm> (last accessed 15th February.2013)

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Rushdie, Salman. 1991. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*. London: Granta. pp. 394-395.

³⁴⁶ Iser, Wolfgang. 1990. *Der Akt des Lesens*. 3rd ed. München: Wilhelm Fink. p. VI.

that derives a very different meaning from the text.³⁴⁷ It is thus again the semantisation of textual structures, and the acknowledgment of “the fictionality of fiction,”³⁴⁸ and not the alleged intention of the author on which assumptions about the meaning and functions of a literature need to be predicated.³⁴⁹

Marion Gymnich’s and Ansgar Nünning’s approach to explicating the difference between ‘authorial intention’ and ‘literary function’ allows further insight into the specific potential of fiction. Gymnich and Nünning draw on Umberto Eco’s distinction between the ‘empirical author’ and the ‘model author.’³⁵⁰ Following Eco’s theory, the ‘empirical reader’ constructs a hypothetical ‘model author’ who forms an integral part of the reception process. That is, the reader’s ideas about the ‘model author’ are derived from the text, for “the [model] ‘author’ is nothing else but a textual strategy.”³⁵¹ Thus, although autobiographical information may substantially influence the reader’s interpretation of a literary work, the text develops its own life,³⁵² its own way of fictional world-making.

Having delineated ‘literary functions’ from notions of the effects of literature and the concept of ‘authorial intention,’ one may spell out the functional approach underlying this study: Borrowing from Roy Sommer, the notion of ‘literary function’ refers to hypothetical assumptions on the interrelationship of particular textual elements, on the one hand, and the textual reference to extra-literary reality on the other.³⁵³ Hence, this analysis of the potential functions fulfilled by literature tackling terrorism is

³⁴⁷ Robertson, Geoffrey. “Looking Back at Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*.” In: *The Guardian*. 14.09.2012. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2012/sep/14/looking-at-salman-rushdies-satanic-verses> (last accessed 20th February 2013) Robertson’s argument contradicts Anthony Close’s essay “The Empirical Author”. Close takes the “Rushdie affair” as a departure point for a defense of the concept of the ‘empirical author’. He argues that “we cannot read *The Satanic Verses* perceptively without having a strong sense of where the ‘empirical’ Rushdie stands: the author of flesh-and-blood, with a certain kind of biography, creed, and commitment, speaking in a certain ironic tone,” and continues his argument by associating the empirical Rushdie with particular textual passages and diegetic and extra-diegetic instances of his works. (Close, Anthony. “The Empirical Author: Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*.” In: *Philosophy and Literature* 14. 1990. pp. 248-267. p. 250, pp. 257- 265.) Yet Close’s rationale can be refuted with Robertson’s defense of Rushdie which is not based on the assessments of the author’s autobiography or ideological position, but on textual and contextual evidence. It is, accordingly, not the lack of knowledge about the author, but rather a matter of interpretation and overidentification of the author with his text that induced Rushdie’s adversaries to press charges against him.

³⁴⁸ Rushdie, Salman. 1991. p. 293.

³⁴⁹ Gayatri Spivak’s re-examination of the post-structuralist notion of the “Death of the Author” against the background of the literal death sentence pronounced on Salman Rushdie offers a very different, radically reader-centered perspective on the notion of authorship which warns of a cultural relativism neglecting the diversity of Islamic voices. Proceeding from the assumption that “literature is transactional,” Spivak focuses on the construction of readerships, rather than the “correct description of a book,” or Rushdie’s intention. Thus, she contends that “in the Rushdie affair, it is the late Ayatollah who can be seen as filling the author-function, and Salman Rushdie, himself, caught in a different cultural logic, is no more than the writer-as-performer.” Spivak, Gayatri C. “Reading the *Satanic Verses*.” In: Biriotti, Maurice; Miller, Nicola, eds. 1993. *What is an Author?* Manchester: Manchester University Press. pp. 104-134. p. 106, p. 116.

³⁵⁰ Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. pp. 7-8.

³⁵¹ Eco, Umberto. 1981. *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*. London: Hutchinson. p. 11. See also the German version: Eco, Umberto. 1987. *Lector in Fabula*. Munich/Vienna: Carl Hanser. p. 76. Sommer. 2000. p. 328.

³⁵² Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. p. 8.

³⁵³ Sommer. 2000. p. 324.

See also: Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. p. 9. Fluck. 1997. p. 13.

predicated on the assumption of a relationship of mutual influence between literature and extra-literary context, a relationship premised on the pivotal role the aesthetics of literary discourse plays in rendering fictional worlds socio-culturally valuable.

3.2. The Potential Functions of Literary Treatments of Terrorism – Theories and Concepts

As extensively discussed before, literature exists in relationship to extra-literary reality, contemporary discourses, prevailing norms, and truth postulates. Yet, how can this relationship be gauged and what potential functions may literary representations of terrorism serve? To examine the ways in which literature tackling terrorism relates to its context and what functional potential it bears, in the following, the theoretical and conceptual scaffolding aimed at explicating the complex relationship between terrorist violence and its literary representations will be outlined.

Beginning with the distinguished role of the aesthetic function, this section further seeks to introduce those functions which can be subsumed under the umbrella attribute ‘socio-cultural’: Firstly, as outlined before, terrorism may affect a culture through the ‘process’ of meaning attribution and the discourses surrounding it. To gauge the ways in which literary discourse both feeds on and influences cultural processes of sense-making, concepts of the ‘cultural function’ of fictional texts will be introduced. Secondly, literary texts as ‘media of cultural memory’ may fulfil a mnemonic function through both the staging of memory processes of characters experiencing terrorism and, thus, their contribution to the shaping of the cultural memory of terrorist violence. In addition, since memory always implies forgetting, a cultural memory perspective on terrorism and literature also provides the framework to understand why particular historical incidents and terrorist groups have been a popular subject for writers, while others only assume a marginal role in British fiction. By virtue of the nexus between memory and identity, the mnemonic approach to literary functions further warrants the elucidation of the ways in which literary representations of terrorism explore the construction and perpetuation of identities in the aftermath of terrorist attacks. As we have seen, the notion of ‘trauma’ has assumed a prevalent position in current academic and public debate, frequently casting terrorist assaults as traumatic events. Likewise, trauma has become a popular trope in contemporary literature on terrorism. Hence, for the subsequent analysis of the ways in which writers tackle the trauma of terrorism, the effects of trauma on memory will be explained. Lastly, considering that notions of terrorism are fraught with moral judgments and condemnations, with value-laden representations of the terrorist and his or her actions, the relationship between literature tackling terrorism and the value systems surrounding the phenomenon will be examined in terms of their potential ethical function.

3.2.1. The Aesthetic Function of Literature

As already indicated before, the fictional-aesthetic dimension of literary works plays a prominent role in the forging of the dialogical relationship between literature and culture. It is the ‘dialectical opposition’ of the aesthetic function to the literary functions relating to the external world that renders literary discourses socio-culturally valuable. As Herbert Grabes puts it, through the aesthetics of literary discourse a “free space within culture”³⁵⁴ is opened up:

What we encounter in literary discourse is overwhelmingly particular and even wholly individual – specific places, moments in time, characters with personal names, ways of speaking and acting, thinking and feeling. Literary discourse is therefore ‘aesthetic’ in the original meaning of *aisthetikos*, ‘perceivable by the senses’: it renders possible and motivates an imaginary experience of the very particular in its outer physicality or inner concreteness rather than offering general notions to the reasoning mind.³⁵⁵

Grabes contends that literary discourses confront their reader with individual test cases. That is, through the presentation of individual characters, particular situations and events, literary discourses do justice to the particular. On the other hand, these specific sites, moments in time, and characters depicted in literature enable the reader to create an illusion of perceiving the imaginary world, thus creating the feeling of sense perception and rendering an emotional response.³⁵⁶ Accordingly, Werner Wolf defines aesthetic illusion as:

a basically pleasurable mental state that emerges during the reception of many representational texts [...] Aesthetic illusion consists primarily of the feeling, with varying intensity, of being imaginatively and emotionally immersed in a represented world and of experiencing this world in a way similar (but not identical) to real life. At the same time, however, this impression of immersion is counterbalanced by a latent rational distance resulting from a culturally acquired awareness of the difference between representation and reality.³⁵⁷

Literature thus goes “beyond the mere communication of meaning or a message.”³⁵⁸ The aesthetic illusion of fictional texts may render their reception very persuasive, for it caters to various human desires and vicarious experiences.³⁵⁹ In addition, literary discourse distinguishes itself from other forms of discourse such as, e.g., historical discourse, because it “is really set free from the cogency of the truth question, and the restricting power of religious, juridical, and other collective norms.”³⁶⁰ Therefore, as

³⁵⁴ Grabes. 2001. p. 19.

³⁵⁵ Grabes. 2001. p. 18.

³⁵⁶ Grabes, Herbert. “What Exactly is the Case? Ethics, Aesthetics and Asisthesis.” In: Baumbach; Grabes; Nünning. 2009. *Literature and Values: Literature as a Medium for Representing, Disseminating, and Constructing Norms and Values*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag. pp. 43- 53. p. 48.

³⁵⁷ Wolf, Werner. “Illusion (Aesthetic).” In: Hühn, Peter ed. et al. 2009. *Handbook of Narratology*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter. pp. 144-160. p. 144.

³⁵⁸ Fluck, Winfried. “Pragmatism and the Aesthetic Experience.” In: Fluck, Winfried, ed. 1999. *Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature: Pragmatism and Literary Studies*, Vol. 15. Tübingen: Gunter Narr. pp. 227-242. p. 227.

³⁵⁹ Wolf. 2009. p. 146.

³⁶⁰ Grabes. 2001. p. 19.

Jacques Derrida claims, the space inhabited by literature within culture is “that of an *instituted* fiction but also a *fictive institution* which in principle allows one to say everything.”³⁶¹ Thus, literary discourse may “break free of the rules, to displace them, and thereby to institute, to invent and even to suspect the traditional difference of nature and institution, nature and conventional law, nature and history.”³⁶² Furthermore, Derrida associates this freedom of literary expression to the “modern idea of democracy.”³⁶³ He regards the writer’s “authorization to say everything,”³⁶⁴ “while remaining shielded, safe from all censorship, be it religious or political”³⁶⁵ as inseparable from a Western sense of democracy. Hence, to return to the fictions of terrorism dealt with in this study, due to the inherent aesthetic-fictional quality of literature, the works are neither contingent on the ontological claim of representing what is generally assumed to be the “truth” about terrorism, nor are they obliged to conform to the worldviews of the dominant cultural and ideological system.³⁶⁶ Instead, due to their complex structure – the aesthetic value, on the one hand, and the extra-literary world referenced on the other – literary texts bear the potential to incorporate a multitude of perspectives, worldviews and discourses, and may thus serve a variety of socio-cultural functions. This way, to borrow from Hubert Zapf, “in literary art the multiplicity of life and of its pluridimensional, contradictory forces and individual energies gains expression more radically than in other modes of writing.”³⁶⁷ Literature on terrorism as a “fictive institution” may hence become a testing ground representing both unknown and familiar ways of being and acting, divergent and prevailing worldviews, ideologies, norms and values.

In order to gauge the ways in which literary responses to terrorism may fulfil such an aesthetic function, this study will devote its attention to the formal-structural strategies deployed. Due to the dialectical opposition of the aesthetic and the socio-cultural functions also the ways in which the latter may be realised through the specific formal-aesthetic strategies may be analysed.

³⁶¹ Derrida, Jacques. “‘This Strange Institution Called Literature’: An Interview with Jacques Derrida.” In: Attridge, Derek, ed. 1992. *Acts of Literature*. London/ New York: Routledge. pp. 33-75. p. 36.

³⁶² Ibid. p. 37.

³⁶³ Ibid. p. 37.

³⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 37.

³⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 37.

³⁶⁶ Grabes. 2001. p. 19.

³⁶⁷ Zapf, Hubert. “Literature as Cultural Ecology: Notes Towards a Functional Theory of Imaginative Texts with Examples from American Literature.” In: Grabes. 2001. pp. 85-100. p. 91.

3.2.2. The Cultural Function of Literature

What follows from the aesthetic function of literature described above is that by its “aestheticising transgression of immediate referentiality”³⁶⁸ literature may become an active sociocultural force which, although responding to existing extra-literary realities, “still gains relative independence as it unfolds the counter-discursive potential of the imagination.”³⁶⁹ In this vein, as Wilhelm Voßkamp puts it, literature functions as a “medium of cultural communication.”³⁷⁰ That is, it gives expression to “specific forms of *individual and collective perceptions of world* and reflections on this perception.”³⁷¹ As such, literary texts open up a space for cultural self-reflexion and processes of cultural self-understanding. Thus, literature may integrate and mediate between a variety of voices, viewpoints and discourses prevailing in the respective historical context.

The view that literary texts lend themselves to mediate between different discourses is also at the heart of Jürgen Link’s ‘interdiscourse analysis’. According to Link, the complexity and functional multifaceted nature of literature is the result of the increasing social differentiation and the ensuing emergence of a variety of specialised discourses.³⁷² Literature functions as a “social institution” that integrates a variety of specialised and antagonistic discourses prevailing in modern societies.³⁷³

This view of an integrative function of literature is taken to a different level in Hubert Zapf’s ‘cultural ecology’. Unlike Link, who focuses on the integration of specialised discourses (e.g. medical and science discourses) in literary texts, Zapf’s approach proceeds from the assumption that literature brings to interaction “what is otherwise separated by cultural convention and practice – the different spheres of a specialised, compartmentalised social reality.”³⁷⁴

Drawing an analogy between literature and ecological processes, Zapf’s ideas concerning the socio-cultural function of literature provide further seminal insights into the relevance of literary representations of terrorism. Following his stance, “literature acts like an ecological force *within* the larger cultural system.”³⁷⁵ Similar to Ricœur’s mimetic circle, Zapf’s triadic model conceptualises the relationship between literature and its context as a circular process that draws and retroacts on extra-literary reality: Firstly, literature may function as a “cultural-critical metadiscourse” that represents and balances “typical deficits, contradictions and deformations in prevailing political, economic, ideological

³⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 88.

³⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 88.

³⁷⁰ Voßkamp, Wilhelm. “Literaturwissenschaft als Kulturwissenschaft.” In: Nünning, Ansgar; Nünning, Vera, eds. 2003. *Konzepte der Kulturwissenschaften: Theoretische Grundlagen – Ansätze – Perspektiven*. Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler. pp. 73-85. p. 78.

³⁷¹ Ibid. p. 77. (My translation)

³⁷² Link, Jürgen. “Interdiskurs, System der Kollektivsymbole, Literatur: Thesen zu einer generativen Diskurs- und Literaturtheorie.” In: Eschbach, Achim, ed. 1986. *Perspektiven des Verstehens*. Bochum: Brockmeyer. pp. 128-146. pp. 128-131.

³⁷³ Ibid. 1986. p. 138.

³⁷⁴ Zapf. 2001. p. 91.

³⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 85.

and utilitarian systems of civilisatory power.”³⁷⁶ Secondly, in assuming the role of an “imaginative counter-discourse,” literary texts focus on what is “marginalised, neglected or repressed”³⁷⁷ in a cultural system. As such, they may articulate and reflect on what remains largely unarticulated. Thirdly, literature may act as a “reintegrative inter-discourse” by bringing together the repressed and the mainstream system of cultural discourses.³⁷⁸ Thus, literature may become a subversive and at the same time regenerative “ecological force-field within culture.”³⁷⁹

Literature, hence, exists in between the conflicting forces of deconstruction and reconstruction. On the one hand, it may assume the role of a “sensorium and symbolic regulatory instance for cultural maldevelopments and imbalances”³⁸⁰ that critically reflects what has been marginalised through dominant power structures and discursive systems. On the other hand, through the staging of what has been culturally suppressed and the celebration of diversity literature may act as a creative instance for the perennial regeneration of language, perception and cultural imagination.³⁸¹

Zapf’s cultural-ecological model describes the relationship between literature and culture in terms of a perpetual flux of negotiations, thus offering a differentiated model to describe the procedures and dynamics of this relationship.³⁸² Yet, it bears one major drawback: It presupposes, as Marion Gymnich rightly points out, a given “tension between literature and dominant ideologies.”³⁸³ However, literary discourse is not inevitably subversive. Instead, it may just as well stabilise and consolidate dominant power structures and mainstream worldviews. Nevertheless, Zapf’s cultural-ecological approach to the functions of literature is particularly pertinent for the purpose of this study, for it allows elucidating in how far literary representations may gain cultural relevance by both bringing to light what lies outside the margins of the ‘process’ of discursive formations that shape how terrorist violence is perceived in culture, and – by means of staging these blind spots³⁸⁴ in the imaginary space of fiction – to reintegrate what has been neglected into the whole discursive system.

³⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 93.

³⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 93.

³⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 93.

³⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 88.

³⁸⁰ Zapf, Hubert. “Das Funktionsmodell der Literatur als kultureller Ökologie: Imaginative Texte im Spannungsfeld von Dekonstruktion und Regeneration.” In: Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. pp. 55-77. p. 56. (My translation)

³⁸¹ Ibid. p. 56.

³⁸² Zapf’s approach needs to be understood against the backdrop of ecological principles, including, e.g., the acknowledgement of the interrelation and interdependence of single phenomena, the acceptance of the evolution, a holistic approach, and the assumption of the self-regulatory powers of nature. Zapf. 2005. pp. 60-63.

³⁸³ Gymnich, Marion. “The Functions of Literature from the Point of View of Postcolonial Literary Studies.” In: Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. pp. 121-140. p. 123.

³⁸⁴ Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. p. 19.

3.2.3. The Mnemonic Function of Literature

Zapf's cultural-ecological approach to the functions of literature further allows valuable insights into the role literary texts play in the formation of cultural memory. That is, by bringing to the surface and reintegrating what has been suppressed, literature may act as an "ecological force-field" that invigorates the remembrance³⁸⁵ of what would have otherwise been or remain forgotten. Thus, through its potential cultural function of re-joining what has been culturally separated, literary texts may also become a relevant "medium of cultural memory."³⁸⁶ They are seen to take a constitutive part in processes of cultural remembrance and may fulfil a variety of mnemonic functions.

However, considering that individual and collective memories of terrorism are first and foremost shaped by omnipresent medial images and representations, public discourses and debates, in how far can literary representations of terrorism serve a potential mnemonic function? In other words, what is the value offered by literary representations of terrorism that justifies their relevance with regard to the cultural remembrance of terrorist violence? Moreover, as already outlined, terrorist assaults are frequently regarded as traumatic events defined by their "capacity to evoke terror, fear, helplessness, or horror in the face of the threat to life or serious injury."³⁸⁷ They may thus potentially have a lasting effect on the fabric of the memory of both the immediate victims and the targeted society.

A trauma is the reaction to an extreme event eluding sense-making, and thus the integration into a cohesive frame of reference. Since the narrativisation of the trauma, that is, the integration of the fragmented traumatic memory into a coherent narrative, is seen as a cure to a psychic trauma, literature is granted a privileged position in the process of cultural regeneration. The consideration of the mnemonic function of literary treatments of terrorism, hence, also entails questions about the role literature may play in the cultural negotiations of the trauma inflicted through terrorist violence. These questions can be best addressed by drawing on Cultural Memory Studies approaches³⁸⁸ exploring the nexuses between literature, memory, trauma and culture.

³⁸⁵ Zapf. 2001. p. 94.

³⁸⁶ Voßkamp. 2003. p. 80.

³⁸⁷ Fullerton, Caroline S.; Norwood, Ann E.; Ursano, Robert J. 2003. *Terrorism and Disaster: Individual and Community Health Interventions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 1.

³⁸⁸ 'Cultural memory' may denote a wide range of concepts. As an umbrella term it comprises the social sciences approach to 'social memory', or the 'material or medial memory' relevant to literary and media studies, as well as the 'mental or cognitive memory' which is the focus of interest in neurosciences and psychology. Erll, Astrid. "Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction." In: Erll, Astrid; Nünning, Ansgar, eds. 2008. *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter. pp. 1-15. pp. 1-4.

In fact, Cultural Memory Studies are of paramount importance for contemporary culturally oriented Literary Studies.³⁸⁹ Premised on the conviction that “culture is intrinsically linked to memory,”³⁹⁰ these approaches seek to investigate the role literature as a cultural product plays within this relationship. That is, the link between culture and memory manifests itself in the ways in which culture is linked to perceptions and interpretations of the past. In other words, it is through culture that “humans create a temporal framework that transcends the individual life span relating past, present and future.”³⁹¹ Hence, if culture relates to memory in that it provides the framework enabling an awareness and fostering the creation of meaning from the past, a meaning that instils the interpretation of the present and premonitions of the future, literature as a means of cultural communication inevitably plays a pivotal part in this process. Thus, the consideration of the nexuses between memory, culture and literature provides a seminal framework for gauging the relationship between literary representations of terrorism and their cultural background, which relates recollections of past terrorist events, present ways of making sense of the violence, and implicitly the meaning-production for coping with the future.

To assess this relation between memory and culture, cultural memory studies incorporate a variety of academic disciplines, ranging from the realms of social sciences, the humanities (e.g. literary and media studies) or natural sciences (neurosciences, psychology). Yet, despite their oft-noted disciplinary incoherence, cultural memory studies share a two-level differentiation as a common denominator: the level of individual or cognitive memory, on the one hand, and the level of collective or cultural memory on the other. While the first notion of memory denotes ‘biological memory’, namely cognitive processes of remembering taking place in the human brain, the latter – as Astrid Erll points out – needs to be understood in terms of an “operative metaphor” referring to social institutions, cultural and medial practices constructing a shared past.

The group level of memory has most often been referred to as ‘collective memory’, a contentious term coined by Maurice Halbwachs,³⁹² whose ideas concerning the social frameworks of memory will be discussed in more detail below. In this study, we are generally dealing with ‘cultural memory’ which is a rather vague concept relating to multifarious definitions. However, in accordance with Marita Sturken’s definition, we will refer to cultural memory as “shared outside the avenues of formal historical discourse yet is entangled with cultural products and imbued with cultural meaning.”³⁹³ Due to literature’s interdependent relationship to cultural processes, and the fictional status of literary texts that

³⁸⁹ Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. p. 20.

Gymnich, Marion; Nünning, Ansgar; Sommer, Roy. “Gauging the Relation between Literature and Memory: Theoretical Paradigms – Genres _Functions.” In: Gymnich, Marion; Nünning, Ansgar; Sommer, Roy, eds. 2006. *Literature and Memory: Theoretical Paradigms, Genres, Functions*. Tübingen: Francke. pp. 1-7. p. 1.

³⁹⁰ Assmann, Aleida. “Canon and Archive.” In: Erll, Astrid; Nünning, Ansgar, eds. 2008. *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter. 97-107. p. 97.

³⁹¹ Ibid. p. 97.

³⁹² Erll. 2008. pp. 4-5.

³⁹³ Sturken, Marita. 1997. *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press. p. 3.

allows them to diverge from the official historical discourse, such a definition is most pertinent for the epistemological interest of gauging the mnemonic function of literary representations of terrorism.

As indicated by this definition, cultural memory studies are less concerned with the past itself. Rather, memories are seen to be neither exact nor complete recollections of the past. Aleida Assmann, for example, contends that the dynamics of memory are fundamentally characterised by processes of forgetting.³⁹⁴ It has therefore become a commonplace in memory studies that instead of yielding accurate recollections, memory, individual or collective, serves the purpose to endow coherence to conceptions of the self, thus facilitating the construction of identities. It is only through the knowledge of the past that human beings and groups are enabled to develop a sense of self.

This nexus between memory and identity is particularly relevant to a functionalist approach to literary representations of terrorism, for literary texts lend themselves to exploring how individuals or groups remember the past and construct their identities on the basis of their memories.³⁹⁵ More precisely, the interfaces between memory, identity and literature can be reduced to two basic categories.³⁹⁶

Firstly, on the textual level, literature features processes of remembering and forgetting, and identity formations of individuals or groups. By virtue of the arsenal of narrative and aesthetic techniques available to literary texts, they may imaginatively delve into the workings of memory,³⁹⁷ thus constituting a “memory *in* literature.”³⁹⁸

Secondly, through the staging of the nexus of memory and identity on the textual level, literature may retroact on existing cultures of memory and notions of self and other. That is, as already indicated previously, fictional texts are not mere mirrors of extra-literary constructions of cultural memory, but may create their own “memory worlds,”³⁹⁹ which allows them to assume an active role in the cultural negotiation of what are deemed as acknowledged versions of the past, and conceptions of identities based on these memories.

To sum up, the literary works dealt with in this study potentially fulfil mnemonic functions on different levels, ranging from works portraying how direct witnesses or victims experience or remember terrorist

³⁹⁴ Assmann, Aleida. 2008. p. 97.

³⁹⁵ Neumann, Birgit. “The Literary Representation of Memory.” In: Erll; Nünning. 2008. pp. 333-344. p. 333.

³⁹⁶ Many studies exploring the relation between literature and memory identify more than just the two concepts utilized here. For example, Ann Rigney differentiates between the role of literary texts in cultural memory as ‘relay stations’ in the circulation of memory, ‘stabilizers’ reinforcing communality in the present, ‘catalysts’ initiating debates about new topics, ‘objects of recollection’ referring to the remediation of literary texts in other media or literature, and lastly ‘calibrators’ are canonical literary texts whose revision becomes an important memorial practice. Rigney, Ann. “The Dynamics of Remembrance: Texts Between Monumentality and Morphing.” In: Erll; Nünning. 2008. *Handbook*. pp. 345-353. pp. 350-352.

The view that through remediation, literature creates a memory of its own is echoed in approaches to the mnemonic function of intertextuality. See, for example: Lachmann, Renate. “Mnemonic and Intertextual Aspects of Literature.” In: Erll; Nünning. 2008. pp. 301-310. Lachmann, Renate. 1990. *Gedächtnis und Literatur: Intertextualität in der russischen Moderne*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

³⁹⁷ Neumann. 2008. p. 334.

³⁹⁸ Erll, Astrid; Nünning, Ansgar. “Concepts and Methods for the Study of Literature and/as Cultural Memory.” In: Gymnich; Nünning; Sommer. 2006. pp. 11-28. p. 13.

³⁹⁹ Neumann. 2008. p. 334.

events or their aftermath, and how this exposure to the trauma affects the conceptions of identity on the individual, collective or national, or even, as is the case with 9/11, the transnational or global level.

To examine in how far literary representations of terrorism fulfil a mnemonic function, namely through either the stabilisation or the questioning of hegemonic notions of the past and conceptions of identities, in the following, both the nexus between individual memory and identity formation as well as the inextricable relation between individual and collective processes of remembering will be outlined. By this means, the ways in which literature represents individual processes of remembering and identity formation in relation to the socio-cultural ambit can be analysed. Subsequently, in order to elucidate how literature as part of the cultural system may act on collective memories and identities, the thematic complex of cultural memory and identity as well as the role of media for processes of collective remembrance will be outlined. Lastly, the effects of traumatic injuries on individual and communal memories and self-concepts will be elucidated. This allows the exploration of the role literature may play in the processing of the trauma of terrorism.

3.2.3.1. Individual Memory and Identity Formation as Social Phenomena

Processes of remembering and forgetting are primarily individual phenomena requiring the organic basis of the human brain and body. As such, they are the subject matter of neurosciences and psychology, both of which explore the workings of individual memory and its functions for the formation of identity.

As evidenced by cognitive psychology research on autobiographical memory, i.e. a specific form of individual “memory for information related to the self,”⁴⁰⁰ in the course of time, particular details of human memory become distorted or disappear completely. This process called ‘schematization’ enables individuals to select the information relevant to their personal processes of sense-making. Hence, individual or autobiographical memories are never accurate recollections of the past. However, they are not false or incorrect, but true “in the sense of maintaining the integrity and gist of past life events.”⁴⁰¹

Individual memory is hence highly selective and contingent on the remembering subjects’ present needs and current situation. What is more, without the selection of memory relevant to the individual in the present, the formation of a coherent sense of self could not be achieved.⁴⁰² The workings of memory are thus inextricably linked to processes of identity construction. Without memory as the “enabling capacity of human existence,”⁴⁰³ individuals would be unaware of their selves, thus rendering identities

⁴⁰⁰ Brewer, William F. “What is Autobiographical Memory?” In: Rubin, David C., ed. 1992. *Autobiographical Memory*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 25-49. p. 26.

⁴⁰¹ Barclay, Craig R. “Schematization of Autobiographical Memory.” In: Rubin. 1992. pp. 82-99. p. 82.

⁴⁰² Neumann, Birgit. “Literatur, Erinnerung, Identität.” In: Erll, Astrid; Nünning, Ansgar, eds. 2005.

Gedächtniskonzepte in der Literaturwissenschaft: Theoretische Grundlegung und Anwendungsperspektiven. Berlin: De Gruyter. pp. 149-178. p. 150.

⁴⁰³ Goethals, George R.; Solomon, Paul R. “Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Study of Memory.” In:

vacuous. Besides, individual memory is not solely highly selective, but also links the selected recollections temporally. Hence, the construction of individual identity bears a diachronic dimension, for “a sense of temporal continuity is an inherent feature of the human self.”⁴⁰⁴

Narratives play a pivotal part in the diachronic interweaving of individual memories. Their role for individual memory and identity is subject to narrative psychology, a scientific subfield, emphasising the role of stable knowledge constructs through narration. These approaches are particularly relevant to a literary studies perspective on the interface between memory and identity, for they focus on the “sense-making properties of narrative.”⁴⁰⁵ Narratives are thus seen as structural organising principles, enabling the linkage of initially disparate life events,⁴⁰⁶ thus constructing temporally, thematically and causally coherent life narratives that integrate past episodes and events with the present self.⁴⁰⁷ In this vein, narratives mould events into stories, and construct temporally coherent and logical accounts of the individual’s past, enabling the interpretation of past experiences to the effect that present and future become assessable.⁴⁰⁸

This idea of the constitutive role of narratives already fascinated the French psychologist Pierre Janet, who conceived of the concept of ‘narrative memory’ in the early 20th century. According to him, narrative memory provides people with mental constructs they may use to make sense out of experience.⁴⁰⁹ Janet further associated narrative memory with the human ability for presentification, an “operation of self-observation and self-representation” which enables individuals to situate past experiences in proper time and space through communicating them to themselves and above all to others.⁴¹⁰ Thus, memory always has a social dimension, or, as János László points out, the ways in which individuals compose their life stories reveal both how they relate to the social world and construct their identities.⁴¹¹

Individual accounts and memories relating to the self are, hence, not constructed in isolation from the social world. Instead, individual memory is fundamentally shaped by social interactions, media and socio-cultural contexts. This nexus between individual and collective remembrances was first discovered by the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, whose groundbreaking works on the social

Solomon, Paul. R. et al., eds. 1989. *Memory: Interdisciplinary Approaches*. New York: Springer. pp. 1-17. p. 1.

⁴⁰⁴ Sani, Fabio. “Introduction and Overview.” In: Sani, Fabio, ed. 2008. *Self Continuity: Individual and Collective Perspectives*. New York/Hove: Psychology Press. pp. 1-10. p. 1.

⁴⁰⁵ Anastasio, Thomas J. et al. 2012. *Individual and Collective Memory Consolidation: Analogous Processes on Different Levels*. Cambridge: MIT. p. 139.

⁴⁰⁶ Neumann. 2005. p. 155.

⁴⁰⁷ Habermas, Tilmann; Paha, Christine. “The Development of Coherence in Adolescents’ Life Narratives.” In: *Narrative Inquiry* 11. 2001. pp. 35-54. p. 35.

⁴⁰⁸ Neumann. 2005. p. 156.

⁴⁰⁹ Cited in: Van der Kolk, Bessel A.; van der Haart, Onno. “The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma.” In: Caruth. 1995. pp. 158-182. p. 160.

⁴¹⁰ Leys. 2000. p. 112.

⁴¹¹ László, János. 2008. *The Science of Stories: An Introduction to Narrative Psychology*. Hove/New York: Routledge. p. 2-4.

frameworks of individual memory have fundamentally influenced contemporary cultural memory studies.

Halbwachs was not interested in the biological workings, but in the social conditioning of memories.⁴¹² Hence, according to him, “it is in society that people normally acquire their memories.”⁴¹³ Clearly, only individuals possess the neurological capacities to remember. However, Halbwachs implicitly argues that children growing up in isolation lack the capacity to memorise, because memory may solely be developed in processes of socialisation.⁴¹⁴ Accordingly, there are no “recollections which can be said to be purely interior.”⁴¹⁵ Instead, human memory is dependent on the communication and interaction of the individual in different social groups.⁴¹⁶ Thus, “it is in this sense that there exists a collective memory and social frameworks for memory; it is to a degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollection.”⁴¹⁷ In other words, it is only through social frameworks that individuals are capable of remembering, and what he calls collective memory, on the other hand, is contingent on the experiences of the individual members of the group.

3.2.3.2. Cultural Memory, Processes of Collective Identity Formation, and the Role of Literature as a Medium of Cultural Memory

Processes of individual and collective memory and identity formation are, as outlined above, inextricably intertwined, or, as Pierre Nora puts it, “there are as many memories as there are groups, that memory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual.”⁴¹⁸ Individual memory only functions through social interaction and collective memory could not exist without the neuronal capacities of the individual members.

This complex interrelationship may be further elucidated with Jeffrey K. Olick’s differentiation of two different concepts of collective memory. He distinguishes between ‘collected’ and ‘collective memory’. While the former refers to the aggregated memories of socially framed individual memories, the latter denotes the collective phenomena *sui generis*. In other words, collective memory transcends the level of aggregated individuals through the media, symbols and cultural objectifications.⁴¹⁹ Thus, as Jan

⁴¹² Assmann, Jan. 2011. *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 21.

⁴¹³ Halbwachs, Maurice. 1992 [1950]. *On Collective Memory*. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press. p. 38.

⁴¹⁴ Assmann. 2011. p. 22.

⁴¹⁵ Halbwachs. 1992. p. 169.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 52-53.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 38.

⁴¹⁸ Nora, Pierre. “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*.” In: *Representations* 26.1989. pp. 7-24. p. 9.

⁴¹⁹ Olick, Jeffrey K. “Collective Memory: The Two Cultures.” In: *Sociological Theory* 17.3. 1999. pp. 333-348.

Assmann explains, the collective level refers to the metaphorical level of group memories. Unlike their individual equivalents, the collective level of memory lacks the natural connection to the body. Hence, a collective awareness of self is based on “factors that are purely symbolic.”⁴²⁰ In this sense, the metaphor of the social body is an imaginary construct that, nevertheless, occupies its own position in reality.⁴²¹ Lacking the natural capacity to recollect the past, and thus, to create an awareness of the self on the basis of “biological” memories, the construction of supra-individual “imagined communities”⁴²² – be it that of e.g. a nation state, ethnic or religious groups – depends on the mediation of a shared past.⁴²³

In fact, there is no memory without media. Not only on the collective, but also on the individual or ‘collected’ level, the sociocultural shaping of memories is mostly enabled through mediation, e.g. conversations with family members or the influence of the mass media on the way we code our life experiences.⁴²⁴ On the collective level, the circulation of knowledge and versions of the past would be rendered impossible without media such as, e.g. monuments, archives, and historiographies.

Mediality is hence inherent to memory. That is, as Andreas Huyssen argues, all representation – be it in language, narrative, image or recorded sound – rests upon memory:

Re- presentation always comes after, even though some media will try to provide us with the delusion of pure presence. But rather than leading us to some authentic origin or giving us verifiable access to the real, memory, even and especially in its belatedness, is itself based on representation.⁴²⁵

Thus, approaches to the workings of both individual and collective memory often involve questions of “*re-* presentation,” and are often simultaneously media research.⁴²⁶ The media of memory also play an important role in the foundational works of contemporary cultural memory studies. For example, Aby Warburg, who is considered, alongside Maurice Halbwachs, as a pioneer in conceptualising the social

p. 333, pp. 338-343.

⁴²⁰ Assmann. 2011. p. 113.

⁴²¹ Ibid. p. 113.

⁴²² Benedict Anderson coined the term ‘imagined communities’ in his seminal work on the spread of nationalism. According to his argument, the identity of large groups such as nation states can only be imagined, because their members will never know their fellow members. Yet in their minds prevails the idea of “the image of their communion.” (Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.) In this vein, collective identities are constructed through cultural symbols and discourse formations aimed at establishing common cultural norms and values. (See, for instance, Assmann, Aleida; Friese, Heidrun. “Einleitung.” In: Assmann, Aleida; Friese, Heidrun, eds. 1999. *Identitäten: Erinnerung, Geschichte, Identität*. 2nd ed. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp. pp. 11-23. p. 12.) See also, e.g., Eric Hobsbawm’s seminal *The Invention of Tradition* which proceeds from the assumption that nation states are nurtured by “invented traditions,” which he defines as a “set of practices [...] which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past” for group identities. Hobsbawm, Eric. “Introduction: Inventing Traditions.” In: Hobsbawm, Eric; Ranger, Terence, eds. 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1-14. p. 1.

⁴²³ Erll, Astrid. “Medium des kollektiven Gedächtnisses: Ein (erinnerungs-) kulturwissenschaftlicher Kompaktbegriff.” In: Erll, Astrid; Nünning, Ansgar, eds. 2004. *Medien des kollektiven Gedächtnisses: Konstruktivität – Historizität – Kulturspezifität*. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter. pp. 3-22. p. 4.

⁴²⁴ Erll, Astrid. 2011. *Memory in Culture*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 113.

⁴²⁵ Huyssen, Alexander. “Time and Cultural Amnesia at Our Fin de Siècle.” In: Huyssen, Alexander, ed. 1995. *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*. London/New York: Routledge. pp. 1-9. pp. 2-3.

⁴²⁶ Erll. 2011. p. 114.

and cultural frames of memory, was particularly interested in the *Bildgedächtnis*, i.e. iconic memory and the significance of images as carriers of memory.⁴²⁷ Media of collective remembrance are, furthermore, essential to Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de memoire*, sites of memory. Nora argues that modern memory is archival, that is, it relies entirely on "the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image."⁴²⁸

Yet media of cultural memory are no neutral carriers of information providing a complete account of the past. Rather, they do not merely encode versions of the past, perceptions of identities, and collectively shared norms and values, but construct them.⁴²⁹ Sybille Krämer, for instance, describes the role of media in culture as not confined to the mere conveyance of a message, but as proactive in the shaping of our perception of reality.⁴³⁰ She further contends that no message is free from the traces of its medium.⁴³¹ Hence, the medium itself always co-determines how reality is experienced, and thus subsequently remembered. Moreover, Krämer contends that 'apparatuses' of media technology actively engage in world-creation.⁴³² Thus, media 'apparatuses' do not solely externalise information, but also produce worlds of cultural memory.⁴³³ Instead, media of memory shape our experiences and knowledge of the world, thus creating memory worlds that would otherwise have been forgotten.⁴³⁴

As Sturken who delves into the US-American making of the cultural memory of the AIDS epidemic and the Vietnam War observes, "memory is produced through objects, images, and representations."⁴³⁵ Likewise, Elena Esposito contends that the memory of societies hinges on the media technologies available to a particular society at a particular time. The different media determine the reach, forms and

⁴²⁷ Assmann, Jan. "Communicative and Cultural Memory." In: Erll; Nünning. 2008. pp. 109-125. p. 110.

On Aby Warburg's interest in the memory of art, see also: Erll. 2011. pp. 19-21.

⁴²⁸ Nora. 1989. p. 13.

Nora argues that memory in modern societies is no longer experienced as it was in archaic or primitive societies, but based on the excessive collection and archival cultivation of documents carrying traces of the past. Hence, his concepts are inextricably linked to questions concerning the mediation of memory.

Jan Assmann's distinction between 'cultural' and 'communicative' memory further highlights the crucial role of the media for collective mnemonic processes. He distinguishes between the two different *modi memoranda*, or ways of remembering, on the basis of the different modes of mediation associated with each of them. Firstly, the concept of 'cultural memory' constitutes part of the collective memory shared by a number of carriers, who derive their cultural identity from it. Cultural memory is an institutionalised form of collective remembrance that is objectified, exteriorized, and stored in "stable and situation-transcendent" (Assmann. 2008. p. 111.) forms and refers to an absolute past. While the participation in cultural memory is strictly codified and usually involves specialised carriers of memory, communicative memory denotes non-institutionalised, communicative and interactive aspects of memory. 'communicative memory' is diffuse rather than institutionalised or attached to material sites of memory, and therefore only lasts for approximately three generations. Ibid. pp. 110-111.

See also: Assmann, Jan; Czaplicka, John. "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity." In: *New German Critique* 65. 1995. pp. 125-133.

⁴²⁹ Erll. 2004. pp. 4-5.

⁴³⁰ Krämer, Sybille. "Was haben Medien, der Computer und die Realität miteinander zu tun? Zur Einleitung in diesen Band." In: Krämer, Sybille, ed. 1998. *Medien, Computer, Realität: Wirklichkeitsvorstellungen und Neue Medien*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp. pp. 9-26. p. 14

⁴³¹ Krämer, Sybille. "Das Medium als Spur und als Apparat." In: Krämer. 1998. pp. 73-94. p. 81.

⁴³² Ibid. 1998. p. 85.

⁴³³ Erll. 2011. p. 116.

⁴³⁴ Ibid. 2011. pp. 115-116.

⁴³⁵ Sturken. 1997. p. 9.

interpretation of memory.⁴³⁶ In this vein, one could argue that the cultural memory of terrorism must have changed fundamentally throughout history. One may argue that memory worlds created through the mass media have influenced the public perception and hence also the literary responses to terrorism. Yet, considering Krämer's view that a trace of the medium is retained in every dissemination of knowledge, what is the mnemonic potential of literature that qualifies it as a medium of cultural memory?

According to Astrid Erll, the mnemonic value of literature rests upon two factors: Firstly, literature and memory are seen to share particular similarities. Especially narration is vital to both literature and memory.⁴³⁷ Narrative memory, as we have seen, permits individuals to create coherent stories about themselves. Likewise, collective subjects such as nation states constitute themselves through the construction of a story of the past.⁴³⁸ Stephen Arata, for instance, accentuates the instrumental role of narratives in the creation and maintenance of collective identities.⁴³⁹ Hence, narrative structures pervade memory cultures on every level, and as Paul Ricœur frames it, eventually become the actual history of the self.⁴⁴⁰ For this reason, literature and particularly narrative fiction seems to be an ideal medium of cultural memory.

Secondly, by virtue of their aesthetic function, literary texts display characteristics distinguishing them from other media of cultural memory. Due to the specific means available to literary texts, e.g. verbal pictures, semanticized forms, or through the use of fictional privileges such as the representation of inner worlds,⁴⁴¹ different perspectives on individual and collective memory worlds may be opened up. That is, literary texts are seen to possess the capability to incorporate a variety of divergent versions of memory, thus creating mnemonic multiperspectivity.⁴⁴²

As a result of these aesthetic-fictional characteristics, literature distinguishes itself from other media of cultural memory in that it is capable of memory reflexivity. On the one hand, literary texts construct versions of the past, and on the other hand, they reflect on these practices of construction.⁴⁴³ This way,

⁴³⁶ Esposito, Elena. 2002. *Soziales Vergessen: Formen und Medien des Gedächtnisses der Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp. p. 10.

⁴³⁷ Erll. 2011. pp. 146-147.

Erll further identifies 'condensation,' i.e. the compression of various semantic fields in a small space, and 'genre', that is "conventionalized formats" are content of memory and literature. Ibid. 2011. pp. 145-146, pp. 147-149.

⁴³⁸ Assmann, Aleida. 1999. *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*. München: C.H. Beck. pp. 135-137.

Assmann distinguishes between 'Funktionsgedächtnis', functional memory, and 'Speichergedächtnis', storage memory. While the former refers to memory that is drawn on to derive meaning from the past through, e.g., the construction of life stories, the latter describes an inert and unproductive mass of stored memories, defying direct access. Ibid. 1999. pp. 134-135

⁴³⁹ Arata, Stephen. 1996. *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 1.

⁴⁴⁰ Ricœur, Paul. 1988 [1985]. *Time and Narrative: Volume III*. Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press. p. 247.

⁴⁴¹ Erll; Nünning. 2005. p. 283.

⁴⁴² Erll. 2011. pp. 149-152.

⁴⁴³ Ibid. pp. 149-152.

they may influence the hegemonic cultural memory and impact on notions of what is to be remembered or forgotten. They are seen to fulfil the function of a cultural institution of “counter-memory.”⁴⁴⁴ In the Foucauldian sense, “counter-memory” or “effective history” oppose traditional history, the latter of which seeks to dissolve a “singular event into an ideal continuity.”⁴⁴⁵ The former, however, “deals with events in terms of their most unique characteristics, their most acute manifestations.”⁴⁴⁶ In this sense, a literary discourse of counter-memory is liberated from the claims of objectivity and continuity arrogated by traditional historical discourse. Therefore, liberated from the obligations towards representing the truth postulate held by historiography, literary texts may embrace a subjective approach to events.⁴⁴⁷ However, we need to bear in mind that literature as a ‘medium of cultural memory’ does not necessarily criticise and undermine prevalent memories, but may also stabilise and reiterate dominant versions of the past.⁴⁴⁸ In this vein, we may proceed from the assumption that literature tackling terrorism may not only scrutinise the construction of past versions of terrorist violence, and question their validity, but may also stabilise and reinforce common notions of past terrorist events.

3.2.3.3. The Dynamics of Memory and Forgetting

This study proceeds from the assumption that not only literary representations of the past are relevant to an evaluation of the mnemonic function of literature, but also “literary forgetting” of terrorism may play a crucial mnemonic role. That is to say, as already indicated in the introduction to this section, memory it is neither exact nor complete.⁴⁴⁹ Maurice Halbwachs already argued that the selection of collective recollections has to comply with society’s needs of the present-day.⁴⁵⁰ That is to say, cultural memory serves the function of preserving “the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity.”⁴⁵¹ This way, cultural memory enables groups to define themselves in a positive (“We are this”) or negative sense (“That’s our opposite”).⁴⁵² It does not, however, provide authentic or consistent recollections of the past.

⁴⁴⁴ Zemon Davis, Natalie; Starn, Randolph. “Introduction.” In: *Representations: Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory* 26. 1989. pp. 1-6.

⁴⁴⁵ Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*. Ithaca/New York: Cornell University Press. p. 152.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. 152.

⁴⁴⁷ See, for example: Rupp. 2010. p. 1.

⁴⁴⁸ According to Ann Rigney, ‘stabilizers’ are fictional texts that “can succeed in figuring particular periods in a memorable way and so provide a cultural frame for later recollections.” This way they may help to “reinforce communality in the present.” (Rigney. 2008. pp. 348, 350.)

⁴⁴⁹ Assmann, Jan. 2008. p. 114.

⁴⁵⁰ Halbwachs. 1992. pp. 182-189.

⁴⁵¹ Assmann; Czaplicka. 1995. p. 130.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.* 1995. p. 130.

Therefore, one could even go so far as to argue that “memory and forgetting are co-constitutive processes.”⁴⁵³ Elena Esposito, who analyses the dynamics of remembering and forgetting from a systems-theory perspective, for instance, contends, “remembering and forgetting always proceed together. [...] Without the ability to forget [...] the faculty to remember would soon be overloaded. There must be something that can be remembered, but one must forget almost everything.”⁴⁵⁴ Hence, the ability to forget is a regulatory mechanism vital to processes of remembering and identity construction.

What is more, the ability to forget is not solely functional to the formation of coherent identities, but any examination of the processes of memory construction requires a certain degree of self-reflexivity. That is, “the one who intends to forget cannot avoid confronting himself and his own procedures of memory construction, while in the case of remembering one can persist in the illusion of only recording external data (in however inevitably defective and selective a manner).”⁴⁵⁵ Any engagement with forgetting thus reveals something about the self of the remembering subject – be it on the individual or group level. Reinhart Koselleck, for instance, examines the practices of forgetting, or the suppression of ‘negative memory’. This concept refers to both recollections whose content is offensive and unwelcome and recollections eluding storage because memory refuses to take notice of the negative content.⁴⁵⁶ Hence, particular recollections deemed unfavourable or inappropriate for the self-concept can be excluded from cultural memory.

For this inaccuracy and constructedness of memory, one could go even further in stressing the “fictional(izing) aspects”⁴⁵⁷ of cultural memory. Ansgar Nünning, for example, coined the phrase of “fictions of cultural memory,”⁴⁵⁸ for they “consist of predispositions, biases, values and epistemological habits which provide both agreed-upon codes of understanding and cultural traditions of looking at the world, past and present,”⁴⁵⁹ and, in a similar vein, Mieke Bal contends:

Because memory is made up of socially constituted forms, narratives, and relations, but also amenable to individual acts of intervention in it, memory is always open to social revision and manipulation. This makes it an instance of fiction rather than imprint, often of social forgetting rather than remembering.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵³ Sturken. 1997. p. 2.

⁴⁵⁴ Esposito, Elena. “Social Forgetting: A Systems-Theory Approach.” In: Erll; Nünning. 2008. pp. 181-189. p. 182.

⁴⁵⁵ Esposito. 2008. pp. 181-182.

⁴⁵⁶ Koselleck, Reinhart. “Formen und Traditionen des negativen Gedächtnisses.” In: Knigge, Volkhard; Frei, Norbert, eds. 2005. *Verbrechen erinnern: Die Auseinandersetzung mit Holocaust und Völkermord*. Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. pp. 21-32. p. 21.

⁴⁵⁷ Erll; Nünning. 2005. p. 263.

⁴⁵⁸ Nünning, Ansgar. “Editorial: New Directions in the Study of Individual and Cultural Memory.” In: *Journal for the Study of British Cultures* 10. 2003. pp. 3-9. p. 5.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 5.

⁴⁶⁰ Bal, Mieke. “Introduction.” In: Bal, Mieke; Crewe, Jonathan; Spitzer, Leo, eds. 1999. *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*. Hannover/London: University Press of New England. pp. vii-xvii. p. xii-xiii. See also, Paul John Eakin, who is mainly concerned with autobiographical memories and the construction of autobiographies. He argues that “autobiographical truth is not a fixed but an evolving content in an intricate process of self-discovery and self-creation, and, further that the self that is the center of all autobiographical narrative is necessarily a fictive structure.” Eakin, Paul John. 1985. *Fictions in Autobiography: Studies in the*

Hence, the ways in which the “fiction” of recollected terrorist violence, the ensuing counter-terrorism measures, and their cultural impact are culturally constructed through media of cultural memory, and particularly in Britain’s literary discourse, tells much about how Britons define their cultural characteristics, mentalities, norms and values. Furthermore, particularly “literary forgetting” may play an integral role in the construction of a favourable and coherent self. Thus, not only the literary treatment of terrorism fulfils a potential mnemonic function, but also the exclusion of prevalent events and terrorist groups from literary discourse may serve a function in the British culture of remembrance.

3.2.3.4. The Interfaces of Trauma, Memory and Literature

The impossibility to remember is also at the heart of contemporary trauma theory, which, like Cultural Memory Studies, assumes a two-level distinction of traumatising events shattering the psychological and mnemonic fabric of both individuals and collectives. However, unlike memories which have been excluded from memory discourses because they do not comply with the current demands of their carriers, traumatic memory continues to have its grip on the victims in the present.⁴⁶¹ The past haunts traumatized individuals, and thus has a continuous impact on their present lives and identity formations. However, as illustrated in chapter 2.6., ‘trauma’ is not solely a phenomenon that is described in medical or psychological discourse, but it has been used to describe cultural processes in response to human suffering. As such, the meaning of the concept of trauma has evolved, from the late Victoria age when it signified the shock of modernity to the contemporary view of trauma as the experience of a wound that is resistant to immediate processing. In order to analyse how trauma has been represented in literature, this section is aimed at explicating current trauma theory, which can be deployed in the analysis of literary representations of trauma, particularly in modern novels tackling terrorism. The following section seeks to shortly define ‘trauma’ in a way that particularly encapsulates the enormous scale of the human-caused disaster of terrorism.

The concept of ‘trauma’ receives great attention in current academic and public discourse. However, despite the pivotal position it occupies in approaches to the effects of individual and collective experiences of violence, a shared definition of ‘trauma’ underlying the plethora of multidisciplinary trauma studies is still lacking.⁴⁶² Yet at least the different trauma theories share substantial common ground. ‘Trauma’ is induced by an event which is for those exposed to it “elusive and impossible to

Art of Self-Invention. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p. 3.

⁴⁶¹ Bal. 1999. p. viii.

⁴⁶² Cathy. 1995. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press. pp. 3-4.

grasp.”⁴⁶³ A trauma can be understood as a “blow”⁴⁶⁴ that disrupts the cohesiveness of memory. To be more precise, “trauma cannot be integrated into memory, but neither can [it] be forgotten.”⁴⁶⁵ The traumatic event thus “resists simple comprehension”⁴⁶⁶ and the violence “cannot be fully known”⁴⁶⁷ at the very moment of its occurrence. Individuals dissociate the trauma from their storage memories at the very moment it occurs. Thus, the uncoupled experience⁴⁶⁸ can only be known belatedly, an observation already made by Freud, whose concept of *Nachträglichkeit*, ‘belatedness’ forms the heart of his trauma theory.⁴⁶⁹

Thus, the response of an individual who suffers from what is today commonly acknowledged as a pathological condition termed Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) “occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled, repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena.”⁴⁷⁰ These include “dreams, thoughts or behaviours stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event.”⁴⁷¹ Hence, as Erikson phrases it, “our memory repeats to us what we haven’t yet come to terms with, what still haunts us.”⁴⁷² The traumatised individual thus relives the event through the intrusive recall or flashbacks of the event, but is, at the same time, denied conscious access to these recollections.⁴⁷³ Trauma is thus inextricably linked to the workings of memory, and a healing process may only be initiated through the reintegration of the traumatic memory into a cohesive commemorative frame of reference that renders the past experience consciously accessible and comprehensive.

As outlined in the previous sections, narrative structures are vital to mnemonic processes and narrative memory is prerequisite to the construction of a coherent sense of self. In this vein, narratives also play an integral role in coping with PTSD. That is to say, one possible way of curing PTSD is transforming the traumatic memory into ‘narrative memory’, which allows the individual to verbalise and

⁴⁶³ Radstone, Susannah. “The War of the Fathers: Trauma, Fantasy and September 11” In: Greenberg, Judith, ed. 2003. *Trauma at Home: After 9/11*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. pp. 117-123. p.117.

⁴⁶⁴ Erikson, Kai. “Notes on Trauma and Community.” In: Caruth, Cathy, ed. 1995. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press. pp. 183-199. 184.

⁴⁶⁵ Radstone. 2003. p. 117.

⁴⁶⁶ Caruth, Cathy. 1996. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press. p. 6

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 6

⁴⁶⁸ Van der Kolk, Van der Hart. 1995. pp. 168-169.

⁴⁶⁹ In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud describes the recurrence of the traumatic memory in dreams: “Now dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright. This astonishes people far too little. They think the fact that the traumatic experience is constantly forcing itself upon the patient even in his sleep is a proof of the strength of that experience: the patient is, as one might say, fixated to his trauma.” Freud. 1950. p.10. See also: Caruth. 1995. *Trauma and Experience*. p. 4.

⁴⁷⁰ Caruth. 1996. p. 11.

⁴⁷¹ Caruth. 1995. “Trauma and Experience: Introduction.” In: Caruth. 1995. pp. 3-12. p. 4.

⁴⁷² Erikson. 1995. p. 184.

⁴⁷³ Caruth, Cathy. “Recapturing the Past: Introduction.” In: Caruth. 1995. pp. 151-157. p. 152.

communicate the trauma, and thus, to construct a “completed story of the past.”⁴⁷⁴ Hence, the relationship between trauma, narrative and memory is characterised by some tensions and paradoxes.⁴⁷⁵

Ernst van Alphen, e.g., points out that already the terms ‘traumatic experiences’ or ‘traumatic memories’ are ambiguous. That is, as he contends, a trauma is actually a failed experience that cannot be memorised.⁴⁷⁶ Thus, a trauma is a paradoxical experience intrusive in the present, and yet not fully experienced at the time it occurs.⁴⁷⁷ It is simply too much to grasp,⁴⁷⁸ and can therefore not be experienced and verbalised, that is, integrated into narrative memory. At the same time, there exists a desire to narrate the unspeakable. Judith Herman therefore describes the “central dialectic” of psychological trauma as “the conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud.”⁴⁷⁹ This tension between the urge to know and to speak about the wound on the one hand, and the need to deny the traumatic experience on the other hand⁴⁸⁰ bears a creative potential, and particularly literature is seen as a means to find a language to represent the “forgotten wound.”⁴⁸¹ As Dori Laub argues, the healing process of a massive psychic trauma requires an audience, someone who testifies to an absence, “an event that has not yet come into existence.”⁴⁸²

Thus, José Yebra argues, “like psychoanalysis, trauma literature constitutes a dialogical process between narrator and a listener or reader.”⁴⁸³ Hence, particularly literature is seen as a medium that is apt to dissolve this paradox by explaining the “radical disruption and gaps of traumatic experience,”⁴⁸⁴ by providing a space for narrativisation through which access may be gained to the traumatic history.⁴⁸⁵ As Deborah Horvitz contends, psychoanalysis and literature may facilitate similar healing processes. In this vein, in literary negotiations of trauma, “fictional characters experience trauma and, subsequently, as a self-protective response, repress its memories. And, it is within the discourse of healing that the operative dynamics of memory, remembering, and narrative converge.”⁴⁸⁶ Literature may thus also serve

⁴⁷⁴ Caruth. 1995. *Recapturing the Past*. p. 153.

⁴⁷⁵ Kopf, Martina. “Trauma, Narrative, and the Art of Witnessing.” In: Haehnel, Birgit; Ulz, Melanie, eds. 2010. *Slavery in Art and Literature: Approaches to Trauma, Memory, Visuality*. Berlin: Frank & Timme. pp. 41-58. p. 48.

⁴⁷⁶ Van Alphen, Ernst. “Symptoms of Discursivity: Experience, Memory, and Trauma.” In: Bal; Crewe; Spitzer. pp. 24-38. p. 26.

⁴⁷⁷ Caruth. 1995. *Recapturing the Past*. p. 151.

⁴⁷⁸ Bohleber, Werner. “Die Entwicklung Traumatherapie Psychoanalyse.” In: *Psyche: Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse und ihre Anwendungen* 5.4. 2000. pp. 797-839. p. 798.

⁴⁷⁹ Herman, Judith. 1992. *Trauma and Recovery*. New York: Harper Collins. p. 1.

⁴⁸⁰ Phrased according to the title of the textbook by Herrero, Dolorea; Baelo-Allué, Sonia, eds. 2011. *Between the Urge to Know and the Need to Deny: Trauma and Ethics in Contemporary British and American Literature*. Heidelberg: Winter.

⁴⁸¹ Herrero, Dolores; Baelo-Allué, Sonia. “Introduction: Between the Urge to Know and the Need to Deny.” In: Herrero; Baelo-Allué. 2011. pp. 9- 17. p. 14.

⁴⁸² Laub, Dori. “Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening.” In: Felman, Shoshana; Laub, Dori, eds. 1992. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. London/New York: Routledge. pp. 57-74. p. 57.

⁴⁸³ Yebra, José M. “The Belated Trauma of AIDS in Allen Hollinghurst’s *The Swimming-pool Library*.” In: Herrero; Baelo-Allué. 2011. pp. 113-125. p. 117.

⁴⁸⁴ Caruth. 1995. *Trauma and Experience*. p. 4.

⁴⁸⁵ Caruth. 1995. *Recapturing the Past*. p. 156.

⁴⁸⁶ Horvitz, Deborah M. 2000. *Literary Trauma: Sadism, Memory, and Sexual Violence in American Women’s*

a specific mnemonic function in fostering a healing process by restoring “meaning where it had been destroyed, integrates suppressed and painful experience into collective memory and gives victims of violence voice, agency and dignity.”⁴⁸⁷

Yet, trauma literature needs to be further distinguished. There are, on the one hand, authentic survivor accounts relating the lived experience of trauma, for example in autobiographies, which must be differentiated from representations of traumatic terrorist events in literary fiction deploying fictional characters experiencing a trauma. Trauma chronicles differ substantially from their fictional counterparts by their expressions of anguish and dread, and thus their emotional intensity. While oral testimonies tend to lack chronology and cohesiveness, a written survivor memoir usually abides by certain literary conventions, such as “chronology, description, characterization, dialogue and [...] the invention of a narrative voice,” which seeks to “impose on apparently chaotic episodes a perceived sequence.”⁴⁸⁸ Moreover, as Kalí Tal states, traumatic events such as the Holocaust are written and rewritten to the extent that they become codified and their content is being replaced by narrative form. For example, the Holocaust had become a metonym not only for the actual historical tragedy, but also for the symbols that signify that experience. Hence, she argues that the framing and re-framing of ‘incomparable’ events like the Holocaust makes them yardsticks by which the scale of the trauma may be measured.⁴⁸⁹ Fictional narratives seeking to deal with the trauma of terrorism, and in particular of 9/11 which was immediately interpreted and framed as a national and even transnational trauma, are confronted with a highly iconic event that has been codified as a set of symbolic images, such as Richard Drew’s photograph of the Falling Man or the footage of collapsing towers that have come to represent the disaster and its emotional effects. As such, the mechanisms of memories will be reviewed and “how and why”⁴⁹⁰ the past is remembered in literary discourse assumes a central role.

3.2.4. The Ethical Function of Literature

As indicated above, negotiations of the trauma inflicted by terrorism may also bear a moral dimension,⁴⁹¹ for terrorist acts are widely believed to be wrong and often “condemned with special vehemence.”⁴⁹² Moral overtones pervade representations of terrorism, public discourses, or academic attempts at conceptualising and defining the phenomenon, and, what is more, also the terrorist’s rationale is

Fiction. Albany: State University of New York Press. p. 10.

⁴⁸⁷ Kopf. 2010. p. 47.

⁴⁸⁸ Langer, Lawrence L. 1991. *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory*. New Haven/ London: Yale University Press. p. 41.

⁴⁸⁹ Tal, Kalí. 1996. *World of Hurts*. Cambridge/Melbourne: Cambridge University Press. p. 6.

⁴⁹⁰ Whitehead, Anne. 2004. *Trauma Fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. p. 3.

⁴⁹¹ For the link between ethics and trauma, see, for example: Herrero; Baelo-Allué. 2011. p. 9.

⁴⁹² Nathanson, Stephen. 2010. *Terrorism and the Ethics of War*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press. p. 30.

inherently laden with moral absolutes. For this reason, in the following, the potential functions of literary texts tackling terrorism will be approached from a moral-philosophical or ethical angle. Drawing on some of the concepts of contemporary ethical criticism, this chapter is aimed at illustrating the potential ethical function(s) literature tackling terrorism may fulfil. Considering that ethical criticism is a “pluriform discourse” interweaving “many genealogical strands”,⁴⁹³ the following introduction to the ethical value of literature abstains from the attempt at providing a full picture of the contemporary ethical movement. Instead, the ethical function of literary representations of terrorism will be assessed from four different angles, accounting for both the nature of the phenomenon of terrorism and the perspectives of victim and perpetrator represented in the works.

Firstly, terrorism, as we have seen, is a phenomenon which is fundamentally contingent on the ‘process’ of representation. It is thus the extensive media coverage that more than anything else shapes the cultural perception of both the events and the perpetrators behind the attacks, and influences the dissemination of values and worldviews in their wake. Hence, one of the main questions discussed in the following is the relation of literature to extra-literary value systems. In other words, in how far can literary representations of the trauma of “real world” terrorism assume an ethical function through the stabilisation or subversion of prevalent value systems? Is there an ethical discourse offered by literature that diverges from the mainstream representations of terrorism, or do the works dealt with in this study sustain dominant terrorism discourses? For this reason, initially, the meaning of ‘ethics’ in the contemporary debate surrounding the “ethical turn,” and its interrelationship with cultural value systems and literature will be introduced.

Secondly, dealing with the ethical value of literature also entails questions of *how* to tackle the trauma of terrorism. While the media arrogate the prerogative of representation, literary representations of terrorism and violence have not gone unchallenged. Therefore, this section seeks to analyse in how far fictional representations of terrorism may contribute to the cultural processes of negotiating and coping with the trauma or, on the other hand, whether fictional representations of traumatic events should even be deemed unethical, since, due to literature’s flexibility in the representation of violence, these texts may run the risk of offending the victims by exposing or making light of their pain.

Thirdly, terrorism usually leads to the moral condemnation of the perpetrators and their deeds, and to fixed views dividing the world into the binary opposition of “us” versus “them”. Therefore, this section will also tackle ethical implications of dealing with the terrorist “other”. In other words, the relation between ethics, alterity and the specific potential of literature in dealing with otherness will be discussed. This, in turn, leads to the fourth and last question dealt with in this section; that is, in how far literary texts have the propensity to render particularly empathetic representations of the “other”, or if literature may potentially elicit empathy in the reader.

⁴⁹³ Buell, Lawrence. “Introduction: In Pursuit of Ethics.” In: *PMLA* 114. 1999. pp. 7-19. p. 7.

3.2.4.1. The Nexus between Ethics, Values and Literature

The argument that literature serves an ethical function is not novel, but has been frequently brought forth throughout literary history to safeguard an important position for literary texts in culture and education.⁴⁹⁴ The association of literature with ethics can even be traced back to antiquity, when for instance Homer's stories reflecting on heroic virtues and the ancient Greek philosophers founded a tradition of moral thinking. Up until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the spheres of ethics and aesthetics have been perceived as closely related.⁴⁹⁵ Carol Stewart even links the rise of the new genre of the novel in the 18th century to its moral efficacy. Associating the emergence of the novel with the secularization of ethics, Stewart argues that "the novel began to be taken seriously by authors and readers when it was used as a means of motivating readers to whatever was seen as moral behaviour. [...] The impetus for such a development came from a perception of the clergy as inadequate or ineffective moral teachers."⁴⁹⁶ Hence, since the 1740s, the novel was seen as a vehicle to disseminate the moral values which previously resided with institutionalised religion.⁴⁹⁷ With the expansion of the book market towards the end of the eighteenth century, aristocratic influence waned and a more democratic approach to the dissemination of values took hold.⁴⁹⁸

The gathering power and growing acceptance of science in 19th-century Britain and the consequent spread of a secular conception of the world, which bred preoccupation with the notion of objectivity, sparked a debate about the relationship between science and ethics; a culture war which was also reflected in contemporary literature. George Levine regards the Victorian realist novel and the empathetic and naturalistic vision of the world it created as the answer to growing concerns about a lack of moral guidance in the secular age.⁴⁹⁹ The increasing secularisation of ethics was not only omnipresent in Victorian Britain, but also evoked a variety of ideas within broad frames of references and contexts. Particularly the second half of the 19th century saw the diversification and amplification of the meaning of 'ethics,' which could denote political, aesthetic, epistemological, evolutionary, utilitarian or theological ethics, the latter of had been increasingly subject to criticism for its rigid morality.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁴ Grabes, Herbert. "Being Ethical: Open, Less Open, and Hidden Dissemination of Values in English Literature." In: Erll, Astrid; Grabes, Herbert; Nünning, Ansgar, eds. 2008. *Ethics in Culture: The Dissemination of Values Through Literature and Other Media*. Berlin: De Gruyter. pp. 35-50. p. 35.

⁴⁹⁵ From Greek, medieval or Renaissance cultures to Christianity, Judaism and Islam, the chief means of moral education is storytelling. MacIntyre, Alasdair. 2007. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. 3rd ed. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press. p. 39.

See also: Antor, Heinz. "The Ethics of Criticism in the Age After Value." In: Ahrens; Volkmann. 1996. pp. 65- 85. pp. 65-66.

⁴⁹⁶ Stewart, Caroline. 2010. *The Eighteenth-Century Novel and the Secularization of Ethics*. Farnham/Burlington: Ashgate. p. 3.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 4.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 194.

⁴⁹⁹ Levine, George. 2008. *Realism, Ethics and Secularism: Essays on Victorian Literature and Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. vi-xi.

⁵⁰⁰ Li, Hao. "Deploying 'Ethics' in Victorian Britain." In: *Literature Compass* 7.3. 2010. pp. 226-242. pp. 226-235.

Towards the end of the century, the meaning of the term 'ethics' had become increasingly elastic and unstable, rendering it "an amorphous but suggestive idea."⁵⁰¹ On the other hand, the Aesthetic and Decadent Movements championed by writers like Oscar Wilde challenged the association of the ethical with the scientific and the rational. It became fashionable for writers to use the term ironically in order to make their own normative claims. Thus, they appropriated the term in order to make an ethical statement themselves.⁵⁰²

In the 20th century, aligned to the post-metaphysical turn in philosophy, which "led to a new awareness of the contingency of the world",⁵⁰³ and hence, undermined the notion of a single ultimate truth,⁵⁰⁴ the post-structuralist and deconstructivist movements relegated notions of essential foundations including ethics to the realm of the metaphysical.⁵⁰⁵ However, a renewed interest in the ethical value of literature re-emerged in literary criticism in the 1980s. Thus, this shift referred to as the "ethical turn"⁵⁰⁶ occurred at a time when postmodernism's view of culture as being fundamentally constructed had rendered a foundation for binding moral obligations or individual responsibilities impossible, reinvigorated questions concerning the ethical value of literature.⁵⁰⁷ The revival of ethical questions in literary criticism has even been regarded as a "paradigm shift"⁵⁰⁸ or "paradigm-defining concept"⁵⁰⁹ which essentially deals with an approximation of the fields of ethics and aesthetics.⁵¹⁰

As is well known, the term 'ethics' refers to the philosophy of morals, whose "basic project" is "the postulation of the *ought*."⁵¹¹ This means it traditionally deals with norms and values, that is, with "questions of right and wrong, duty, responsibility and choice."⁵¹² Thus, ethics refers to value

⁵⁰¹ Ibid. p. 236.

⁵⁰² Ibid. pp. 237-238.

⁵⁰³ Antor. 1996. p. 67.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 67.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 65.

⁵⁰⁶ As Todd Davis and Kenneth Womack contend in the preface to their textbook *Mapping the Ethical Turn*, the shift towards ethics is not exclusively a recent trend in Literary Studies. Rather, ethical critics describe a relationship between ethics and literature that, despite postmodernism's repudiation of "ethical or moral dimensions of the human condition," ethical and moral questions have always been inherent to the act of telling and reading stories. Davis, Todd F.; Womack, Kenneth. "Preface: Reading Literature and the Ethics of Criticism." In: Davis, Todd F.; Womack, Kenneth, eds. 2001. *Mapping the Ethical Turn: A Reader in Ethics, Culture, and Literary Theory*. Charlottesville/London: University of Virginia Press. pp. ix-xiv. p. ix.

⁵⁰⁷ Grabes, Herbert. "Introduction." In: Erll; Grabes; Nünning. 2008. pp. 1-15. p. 1.

For the politico-cultural background of the "ethical turn", see, e.g., Heinze, Rüdiger. 2004. *Ethics of Literary Forms in Contemporary American Literature*. Münster: LitVerlag. pp. 17-20.

⁵⁰⁸ Kotte, Christina. 2001. *Ethical Dimensions in British Historiographic Metafiction: Julian Barnes, Graham Swift, Penelope Lively*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag. p. 61.

⁵⁰⁹ Buell. 1999. p. 7.

⁵¹⁰ See, for instance: Grabes, Herbert. "Ethics, Aesthetics and Alterity." In: Hoffmann, Gerhard; Hornung, Alfred, eds. 1996. *Ethics and Aesthetics: The Moral Turn of Postmodernism*. Heidelberg: Winter. pp. 13-28.

⁵¹¹ Harpham, Geoffrey Galt. 1992. *Getting it Right*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. p. 7.

⁵¹² Neumann, Birgit. "What Makes Literature Valuable: Fictions of Meta-Memory and the Ethics of Remembering." In: Erll, Astrid; Grabes, Herbert; Nünning, Ansgar, eds. 2008. *Ethics in Culture: The Dissemination of Values Through Literature and Other Media*. Berlin: De Gruyter. pp. 131-152. p. 132. The ethical and the moral are, however, not to be used synonymously. Following Derek Attridge's distinction, the ethical refers to an ought, a responsibility to respond responsibly to otherness, the moral is officially stipulated by a binding code embodied by social norms, religious rules or the judicious system of a country. Attridge, Derek. "Innovation, Literature, Ethics: Relating to the Other." In: *PMLA* 114.1. 1999. pp. 20-31. p.

judgements people make and the beliefs they hold both as individuals and as collectives. In this sense, every person, community or nation can be regarded as ethical.⁵¹³ Every sphere of culture is thus inundated with values and normative judgments. In other words, “value is inescapable,” and “processes of estimating, ascribing, modifying, affirming and even denying value, in short, the process of *evaluation*, can never be avoided,”⁵¹⁴ or, as John Fekete argues:

No aspect of human life is unrelated to values, valuations, and validations. Value orientations and value relations saturate our life experiences and life practices from the smallest established microstructures of feeling, thought and behaviour to the largest established macrostructures of organizations and institutions.⁵¹⁵

Given that literary texts exist in a relationship to their extra-literary context, they are also implicitly imbued with cultural values; moreover, due to its active, constitutive position in culture, literature may further contribute to the construction of values,⁵¹⁶ or on the other hand, function as an oppositional cultural force resisting the dominant value system.

In contrast to the ethical discourse prevalent in the first half of the 20th century, dominated, for instance, by Frank Raymond Leavis’ influential notions of the timeless and universal ethical value of the “great tradition”⁵¹⁷ of English novelists, and the anti-ethical prejudice harboured by different postmodern critical schools,⁵¹⁸ ethics is not to be understood as constituting a set of “ahistorical principles, rules, and prescriptions.”⁵¹⁹ Rather, as Alasdair MacIntyre declares, ethics “characteristically presupposes sociology.”⁵²⁰ Instead of dealing with “universalist notions of good and bad,”⁵²¹ in this study, ethical values are regarded as products of historical and socio-cultural conditioning.

Once released from the claim of universality, ethics is also exonerated from the function of teaching a lesson. Instead, ethics can be regarded as “stimulating the ability to question established notions of value and initiating processes of change.”⁵²² A potential ethical function of literature is not solely bound to the propensity to reflect the values of a particular time. Rather, “if the definition of what is good and valuable is culturally conditioned and therefore contingent, the ethical value of cultural products should

p. 28.

⁵¹³ Roth, John K. “Ethics.” In: Hayes, Peter; Roth, John K., eds. 2010. *Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 722-736. p. 723.

⁵¹⁴ Connor, Steven. 1992. *Theory and Cultural Value*. Oxford/Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell. p. 8. Neumann. 2008. p. 134.

⁵¹⁵ Fekete, John. “Introductory Notes for a Postmodern Value Agenda.” In: Fekete, John, ed. 1987. *Life after Postmodernism: Essays on Value and Culture*. New York: St. Martin’s. pp. i-xix. p. i.

⁵¹⁶ Neumann. 2008. p. 132.

⁵¹⁷ Leavis, F.R. 1960. *The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad*. 4th ed. London: Chatto & Windus.

⁵¹⁸ Marxist critic Fredric Jameson, e.g., famously claims that “ethics itself [...] is the ideological vehicle” safeguarding the “legitimization of concrete power structures and domination.” Jameson. 1981. p. 101. This idea of the “ethical imperative” designed to mask the interests of a specific group of people reverberated in different theoretical accounts. Kotte. 2001. p. 63.

⁵¹⁹ Harpham. 1992. p. 9.

⁵²⁰ MacIntyre. 2007. p. 23.

⁵²¹ Neumann. 2008. p. 133.

⁵²² *Ibid.* p. 135.

be measured in terms of their capacity to reflect that contingency.”⁵²³ Literature is thus not solely a vehicle for the perpetuation of values, or “an educational medium for moral behaviour,”⁵²⁴ but the ethical value of literary works hinges on the capacity to link representations of values and “moral messages”⁵²⁵ with a “self-conscious reflection”⁵²⁶ of the process of value conditioning itself.

What is more, literature not solely represents values and scrutinises their construction, but may also influence processes of value construction, thus fulfilling an important “normative function”.⁵²⁷ Hence, indebted to Ricœur’s mimetic circle, the relationship between literature and values is characterised by the translation of existing norms and values into the fictional sphere, where they can be further investigated and expanded to probe their boundaries. Thus, literature, like society and the media, actively engages in the process of value conditioning and negotiation.⁵²⁸

What does such a view on the interplay between literature and ethics imply specifically for the assessment of the ethical functions of literary representations of terrorism? Terrorism, as outlined before, is a phenomenon that is predicated on subjective and binary, opposed moral messages and ideas about the right way to act. The ethical function of literary representations of terrorism should thus not merely be gauged by the content of literary representations of these messages but also by the self-reflexive and critical distance kept from them. Expressed differently, the ethics of literary treatments of terrorism can be understood in terms of a “metaethics”⁵²⁹ which both represents and exposes the construction and dissemination of moral messages and values in the aftermath of terrorist violence, thereby opening up a cultural space where diverging value systems and cultural “paradigm scenarios” refined by literature⁵³⁰ may be explored. In this sense, it is not solely the moral value of the content but also the “metaethics” disclosing the processes of evaluation which makes literature ethically valuable.⁵³¹ Furthermore, literary texts not only reflect and investigate the ethics of terrorism, but may also potentially engage in the process of value negotiation in two-dimensional ways, through the consolidation and stabilisation or questioning and scrutinising existing value systems in the aftermath of terrorism.

⁵²³ Ibid. p. 134.

⁵²⁴ Grabes. 2008. p. 36.

⁵²⁵ Neumann. 2008. p. 132.

⁵²⁶ Ibid. p. 132.

⁵²⁷ Baumbach; Grabes; Nünning. 2009. p. 7.

⁵²⁸ Ibid. p. 5.

⁵²⁹ Shusterman opposes the assumption that literature teaches its readers a moral lesson. He rather regards the metaethical as a sphere where the process of moral judgements is examined without practical instructions on the application of these judgements. Shusterman, Ronald. “A Metaethics of Reading.” In: *ranam* 36.1. 2003. pp. 29-34. pp. 29-30.

⁵³⁰ De Sousa, Ronald. 1987. *The Rationality of Emotion*. Cambridge, Massachusetts/ London: MIT. pp. 181-182.

⁵³¹ Neumann. 2008. pp. 135-136.

3.2.4.2. The Ethics of Representation

The question of *how* to represent a particular content is particularly relevant to fictional representations of human suffering and violence. Aesthetic representations of traumas seem to be inevitably accompanied by moral concerns surrounding the controversy of whether real-world human suffering should be subject to fictionalization at all, or if such experiences should remain the subject matter of factual accounts, for example in historiography or documentaries. Drawing on the ethical controversy surrounding literary representations of the Holocaust which, despite its singularity, lends itself to exemplify the ethical questions fictional representations of violence and terrorism are faced with, this section will discuss the ethical implications of literary representations of terrorism.

Theodor Adorno's famous dictum "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric"⁵³² underpins the predicament engendered by the challenge of representing the unrepresentable, or, in other words, a presumed tension between ethics and aesthetics.⁵³³ That is, if the aesthetic is deemed as being untouched by any kind of metaphysical or epistemological reasoning, then, consequently, artistic representations of violence are self-sufficient in that they contain their own justification.⁵³⁴ Essentially, Adorno opposes this notion that divorces the aesthetic from ethics, and the view that art is "transcendent and that traditional aesthetic forms can persist without acknowledging the occurrence of tremendous suffering, as represented synecdochically by Auschwitz."⁵³⁵ Moreover, he even seems to suggest that beyond Holocaust literature any literary representation has been rendered impossible after the Holocaust.⁵³⁶

In a similar vein, after 9/11, the dictum was drawn on to express the ubiquitous feeling that the scope and incommensurability of the atrocity and its medial imagery rendered a fictional treatment difficult if not impossible.⁵³⁷ Like the Holocaust, 9/11 was regarded as an "unspeakable" crime against humanity. Moreover, similarly to cultural debates about the Holocaust, the notion of excess⁵³⁸ reverberated in many

⁵³² Adorno, Theodor W. 1967. *Prisms*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT. p. 34.

⁵³³ Richardson, Anna. "The Ethical Limitations of Holocaust Literary Representation." In: *eSharp* 5. 2005. pp. 1-19. p. 1. http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_41171_en.pdf (last accessed 6th August 2013).

⁵³⁴ Grabes. 1996. p. 13.

⁵³⁵ Schwartz, Jaime. "Adornian Ethics for the Digital Era." In: *Interventions*. 29.01.2013.

<http://interventionsjournal.net/2013/01/29/adornian-ethics-for-the-digital-era/> (last accessed 6th August 2013)

⁵³⁶ Martínez-Alfaro, María Jesús. "Where Madness Lies: Holocaust Representation and the Ethics of Form in Martin Amis' *Time's Arrow*." In: Onega, Susana; Ganteau Jean-Michel, eds. 2011. *Ethics and Trauma in Contemporary British Fiction*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi. pp. 127-154. p. 129.

⁵³⁷ See, for example: B.R. "How 9/11 changed Fiction. After the Unthinkable." In: *The Economist*. 02.09.2013.

<https://www.economist.com/blogs/prospero/2011/09/how-911-changed-fiction> (last accessed 26th July 2013)

N. N. "'Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close': Adorno's Ghost and 9/11." In: *The Jewish Week*. 22.12.2011. http://www.thejewishweek.com/blogs/well_versed/extremely_loud_and_incredibly_close_adornos_ghost_and_911 (last accessed 7th August 2013)

Sonia Baelo-Allué provides a felicitous description of the misgivings concerning the future of fiction writers and journalists harboured in the aftermath of 11 September 2001: Baelo-Allué, Sonia. "The Depiction of 9/11 in Literature: The Role of Images and Intermedial Referencnes." In: *Radical History Review* 111. 2011. pp. 184-193. p. 185.

⁵³⁸ Trezise, Thomas. "Unspeakable." In: *Yale Journal of Criticism* 14.1. 2001. pp. 39-66. p. 42.

comments on the future of cultural production in the wake of the attacks. Here, ‘excess’ refers to the idea that the violence eludes verbalisation “because it lies outside the profane world and its language, or may not be spoken, because speaking it would be a profanation, that is, a transgression or violation of the limit between the sacred and the profane.”⁵³⁹

Yet, as Thomas Stubblefield argues, Adorno’s “prohibition on poetry and the expectation of a necessary failure of the image it engendered has largely been undermined by popular culture.”⁵⁴⁰ A recognition of the unrepresentability of the event does accordingly not preclude its depiction. Thus, for example, a number of Hollywood blockbusters such as *Schindler’s List* or *Sophie’s Choice* (1982) dealt extensively with the Holocaust previously deemed unrepresentable.⁵⁴¹ In this vein, also a plethora of literary representations not only of the Holocaust, but also of 9/11 and other homicide and terrorist attacks have been published over the years. This, in turn, even suggests that literary representations of violence may even be particularly culturally relevant, or put differently, they may even serve a specific ethical function. They can reshape cultural memory through the literary representation of traumas from an individualised perspective, thus offering a perspective on terrorism that diverges from prevalent notions and depictions.

Yet, the line between the need of representing the unsayable and exploiting human suffering seems to be very fine. That is, aesthetic representations of violence are confronted with the dilemma of aestheticizing experience, and thereby possibly rendering an inadequate, even offensive account of human suffering, on the one hand, and the ethical responsibility of giving voice to the trauma on the other hand. In his later work, Adorno addresses this predicament. Without generally distancing himself from his Holocaust dictum, he concedes that, “the abundance of real suffering tolerates no forgetting. [...] Yet this suffering [...] also demands the continued existence of art while it prohibits it; it is now virtually in art alone that suffering can find its own voice, consolation, without being betrayed.”⁵⁴² In this sense, through art, the memory of human suffering can be kept alive, while not only representing, but even ameliorating the inflicted pain and trauma.

At the same time, Adorno pinpoints the kernel of the dilemma: While aesthetic approaches to the Holocaust may fulfil an important ethical function through the preservation of the memory of what is deemed “unspeakable,” or exceeding any “verbal representation at our disposal,”⁵⁴³ aesthetic representations entail a “tangible sense of taboo.”⁵⁴⁴ That is, neither the motivations of the perpetrators nor the plight of the victims may be thoroughly understood and represented by a writer or reader. To

⁵³⁹ Ibid. p. 42.

⁵⁴⁰ Stubblefield, Thomas. 2015. *9/11 and the Visual Culture of Disaster*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. p. 176.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid. p. 176.

⁵⁴² Adorno, Theodor. “Commitment.” In: Adorno, Theodor et al. 2002. *Aesthetics and Politics: The Key Texts of the Classic Debate Within German Marxism*. 6th ed. London/New York: Verso. pp. 177-195. p. 188.

⁵⁴³ See, Thomas Trezise’s discussion of the meaning of ‘unspeakable’ and the moral implications of the term. Trezise. 2001. p. 39.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 43.

fictionalise an experience like the Holocaust implies that meaning is imported to it “which it arguably does not warrant.”⁵⁴⁵ Its representation may therefore become offensive to the survivors.⁵⁴⁶ What is more, even pleasure might be derived from the aesthetic representation of the victim’s suffering.⁵⁴⁷ In this vein, Adorno argues that the “abundance of real suffering permits forgetting.”⁵⁴⁸ The “so-called artistic rendering of the naked physical pain of those beaten down with rifle butts, contains however distantly, the possibility that pleasure can be squeezed from it.”⁵⁴⁹

However, despite the dangers of a stylisation of the atrocity⁵⁵⁰ at the expense of the dignity of the victims, this study will argue with Thomas Trezise, who contends that rather than denying the possibility of producing art, or more specifically literature, at all, it is a question of *how* rather than *whether* the Holocaust or as in our particular case, terrorist violence should be represented.⁵⁵¹ Bearing in mind that all *re*-presentations are belated accounts of events that can never be original, and are hence rendered inherently inadequate,⁵⁵² there can never be an account – factual or fictional – of what happened that may exactly convey the horrors. However, due to the imaginative qualities inherent to aesthetic treatments of violence, they may occupy a significant cultural position.

One could even go so far as to claim that there exists a “mnemonic responsibility”⁵⁵³ and “ethical imperative”⁵⁵⁴ for aesthetic or literary violence and traumas, for the price of artistic silencing could be the creation of a “vacuum of forgetfulness.”⁵⁵⁵ In this light, literature may fulfil an ethical function by providing the victims with a story, with a metaphorical face and a name by lending resonance to their otherwise forgotten voices. Instead of arguing that their fictional status and open referentiality renders them ethically questionable, one may contend that it is *because* of their aesthetic value that literary texts are particularly pertinent to giving voice to the suffering of the anonymous victims. Unlike factual accounts, literary texts can hand down to us how it might have been without claiming “truthfulness” or “objectivity.” Hence, they lend themselves to retrieving the memory of atrocities and collective homicide without trivialising them.⁵⁵⁶ Borrowing from Ulrich Baer, one may thus argue that literature is the pertinent medium for the cultural negotiation of human trauma and suffering, for it recognises “another’s experience of trauma or shock as irreducible *other* and irreducible to generalizations”.⁵⁵⁷ In

⁵⁴⁵ Richardson. 2005. p. 3.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 3.

⁵⁴⁷ Trezise. 2001. p. 43.

⁵⁴⁸ Adorno, Theodor. 1992. *Notes to Literature*, Vol. 2. New York/Oxford: Columbia University Press. p. 88.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 88.

⁵⁵⁰ Richardson. 2005. p. 6.

⁵⁵¹ Trezise. 2001. p. 43.

⁵⁵² Lang, Berel. 2000. *Holocaust Representation: Art within the Limits of History and Ethics*. Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press. p. 19.

⁵⁵³ Wolf, Philipp. “The Ethics of Literature: A Reconsideration with Three Suggestions.” In: *Anglistik: Mitteilungen des Deutschen Anglistenverbandes* 17.1. 2006. pp. 151-166. p. 161.

⁵⁵⁴ Lang. 2000. p. 19.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid. 2000. p. 19.

⁵⁵⁶ Wolf. 2006. p. 161.

⁵⁵⁷ Baer, Ulrich. 2000. *Remnants of Song: Trauma and the Experience of Modernity in Charles Baudelaire and Paul Celan*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. p. 11.

this sense, literary texts may serve an ethical function by means of personalising the suffering of the many. By representing the trauma of imaginary victims, fictional texts give voice to individual suffering, thus by extension releasing the victims from their anonymity, and rescuing them from oblivion.

3.2.4.3. Ethics, Literature and Alterity

As already indicated in the statement by Baer cited above, the ethics of literature is seen as inextricably linked to questions of otherness. While Baer refers to the singularity of human suffering, the ethics of literary texts have been frequently associated with questions of identity and alterity. Drawing upon publications by Herbert Grabes, this study argues that in ethics “the problem of how to deal with alterity is more acute in the domain of ethics than in any other.”⁵⁵⁸ That is, the encounter with the “other” distinguishes ethics from other branches of philosophy.⁵⁵⁹

Stemming from the Latin word *idem*, meaning “the same”,⁵⁶⁰ identity is not only based on a diachronic account of the self, but it is also always premised on the relation to an “other”. That is, “to be other is necessarily to be other to. What is the same to me is other to someone else and vice versa.”⁵⁶¹ In this sense, we define ourselves in relation to an “other.” Thus, ethics, identity and alterity are inherently related phenomena. As Charles Taylor observes:

To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case

⁵⁵⁸ Grabes. 1996. pp. 13-28. p. 19.

⁵⁵⁹ Harpham. 1992. p. 9.

In fact, the current concern for the ethics of literature was to some extent ushered in by the re-discovery of Emmanuel Levinas’ ethical writings on alterity, which had been largely neglected at the time of their publication. Due to Derrida’s recourse to Levinas in his later works and the introduction of his works to an English-speaking readership, Levinas’ writing assumed a prominent place in philosophy by the 1990s. (Wehrs, Donald R.; Haney P., David, eds. 2009. *Levinas and Nineteenth-Century Literature*. Cranbury: Associated University Press. p. 16.) Challenging Heidegger’s ontology, which presupposes the subordination of the “other” as a specific difference, Levinas argues that this allows for the treatment of others as if they were objects at one’s disposal. Levinas’ approach contests the traditional priority of ontology over ethics. He casts the other human being as irreducible to any common denominator, which cannot be understood or perceived in terms of a phenomenon. The ethical relation is non-reciprocal and consists of finding oneself infinitely responsible for the “other”. (Bortjun, Ileana. “Substitution and Mit(da)sein: An Existential Interpretation of the Responsibility for the Other.” In: Foran, Lisa; Uljée, Rozemund, eds. 2016. *Heidegger, Levinas, Derrida: The Question of Difference*. Switzerland: Springer. pp. 1-15. pp. 1-2.) Ethics in the Levinasian sense “is critique [...] of the liberty, spontaneity, and cognitive emprise of the ego that seeks to reduce all otherness to a point of alterity, or what Levinas also calls exteriority (*exteriorité*), that cannot be reduced to the Same.” Critchley, Simon. 2014. *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*. 3rd ed. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. p. 5.

⁵⁶⁰ *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. “Identity.”

<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/identity?q=identity> (last accessed 29th August.2013)

⁵⁶¹ Attridge. 1999. p. 23.

to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand.⁵⁶²

Hence, our identity provides us with an orientation and essentially allows us to develop an ethical stance, an idea of what is deemed “good” or “bad,” what corresponds with our worldviews and cultural values, or what is to be culturally excluded or morally condemned. Therefore, to borrow from Heinz Antor, the acts of self-creation and ethical judgements are inextricably interwoven.⁵⁶³

Furthermore, Antor sees language and “literature as the most immediately linguistic form of art”⁵⁶⁴ as particularly relevant to providing orientation and framing human horizons. It provides a paradigm for our ways of dealing with the world. For this reason, literature as the medium of pattern-building processes and value judgements is intrinsically ethical.⁵⁶⁵ Accordingly, the ethical value of literature may also be gauged along the lines of the treatment of sameness and difference, of self and other, victim and perpetrator. In literature, the reader is confronted with an “other” which may be “the voice of the narrator or of the implied author and his implied world picture, explanatory patterns, horizon or framework.”⁵⁶⁶ These horizons may or may not correspond to our own, but they are almost certainly not identical.⁵⁶⁷ Therefore, the ethical function of literature is also a contingent encounter with an “other” whose alterity is “an impingement from outside that challenges assumptions, habits, and values”⁵⁶⁸ and thus may lead to an ethical experience on the part of the reader. Influenced by Aristotle’s Nichomachian ethics, the philosopher Martha Nussbaum argues that literature, and particularly novels, are a pertinent medium for confronting the reader with otherness, because they work on two levels:

Literature is an extension of life not only horizontally, bringing the reader into contact with events or locations or persons or problems he or she has not otherwise met, but also, so to speak, vertically, giving the reader experience that is deeper, sharper and more precise than much of what takes place in life.⁵⁶⁹

Thus, literature invites its readers to lead “imaginary lives [...] beyond the reach of our life experience.”⁵⁷⁰ Literary texts are thus seen to enter a relationship with the reader. According to the ethical critic Wayne Booth, for instance, such a relationship between literature and its readers is

⁵⁶² Taylor, Charles. 1989. *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 27.

⁵⁶³ Antor. 1996. p. 68.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid. 1996. p. 69.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid. 1996. pp. 69- 70.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 71.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid. 1996. p. 71.

⁵⁶⁸ Attridge. 1999. p. 23.

⁵⁶⁹ Nussbaum, Martha C. 1990. *Love’s Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 48.

⁵⁷⁰ Grabes. 2001. p. 18.

characterised by ‘coduction,’⁵⁷¹ that is, reader and text enter into a state of reciprocal exchange of worldviews and moral values, a process that may have an ethical effect on the reader.⁵⁷²

The confrontation with an “other” in the text is pivotal to the establishment of such an ethical text-reader relationship,⁵⁷³ for literary texts allow the reader to experience unfamiliar terrain, fostering “both cognitive and emotional sympathy with, or distance from, some ‘Other’.”⁵⁷⁴ Expressed differently, the ethical value of literature may also hinge upon the confrontation of “the reader with an Other in the text, other life worlds, value frameworks, perspectives, and can thus contribute to a possible moral and rational amelioration of humanity.”⁵⁷⁵

A potential ethical function of literary works tackling terrorism is contingent on the reader’s confrontation with alterity. This study therefore proceeds from the assumption that literary works tackling terrorism, a phenomenon characterised by its supposedly clear moral divisions and binary opposition of “us” versus “them”, can potentially fulfil a pivotal ethico-cultural function. By confronting the reader with the Other of the text, that is, for instance, with the ambiguities of the different life worlds, literary representations of terrorism may challenge gridlocked ideas of the terrorist as the ultimate “Other”. This way, they may even debunk prevailing values and notions of “good” and “bad”, and scrutinise the construction of these values and identity conceptions, thereby eliciting an ethical experience in the reader.

3.2.4.4. Gauging the Ethical Experience – Empathy and the Literary Text

Such an ethical experience has been frequently associated with ‘empathy’, a term which denotes “the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.”⁵⁷⁶ Since the term ‘empathy’ was coined in the early 20th century, it has been used to describe both how a person relates to other people, and how a person relates to art.⁵⁷⁷ Empathy is particularly relevant to literature because it is seen as inherently linked to imagination. Nancy Sherman, for example, who addresses this connection between empathy and imagination, discusses the moral implication of our capacities to imagine ourselves in the position of others.⁵⁷⁸ Thus, ‘empathy’ refers, on the one hand, to the emotional engagement of, for instance, the

⁵⁷¹ Booth, Wayne C. 1988. *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press. p. 70-77.

⁵⁷² Ibid. 1988. p. 42.

⁵⁷³ See, for example, Attridge. 1999. pp. 26-27. Booth. 1988. pp. 70-72.

⁵⁷⁴ Grabes. 2001. p. 18.

⁵⁷⁵ Heinze. 2004. p. 9.

⁵⁷⁶ *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. “Empathy.”

<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/empathy?q=empathy> (last accessed 07th September 2013)

⁵⁷⁷ Harrison, Mary-Catherine. “The Paradox of Fiction and the Ethics of Empathy: Reconceiving Dickens’s Realism.” In: *Narrative* 16.3. 2008. pp. 256-278. p. 256.

⁵⁷⁸ Sherman, Nancy. “Empathy and Imagination.” In: French, Peter A.; Wettstein, Howard K., eds. 1998. *Philosophy of Emotions*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press. pp. 82-119.

reader of a novel with the characters represented in it. On the other hand, this ethical effect of literature on its readers is also seen to have an impact on the reader's behaviour in the real world.

Contemporary moral philosophers have therefore been eager to explore the link between fiction, empathy and altruistic behaviour. Martha Nussbaum and Richard Rorty, for example, regard the act of reading literature as potentially leading to moral interaction. In Nussbaum's view, "literature, with its ability to represent the specific circumstances and problems of people of many different sorts, makes an especially rich contribution"⁵⁷⁹ to our understanding of the society around us, thus making us more sensitive and better-informed citizens. Literary imagination is accordingly essential to the development of an ethical stance which "asks us to concern ourselves with the good of other people who are distant from our own."⁵⁸⁰ Hence, literary imagination is closely linked to empathy and may thus have important repercussions on public life, for, as Nussbaum further contends, "an ethics of impartial respect for human dignity will fail to engage real human beings unless they are made capable of entering imaginatively into the lives of distant others."⁵⁸¹

Similarly, Richard Rorty regards novels as vehicles sensitizing us to the pain of others.⁵⁸² In pluralistic societies, literature may endow solidarity through the power of imagination. In Rorty's words, through the readers' imaginative ability fostered by fiction, solidarity "is created by increasing our sensitivity to the particular details of the pain and humiliation of other, unfamiliar sorts of people. Such increased sensitivity makes it more difficult to marginalize people different from ourselves."⁵⁸³

Empathy, it seems, "is suddenly hot in the academy."⁵⁸⁴ As Ann Jurecic points out, even the former US President Barack Obama, for instance, associates reading literature with altruistic behaviour⁵⁸⁵ and the development towards a better citizenship, for he asserts that "we are in great need of people being able to stand in somebody else's shoes and see the world through their eyes. And the great power of books is the capacity to take you out of yourself and put you somewhere else."⁵⁸⁶

Yet scholars such as Suzanne Keen are more cautious in their assessment of the powers of literature. While Keen acknowledges that "fiction does disarm readers of some of the protective layers of cautious reasoning that might inhibit empathy in the real world", she also concedes that "readers' cognitive and affective responses do not inevitably lead to empathizing".⁵⁸⁷ Clearly, the view that fiction leads to empathy and thus altruistic behaviour seems very appealing. But how can we best gauge the ways in which literature may possibly lead to an empathetic response in the reader?

⁵⁷⁹ Nussbaum, Martha C. 1997. *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*. Cambridge, Massachusetts/London: Harvard University Press. p. 86.

⁵⁸⁰ Nussbaum, Martha C. 1995. *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*. Boston: Beacon Press. p. xvi.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid. p. xvi.

⁵⁸² Rorty, Richard. 1989. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 94.

⁵⁸³ Ibid. p. xvi

⁵⁸⁴ Jurecic, Ann. "Empathy and the Critic." In: *College English* 74.1. 2011. pp. 10-27. p. 10.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 13.

⁵⁸⁶ Cited in: Ibid. p. 13.

⁵⁸⁷ Keen, Suzanne. "A Theory of Narrative Empathy." In: *Narrative* 14.3. 2006. pp. 207-236. p. 213.

One particularly promising approach is offered by narratology. Narrative structures have always been essential to moral philosophy throughout history. Moral philosophers have harnessed narrative structures to illustrate their ideas about a good life and virtues.⁵⁸⁸ In this vein, J. Hillis Miller argues, “without storytelling there is no theory of ethics. Narratives, examples, stories [...] are indispensable to thinking about ethics. An understanding of ethics as a region of philosophical or conceptual investigation depends [...] on the mastery of the ability to interpret written stories.”⁵⁸⁹ Therefore, the ways of dominant thinking in the spheres of moral philosophy and literature have been considered as inherently related,⁵⁹⁰ or, as Richard Rorty points out, “literary interest will always be parasitic on moral interest”.⁵⁹¹

Consequently, this link between the narrative organisation and ethics suggests that the analysis of the techniques and structures chosen for a work may shed light on the ways in which it may elicit identification and empathy with characters in the reader, thus possibly predisposing him to altruistic behaviour. As Keen points out, the evocation of the readers’ empathy is often seen to rely to a great extent on identification with a character, which is not a narrative technique but a process occurring in the reader.⁵⁹² However, specific aspects and techniques of characterisation may direct the readers’ response to the characters depicted. These include naming (e.g. withholding of a name, allegorical and symbolic naming), description, indirect presentation of character traits, reliance on types, and the relative flatness or roundness of the characters.⁵⁹³ According to E.M. Forster, flatness of characters in its purest form exists when a character is constructed around one single idea or characteristic. On the other hand, the more qualities a character possess, the “rounder” he is likely to appear.⁵⁹⁴ Moreover, identification with a character and empathy may be directed by the actions that are depicted, by the characters’ role(s) in the plot trajectories, the quality of speech attributed to him/her, and the mode and content of representations of the character’s consciousness.⁵⁹⁵

However, the ways in which readers respond to a character are highly contingent on their empathetic disposition. Clearly, some readers are more empathetic than others, and some do not empathise with literary characters at all.⁵⁹⁶ As already explained in the introduction to literary functions, the functional potential of a text can never be fully controlled by its author. In this vein, the generic and formal choices made by authors may elicit an experience in the reader that is very different to that of the authors’ set-up was meant to produce.⁵⁹⁷ However, despite the non-identity of the text and the readers’ reception,

⁵⁸⁸ Antor. 1996. p. 65- 66.

⁵⁸⁹ Miller, J. Hillis. 1987. *The Ethics of Reading: Kant, de Man, Eliot, Trollope, James and Benjamin*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 3.

⁵⁹⁰ Antor. 1996. p. 66.

⁵⁹¹ Rorty. 1989. p. 167.

⁵⁹² Keen. 2006. p. 216.

⁵⁹³ Ibid. pp. 216-219.

⁵⁹⁴ Forster, Edward Morgan. [1927] 1974. *Aspects of the Novel and Related Writings*. London: Edward Arnolds. pp. 46-47.

⁵⁹⁵ Keen. 2006. pp. 216-219.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 214.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 215.

these choices allow at least plausible hypotheses about their potential impact on the reader, along the lines suggested above.

Wolfgang Müller's theory of 'ethical narratology' is aimed at providing a framework for the analysis of the specific ways in which story-telling and narrative point-of-view can have ethical implications.⁵⁹⁸ Müller's approach is particularly pertinent to this study, because instead of concentrating on the reader's reception, or on first-person narration,⁵⁹⁹ which has been frequently associated with the evocation of the readers' responsiveness,⁶⁰⁰ he seeks to gauge the ethical implications of the three basic modes of narration, that is, authorial narration, point-of-view narration and first-person narration. To begin with, authorial narration is established by a heterodiegetic narrator claiming omniscience. Due to his position, which is separated from the characters, the authorial narrator may comment and reflect on the moral issues of the plot, and may also guide the readers' perception, and ultimately also the readers' identification with the characters, or the condemnation of their moral conduct.⁶⁰¹ Secondly, the point-of-view narration featuring a covert narrator reduces the narrator's authority as a "dispenser of moral attitudes and values".⁶⁰² Instead, one or more characters serve as reflector figures, which in general suggests less explicit moral judgements, unless one of the characters makes overt moral statements. These texts guide the readers' responsiveness to the moral content and the characters indirectly. One particularly pertinent device for this covert characterisation is, for example, irony.⁶⁰³ Thirdly, the first-person narration offers direct access to the character. The mostly homodiegetic narrator might involve the readers in his/her act of self-creation, which, as we have seen, has ethical implications. That is, the protagonist usually tells the story of his or her own experiences. Due to the immediacy of first-person narration, that is the omission of an omniscient narrator or point-of-view narration, first-person narration can create an authentic, subjective voice.⁶⁰⁴ Therefore, one can argue that first-person narration may lead to a stronger identification with a character, and thus increases the likelihood of an empathetic response on the part of the reader.

The first-person narration has been a popular narrative form throughout the history of the novel, which, according to David Lodge, has become increasingly widespread in the last decades. He explains the appeal of the first-person narrative with the growing uncertainty of our times, "in which transcendental belief has been undermined by scientific materialism."⁶⁰⁵ Therefore, "the single human voice, telling its own story, can seem the only authentic way of rendering consciousness."⁶⁰⁶ According to Lodge, first-

⁵⁹⁸ Müller, Wolfgang G. "An Ethical Narratology." In: Erll; Grabes; Nünning. 2008. pp. 117-130. p. 117.

⁵⁹⁹ See, for instance, James Phelan's concept of 'character narration', mainly focusing on I-narratives.

Phelan, James. 2005. *Living to Tell About it: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration*. Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press.

⁶⁰⁰ Keen. 2006. p. 215.

⁶⁰¹ Müller. 2008. pp. 118-123.

⁶⁰² Ibid. p. 123.

⁶⁰³ Ibid. pp. 123-127.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid. pp. 127-129.

⁶⁰⁵ Lodge, David. 2002. *Consciousness and the Novel: Connected Essays*. London: Secker & Warburg. p. 87

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 87.

person narration may create an illusion of reality by “modelling itself on the discourses of personal witness”.⁶⁰⁷

Hence, the choice of the narrative situation may guide the development of the readers’ moral stance and his responsiveness to the literary text. However, it has become a commonplace that identification with a character and the readers’ empathy is best promoted by internal perspectives, which can be achieved through all three basic forms of narration; that is either first-person self-narration, point-of-view or omniscient authorial narration allowing insights into the characters’ minds.⁶⁰⁸ Thus, according to Wayne Booth, the identification with a character and sympathy⁶⁰⁹ with a character may be evoked by prolonged inside views. Booth, for instance, argues that “if an author wants intense sympathy for characters [...], then the psychic vividness of prolonged and deep inside views will help him.”⁶¹⁰

Particularly narrated monologues, that is, the narrator’s representation of the characters consciousness and emotions, are seen to evoke empathy in the reader.⁶¹¹ Sylvia Adamson, therefore, even labels this narrative form after its alleged effect as ‘empathetic narrative’, a form of narrative that arose in the 19th-century novel, facilitating the presentation of the point of view of one or more characters.⁶¹² Likewise, interior monologues, i.e. the apparently unmediated presentation of a character’s thoughts and feelings, are seen to produce a strong response in the reader.⁶¹³ Whether psycho-narration, which is characterised by an authorial narrator who is “unable to refrain from embedding his character’s private thoughts in his own generalizations about human nature,”⁶¹⁴ on the other hand, can be associated with the arousal of empathy, is rather controversial.⁶¹⁵ Dorrit Cohn, for example, sees a correlation between the extent to which the narrator pronounces his external view on the character’s thoughts, and the lack of psychological depth of the characters.⁶¹⁶

Clearly, the specific ways in which the characters’ emotions are represented may shed light on narrative attempts to evoke empathy. Ultimately, however, the actual effect on the reader cannot be predicted merely by the analysis of the narrative forms applied. This study will analyse the potential ethical value and function of the works tackling terrorism. However, regarding the notion of literary functions

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 87.

⁶⁰⁸ Keen. 2006. p. 219.

⁶⁰⁹ ‘Sympathy’ is the semantic cousin of ‘empathy.’ While empathy refers to “the ability to understand and share the feelings of another,” sympathy denotes “feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else’s misfortune.” (ODO. “Empathy.”)

⁶¹⁰ Booth, Wayne. 1973. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. 10th ed. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press. pp. 377-388.

⁶¹¹ Miall, David. “On the Necessity of Empirical Studies of Literary Reading.” In: *Frame* 14.2000. pp. 43-59. p. 57.

⁶¹² Adamson, Sylvia. “The Rise and Fall of Empathetic Narrative: A Historical Perspective on Perspective.” In: Van Peer, Willie; Chatman, Seymour, eds. 2001. *New Perspectives on Narrative Perspective*. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp. 83-99. p. 83.

⁶¹³ Keen. 2006. p. 219.

⁶¹⁴ Cohn, Dorrit. 1978. *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p. 22.

⁶¹⁵ Keen. 2006. pp. 219-220.

⁶¹⁶ Cohn. 1978. p. 25.

underlying this study, the effects of literary representations of terrorist violence, including their possible impact on readers' altruistic behaviour, can only be approached by making some plausible assumptions about what these effects might be.

3.3. The Functions of Genre and the Idiosyncracies of the Novel

Having delineated the potential functional dimensions of literary texts from different theoretical angles – ranging from the aesthetic to the cultural, mnemonic and ethical – in the following, the concept of 'genre' will be elucidated, for *Funktionsgeschichte* exists in a dynamic relationship to approaches to generic history.⁶¹⁷ It seems therefore worthwhile to consider both strands – *Funktionsgeschichte* and generic history – as related and linked ideas. The second subsection will set out to illuminate the specific formal and functional idiosyncrasies of the novel in general. Given that a variety of different texts will be analysed, ranging from late Victorian dynamite novels to contemporary fictions of terrorism, from paperback thrillers to epistolary novels and “Black British” approaches to terrorist violence, this study will seek to carve out the functional potential of these specific generic approaches in the subsequent analysis of the literary texts.

3.3.1. A Functionalist Approach to Genre

The changes of literary functions also manifest themselves in the emergence of new genres or changes in established genres.⁶¹⁸ In this sense, considering the proactive, poietic character of literature, genres can be seen as a reflection of and response to socio-historical changes.⁶¹⁹ As such, they may also be conceived of as “contents of memory”⁶²⁰ or “repositories of cultural memory,”⁶²¹ for they may function as containers of conventionalised schemata for versions of the past.⁶²² Therefore, as already indicated, *Funktionsgeschichte* and generic history need to be considered as intertwined concepts.

⁶¹⁷ Gymnich, Marion; Neumann, Birgit. “Vorschläge für eine Relationierung verschiedener Aspekte und Dimensionen des Gattungskonzeptes: Der Kompaktbegriff Gattung.” In: Gymnich, Marion; Neumann, Birgit; Nünning, Ansgar, eds. 2007. *Gattungstheorie und Gattungsgeschichte*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag. pp. 31-52. p. 47.

⁶¹⁸ Gymnich; Nünning. 2005. pp. 15-16.

⁶¹⁹ Schmidt, Sabine. 2004. *Das domestizierte Subjekt: Subjektkonstitution und Genderdiskurs in ausgewählten Werken Adalbert Stifters*. St. Ingbert: Röhrig. p. 18.

⁶²⁰ Erll. 2011. pp. 147-148.

⁶²¹ See, the volumes edited by Van Gorp, Hendrik; Musarra-Schroeder, Ulla. eds. 2000. *Genres as Repositories of Cultural Memories: Volume 5 of the Proceedings of the xvth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association 'Literature as Cultural Memory'*. Amsterdam/Atlanta: Rodopi B.V.

⁶²² Erll. 2011. p. 74.

See, e.g., also Olick's essay on 'genre memory': Olick, Jeffrey K. “Genre Memories and Memory Genres: A Dialogical Analysis of May 8, 1945: Commemorations in the Federal Republic of Germany.” In: *American Sociological Review* 64.3. 1999. pp. 381-402
Rupp. 2010. pp. 24-32 Both assume a Bakhtinian perspective on the memory of genre.

Genres are also central to Mikhail Bakhtin's literary theory, who regards them as a fundamental influence to the ways in which we "visualise and conceptualise the world."⁶²³ As Ronald D. LeBlanc explains, in his writings, Bakhtin invests genres with a life of their own, describing them with organic metaphors and framing them in terms of constant rebirths and renewals.⁶²⁴ Thus, Bakhtin argues that "a genre lives in the present, always remembers its past, its beginning. Genre is a representative of creative memory in the process of literary development.[...] For a correct understanding of a genre, therefore, it is necessary to return to its sources."⁶²⁵ Thus, as Meili Steele explains, genres represent for Bakhtin not solely rules and norms for literary production, but are also vessels of cultural memory and ways of perceiving and representing the world which inform both literary and non-literary utterances.⁶²⁶

It becomes clear from the above that not only do genres provide "answers to 'cultural' problems,"⁶²⁷ but the memory of genres also takes on the form of generic "intertextuality."⁶²⁸ Genres function as archives that reproduce the memory of literary texts. They grant insights into the changes and development of literature.⁶²⁹ Hence, genres evolve dialogically.⁶³⁰ They always refer back to genre memories, and at the same time renew memories. According to Jan Rupp, genres function on three levels: the inner-literary level of inter-textual relations, the individual or cognitive level, enabling individuals to make sense of the past, and the level of cultural memory.⁶³¹

Consequently, genres always have a diachronic dimension, and at the same time express cultural needs at a particular point in time.⁶³² That is to say, "genres are formal structures that have a historical existence in the sense that they come into being, flourish, and decay, waxing and waning in complex relationship to other historical phenomena."⁶³³ Synchronically, genres function as "literary-social institutions"⁶³⁴ that

⁶²³ LeBlanc, Ronald D. "A la recherche du genre perdu: Fielding, Gogol, and Bakhtin's Genre Memory." In: Greenleaf, Monica; Moeller-Sally, Stephen, eds. 1998. *Russian Subjects: Empire, Nation and the Culture of the Golden Age*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press. pp. 101-122. p. 101.

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

⁶²⁵ Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1984. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. p. 106.

⁶²⁶ Steele, Meili. 1997. *Critical Confrontations: Literary Theories in Dialogue*. Columbia: South Carolina University Press. p. 31.

⁶²⁷ Van Gorp, Hendrik; Musalla-Schroeder, Ulla. "Introduction: Literary Genres and Cultural Memory." In: Van Gorp; Musarra-Schroeder. 2000. pp. i-ix. p. ii.

Ibid. p. ii. See, for example, Renate Lachmann who links the intertextuality of literary texts to "models of memory inherent in cultural systems." Lachmann, Renate. 1997. *Memory and Literature: Intertextuality in Russian Modernism*. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press.

⁶²⁹ Humphrey, Richard. "Literarische Gattung und Gedächtnis." In: Erlil; Nünning. 2005. pp. 73-96. p. 92.

⁶³⁰ Paul Copley argues that also from a semiotic perspective, genre must be understood dialogically: "To posit genre as an unchangeable thing – or even as an object – is, effectively, to maintain an untenable monologue perspective on signification. Another way of putting it is to say that genre cannot be sustained by anything other than dialogue." Copley, Paul. "Objectivity and Immanence in Genre Theory." In: Dowd, Garin; Stevenson, Lesley; Strong, Jeremy, eds. 2006. *Genre Matters: Essays in Theory and Criticism*. Bristol/Portland: Intellect. pp. 41-55. p. 46.

⁶³¹ Rupp. 2010. pp. 27.

⁶³² Gymnich; Neumann. 2007. p. 39.

Hempfer, Klaus W. "Gattung." In: Weimar. 1997. pp. 651-655. p. 651.

⁶³³ McKeon, Michael. 2000. *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*. Baltimore/London: John Hopkins University Press. p. 1.

⁶³⁴ Voßkamp, Wilhelm. "Gattungen als literarisch-soziale Institutionen." In: Hinck, Walter, ed. 1977. *Textsortenlehre- Gattungsgeschichte*. Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer. pp. 27-44. p. 30.

crystallise and stabilise dominant structures.⁶³⁵ They mould pre-literary and unformed experiences into a conventional shape.⁶³⁶ This way, as Anis Bawarshi puts it, “genres [...] endow literary texts with a social identity within the ‘universe of literature’, constituting a literary text’s and its producer’s ‘mode of being’.”⁶³⁷ Similarly, Carolyn Miller describes genres in her seminal essay “Genre as Social Action” as “typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations.”⁶³⁸

In this vein, literary genres, as Wilhelm Voßkamp points out, can be understood as possible selections reducing the complexity of the literary sphere to models of communication. Dominant structures become institutionalised through the stabilising quality of genres. They may evoke expectations in an audience who associates particular continuities with a genre.⁶³⁹ They function as interpretative tools, presenting “a social world or a partial view of one that includes configurations of time and space, notions of causality, and human motivation, and ethical and aesthetic values.”⁶⁴⁰

Thus, functioning as “storehouses of cultural knowledge and possibility,”⁶⁴¹ genres foster the creation of a literary work by providing the conventions shaping it.⁶⁴² Thus, they fundamentally shape the composition of a text, or, as Martin Amis puts it, “genre really does determine outcomes.”⁶⁴³ They serve as “social contracts between a writer and a specific public, whose function is to specify the proper use of a particular cultural artefact.”⁶⁴⁴ In the light of this, genres should be understood as “conventionalised frames for our ways of worldmaking.”⁶⁴⁵ That is, they react with culture by shaping the way in which reality is represented, perceived and interpreted.⁶⁴⁶ Accordingly, the conventions of a particular genre predetermine how a text is both produced and received. Thus, the genre of the individual fictional representations of terrorism is essential to the text’s potential functions.

Yet genre is a contentious concept. Ever since Aristotle’s foundational *Poetics*, distinguishing between the dramatic, epic and lyric, the concept of genre has proven to be historically variable and theoretically elusive.⁶⁴⁷ That is, theoretical approaches often suffer from the inconsistent and ill-defined

⁶³⁵ Ibid. p. 30.

⁶³⁶ Gymnich; Neumann. 2007. p. 40.

⁶³⁷ Bawarshi, Anis. “The Genre Function.” In: *College English* 62.3. 2000. pp. 335-360. p. 346.

⁶³⁸ Miller, Carolyn R. “Genre as Social Action.” In: *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70. 1984. pp. 151-167. p. 159.

⁶³⁹ Volkmann. 1977. pp. 29-30.

According to Volkmann, the history of genre is shaped by prototypical works in the one hand, and the literary responses triggered by them. (Ibid. p. 30) For a detailed description of the processes inducing the emergence of a new genre, see, for example: Fishelov, David. “The Birth of a Genre.” In: *European Journal of English Studies* 3.1. 1999. pp. 51-63.

⁶⁴⁰ Seitel, Peter. “Theorizing Genres – Interpreting Works.” In: *New Literary History* 34.2. 2003. pp. 275-297. p. 275.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid. p. 275.

⁶⁴² Bawarshi. 2000. p. 340.

⁶⁴³ Cited in: Duff. 2000. p. 1.

⁶⁴⁴ Jameson. 1981. p. 92.

⁶⁴⁵ Neumann, Birgit; Nünning, Ansgar. “Einleitung: Probleme, Aufgaben und Perspektiven der Gattungstheorie und Gattungsgeschichte.” In: Gymnich; Neumann; Nünning. 2007. pp. 1-28. p. 6. (My translation).

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 6.

⁶⁴⁷ Thomas Beebee, for instance, quite rightly categorizes the array of critical approaches to ‘genre’ in terms of four different stages: “Genre as rules, genre as species, genre as patterns of textual features, and genres as

use of the term 'genre'.⁶⁴⁸ What is more, the criteria for genre distinctions vary fundamentally. In the 20th century, for instance, genre theory oscillated between privileging formal criteria for the description of textual differences and a functionalist approach, including all naturally occurring forms or 'speech genres',⁶⁴⁹ or even extra-literary criteria.⁶⁵⁰ Peter Stockwell quite rightly points out that genres "can be defined socially, historically, functionally, authorially, politically, stylistically, arbitrarily, idiosyncratically, or by combination of any of these."⁶⁵¹

What is more, with the advent of postmodernism and post-structuralism, the validity of the concept of genre which had hitherto served as "a basic assumption of Western literary discourse"⁶⁵² has become highly contested. Particularly the hybridisation of literary texts, that is, their propensity to simultaneously comprise a number of generic constraints, evoked "anti-generic" convictions.⁶⁵³ However, in recent literary and cultural theory, the rejection of genre and its allegedly narrow corset of constraints, rules and conventions, has not only abated, but the term 'genre' has arguably lost its negative connotations, and operates, instead, as a "valorising term" and "enabling device."⁶⁵⁴ Some critics have therefore even proclaimed a "generic turn"⁶⁵⁵ in cultural and literary studies.

Most of the plethora of recent attempts to reconceptualise genre conceive them as "pragmatic constructs through and through"⁶⁵⁶ which are fundamentally constructed, albeit instrumental in nature. That is to say, genres are conceived to "function to classify or to organise material."⁶⁵⁷ Thus, the notion that genres are self-contained concepts has been dismissed.⁶⁵⁸ Rather, they are not to be reduced to being purely *a priori* taxonomic principles, but should be considered as serving a variety of socio-cultural and aesthetic functions.⁶⁵⁹

reader conventions," corresponding to "the four positions in the great debate about the location of textual meaning: in authorial intention, in the work's historical or literary context, in the text itself, or in the reader." Beebee, Thomas O. 1994. *The Ideology of Genre: A Comparative Study of Generic Instability*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press. p. 3.

⁶⁴⁸ Neumann; Nünning. 2007. p. 3.

⁶⁴⁹ Kearns, Michael. "Genre Theory in Narrative Studies." In: Herman, David; Jahn, Manfred; Ryan, Marie-Laure eds. 2005. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. London/New York: Routledge. p. 202.

⁶⁵⁰ Neumann; Nünning. 2007. p. 2.

⁶⁵¹ Stockwell, Peter. 2002. *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*. London/New York: Routledge. p. 28.

⁶⁵² Duff, David. "Introduction." In: Duff, David, ed. 2000. *Modern Genre Theory*. Essex: Longman. pp. 1-24. p. 1.

⁶⁵³ De Geest; Dirk; van Gorst, Hendrik "Literary Genres from a Systemic-Functionalist Perspective." In: *European Journal of English Studies* 3.1. 1999. pp. 33-50. p. 35.

⁶⁵⁴ Duff. 2000. p. 2.

⁶⁵⁵ See, for example, Rupp. 2010. p. 19.

⁶⁵⁶ Fohrmann, Jürgen. "Remarks Towards a Theory of Literary Genres." In: *Poetics* 17.3. 1988. pp. 273-285. p. 282.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 282.

⁶⁵⁸ Rupp. 2010. p. 19.

⁶⁵⁸ Rupp. 2010. pp. 19-20.

⁶⁵⁹ See, for example: Dubrow, Heather. 1982. *Genre*. London/New York: Methuen. p. 46.

Ferreira Duarte, João. "Introduction: Genre Matters." In: *European Journal of English Studies* 3.1. 1999. pp. 3-10. pp. 3-4.

By drawing on a Cultural Studies and functionalist approach, this study is predicated on a notion of genres as responses to historical change and social processes,⁶⁶⁰ which are characterised by a dual nature: The application of particular generic pattern constitutes a reaction to cultural-historical challenges and fulfils readers' expectations with respect to continuity, on the one hand, and the flexible use of generic conventions may render the exploration of marginalised realities and new expectations in the audience on the other.⁶⁶¹ This dialectic of synthesising the requirements of the readership and the production of new needs is fundamental to the evolution of generic history.⁶⁶² In other words, genres constitute significant cultural forces that actively shape the readers' perception through the fulfilment or flouting of conventional standards. Genres, thus, enter into a dialogical relationship with the surrounding culture. Drawing on Jürgen Link's 'interdiscourse analysis', Marion Gymnich and Birgit Neumann point to the crucial cultural function of selecting and integrating the cultural and literary knowledge of their context.⁶⁶³ Despite their fundamental historico-cultural role and significance for literary studies, the classification of different genres has proven to be difficult. Indebted to Aristotle, the tripartite division between narrative, drama and poetry still serves as a basis for many approaches. However, considering the multifaceted spectrum of literary texts, these broad categories have engendered a variety of more narrow classifications that have been conceived in order to account for differences between literary texts.⁶⁶⁴ Genre classifications are often rather arbitrary, and differ in the scope of the conventions attributed to them.⁶⁶⁵ That is to say, the term 'genre' is used to refer to very different concepts, ranging from the traditional umbrella categories distinguishing lyric, drama and narratives to the differentiation of a plethora of sub-categories to these broad classifications.⁶⁶⁶ While the discussion of the controversies surrounding the conception of a systematic genre typology would transgress the boundaries of this study, it seems worthwhile for the subsequent analysis to mention that the identification of the generic categories includes to varying degrees both criteria regarding the content and formal-structural aspects.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶⁰ Ferreira Duarte. 1999. p. 4.

⁶⁶¹ Neumann; Nünning. 2007. p. 3.

Wilhelm Voßkamp, for instance, conceives of genres as "syntheses of needs" which articulate particular historical challenges and meet the needs of the audience, and at the same time, due to their highly selective nature, inspire new needs. Voßkamp, Wilhelm. "Literaturgeschichte als Funktionsgeschichte der Literatur: Vorträge des Deutschen Germanistentages Aachen 1982." In: Cramer, Thomas, ed. 1983. *Literatur und Sprache im historischen Prozess*. Tübingen: Niemeyer. pp. 32-50. p. 40.

⁶⁶² Voßkamp. 1983. p. 41.

⁶⁶³ Gymnich; Neumann. 2007. p. 40.

⁶⁶⁴ Neumann; Nünning. 2007. pp. 4-5.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 4.

See also: Nünning, Ansgar. "Kriterien der Gattungsbestimmung: Kritik und Grundzüge von Typologien narrative-fiktionaler Gattungen am Beispiel des historischen Romans." In: Gymnich; Neumann; Nünning. 2007. pp. 73-99. pp. 75-77.

⁶⁶⁶ Gymnich; Neumann. 2007. p. 31.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 36.

3.3.2. The Genre of the Novel

In the course of its history – since its emergence in 18th century England until the present day – the novel has advanced to become the “prototypical narrative genre,”⁶⁶⁸ and has been dubbed the “dominant genre”⁶⁶⁹ of modern literary history, which ascended to one of the most important media for the reflection of social, psychological and moral issues.⁶⁷⁰ As Micheal McKeon puts it, “to speak of the novel [...] was to speak of narrative ‘as such.’”⁶⁷¹ Hence, the dominant narrative genre is seen to constitute a particularly influential cultural force.

To begin with, from a functionalist perspective, the novel has traditionally been associated with the representation of interiority and consciousness. That is to say, it has always been linked to the capacity to render individual psychology and depict the inner life of its characters.⁶⁷² Georg Lukács, most notably, argues in his highly influential *Theory of the Novel*, written in 1914/15 that ‘interiority’ is essential to the “inner form of the novel.” It can be regarded as the “process of the problematic individual’s journeying towards himself [...] towards a clear self-recognition.”⁶⁷³ In this sense, “the novel tells of the adventure of interiority; the content of the novel is the story of the soul that goes to find itself, that seeks adventures in order to be proved and tested by them, and, by proving itself, to find its own essence.”⁶⁷⁴ The novel as the “epic of a world that has been abandoned by God”⁶⁷⁵ therefore celebrates the wholeness of the individual and stresses subjectivity in a world lacking the prior “objective and extensive totality”.⁶⁷⁶ In other words, the genre of the novel emerged as a “vehicle for modern subjectivity,”⁶⁷⁷ and its rise thus epitomises the modern paradigm shift from the epic depiction of public actions to the representation of privacy and the psychology of the characters.⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁶⁸ Sommer, Roy. “Drama and Narrative.” In: Herman, David; Jahn, Manfred; Ryan, Marie-Laure eds. 2005. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. London/New York: Taylor Francis. pp. 119-124. pp. 119-124. p. 120.

⁶⁶⁹ Cited in: Bracht, Brahnham, R. “Inventing the Novel.” In: Mandelker, Amy, ed. 1995. *Bakhtin in Contexts: Across Disciplines*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. pp. 79-87. p. 80.

⁶⁷⁰ Nünning. 1992. p. 201.

⁶⁷¹ McKeon. 2000. p. xiii-xiv.

⁶⁷² Bray, Joe. 2003. *The Epistolary Novel: Representation of Consciousness*. London/New York: Routledge. pp. 1, 3.

⁶⁷³ Lukács, Georg. [1916] 2006. *The Theory of the Novel*. London: Merlin. p. 80.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 89.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 88.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 89.

⁶⁷⁷ Warner, William B. 1998. *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684-1750*. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press. p. 32.

⁶⁷⁸ Voßkamp, Wilhelm. “Der Bildungsroman als literarisch-soziale Institution. Begriffs- und funktionsgeschichtliche Überlegungen zum deutschen Bildungsroman am Ende des 18. und Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts.” In: Wagenknecht, Christian, ed. 1989. *Zur Terminologie der Literaturwissenschaft*. Stuttgart: Metzler. pp. 337-352. p. 338.

Likewise, Ian Watt regards the novel as an epitome of an “individualist reorientation”.⁶⁷⁹ He therefore associates in his highly influential *The Rise of the Novel* the emergence of the new literary form in the 18th century with a new formal realism which “purports to be an authentic account of the actual experiences of individuals.”⁶⁸⁰ The narrative realism of the novel has traditionally been linked to the transparency of fictional minds.⁶⁸¹ However, while realism has been especially associated with the origin of the novel in 18th century England, considering the imaginative, fantastic or gothic elements that may be incorporated into a novel, the extent to which novels are negotiating between the realistic and fictitious has been repeatedly reconsidered.⁶⁸²

Nonetheless, one can claim that in contrast to other literary genres, the rise of the novel has been premised on the convention of an authentic representation of individuality and “the particulars of the times and places of their actions.”⁶⁸³ In other words, the novel has always been claimed to present a “particularly compelling imitation”⁶⁸⁴ of reality. Compared to dramatic fiction, the novelistic endorsement of interiority “reveals the hidden side of human nature,” and, paradoxically, derives a life-likeness from the representation of feelings and thoughts of others, which are usually kept hidden in real life.⁶⁸⁵ What is more, with the “turning inward” of the modernist writers of the early 20th century, the “mimesis of inner consciousness” has, according to William Warner, become a feature of advanced novel writing.⁶⁸⁶ Thus internal focalisation and the rendering of the characters’ consciousness are even regarded by some commentators as the “culminating point in the development of narrative realism.”⁶⁸⁷ Hamburger’s *The Logic of Literature* is among the first theoretical works that acknowledges the significance of the novel’s capacity to render a mimesis of consciousness.⁶⁸⁸ She argues that “epic fiction is the sole epistemological instance where the I-originality (or subjectivity) of a third person qua third person can be portrayed.”⁶⁸⁹ In other words, only narrative fiction allows the rendering of the subjectivity and consciousness of characters through the lenses of a diegetic narrator.

The individuality and subjectivity represented in the novel furthermore entails a specific treatment of time. That is to say, the construction and exploration of a character’s personality relies to a great extent

⁶⁷⁹ Watt, Ian. 1967. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. 5th ed. London: Chatto & Windus. p. 13.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 27.

⁶⁸¹ Cohn. 1978.p. 7.

See also Monika Fludernik, who associates “psychology – the tracing of people’s emotions, supposed inclinations, the establishment of their character” with the realist novel. Fludernik, Monika. 1996. *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology*. London/New York: Routledge. p. 161.

⁶⁸² Simonsen; Ping Huang; Rosendahl Thomson. 2004. pp. 4-5.

⁶⁸³ Watt. 1967. p. 32.

⁶⁸⁴ Warner. 1998. p. 32.

⁶⁸⁵ Cohn. 1978. pp. 5-6.

⁶⁸⁶ Warner. 1998. p. 39.

⁶⁸⁷ Fludernik. 1996. p. 170.

⁶⁸⁸ See also: Cohn. 1978. pp. 7-8.

⁶⁸⁹ Hamburger, Käte. 1973. *The Logic of Literature*. 2nd ed. Bloomington/London: Indiana University Press. p. 83.

on the interpretation of its past and present self-awareness.⁶⁹⁰ Time is, hence, an “essential category”⁶⁹¹ in this context, for the characters of a novel may only be individualised against the backdrop of particularised time and place. Watt therefore claims that the novel engages more than any other literary form in the development of its characters in the course of time. The temporal flux inherent to the novel lends itself to exploring areas of everyday life that are usually not that easily accessible in other literary genres and to the detailed exploration of the development of the characters.⁶⁹² These generic features entail fundamental assumptions about the specific functional potential of the novel.

To begin with, from a narratological perspective, narratives are regarded as “one of the most powerful ways of worldmaking,”⁶⁹³ for they may function as tools to make sense of experiences, through the construction of meaningful temporal processes.⁶⁹⁴ What is more, without the narrative construction of reality an understanding of human intentions, personal development, and empathy would be impossible. Fictional narratives are seen to be particularly valuable, for they allow the creation of alternative worlds, and insights into the characters’ consciousness.⁶⁹⁵ Novels as prototypical narrative fictions are furthermore particularly apt to both articulating collective experiences, values, and concepts of identity and influencing their cultural context.⁶⁹⁶ These dynamics, as we have seen, have, e.g., been described by Ricoeur’s mimetic circle, which focuses on the poietic power of narrative literature.⁶⁹⁷ The novel may therefore be suspected of being a particularly powerful world-creating cultural force. This, in turn, entails further inferences about the specific cultural capacities of the novel.

Firstly, as already explained in the section on the mnemonic function of literature, narratives are essential to both literature and the formation of individual and cultural memory and identity.⁶⁹⁸ They play, hence, a significant role in every memory culture.⁶⁹⁹ The historian Jörn Rüsen, for instance, acknowledges their cultural significance, consisting in the temporal orientation provided through the meaningful combination of “experience and expectation,”⁷⁰⁰ which provides the coordinates for an

⁶⁹⁰ Watt. 1967. p. 21.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid. p. 21.

⁶⁹² Ibid. p. 21-22.

⁶⁹³ Nünning, Ansgar. “Making Events – Making Stories – Making Worlds: Worlds of Worldmaking from a Narratological Point of View.” In: Nünning; Nünning; Neumann. 2010. pp. 189-214. p. 191.

For this reason, the world-creating potential of narratives has gained impetus from a variety of studies in a number of fields, including philosophy, psychology, linguistics, all of which are concerned with the ways symbol systems are used to make sense of experiences. Herman, David. “Narrative Ways of Worldmaking.” In: Heinen, Sandra; Sommer, Roy, eds. 2009. *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research*. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter. pp. 71-87. p. 72.

⁶⁹⁴ Erll, Astrid. “Cultural Studies Approaches to Narrative.” In: Herman; Jahn; Ryan. 2005. pp. 88-93. p. 89.

⁶⁹⁵ Nünning, Vera. “The Making of Fictional Worlds: Processes, Features, and Functions.” In: Nünning; Nünning; Neumann. 2010. pp. 215-243. p. 226, p. 238.

⁶⁹⁶ Erll. 2005. p. 91.

⁶⁹⁷ See, also: Nünning, Vera. 2010. pp. 216-217.

⁶⁹⁸ See chapter 3.2.3.5.

⁶⁹⁹ Erll. 2011. p. 147.

⁷⁰⁰ Rüsen, Jörn. 2005. *History: Narration, Interpretation, Orientation*. New York/Oxford: Berghahn. p. 2.

outlook on the future.⁷⁰¹ Hence, “narration [...] is the process of making sense of the experience of time.”⁷⁰²

Therefore, the novel as the prototypical narrative genre with a focus on character development, interiority, and the mediation of the characters’ experiences is seen as a particularly pertinent medium for the staging of the characters’ life experiences and cultural memories, individual and communal retrospection and identity formations. The genre thus assumes a privileged position in memory culture,⁷⁰³ and in a proactive way, novels not solely imitate versions of memory, but also produce the very versions of the past they represent. Due to the variety of specific aesthetic techniques available to the novelist, this genre of the novel is unique in the extent to which it enables the elucidation of the characters’ experiences. Novels are seen to be predestined for the representation of memory, and may simultaneously further insights into the memory culture the text refers to. The subsequent analysis of the novelistic treatments of terrorism will therefore discuss in how far these works may serve such a prominent mnemonic function.⁷⁰⁴

Secondly and closely related to the novel’s capacity to mould individual and collective experiences into stories, the genre is further seen to be conducive to an ethical function of literature. The narrative construction of personal stories, granting insights into the characters’ consciousness and allowing for the comprehension of individuality and development throughout time, have been related to an ethical function.

That is, narratives and the novel, in particular, have been associated with moral philosophy. Narratives are thus often seen as inextricably bound to ethics, and even more so, narrative has been identified “as ethics.”⁷⁰⁵ In fact, with a few exceptions, ethical criticism tends to concentrate exclusively on the novel.⁷⁰⁶ For example, Martha Nussbaum links her moral-philosophical interest to specific works of narrative literature, and particularly to the genre of the novel. Following her argument, in comparison to drama and lyric poetry, the novel is “a close and careful interpretative description”⁷⁰⁷ of life, and therefore particularly lends itself to the dissemination of moral messages and values. As we have already seen before,⁷⁰⁸ she further associates novel reading with an understanding of otherness and the evocation of empathy in the readership, for the narrative imagination epitomised by the novel and its emphasis on interiority and character development, “inspires intense concern with the fate of characters and defines those characters as containing a rich inner life [...] in the process, the reader learns to have respect for

⁷⁰¹ Ibid. p. 2.

⁷⁰² Ibid. p. 10.

⁷⁰³ Neumann. 2008. pp. 340.

⁷⁰⁴ Processes of remembering are not only represented in novels, but also in a number of so-called memory plays or memory poetry. However, these genres are irrelevant to this study, and will therefore not be discussed in greater detail. (See, Ibid. p. 340).

⁷⁰⁵ Newton, Zachary Adam. 1995. *Narrative Ethics*. Cambridge, Massachusetts/London: Harvard University Press. p. 11.

⁷⁰⁶ Korthals Altes, Liesbeth. “Ethical Turn.” In: Herman; Jahn; Ryan. 2005. pp. 142-146. p. 142.

⁷⁰⁷ Nussbaum. 1990. p. 47.

⁷⁰⁸ See 3.2.4.

the hidden contents of that inner world.”⁷⁰⁹ In other words, through its form and thematic material, the novel represents precisely what ethics is about. That is, a reflection on human action, desires and experiences throughout time, presented through different perspectives,⁷¹⁰ or as Nussbaum pinpoints it in *Poetic Justice*, the novel is “still the central morally serious yet popularly engaging fictional form of our culture.”⁷¹¹

However, one needs to bear in mind that these functional attributes are not static phenomena, but have changed substantially throughout history. Genres are dynamic entities and an array of subgenres have been harnessed throughout the history of literary efforts to represent terrorism. That is to say, the novel provides different answers to the specific challenges of an era and although novels are very pertinent for the fulfilment of cultural, mnemonic and ethical functions, the memory culture, values and ideas prevailing, say, in late-Victorian Britain differ fundamentally from those of the post-9/11 culture. It is therefore one of the epistemological interests of this study to define these historical and generic differences and continuities of the various representations of terrorism.

4. Literary Representations of Terrorism in British Literature: A Historical Perspective

Much has been said so far about the supposed causes and effects of terrorism, the subjective factors involved in the construction of the phenomenon, and the reality-making effect of discourses surrounding it. Yet one needs to bear in mind that “both the phenomenon of terrorism and our conceptions of it depend on historical context.”⁷¹² Therefore, this section is aimed at elucidating the contexts in which terrorism emerged, and, furthermore, form the backdrop against which literary responses have been articulated.

While the “systematic terrorism”⁷¹³ dealt with in literary representations first surfaced in the second half of the 19th century, its roots can be traced back to ancient times.⁷¹⁴ What distinguishes terrorism in its modern guise from its premodern progenitors is the strategic exploitation of the potentials of newly emerged mass media. In other words, it was in the 19th century, when terrorists started to use media

⁷⁰⁹ Nussbaum. 1997. p. 90.

For a brief outline of her predilection of the novel, see also, e.g.: Nussbaum, Martha C. “Exactly and Respectably: A Defense of Ethical Criticism.” In: Davis; Womack. 2001. pp. 59-79

⁷¹⁰ Korthals Altes. 2005. p. 142.

⁷¹¹ Nussbaum. 1995. p. 6.

⁷¹² Crenshaw. 2007. p. 3.

⁷¹³ Laqueur, Walter. 1977. *Terrorism*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson. p. 11.

⁷¹⁴ Two distinct currents can be identified as the origin of contemporary terrorism. One is the secular concept of tyrannicide that can, on a theoretical level, be associated with Aristotle, and, more concretely, with Plutarch’s analysis of the conspiracy involved in Cesar’s assassination. The second current is the religious terrorism perpetrated by diverse Islamic, Judaic and early Christian sects who were willing to murder for their “higher cause.” Miller, Martin A. “The Intellectual Origins of Modern Terrorism in Europe.” In: Crenshaw. 2007. pp. 27-62. p. 29.

attention to disseminate their message,⁷¹⁵ and to build the symbiotic relationship that constitutes the key to terrorism's modern guise as a violent communication strategy. What is more, the development of terrorism is not only fostered by innovations in mass media technology, but also by advanced types of weapons.⁷¹⁶ For example, the invention of dynamite by Alfred Nobel in 1863, as well as the fulminate mercury detonating process in 1867,⁷¹⁷ provided the perpetrators with the means to successfully carry out clandestine operations which, at the same time, produced the greatest effect possible.

Terrorism has been subject to great changes and terrorists have been motivated by a variety of ideologies and grievances. Scholars have therefore been eager to identify different phases or types of terrorism accounting for this transformation.⁷¹⁸ For example, one particularly useful approach is the 'wave theory' conceived by David Rapoport, who divides the history of modern terrorism into four different interlinked 'waves,' or cycles "of activity in a given period."⁷¹⁹ However, as this study seeks to shed light on the functions of British fiction on terrorism, some peculiarities of the British history of terrorism, serving as inspiration for writers, need to be amended.

Hence, the first section will deal with terrorism troubling late Victorian Britain consisting of two different movements. Firstly, the Irish nationalist Fenian movements, precursory organisations to the Irish Republican Army (IRA), plotted a number of terrorist attacks on the British mainland. Secondly, the 19th-century anarchist movements that threatened great parts of Europe were perceived as a major threat to the British socio-political system. Literary responses to this threat include: E. Douglas Fawcett's *Hartmann the Anarchist*, Robert Louis Stevenson's and Fanny Van de Grift's *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter*, Henry James' *The Princess Casamassima*, Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* and Gilbert Keith Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare*.

The second section will discuss the terrorist activities that dominated the political landscape after World War II. Most prominently, the conflict with the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was to dominate political affairs in the second half of the 20th century. Their activities were aimed at the achievement of the concrete aim of the independence of a united Ireland from the UK, and sparked an enormous number of literary responses by British fiction writers. Examples of the so-called Troubles fiction which will be discussed in this section include: Douglas Hurd's *Vote to Kill*, Gerald Seymour's *Harry's Game*, Chapman Pincher's *In the Eye of the Tornado*, Andrew Lane's *Forgive the Executioner*, Martin Walker's *The Infiltrator*, Julian Romanes' *The Cell*, Ian Rankin's *Watchman*, David Lodge's *The British Museum is Falling Down*, and Doris Lessing's *The Good Terrorist*.

⁷¹⁵ Scanlan. 2001. p. 5.

⁷¹⁶ Mitchell, Thomas H. "Defining the Problem." In: Charter, David A. 1991. *Democratic Responses to International Terrorism*. New York: Arnsley-on-Hudson. pp. 9-16. p. 10.

⁷¹⁷ Houen. 2002.p. 24.

⁷¹⁸ Randall Law, for instance, describes terrorism's historical evolution by adhering to a mostly chronological method. Law, Randall D. 2009. *Terrorism: A History*. Cambridge: Polity Press. *Terrorism in Context*, edited by Martha Crenshaw, organises the history of terrorism around thematic and chronological aspects. Crenshaw. 2007.

⁷¹⁹ Rapoport, David C. "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism." In: Cronin, Audrey Kurth, ed. 2004. *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy*. Washington: Georgetown University Press. pp. 46-73. p. 47.

In addition, like many other Western countries post-war Britain had to contend with a left-wing radical movement. The British equivalent of The Angry Brigade aimed at battling Western neo-imperialism and capitalism inspired only two literary responses: B.S. Johnson's *Christie Malry's Own Double Entry* and Alan Burn's *The Angry Brigade*. The last section will deal with the rise of Islamist terrorism and, in particular, the attacks on 11 September in the United States and the myriad of literary works that appeared in the aftermath. British authors tackling the catastrophe include Barker's *Double Vision*, Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, Ian McEwan's *Saturday*, Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* and Chris Cleave's *Incendiary*. The bombing of the London transport system on 7 July 2005, on the other hand, inspired only few literary responses. Amongst them are Carol Smith's *Without Warning*, Roma Tearne's *Brixton Beach* (2010) and John Roberts' *How the Dice Fell*.

4.1. Fenians and Anarchists

Towards the end of the 19th century, the liberal late Victorian state was challenged by the rise of a new phenomenon: modern political terrorism. The spectres of Irish Fenianism and anarchism defied the nation's liberal optimism and the belief in the superiority of their system over that of all other societies.⁷²⁰ In Victorian Britain, liberty did not only manifest itself in domestic policies, including their immigration legislation or the lack of a detective police, and the most cherished values of the freedom of speech, thought, conscience and the press, but also in their capitalist system, promoting scientific and industrial progress which had transpired into every sphere of Victorian culture.⁷²¹ In fact, liberalism and its endorsement of rationalism⁷²² were regarded as "the engine of their nation's progress."⁷²³ Moreover, the Victorian period, also dubbed "the age of science," was marked by both the belief in the supremacy of natural and empirically grounded laws⁷²⁴ and substantial social transformations induced by the rise of industrialisation and urbanisation. Yet, as Brian Jenkins argues, Victorian responses to scientific and technological progress were janiform: On the one hand, they appreciated the transformation towards more prosperity and a more dutiful civilisation. On the other hand, the transformation of their daily lives

⁷²⁰ Porter, Bernard. 1987. *The Origins of the Vigilant State: The London Metropolitan Police Special Branch Before the First World War*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson. p. 2.

⁷²¹ Ibid. pp. 2-18.

⁷²² On liberalism and rationalism, see, for example: Freedon, Micheal. "Liberal Passions: Reason and Emotion in Late- and Post-Victorian Liberal Thought." In: Ghosh, Peter; Goldman, Lawrence, eds. 2006. *Politics and Culture in Victorian Britain: Essays in Memory of Colin Matthew*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 136-152. p. 136.

⁷²³ Jenkins, Brian. 2008. *The Fenian Problem: Insurgency and Terrorism in a Liberal State 1858-1874*. Québec: McGill-Queen's University Press. p. 3.

⁷²⁴ The ambivalence towards the technological transformation of society also manifested itself, for example, in the juxtaposition of science and empirically grounded law and the fascination with the supernatural and spiritualism. Noakes, Richard. "Spiritualism, Science and the Supernatural in Mid-Victorian Britain." In: Bown, Nicola; Burdett, Caroline; Thurschwell, Pamela, eds. 2004. *The Victorian Supernatural*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 23-43. pp. 23-24.

instilled them with pessimism concerning the unprecedented destructiveness modernity entailed.⁷²⁵ This sense of alienation from the social and technological processes was widespread among the Victorians at the *fin de siècle*. Victorian culture was in fact inundated with fears of potential disaster and decline. Even the pleasures and comforts of consumption of market society's goods could not ameliorate this sentiment, but rather resulted in a "fear of falling behind the competition, and the insatiable desire for new sensation"⁷²⁶ and an unquenchable ennui.⁷²⁷

Moreover, as Bernard Porter points out, late Victorian Britain was marked by a waning optimism regarding its liberal system. The economic depression of 1873 had bruised the belief in self-regulatory power of the market, the riots organised by the resuscitated socialist movements proved that the class conflict had not come to an end, and the exacerbating international conflict with the aspiring colonial powers on the continent resulted in an unprecedented feeling of threat. In this climate of increasing pessimism, the threat of terrorist dynamite campaigns rendered the nation's former liberal ethos unsustainable. As a result, the former British liberal belief in progress and improvement became more and more tainted with an increasingly gloomy outlook.⁷²⁸

As the century came to a close, London's urban landscape became the surface for projections of late Victorian anxieties. The metropolis, harbour to the "the nerve centres of the empire,"⁷²⁹ was depicted in late Victorian literature as a "dark, powerful and seductive labyrinth."⁷³⁰ London's social amalgam was the factual and fictional setting in which the crisis of the Empire on the brink to modernism crystallised in social unrest, feelings of alienation, and anxieties of national and imperial decline.⁷³¹

The explosive scares of Fenianism and anarchism reinforced the late Victorian anti-modern anxieties. Their terrorist bombs formed part of the evolution induced by industrial, technological and scientific progress, or, to borrow from Deaglán Ó Donghaile, Fenian and anarchist bombs "can be thought of as delivering the masses with industrially produced violence."⁷³² As such, they ushered in an entirely new cultural and psychic level of political violence.⁷³³ Terrorism was accordingly perceived as another symptom of the degenerative and destructive implications of modernity. In contrast to other increasingly influential socialist movements, labour unrest and democracy threatening the status quo of the British middle and upper classes,⁷³⁴ the late 19th century terrorists exploited the destabilising power of the newly invented dynamite, and thus subverted the potentials of scientific progress to further their cause. While,

⁷²⁵ Bevir, Mark. 2011. *The Making of British Socialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p. 23.

⁷²⁶ Gagnier, Regina. 2000. *The Insatiability of Human Wants: Economics and Aesthetics in Market Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p. 123.

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 122.

⁷²⁸ Porter. 1987. pp. 19-24.

⁷²⁹ "The Scare." In: *The Pall Mall Gazette*. 26.01.1885. p. 1.

⁷³⁰ Walkowitz, Judith R. 2000. *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*. 4th ed. London: Virago Press. p. 17.

⁷³¹ *Ibid.* p. 17.

⁷³² Ó Donghaile. 2011. p. 20.

⁷³³ *Ibid.* p. 20.

⁷³⁴ See, for example: Porter.1987. pp. 100-101.

as will be seen, the “scientific warfare”⁷³⁵ fought by the Fenian Irish nationalists caused indeed substantial material damage and harm, the anarchist scares haunting Victorian Britain during the last decade of the 19th century belonged more to the realm of imagination and imputation than to reality.

4.1.1. The Fenians

Irish militancy in pursuit of national independence surfaced around the middle of the 19th century. Originating in the British settlement in northeast Ireland during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, British-Irish tensions had already been smouldering for a long time, before two closely linked radical movements formed: the Irish Republican Brotherhood in Dublin and the Fenian Brotherhood (later renamed *Clan na Gael*) in New York.⁷³⁶ Both branches were, and are still denoted as ‘Fenians’, a term referring to an ancient “body of warriors who are said to have been the defenders of Ireland.”⁷³⁷

The relation between Britain and Ireland can be best characterised by the dialectics of “the colonial subordination of Ireland and the imperial domination of Britain.”⁷³⁸ On the one hand, the Irish held manifold grievances against the British: the Catholic Irish had to endure land confiscations, plantations of English and Scottish settlers, ethnic prejudice, and the establishment of a Protestant church.⁷³⁹ The British, on the other hand, strived to anglicise Ireland; that is, to remodel it politically, economically and morally in its own image. However, this endeavour proved to be little successful, for, according to prevalent stereotypes, the incapability of the Celtic “Paddy” to adapt to British standards was grounded in the difference of his class and religion and race. Even the Great Famine (1845-49) could not convince the Irish peasants and their landlords to adopt the qualities that were supposedly the key to Britain’s success.⁷⁴⁰ According to British public opinion, the striving for anglicisation was doomed to fail, for, as e.g. *The Times* asserted, the misery of the Irish “Paddy” was not rooted in the landlord-system, dividing society into rich and poor, but in his racial difference, manifesting itself in the lack of “commercial spirit” and “innate energy” as well as in the endorsement of the “faithful and dogged prejudice” that attaches the “Paddy” to “the habits and customs and legends of his fathers.”⁷⁴¹ Accordingly, Irish “backwardness” and “underdevelopment” were deemed to be inextricably linked to questions of racial and cultural difference. Thus, it was not the socio-economic system that had to be changed, but – if ever

⁷³⁵ Burleigh, Micheal. 2008. *Blood and Rage: A Cultural History of Terrorism*. London: Harper Press. pp. 13.

⁷³⁶ Law. 2009. pp. 142-143.

⁷³⁷ *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. “Fenian.”

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/69262?redirectedFrom=fenians#eid>

(last accessed 15th November.2012)

⁷³⁸ Martin, Amy E. 2012. *Alter-Nations: Nationalisms, Terror, and the State in Nineteenth-Century Britain and Ireland*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press. p. 2.

⁷³⁹ Jenkins. 2008. p. 8.

⁷⁴⁰ De Nie. 2004. p. 3-5.

⁷⁴¹ According to an article of *The Times*, the Irish share many character traits with the people inhabiting the Scottish Highlands. “The Condition of the People of the Highlands of Scotland.” In: *The Times*. 07.10.1947. p. 4. See also: De Nie. 2004. pp. 5-35.

possible – the Irish character. What becomes clear from *The Times*' treatment of Irishness is that in 19th-century British public opinion, the “Irish other” was constructed as being less civilised, even savage⁷⁴² and both racially and culturally inferior to the British. As Michael de Nie convincingly shows in his analysis of the construction of the “Paddy” in the British press, “Irishness [...] connoted everything that the British were not: superstitious, feckless, improvident, duplicitous, violent, excitable, subservient to priests and demagogues, and given to drink.”⁷⁴³ Declan Kiberd famously claims the British invented Ireland “as a foil to set off English virtues, as a laboratory in which to conduct experiments, and as a fantasy-land in which to meet fairies and monsters.”⁷⁴⁴

In British public discourse, Ireland was thus constructed as the ultimate inferior “alter-nation.”⁷⁴⁵ Whereas the Irish, as James Joyce contended, when looking at the “image of England,” viewed their “own distorted reflection – as if in the ‘cracked looking glass of a servant’”⁷⁴⁶ Famine-stricken and disillusioned with the failure of constitutional reform, armed rebellion had become an increasingly appealing option in Ireland.⁷⁴⁷ The Fenians canalised these grievances. They saw the solution to the plight of the Irish people in the recovery of their self-determination, of which they had been deprived by the Act of Union (1801) that incorporated Ireland and Great Britain in one single kingdom. They linked their anti-imperial demands to the establishment of an independent democratic Irish republic.⁷⁴⁸

Founded by James Stephens on St. Patrick’s Day 1858, the Dublin branch of the Fenian movement, engaged in a wide range of activities, including labour activism as well as rural disturbances, insurrection and terrorism. The role of the American Fenians, headed by John O’ Mahony, on the other hand, was to solicit money for anti-British campaigns, particularly by means of the so-called “dynamite press.”⁷⁴⁹ After a decade of organisation and recruitment, the Irish Fenian Brotherhood made its first attempt at a revolution through insurrection in March 1867.⁷⁵⁰ Initially, all their actions were short-lived, defeated by informers, governmental and military power, and unfavourable weather conditions,⁷⁵¹ the

⁷⁴² The construction of the “Irish savage” not only became an integral part of the Anglo-Saxon 19th century discourse of racial science, but also was a popular phrase recurring in newspaper articles and official accounts of the “Irish question” and the Irish people in general. Examples such as the comments on “the Irish savage (and the peasantry of that country are not better than savages)” abound. (“Irish Coercion.” In: *The Bristol Mercury*. 30.03.1833. p.3.) Even in parliamentary debates, for example, on the Irish Insurrection Act, the “degraded position” of the Irish population and their incapability of taking responsibility for themselves was emphasised. *The Leeds Mercury* “House of Commons.” 20.07. 1822. p. 2.

⁷⁴³ De Nie. 2004. p. 23.

⁷⁴⁴ Kiberd, Declan. 1995. *Inventing Ireland*. London: Jonathan Cape. p. 1.

⁷⁴⁵ See the introduction of Martin. 2012. pp. 1-14.

⁷⁴⁶ Cited in Martin. 2012. p. 2.

⁷⁴⁷ Duffy, Seán. 2000. *The Concise History of Ireland*. Dublin: Gill & MacMillan. pp. 164-166.

⁷⁴⁸ Loughlin, James. “Fenianism.” In: Conolly, S. J., ed. 2007. *Oxford Companion to Irish History*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 198-199.

⁷⁴⁹ Burleigh. 2008. pp. 2-4.

The dynamite press included newspapers like *The Irish World*, *The Irish People*, *The Irish People*, (founded by Stephens), *The United Irishman*, and *Ireland’s Liberation*. See: Ó Donghaile. 2011. p. 16.

⁷⁵⁰ Kelley, M. J. 2006. *The Fenian Ideal and Irish Nationalism, 1882-1916*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press. p.

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⁷⁵¹ Loughlin. 2007. p. 199.

“Fenian Rising” became a “major publicity coup.”⁷⁵² The long prison sentences many of the insurgents received, as well as the execution of three Fenians, who killed a police officer in their attempt to free one of their comrades from a police van in Manchester, sparked a wave of public sympathy for the movement in Ireland. Thus, the executed Fenians, also known as “Manchester Martyrs,” came to symbolise for future generations of Irish the nobility of fighting for Irish freedom.⁷⁵³ The British public, on the other hand, was thoroughly shocked at the incident. Fenianism was no longer restricted to Ireland, but had arrived on the British mainland, and as such, it was “a very different affair.”⁷⁵⁴ *The Times*, for instance, claimed that “the deliberate slaughter of an unarmed policeman” provoked the “sternest feelings of abhorrence in all classes”⁷⁵⁵ of the British population. The shock at the Fenian outrages drew into outright panic, when, in that same year, some Fenians attempted to bomb the wall of the London Clerkenwell prison. While the aim of liberating incarcerated Irish nationalists of this unparalleled “diabolical crime”⁷⁵⁶ was not achieved, the explosion caused the death of several innocent people and injured more than a hundred.⁷⁵⁷

While the early agitation of the Fenians had mostly been designed as insurrectional campaigns to liberate comrades, the Clerkenwell bombing is considered a watershed in the group’s agitational strategy. The killing of innocent individuals was, according to Niall Whelehan, “an unplanned tragedy,”⁷⁵⁸ but it focused new attention on the Irish question and showed how political violence could be harnessed to provoke decisive action. Thus, the Fenians increasingly resorted to methods that were to become characteristics defining the nature of modern terrorism: the bombing of symbolic targets and, consequently, the acceptance of intermediary, indiscriminate victims.⁷⁵⁹ Hence, during the 1880s, the planting of bombs at British targets fraught with the symbolism of the Empire or the “Irish cause” became the new tactic aimed at the demoralisation of the powerful opponent. Significantly, the series of attacks was initiated by the bombing of an army barracks where three Fenian martyrs had been executed (1881). Further bomb attacks were mainly planted at public buildings like the Liverpool police headquarters (1881), the Glasgow city gasworks (1883), behind the London-based offices of *The Times* (1883), whose journalists treated the Irish nationalist cause with condescending distaste,⁷⁶⁰ in the London underground (1883), the office of Scotland Yard’s recently established “Irish Special Branch” (1884). Furthermore, on the so-called “Dynamite Saturday”⁷⁶¹ three bombs exploded in Westminster

⁷⁵² Kelley. 2006. p. 1.

⁷⁵³ Duffy. 2000. p. 168.

⁷⁵⁴ “The Preliminary Case for the Prosecution is Now.” *The Times* 03.10.1867. p. 6.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p. 6.

⁷⁵⁶ “The Clerkenwell Atrocity.” In: *Liverpool Mercury* 16.12.1867. p. 7.

⁷⁵⁷ Duffy. p. 168.

Law. 2009. p. 143.

⁷⁵⁸ Whelehan, Niall. 2012. *The Dynamiters: Irish Nationalism and Political Violence in the Wider World, 1867-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 73.

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p.73.

⁷⁶⁰ Ó Donghaile. 2011. pp. 3-4.

⁷⁶¹ Oppenheimer, A.R. 2009. *IRA: The Bombs and the Bullets*. Dublin/Portland: Irish Academic Press. p. 179.

Hall, the Houses of Parliament and the Tower of London on one single day (1885).⁷⁶² Despite the assassination of the Chief Secretary of Ireland and his deputy in Dublin's Phoenix Park (1882),⁷⁶³ and the attempt to murder Queen Victoria (1887),⁷⁶⁴ the Fenian campaign was rather aimed at symbolic buildings than at individuals representing the Empire's oppression of Ireland.

As Bernard Porter explains, the Fenian dynamite campaign was the most severe series of political violence London had been confronted with to date. As a result, the Fenian bombs induced a change in Victorian policing and attitudes towards the handling and perception of radicals, even those unrelated to Fenianism. For example, the German anarchist Johann Most, editor of the London-based newspaper *Freiheit*, was charged and convicted for seditious libel in 1881, after having published an article extolling the assassination of the tsar as a model for political agitation elsewhere.⁷⁶⁵ Such an infringement of the freedom of the press according to the *Daily News* was a result of the fact that political violence was "not merely talked about,"⁷⁶⁶ but had turned into reality. Prior to the Fenian terrorist campaign, the liberal Victorians regarded "contemptuous toleration"⁷⁶⁷ as "the best remedy to bloodthirsty nonsense."⁷⁶⁸ Yet, as exemplified by the *Freiheit* affair, the relaxed liberal ethos that had permitted disdain and sardonic derision at political radicals had begun to wane. Two years after the case *The Times* anticipated that the new quality of crime might change the Englishmen's firm defence of their liberal rights. "Liberty", it argued, "is a most excellent thing, but the kind of liberty which is to be enjoyed on the top of a barrel of gunpowder with a lighted match just on the point of being applied to it is a somewhat insecure and questionable blessing."⁷⁶⁹

Hence, Great Britain, which was at the *fin de siècle* seemingly "slipping from the sunny uplands of mid-Victorian liberal capitalism towards the valley of the shadow of socialism and war,"⁷⁷⁰ was further bedevilled by the Fenian outrages, proving all the more that it could no longer be taken for granted that liberalism would prevail in the end. Consequently, official measures for the aversion of terrorism were required, and vigilance became an increasingly attractive option. In other words, the establishment of a previously rejected secret police became inevitable.⁷⁷¹ Eventually, as a result of the Phoenix Park assassination, the Liberal Government under Gladstone established a Secret Service operation for Ireland in May 1882,⁷⁷² which was also in charge of the observation of anarchists during the 1890s.⁷⁷³

⁷⁶² Porter. 1987. pp. 27-28.

⁷⁶³ Short, K.R.M. 1979. *The Dynamite War: Irish-American Bombers in Victorian Britain*. New Jersey: Humanities Press. pp. 75-76.

⁷⁶⁴ Porter. 1987. p. 29.

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 29.
Short. 1979. p. 215.

⁷⁶⁶ "London, Thursday, March 31." In: *Daily News*. 31.03.1881. p. 5.

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p. 5.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 5.

⁷⁶⁹ "London, Saturday, November 24, 1883." In: *The Times*. 24.11.1883. p. 9.

⁷⁷⁰ Porter. 1987. p. 23.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.* p. 24.

⁷⁷² Short. 1979. p. 5.

⁷⁷³ Porter. 1987. pp. 114-129.

Fenianism accordingly reinforced the dwindling of the nation's liberal optimism.⁷⁷⁴ However, although it shattered Britain in times of what was perceived as an impending crisis, and despite the new quality of the dynamite terrorism – its unpredictability and indiscriminateness – the British media landscape did not unanimously contribute to the aggravation of anxiety.⁷⁷⁵ The newspaper articles rather oscillated in their treatment of Fenianism between outright panic and sardonic contempt.

For example, on 26 January 1885, two days after “Dynamite Saturday”, the newspapers were full of detailed accounts of the atrocities and the official security measures taken in response. The *Morning Post* was among those media organs that centre on the “horror” of the assault. Underpinned by reports on the nationwide consternation caused by the outrages, it describes the shock that was, “as a matter of course, experienced in considerable force by the officials and visitors in the House of Commons.”⁷⁷⁶ The *London Evening Standard*, on the other hand, downplayed the shock at the attacks inside the House of Commons, stating that “for a second everybody stood aghast, wondering what was to follow. But the consternation was merely momentary.”⁷⁷⁷ The *Pall Mall Gazette*'s frontpage article even asserted that the damage caused by the three dynamite attacks had only amounted to “damage to upholstery” and “broken glass.” The attacks had proved that although London had been exposed to an unprecedented campaign of “malice and ingenuity,” the “Infernal Brotherhood” had been incapable of checking “for a moment the even flow of English life.”⁷⁷⁸ This derision at the dynamitards was echoed by the Russian revolutionary Stepniak, who claimed in an interview in the same edition that these explosions were “mere baby work,” “stupid, objectless” and unfruitful activities.⁷⁷⁹

What becomes clear from these newspaper accounts is that the reactions to Fenian terrorism were thoroughly divided. While, on the one hand, the Fenian dynamite campaign was indeed a cause of concern to many Victorians,⁷⁸⁰ the horrors of the attacks were downplayed and ridiculed, on the other. What is more, British resilience and the apparent reluctance to lapse into panic were praised. Porter, therefore, argues that the celebration of British sobriety in the face of the bombing campaign was aimed at making clear that they were not the kind of people to be frightened into hasty measures. Instead, their calmness marked the superiority over the terrorist whose attempt to spread terror had apparently failed.⁷⁸¹ In this vein, the authorities refused to take extensive security measures like the curtailment of the press or the expulsion of foreign political radicals.⁷⁸² Firmer guidelines for the purchase of

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 19.

⁷⁷⁵ See Porter's detailed account of the British media landscape in the wake of the Fenian campaign. Ibid. pp. 29-30.

⁷⁷⁶ “Dynamite Outrages.” In: *Morning Post*. 26.01.1885. p. 5.

⁷⁷⁷ “Attempts to blow up the House of Commons, Westminster Hall, And the Tower.” In: *The London Evening Standard*. 26.01.1885. p. 5.

⁷⁷⁸ “The Scare.” In: *The Pall Mall Gazette*. p. 1.

⁷⁷⁹ Stepniak, Sergei. “From a Revolutionary Point of View.” In: *The Pall Mall Gazette*. 26.01.1885. p. 1.

⁷⁸⁰ For example, according to newspaper reports, the fear of dynamite attacks led to a reduced number of audience in London's theatres. “London Letter.” In: *Western Mail*. 21.04.1883. page unknown.

⁷⁸¹ Porter. 1987. p. 32.

⁷⁸² Ibid. p. 32.

dynamite⁷⁸³ or stricter entrance regulations to the House of Commons after the Westminster bombing⁷⁸⁴ were the utmost measures that could be realised.⁷⁸⁵

Although Fenian terrorism affected the liberal Victorian spirit, at this point, the British population still felt relatively safe. Terrorism was an Irish phenomenon, and as long as there was no “enemy within,”⁷⁸⁶ *The Times* declared, the Fenian bombings were nothing to be too worried about, for the Irish nationalists lacked the “spirit of general anarchy.” In other words, as long as the “dynamite is not the weapon of English workmen dissatisfied with their wages,”⁷⁸⁷ the British public could consider itself comparatively safe. Accordingly, during the 1880s, terrorism was inextricably bound to the Irish race, and the Irish “Paddy,” albeit violent and alien, unlike the anarchists, was not regarded as an enemy capable of truly threatening the British Empire.⁷⁸⁸

4.1.2. Anarchists

After the abatement of the Fenian bombing campaign in 1885, late Victorian Britain had to grapple with the anarchist threat, when a series of violence for the sake of a stateless society was instigated by the anarchist “propaganda of the deed” during the 1890s. In contrast to the Fenian movement, the anarchists did not engage in a bombing campaign on the British mainland, but realised most of their campaigns on the continent and in the U.S.A. However, anarchism was perceived as a major threat to the stability of the British state of affairs. The apparent danger emanating from anarchism was not so much rooted in the expectation of a further wave of terrorist violence in Britain, but followed from the increasingly pessimist atmosphere and general anxieties about modernity. Thus, nurtured by these sentiments, it was not so much the impending terrorist act itself, but the association of anarchism with diffuse fears of social disorder and cultural degeneration that scared the British population. The word ‘anarchy’ as “the fear of social anarchy and intellectual anarchy as a fact”⁷⁸⁹ reverberated in many 19th- century works on social and cultural theory.

Tellingly, already some time before the terrorist “propaganda of the deed” haunted large parts of Western Europe, Matthew Arnold, identified in *Culture and Anarchy*, first published in 1869, a strong anarchical tendency in the British working class. The lower classes, he observes, “are beginning to assert and put in practice an Englishman’s right to do whatever he likes.”⁷⁹⁰ That is to say, they are not eager

⁷⁸³ See, for example, “House of Commons, Monday, 9 April.” In: *The Times*. 09.04. 1883. p. 7.

⁷⁸⁴ “London, Saturday, 14 February, 1884.” In: *The Times*. 14.02.1884. p. 9.

⁷⁸⁵ Porter. 1987. p. 32.

⁷⁸⁶ Porter. 1987. p. 32.

⁷⁸⁷ “London, Friday, April 1883.” In: *The Times*. 06.04.1883. p. 9.

⁷⁸⁸ De Nie. 2004. pp. 5-13.

⁷⁸⁹ Burrow, John Wyon. 1966. *Evolution and Society: A Study in Victorian Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 93.

⁷⁹⁰ Arnold, Matthew. [1869] 1990. *Culture and Anarchy*. 13th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 76.

to engage in productive activities, but are rather prone to “rowdiness”⁷⁹¹ and the promotion of disorder. Culture, on the other hand, is according to Arnold’s treatise “the study and pursuit of perfection,”⁷⁹² which he associates with the educated elites of the country. *Culture and Anarchy* was written in response to labour unrest and political protest, mainly to the Hyde Park Riots in July 1866.⁷⁹³ Arnold’s work tells much about the 19th-century discourse on social disorder, and the equation of anarchy with the “mob.”⁷⁹⁴ Less in the sense of distinct political thought, Arnold like other contemporary conservatives associated ‘anarchy’ with fears of social disintegration and cultural decline precipitated by the growing assertiveness of socialist and labour mass movements.

The term ‘anarchy’ in the Arnoldian sense had entered the English language some 300 years before the publication of *Culture and Anarchy*. It denotes a “state of disorder,” or “absolute freedom of the individual.”⁷⁹⁵ The political theory of ‘anarchism,’ on the other hand, refers to the “abolition of all government and the organization of society on a voluntary, cooperative basis without recourse to force or compulsion.”⁷⁹⁶

Philosophically, anarchism as a systematic political theory emerged about 100 years before the merging of anarchist thought with terrorist violence in the wake of the Enlightenment⁷⁹⁷ and the political upheavals of the Romantic period. In the midst of English debates on the French Revolution, the English philosopher William Godwin was the first to write a treatise on the ideal of a stateless society. Although Godwin did not explicitly describe himself as an anarchist, in his *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*,⁷⁹⁸ first published in 1793, he established a justification of anarchism that was fundamentally based on the discourse of science and rationalism. For Godwin, government institutions are the leading cause of “calamity, [...] oppression, despotism, war and conquest.”⁷⁹⁹ According to him, they are the impediments to the happiness of the increasingly rational human being.⁸⁰⁰ Instead of fostering education and rationalism, governments seek to suppress these human virtues with the force of “restriction” and “abridgement of individual independence.”⁸⁰¹ Godwin’s fervent belief in the rationality of the individual was to influence later anarchist writers such as Pierre Proudhon, Max Stirner and Peter Kropotkin. All

⁷⁹¹ Ibid. p. 77.

⁷⁹² Ibid. p. 72.

⁷⁹³ The Hyde Park riots resulted from earlier protests against the defeat of the Reform Bill, and contributed to the passage of the Second Reform Act of 1867. Weir, David. 1997. *Anarchy & Culture: The Aesthetic Politics of Modernism*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. p. 46.

⁷⁹⁴ Phillips. 2003. p. 70.

⁷⁹⁵ *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. “Anarchy.”

<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/anarchy?q=anarchy> (last accessed 29th October 2012)

⁷⁹⁶ *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. “Anarchism.”

<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/anarchism?q=anarchism> (last accessed 29th October 2012)

⁷⁹⁷ Crowder, George. 1991. *Classical Anarchism: The Political Thought of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p. 6.

⁷⁹⁸ This study uses the following edition: Codell Carter, K., ed. 1971. *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice: With Selections from Godwin’s Other Writings*. London: Oxford University Press.

⁷⁹⁹ Godwin, William. “Summary of Principles: Established and Reasoned upon this work.” In: Codell Carter. 1971. pp. 13-16. p.14.

⁸⁰⁰ Phillips. 2003. pp. 46-49.

⁸⁰¹ Godwin. 1971. p. 14.

of these theorists regard the French Revolution as proof that societies can be transformed and that people are able to govern themselves. However, none of them called for political activism based on their theories. Godwin, for instance, rejected violent revolution as irrational.⁸⁰² Nevertheless, his oppositional ideas on governmental power were espoused by revolutionary anarchists.⁸⁰³

Anarchism-inspired terrorism sprang from the context of the Russian revolutionary struggle against tsarism. The first anarchist activist was the controversial and contradictory Michail Bakunin, who celebrated the revolution as a creative force in its own right.⁸⁰⁴ In his essay “The Reaction in Germany” he famously appeals to the trust in “the eternal Spirit” of the revolution “which destroys and annihilates only because it is the unfathomable and eternal source of all life. The passion for destruction is a creative passion, too!”⁸⁰⁵

Bakunin’s acquaintance with the even more radical Russian nihilist⁸⁰⁶ Sergei Nechaev exercised a great impact on some of his writings. Allegedly in collaboration with Bakunin,⁸⁰⁷ Nechaev authored the infamous “Catechism of a Revolutionary.”⁸⁰⁸ Omitting references to any particular ideology, this catechism is a radical programme, giving instructions on how to become an ideal terrorist, and to implement a revolution. According to this pamphlet, a revolutionary “despises and hates the existing social morality in all its manifestations.”⁸⁰⁹ He needs to be merciless and tyrannical against both himself and the society he seeks to subvert. Furthermore, he only knows “the science of destruction,” and has to renounce all bonds with the civilised world.⁸¹⁰ Bakunin and Nechaev⁸¹¹ were the first to openly link “the

⁸⁰² Godwin argues in *Political Justice* that “voluntary actions of men are under the direction of their feelings.” Reason is never the driving force for human action. The social condition can only be improved by “the improvement of reason,” and not by actions. Godwin. 1971. p. 15.

⁸⁰³ Phillips. 2003. pp. 48-49.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 48-52.

⁸⁰⁵ Bakunin, Michael. “The Reaction in Germany.” In: Dolgoff, Sam, ed. 1971. *Bakunin on Anarchy: Selected Works by the Activist-Founder of World Anarchism*. pp. 54-57. p. 57.

⁸⁰⁶ Russian anarchists often cooperated with the ideologically different nihilists. ‘Nihilism’ in the broad sense of the term denotes “the rejection of all religious and moral principles, often in the belief that life is meaningless.” *Oxford Dictionaries Online*. “Nihilism.” <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/nihilism?q=nihilism> (last accessed 30th October 2012) Bearing usually a negative connotation in the Western context, against the backdrop of the Russian revolution, ‘nihilism’ turned into a positive concept of self-determination. (Korchinsky, Anatoly. “Russian Literature between Literary Nihilism and Poetic Terrorism.” In: Austenfeld, Thomas; Daphinoff, Dimiter; Herlth, Jens, eds. 2011. *Terrorism and Narrative Practice*. Berlin: Lit Verlag. pp. 137- 144. p. 138.) Nihilist movements emerged from the background of radical student circles and attempted to negate the norms of the dominant culture and live according to “scientifically” derived values. (Pomper, Philip. “Russian Revolutionary Terrorism.” In: Crenshaw. 2007. pp. 63-101. p. 68.) Growing increasingly radical, nihilists directed their violence against public figures. Tsar Alexander II, for instance, had been attacked three times before the final, successful attempt in 1881. Anarchist terrorists, in contrast, were more ruthless. Bombs were thrown into public places, hazarding the consequences of indiscriminate killing. Arnett Melchiori. 1985. p. 8.

⁸⁰⁷ It is heavily contested in how far Bakunin was involved in the catechism. Micheal Burleigh, for instance, regards the catechism as a work of both Nechaev and Bakunin, whereas Pomper assumes that the catechism is solely the work of Nechaev. See: Burleigh. 2008. p. 37. Pomper. 2007. p. 72.

⁸⁰⁸ Nechaev, Sergei. “Revolutionary Catechism.” <https://www.marxists.org/subject/anarchism/nechayev/catechism.htm> (last accessed 28th March 2017)

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁸¹⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹¹ Apart from the *Catechism of a Revolutionary* Nechaev also became infamous for murdering his fellow

doctrine of anarchism with the practice of individual terrorism.”⁸¹² The instructions on accomplishing an effective revolutionary struggle in the catechism are universal and, as Rapoport points out, even reverberate in Osama bin Laden’s training manual.⁸¹³

As Phillips points out, the fear of anarchist violence was not confined to Russia, but became a major threat haunting great parts of Western Europe. Russian activists who were identified by their authorities often took refuge abroad, which resulted in thousands of small informal movements scattered about Europe and America. Instead of forming the international anarchist “conspiracy,” these groups – albeit connected by a sympathy of ideas – followed their own agenda. However, anarchism established several important narratives that defined these circles as a group. Firstly, anarchists embraced the concept already established by Godwin of the primacy of the individual over society.⁸¹⁴ Secondly, similarly to their socialist contemporaries, anarchists believed in economic justice and that society becomes more equitable with everyone owning the land, factories, business, and banks. Yet anarchists, unlike socialists, expanded their critique from economic inequality to unequal arrangements of power. Consequently, anarchists advocated the elimination of both capital and the state.⁸¹⁵

The liberal climate in 19th-century Britain made the country a particularly popular destination for anarchists and other political refugees. The British asylum policy was more generous than those of other European countries,⁸¹⁶ particularly since the granting of asylum had been extended under the ‘Extradition Act’ (1870).⁸¹⁷ For the sake of the cherished freedom of speech, political fugitives would not be surrendered to a foreign state. Many Russian revolutionaries were often even welcomed as “freedom fighters” who deserved to be supported in their struggle against tyranny.⁸¹⁸

This relaxed liberal attitude could not be maintained as the century came to a close and Western Europe experienced “the high tide”⁸¹⁹ of anarchism-inspired terrorism. Based on the doctrine dubbed the “propaganda of the deed,”⁸²⁰ which simply points to the truism of deeds speaking more loudly than words,⁸²¹ anarchists committed a series of violent attacks in France, Italy, Spain and the United States.⁸²²

conspirator, Ivanov, in 1869. The “Nechaev-Ivanov affair” not only imbued Dostoevsky’s *Demons*, but also became one of the biggest scandals in 19th-century Russia. Anemone, Anthony. “Introduction: Just Assassins?” In: Anemone, Anthony, ed. 2010. *Just Assassins: The Culture of Terrorism in Russia*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. pp. 3-24. pp. 9-10.

⁸¹² Joll, James. 1979. *The Anarchists*. 2nd ed. London: Methuen. p. 78.

⁸¹³ Rapoport. 2004. p. 49

⁸¹⁴ Phillips. 2003. pp. 61-62.

⁸¹⁵ Hong, Nathaniel. “Constructing the Anarchist Beast in American Periodical Literature, 1880-1903.” In: *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 9. 1992. pp. 110-130. p. 112, p. 114.

⁸¹⁶ Porter. 1987. p. 10.

⁸¹⁷ Extradition Acts, 1870 to 1935. *The Extradition Act 1870. An Act for Amending the Law Relating to the Extradition of Criminals*. http://ozcase.library.qut.edu.au/qhlc/documents/qr_crim_extradition_1870_33-34_Vic_c52.pdf. pp. 1023-1039. p. 1024. (last accessed 5th November 2012)
See also: Houen. 2002. p. 35.

⁸¹⁸ Porter. 1987. p. 110.

⁸¹⁹ Laqueur. 1977. p. 14.

⁸²⁰ The period of the “propaganda of the deed” can be approximately dated from about 1880 to 1910. Crowder. 1991. p. 1.

⁸²¹ Schmid; McAllister. 2011. p. 229.

⁸²² Laqueur. 1977. p. 11.

The threat inflicted by the anarchist spectre haunting large parts of Europe also gripped the British public of that time and British anarchists were alienated from the British middle classes. Their discourses of individual empowerment and social justice along with their violent rhetoric and actions seemed to be all too daunting for the majority of the British population. Narratives created by advocates of the current economic and governmental system established the anarchist as a “sinister caricature designed to frighten the general population.”⁸²³ In an atmosphere of increasing pessimism and anxieties concerning the future, anarchism’s narratives of revolution and negation of all morality served as scapegoats for the social fears associated with modernity.⁸²⁴ As a result, similarly to Arnold’s broad association of the whole British labour movements with anarchy, the term ‘anarchistic’ could be quite amply applied to refer to any disturbing social idea or development.⁸²⁵ Thus, as Barbara Melchiori points out, anarchists and socialists were often confused by advocates of the middle and upper class who canalised the fear of “what was felt to be an inevitable and impending class struggle,”⁸²⁶ and, thus, attempted to “build up resistance to the whole socialist movement.”⁸²⁷ *The Graphic*, for instance, subsumes socialists, anarchists and nihilists under “a section of a community who are restless, discontented, and despairing.”⁸²⁸ Craving for pleasures they cannot obtain, all of these groups “seek their revenge and vent their disappointment in acts of destruction.”⁸²⁹ Anarchism was thus less acknowledged as a distinct political idea, but was rather used as an umbrella term to describe the modern condition.

Although anarchists were constructed as the “destabilizing force of the time,”⁸³⁰ anarchist terrorism in Britain was primarily a mediated phenomenon. Most of the terrorist attacks happened on the continent, yet the public was well informed about the anarchist scares by the British press. Reported anarchist “outrages” in foreign countries provided the newspapers with lurid material.⁸³¹ Incidents such as the assassination of Tsar Alexander II (1881), the dynamite attacks perpetrated by the Frenchman Ravachol in Paris (1892),⁸³² as well as the assassination of several political leaders such as the President of France, Sadi Carnot, Premier Castillo of Spain (1897), Empress Elisabeth of Austria in 1889, the King Umberto of Italy (1900), or President McKinley (1901)⁸³³ seemed to prove the danger emanating from anarchism.

⁸²³ Phillips. 2003. p. 63.

⁸²⁴ Ibid. p. 73.

⁸²⁵ Ibid. p. 74.

⁸²⁶ Melchiori. 1985. p. 9.

⁸²⁷ Ibid. p. 9.

⁸²⁸ “The Recent Dynamite Outrages.” In: *The Graphic*. 31.01.1883. p. 103.

⁸²⁹ Ibid. p. 103.

⁸³⁰ Phillips. 2003. p. 63.

⁸³¹ Ibid. p. 64.

⁸³² In 1892, François Claudius Ravachol placed bombs in the homes of Benoit, an advocate general and the judge Bulot. His motive was to take revenge for the disproportionate suppression of a labour demonstration and the draconic sentences two of his comrades had received. The attacks did not harm any of the inhabitants, but caused considerable material damage. Being betrayed by a waiter of the restaurant Véry, Ravachol was caught and sentenced to death. The betrayal as well as his execution triggered anarchist retaliation. For example, the restaurant of Ravachol was bombed the day he stood trial, and a bomb was placed in the Chamber of Deputies after Ravachol had been guillotined. (Burleigh. 2008. pp. 81-81.)

⁸³³ Weir. 1997.p. 76.

Eventually, London was not to remain completely unscathed by anarchist propaganda and violence. In July 1881, the International Anarchist Congress was held in London. Among the outcomes of the gathering was the passage of a resolution on the exploitation of the possibilities offered by chemical and technical sciences, as well as the mobilisation of the masses by the “propaganda of the deed,” both of which were to precipitate the hoped-for general conflagration.⁸³⁴

Three years later, an explosion outside the Greenwich Observatory on 15 February 1884 made clear that London was not completely immune against anarchist violence. However, the attack on the Observatory failed, because the perpetrator, Martial Bourdin, a French anarchist, accidentally triggered the bomb he was still carrying.⁸³⁵ Moreover, although Bourdin had moved in anarchist circles, and was a member of the infamous Autonomie Club,⁸³⁶ there was no evidence indicating that the explosion in front of the Observatory was an intended attack, and not merely an accident.⁸³⁷ Despite this lack of proof, the incident produced an enormous stir. Being solely accustomed to anarchist outrages on the continent, the British press reacted hysterically to the Greenwich explosion. Newspaper accounts of what happened were aimed at the most “sensational or vulgar sentiments and fears of the public.”⁸³⁸ *The Times*, for instance, described any visceral detail of the dying anarchist as “a respectably-dressed man, in a kneeling posture, terribly mutilated. One hand was blown off and the body was open.”⁸³⁹

Before and after the Greenwich bombing, the British public was confronted with a few minor incidents such as the discovery of an anarchist bomb-making factory in Walsall in January 1892, or the detention of an Italian anarchist carrying explosives. In addition, frequent bomb threats turned out to be mistakes or hoaxes,⁸⁴⁰ like for example the parcel deposited in a Glasgow post office, whose label indicated that it was intended to terrorise the country and subscribed “Anarchist.”⁸⁴¹

Apart from the Walsall factory incident, and Oscar Wilde’s friend Barlas, who fired a revolver at the House of Commons,⁸⁴² native Britons were not involved in violent anarchism-inspired actions.⁸⁴³ Anarchism was thus mainly a foreign phenomenon, imported by the immigrants who were generously granted asylum in Britain. In the light of the perceived threat posed by foreign anarchists, the British asylum policy seemed to be too liberal and ill-considered. However, despite the media discourses creating the threat identity of the “half-crazed bomb-throwing fanatic,”⁸⁴⁴ and the general fear of social disorder anarchism represented to the British establishment, the government did not change its liberal

⁸³⁴ Laqueur. 1977. p. 51.

⁸³⁵ Burleigh. 2008. pp. 83-84.

⁸³⁶ The Autonomie Club was a famous anarchist meeting place in London, which was perfectly legal under the liberal British law. Mulry, David. “Popular Accounts of the Greenwich Bombing and Conrad’s *The Secret Agent*.” In: *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature* 54.2. 2000. pp. 43-64. p. 46.

⁸³⁷ Weir. 1997. p. 75

⁸³⁸ Mulry. 2000. pp. 43-45.

⁸³⁹ “Explosion in Greenwich Park.” In: *The Times*. 16. 2. 1884. p. 5.

⁸⁴⁰ Porter. 1987. p. 102.

⁸⁴¹ OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT. “The Greenwich Explosion”. In: *The Times* 20.2. 1884. p.5.

⁸⁴² Sloan, John. 2003. *Authors in Context: Oscar Wilde*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 35.

⁸⁴³ Porter. 1987. p. 103.

⁸⁴⁴ Porter. 1987. p. 108.

policy towards anarchists or other immigrants until 1914,⁸⁴⁵ a time by which the fear of the “propaganda of the deed” had already abated. Britain was frequently criticised by her harder-pressed European neighbours who considered the liberal design of Britain’s asylum policy as encouraging for terrorists, and as an obstacle to stricter European legislative measures. Those critics certainly had a point, since the British government also refused to collaborate with other European countries. At the “International Conference of Rome for the Social Defense Against Anarchists,” for instance, Great Britain abstained from provisions aimed at the establishment of a common European anti-terrorism policy which was otherwise unanimously agreed upon by the other European delegates.⁸⁴⁶ The reason for this strict adherence to their national policy grounded in the still prevailing belief in liberalism. British politicians, therefore, refused to join in the hysteria promoted by their press and European neighbours. In the end, in Britain, the anarchist threat was not engendered by violent outrages, but by anxieties provoked by the subversiveness of the anarchist idea that, in the British middle and upperclass perception, represented everything disorderly.⁸⁴⁷

4.1.3. Literary Representations of Fenians and Anarchists

There are a considerable number of literary responses drawing on the actual historical ‘event’ of Fenian terrorism, on the one hand, and the ‘process’ of meaning-making and the anxieties associated with the anarchist discourse that threatened Britain’s established power relations and social order on the other. Particularly the 1880s and 1890s saw the rise of novels dealing with the spectre of terrorist violence haunting the country. Examples for such literary endeavours include Edward Douglas Fawcett’s science fiction novel *Hartmann the Anarchist* (1892), Robert Louis Stevenson’s and Fanny Van de Grift’s *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter* (1885), Henry James’ *The Princess Casamassima* (1886), Joseph Conrad’s notoriously bleak *The Secret Agent* (1907), Gilbert Keith Chesterton’s *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare* (1908); all of which will be discussed in the following chapter.

In recent years, commentators have been eager to pinpoint the taxonomic principles underlying these novels, thus attempting to mould them into a genre category. For this reason, the following chapter will firstly address the different genre concepts critics have applied to fathom the cultural importance of these works and eventually discuss the texts in terms of the genre category of the ‘dynamite genre’. Subsequently, the specific formal-aesthetic features of the texts will be elucidated in order to gain insights into their socio-cultural function(s). Due to the enormous difference in their literary depth and

⁸⁴⁵ It was not until 1914 that Britain followed other European countries in registering and retaining records on “aliens.” Houen. 2002. p. 35.

⁸⁴⁶ Deflem, Mathieu. 2004. *Policing World Society: Historical Foundations of International Police Cooperation*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 67.

⁸⁴⁷ Porter. 1987. p. 110.

value, not all of the texts will be discussed in equal proportions. Therefore, Conrad's *The Secret Agent* and James's *The Princess Casamassima* will receive the lion's share of attention.

As discussed in subsection 3.3.1., genres do not emerge in isolation or as mere *a posteriori* constructs, but organise, select and integrate the historical material of a certain period of time and are therefore vital to an individual, cognitive understanding of the works and furthermore, for the shaping of cultural memory. However, in many ways, the late Victorian and Edwardian works tackling the dynamite scares of their time seem to lack many of the common elements allowing for a clear-cut conception of a distinct genre category. While, for example, Henry James' *Princess Casamassima* is a typical example of a Victorian social novel, Stevenson's and de Grift's tale is rather surreal and like Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday* gleeful in tone. *Hartmann the Anarchist*, on the other hand, is a representative of Victorian pulp Science-Fiction, whereas Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* centres on the science of terrorist destruction from a perspective that is fundamentally informed by its historical position on the brink of modernism. However, all of these texts share the simple common theme: that of addressing the prevailing anxieties elicited by the Fenian bombings and international anarchist operations. Moreover, consistent with the Victorian "fascination with the 'criminal element,'"⁸⁴⁸ most of these novels focus on the perpetrators rather than their victims. The authors, so it seems, were obsessed with those behind the scenes plotting acts of large-scale destruction.

As we have seen before, literary genre categories institutionalise dominant structures and literary material, thus functioning as interpretative tools that may evoke expectations in an audience. As such, genres may indicate the cultural knowledge underpinning fictional ways of worldmaking of a particular group of texts. For this reason, regardless of the formal-aesthetic and stylistic diversity of the literature tackling Victorian dynamite terrorism, it still seems to be a worthwhile endeavour to find a common taxonomy. Attempts at finding a common genre category are generally based on the existence of a common theme rather than structural similarities. David Trotter, for example, sees these texts as expressions of the early British 'spy novel' which exploited the secrecy of the dynamiters and the enigma created by terrorism for commercial ends.⁸⁴⁹ Adrian Wisnicki, on the other hand, regards these texts as belonging to the popular genre of 'conspiracy fiction' and more precisely to the subgenre of the 'revolutionary conspiracy narrative,'⁸⁵⁰ which tracks a specific group, e.g., anarchists or an unspecified group such as the lower classes attempting to overthrow the existing social order or a government.⁸⁵¹ Anna Faktorovich's notion of the 19th-century 'rebellion genre' includes Stevenson's *The Dynamiter* as an example of her hybrid genre concept, which is based on a comprehensive notion of 'rebellion'. It encompasses civil or social rebellions, assassinations, anti-colonial rebellions, nationwide rebellions

⁸⁴⁸ Arata. 1996. p. 110.

⁸⁴⁹ Trotter, David. "The Politics of Adventure in the Early British Spy Novel." In: Wark, Wesley K. ed. 1991. *Spy Fiction, Spy Films, and Real Intelligence*. London/ Portland: Frank Cass. pp. 30-54. p. 34.

⁸⁵⁰ Wisnicki, Adrian S. 2008. *Conspiracy, Revolution and Terrorism from Victorian Fiction to the Modern Novel*. New York/London: Routledge. pp. 153-173.

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 153.

against the entire ruling order, and thus, covers a wide range of political conflicts depicted in 19th-century novels. What is more, Faktorovich regards them as simultaneously bearing traits of the broader genre categories usually attributed to the social, political and historical novel.⁸⁵²

As mentioned before, late-Victorian examples used in this study also pertain to a number of genre categories including the social novel which focuses on social ills, or the political novel with its emphasis on political events and personalities or even the historical novel depicting small or large-scale historical events.⁸⁵³ However, ‘rebellion’ as a discrete taxonomy aiming to carve out the specific generic features of the above-listed texts would fall short of the particularities inherent to literature tackling dynamite terrorism.

One may argue that these texts need to be distinguished from other works dealing with forms of rebellion or political conflict by three aspects. Firstly, 19th-century terrorists, who were essentially Irish nationalists, oftentimes resorted to the newly invented dynamite to achieve the most powerful effect possible. In the late Victorian age, which was characterised by its positivism, this method of authoring destruction can be seen as a natural evolution extending positivism to many spheres of life, including a very “scientific” implementation of political violence. This sense of a fundamentally modern experience is also reflected in the literature. Secondly, the effect of these new dynamite-fuelled tactics was further aggravated by the deliberate attack on (mostly) indiscriminately selected targets; and the strategy relied to a great extent on the recently commercialised press in order to spread fear and anxiety. Thirdly, and closely related to this aspect, the ways in which terrorism affects socio-cultural processes depends to a large extent on the subsequent process of meaning-making, which was to a great extent fuelled by a fear of both anarchism and the cultural meaning attached to it.

As will be shown subsequently, the 19th-century literature discussed in this study – unlike texts dealing with other forms of rebellion, insurrection and revolution – does not solely focus on the social grievances serving as a motivation for the terrorist, or political and personal circumstances that prompted radicalisation, but also responds to the diffuse anxieties which were engendered by modernity, the unprecedented destructiveness that accompanied it and the dynamiters as one of its most destructive and unpredictable manifestations. Also reviewed is the impact of the symbiosis between media and terrorism and the ways in which the “outrage” is represented and interpreted by the public.

To further elucidate these idiosyncracies, a closer look at the genre category first conceived by Barbara Arnett Melchiori called the ‘dynamite novel’ may be insightful. She discusses in *Terrorism and the Late Victorian Novel*⁸⁵⁴ how novelists became attracted to the rich plot material provided by the dynamite campaigns in the UK and the anarchist movement which was operating all across Europe. As already indicated, the late Victorian middle-class writer was particularly interested in the psychology of the

⁸⁵² Faktorovich, Anna. 2013. *Rebellion as Genre in the Novels of Scott, Dickens and Stevenson*. Jefferson: MacFarland. pp. 15-18.

⁸⁵³ Ibid. pp. 15-18.

⁸⁵⁴ Arnett Melchiori. 1985.

perpetrator and not in the victim and eagerly explored the motives for their involvement in such diabolical acts, which was “linked up conveniently for the novelists with what was by now familiar material of the Victorian novel: the social question.”⁸⁵⁵ Thus, these texts deal with a politically motivated plot, but not always represent literal dynamite,⁸⁵⁶ as for example Henry James’s *The Princess Casamassima*. Bearing in mind that the texts discussed in this chapter are very different in style and tone, in general these novels are about the perpetrators and the question of whether society or individual abnormality are at play in driving individuals to resort to terrorism:

Writers in the dynamite genre engage such problems by contemplating the psychology, motivations, and character of the ‘terrorist’. At the root of such imaginary narratives are profound questions [...]: are political crimes manifestations of individual deviance or the inevitable outcome of social conditions?⁸⁵⁷

Yet, most of the dynamite fiction is rather one-dimensional in perspective and reactionary in tone. That is, the genre is according to Richard Ruppel “inspired by a society that feared an internal, not a foreign enemy, an enemy created by the very structure of English society.”⁸⁵⁸ These works are partisan in their treatment of the terrorists as cruel, “noxious misfits.”⁸⁵⁹

Thus, equally crucial for an understanding of the genre is the way in which these texts play on both collective anxieties and the lust for sensation which the phenomenon with its conspiracies and violent shocks engendered among the public.⁸⁶⁰ Newspaper stories as well as popular fiction catered best to the needs of the public readership. Thus, a great number of “shilling shockers” and texts “made in a throwaway manner” as well as “sensation novels” appeared as the century came to a close.⁸⁶¹

Deaglan Ó Donghaile regards the best-selling dynamite genre “with its themes of urban terror and political meltdown” as “an important subcategory in its own right” that “exploited the theme of modern political violence not just as political matter, but as a form of literary capital as well.”⁸⁶² Terrorism as a theme representing the “political frights, moral shocks and aesthetic thrills”⁸⁶³ proved to be a phenomenon that suited the Victorian literary imagination and was at the same time commercially successful.

Having said that, it should also be noted that this fascination with the terrorist subject was not solely reflected in the myriad of popular texts which appeared in the 1880s, but was also represented in texts by authors deemed as canonical, including Joseph Conrad and Henry James. Hence, something more

⁸⁵⁵ Arnett Melchiori. 1985. p. 2.

⁸⁵⁶ Miller, Elizabeth Carolyn. 2011. *Framed: The New Woman Criminal in British Culture at the Fin de Siècle*. 4th ed. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. p. 149.

⁸⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 189.

⁸⁵⁸ Ruppel, Richard. 2014. *A Political Genealogy of Joseph Conrad*. Lanham/Boulder: Lexington. p. 85.

⁸⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 85.

⁸⁶⁰ See Arnett Melchiori on the demand for a “dynamite sensation” among the British newspaper readership. Arnett Melchiori. 1985. p. 37.

⁸⁶¹ Ó Donghaile. 2011. p. 7-8.

⁸⁶² Ibid. p. 8.

⁸⁶³ Ibid. p. 8.

than a fleeting craving for sensationalism and the bittersweet confrontation with the own anxieties must have been at play to trigger such a great number of responses from both ends of the literary spectrum.

Set in London, these texts convey the sense that something is brooding underneath the surface of Britain's buzzing capital. In *Princess Casamassima*, Henry James makes his protagonist Hyacinth Robinson express this sense of looming disaster in every pore of London's underbelly:

Nothing of it appears above the surface; but there is an immense underworld, peopled with a thousand forms of revolutionary passion and devotion. [...] And on top of it all, society lives! People go and come, and buy and sell, and drink and dance, and make money and make love, and seem to know nothing and suspect nothing and think of nothing [...] And that is one-half of it; the other half is that everything is doomed! In silence, in darkness, but under the feet of each one of us, the revolution lives and works. It is a wonderful, immeasurable trap, on the lid of which society performs its antics. [...] The invisible, impalpable wires are everywhere, passing through everything, attaching themselves to objects in which one would never think of looking for them.⁸⁶⁴

It can be argued that the dynamite genre responds to this sense of impending catastrophe which Hyacinth phrases in his address to Princess Casamassima. Often regarded as an anomaly within James' body of work which typically centres on aristocratic manners and transatlantic travels,⁸⁶⁵ *The Princess Casamassima* delivers this sense of threat emanating from the seething class conflict and the anarchist movement as its potentially most militant manifestation.⁸⁶⁶

Bearing in mind that literary discourse is set free from the truth question, these texts can convey contemporary perceptions and discourses that may not be historically exact, albeit more thorough in rendering an impression of the public interpretation and cultural significance of terrorist violence. The most historically accurate text of those discussed in this section is *The Secret Agent*, as it draws on the only actual anarchist incident in Britain, the premature explosion of a bomb at the Greenwich Observatory that killed Bourdin, the anarchist who was carrying it. In the wake of the event, a lot of unresolved speculations about Bourdin's purpose, which remains obscure until the present day, circulated.⁸⁶⁷ Conrad's fictional account closes the remaining gaps within the historical narrative by imagining a rationale behind the incident that is "perverse and implicitly flawed."⁸⁶⁸ Moreover, *The Secret Agent* not only draws on the historical material of the explosion at Greenwich, but it also reflects on the British abstention from provisions aimed at the establishment of a common European anti-terrorism legislation or other measures designed to infringe the liberal asylum policy. As Privy Counciller Wurmt, Mr Verloc's commissioner at the Embassy puts it: "The general leniency of the judicial procedure here, and the utter absence of all repressive measures are a scandal to Europe. What

⁸⁶⁴ James. 2004. pp. 236-237.

⁸⁶⁵ Beringer, Alex. "The Pleasures of Conspiracy in Henry James's *The Princess Casamassima*." In: *Studies in American Fiction* 39.1. 2012. pp. 23-42. p. 25.

⁸⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 24.

⁸⁶⁷ Mulry. 2000. p. 44. This essay also gives a detailed account of popular reports of the event and Conrad's reception of it.

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 44.

is wished for just now is the accentuation of the unrest – of the fermentation which undoubtedly exists.”⁸⁶⁹ However, other works pertaining to the dynamite genre are less attentive to the actual historical background.

Most notably, the majority of these works does not feature characters adhering to Irish nationalism, but often represent foreign anarchists plotting and implementing terrorist campaigns. Thus, even Henry James, whose *Princess Casamassima* is regarded as his most naturalistic work, does not represent Irish nationalists, but adherents of the anarchist movement whose activities in Britain were never as well-organised and prolific as they are represented in James’s novel.⁸⁷⁰ Although the Fenians were the first terrorists in the modern sense of the word and realised a large-scale bombing campaign in London, they did not seem to serve as attractive characters for the fictional depictions of dynamite terrorism.

One exception among the dynamite genre constitutes the villainous Irish dynamiter Zero in Louis Stevenson’s and Fanny van de Grift Stevenson’s *The Dynamiter*, which combines fantastic, orientalist elements with domestic politics and Fenianism. In the “absurdist world”⁸⁷¹ of the novel, the terrorists’ Irishness is merely touched upon briefly and represented in a rather superficial manner. Drawing on the common staple of stereotypes, the Irish militants in the tale lack education, manners and decorum, and even the nurse of the wild “meanly attired”⁸⁷² and “displeasing”⁸⁷³ bunch is given to drink and prone to spending her mornings in the public house. The facial hair of the lodgers is also remarked upon a number of times. The chin beard of some of the tenants reflects the Fenian fashion of trimming and shaving the hair into a distinctive style, “cut away from the mouth and nose, left framing the chin.”⁸⁷⁴ Besides the employment of this visual marker of the Fenian threat, Irish difference⁸⁷⁵ and Irish stereotypes, there are but few references to the cause of the dynamiters. Echoing contemporary ridicule at the Fenian operations in the press, all of Zero’s schemes are a failure and he eventually ends up obliterating himself. The clumsiness of the Irish nationalists’ operations becomes especially apparent in Zero’s tale about the hapless Patrick M’Guire who failed to blow up the actual objective of the effigy of Shakespeare in Leicester Square which was chosen for “the sake of the dramatist, still very foolishly claimed as a glory by the English race, in spite of his disgusting political opinions.”⁸⁷⁶ Most importantly, however, the statue attracts “children, errand-boys, unfortunate young ladies of the poorer class and infirm old

⁸⁶⁹ Conrad. 2008. p. 13.

⁸⁷⁰ Scanlan, Margaret. “Terrorism and the Realistic Novel: Henry James and the *Princess Casamassima*.” In: *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 34.3. 1992. pp. 380-402. pp. 382-384.

⁸⁷¹ Sandison, Alan. “A World Made for Liars: Stevenson’s *Dynamiter* and the Death of the Real.” In: Jones, William B. ed. 2003. *Robert Louis Stevenson Reconsidered: New Critical Perspectives*. Jefferson: McFarland. pp.140-162. p. 144.

⁸⁷² Stevenson; van de Grift. 2005. p. 95.

⁸⁷³ *Ibid.* p. 95.

⁸⁷⁴ Edge, Sarah. “Reading the Fenian Photographs: A Historically and Culturally Located Study.” In: Machin, David, ed. 2014. *Handbook of Visual Communication*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter. pp. 483-500. p. 495.

⁸⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 495. See also the facial hair of “The Irish Frankenstein” depicted by *Punch* cartoonist Kenny Meadows and in a *Punch* cartoon “Young Ireland in Business for Himself.” Curtis, L. Perry. 1997. *Apes and Angels: The Irishmen in Victorian Caricature*. Washington/London: Smithsonian Institution Press. pp. 32, 127.

⁸⁷⁶ Stevenson; van de Grift. 2005. p. 107.

men;⁸⁷⁷ all of whom serve as perfectly indiscriminate targets. Children are the acme of indiscriminateness and the “sensitive point” of society, and therefore pose a convenient target for them.⁸⁷⁸ While the fortunes of “green Erin”⁸⁷⁹ serve as the declared cause, it is their utter viciousness that makes for the Fenians’ actual motivation. Hence, the text foregrounds the dynamitard’s nihilistic spirit, the belief “in nothing”⁸⁸⁰ underpinning his deeds, and thus rather plays on contemporary fears, transfixing society with the “accomplished anarchist”⁸⁸¹ than marking itself off from the other dynamite novels through the representation of the Fenian cause. In fact, apart from some gags about Irish stereotypes, one could argue that it would not make a great difference to the novel if Zero and his fellow plotters were anarchists instead of Fenians. Ó Donghaile therefore quite rightly points out that the text depoliticises Irish separatism, “presenting it as a purely criminal and insane endeavour.”⁸⁸²

As explained earlier, not only representations, but also “literary forgetting” of terrorism may play an integral role in capturing the ways in which literature may constitute a cultural force participating in the construction of a favourable and coherent identity.⁸⁸³ As for the lack of in-depth depictions of Fenians, there are two aspects at work which explain the authors’ almost unanimous neglect of Fenianism and their preference for representing anarchism.

Firstly, as outlined before, Irishness in Victorian times was strongly associated with cultural, racial and economic inferiority. Protagonists and incidental characters of a dynamite novel, on the other hand, need to demonstrate certain conspiratorial and hence intellectual skills which Irishmen in the British public perception lacked. As shown before, the Fenian bombing campaign engendered a rather ambivalent response which oscillated between panic-stricken reactions and blatant derision at the bombers’ dilettantism. Due to their perceived ineptness and inferiority and despite their large-scale dynamite campaign, Fenians never managed to transfix the whole country in the long term. Their cause of Irish independence did not threaten the social structure of British society as a whole, but was like the group itself regarded as a minor issue. Anarchists, on the other hand, were deemed to be the potential “enemies within” who posed a menace to the social order. They were in general believed to be the more capable and subversive instigators and were perceived as a threat to the stability of British society and therefore served as protagonists in many of the dynamite novels. More poignantly, to write about a Fenian was to describe an ape, whereas to write about an anarchist was to capture a continental sophisticate.

⁸⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 107.

⁸⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 105. See also M’Guire’s attempt to convince a mother of small children to take the bag with dynamite home with her (Ibid. p. 110) and the failed scheme of bombing the Children’s Hospital (Ibid. p. 163).

⁸⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 112.

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 105.

⁸⁸¹ Ibid. p. 168.

⁸⁸² Ó Donghaile. 2011. p. 29.

⁸⁸³ See chapter 3.2.3.3.

Secondly and closely linked to the previous point, the anxieties inspired by anarchism were associated with much more far-reaching apprehensions related to modernity and the social unrest and technological progress it entailed. Those fears haunted society, and particularly the establishment of that time. As elucidated before, anarchism was often equated with the socialist movement and the threat emanating from the underclasses seeking to subvert the existing social order. The dynamite genre therefore encapsulates the apparent threat the underclass and socialist movement posed to the middle and upper class.

Playing on these existing fears and anxieties, the novels of the dynamite genre also reflect on the ways in which terrorism is represented and the news of terrorist atrocities is disseminated through the news media. For example, Gregory the supposedly anarchist poet in *The Man Who Was Thursday* tells his comrades his policy of correcting the public image of anarchism which has been slandered by those who get their knowledge from “sixpenny novels,” “tradesmen’s newspapers,” the comic magazine “*Ally Sloper’s Half Holiday* and the *Sporting Times*.”⁸⁸⁴ In a similar vein, *The Secret Agent* also mocks the power of the news media to construct the public image of anarchism and its adherents. The image of Michaelis, the harmless ticket-of-leave apostle, created by “some emotional journalists”⁸⁸⁵ upon his release from prison makes his arrest much more expedient. Clearly, “the journalists who had written him up with emotional gush would be ready to write him down with emotional indignation.”⁸⁸⁶ The press is hence a player of the “game” of criminals and the police which occupies Chief Inspector Heat. What is more, the press is also harnessed to create the desired outrage at Mr Verloc’s terrorist attack in Greenwich. The news of this incident has been shouted in the streets and disseminated immediately.⁸⁸⁷ The function of the press in the fictional world of *The Secret Agent* lies in the creation of false images for the sake of enhancing commercial success, at the same time playing into the hands of the police and terrorists alike.

The works not solely reflect on the public representation, but also create their own images. The exploration of the mind of the terrorist is a dominant theme of the dynamite genre and the question at the heart of some of the novels is whether his fate is predetermined by society or is a manifestation of an inherent condition. Such an approach evokes the theories of Cesare Lombroso, whose ideas on the born criminal enjoyed currency around the *fin de siècle*.⁸⁸⁸

Famously, Joseph Conrad applied Lombrosian descriptions of the criminal man to his characters in *The Secret Agent*. Stevie, the handicapped brother of *agent provocateur* Adolf Verloc’s wife, is a prime example of a Lombrosian degenerate⁸⁸⁹ who spends much of his time drawing innumerable circles, thus

⁸⁸⁴ Chesterton. 2005. p. 19.

⁸⁸⁵ Conrad. 2008. p. 90.

⁸⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 91.

⁸⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 53.

⁸⁸⁸ As Allan Hunter points out, they were not agreed upon unanimously, but had become subject to critical scrutiny. Hunter, Allen. 1983. *Joseph Conrad and the Ethics of Darwinism: The Challenges of Science*. London: Croom Helm. pp. 182-183.

⁸⁸⁹ Jacobs, Robert C. “Comrade Ossipon’s Favorite Saint: Lombroso and Conrad.” In: *Nineteenth-Century*

rendering “cosmic chaos, the symbolism of a mad art.”⁸⁹⁰ “His thin neck, sunk into a deep hollow at the base of the skull”⁸⁹¹ is evocative of Lombroso’s pseudo-science. In fact, Lombroso’s name is explicitly mentioned in the novel. One of the anarchists who gather at Mr Verloc’s shop, the ex-medical student Ossipon who is also an author of pseudo-scientific studies and wandering lecturer on quasi-medical topics, is an ardent admirer of Lombroso’s theories. Commenting on Stevie’s physique and drawings, he diagnoses a Lombrosian form of degeneracy: “That’s what he may be called scientifically. Very good type too, altogether, of that sort of degenerate. It’s enough to glance at the lobes of his ears. If you read Lombroso---.”⁸⁹² Robert G. Jacobs observes that Conrad indeed modelled Stevie’s appearance after “pertinent Lombrosian details.”⁸⁹³ Towards the end of the novel, Ossipon’s observations become even “more orthodox,”⁸⁹⁴ as he gazes at Stevie’s sister, Winnie Verloc.

He gazed scientifically at that woman, the sister of a degenerate, a degenerate herself – of a murdering type. He gazed at her and invoked Lombroso, as an Italian peasant recommends himself to his favourite saint. He gazed scientifically. He gazed at her cheeks, at her nose, at her eyes, at her ears.....Bad!....Fatal!⁸⁹⁵

While Winnie and her brother are the only characters who actually commit factual acts of murder and destruction in the novel, many critics have commented on the Lombrosian features of many of the characters and particularly of the anarchists in the *Secret Agent*.⁸⁹⁶

The function of these Lombrosian characterisations is, however, hard to grasp. Critics have speculated about Conrad’s intention to use Lombroso’s analyses of criminals as a template for some of his characters. What is more, the author’s imagination obviously operates “within a frame-of-reference”⁸⁹⁷ established by Lombroso’s theories, yet the extent to which he was acquainted with his work and what he made of it remains controversial.⁸⁹⁸ For example, the anarchist Karl Yundt, who is described as a

Fiction 23.1. 1968. pp. 74-84. p. 78.

⁸⁹⁰ Conrad. 2008.p. 34.

⁸⁹¹ Ibid. p. 34.

⁸⁹² Ibid. p. 35.

⁸⁹³ Jacobs. 1968. p. 78.

⁸⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 78.

⁸⁹⁵ Conrad. 2008. p. 217.

⁸⁹⁶ The vast number of works tackling Conrad’s use of Lombroso include: Burton Harrington, Ellen. “The Female Offender, the New Woman and Winnie Verloc in the *Secret Agent*.” In: Simmons, Allan H.; Stape, J.H. 2007. *The Secret Agent: Centennial Essays*. Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V. pp. 57-69. p. 63. Halliwell, Martin. 2006. *Transatlantic Modernism: Moral Dilemmas in Modernist Fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. p. 95. Hampson, Robert G. “‘If you read Lombroso’: Conrad and Criminal Anthropology.” In: Curreli, Mario, ed. 1988. *The Ugo Mursia Memorial Lectures: Papers from the International Conrad Conference, University of Pisa, September 7th-11th 1983*. Milan: Mursia International. pp. 317-335.

Hunter. 1983. Jacobs. 1968. pp. 77-83. Kern, Stephen. 2004. *A Cultural History of Casualty: Science, Murder Novels, and Systems of Thought*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p. 234.

With a focus on Nordau rather than Lombroso: Ray, Martin. “Conrad, Nordau and Other Degenerates.” In: *Conradania: A Journal of Joseph Conrad Studies* 16.2. 1984. pp. 125-141.

Watts, Cedric. 2014. *A Preface to Conrad*. 2nd ed. Abingdon/New York: Routledge. p. 92.

⁸⁹⁷ Hampson. 1988. p. 335.

⁸⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 223. For a detailed analysis of the extent and the nature of a possible relationship between Lombroso’s theories and Conrad’s work, see: Hunter. 1983. pp. 181-204.

“disgusting old man”⁸⁹⁹ and who is one of the most despicable characters of the short novel, is the only one who openly criticises Lombroso. This has induced commentators like Jacobs to assume that the text expresses Conrad’s aversion to Lombroso’s criminal anthropology, for Yundt as a spokesperson seems an unlikely choice.⁹⁰⁰ Surely, the attitude conveyed towards the ideas of the Italian physician throughout the text is difficult to fathom. However, Lombroso’s advocate and admirer Ossipon is clearly – like most of the characters in the novel – treated with mocking irony. Alan Hunter points out that not only is he a quack scientist nicknamed ‘the doctor’, but his physical appearance with his mongoloid features, large bony forehead could also spring from a Lombrosian textbook. Particularly his thick lips, high cheek bones and almond-shaped eyes accentuating “the negro type”⁹⁰¹ or Mongoloid features of his face are reminiscent of what Lombroso regarded an atavistic species, and what was popularly thought to be a degenerate at the time.⁹⁰² Therefore, Cedric Watts quite rightly pins down Conrad’s treatment of Lombroso’s phrenology as “an elaborate game of ironic endorsement and mocking reversal.”⁹⁰³ The repetition of the charlatan Ossipon’s scientific gaze⁹⁰⁴ at Winnie, the “sister of a degenerate – a degenerate herself of a murdering type”⁹⁰⁵ in chapter 12 stresses the structural irony underpinning the use of Lombroso’s theory. It is hence little surprising that the Professor who advocates science for the cleansing and betterment of society in its most radical form, and is thus indirectly an adherent of Lombroso’s school of thought himself, is also an embodiment of a Lombrosian criminal:

His flat, large ears departed widely from the sides of his skull, which looked frail enough for Ossipon to crush between thumb and forefinger; the dome of the forehead seemed to rest on the rim of the spectacles, the flat cheeks, of a greasy, unhealthy complexion, were merely smudged by the miserable poverty of a thin dark whisker.⁹⁰⁶

As will be subsequently shown in more detail, in Conrad’s *Secret Agent* the two worlds of either sides of the law, of criminal/police, good/evil, or respectable/vile relentlessly collapse. This ironic treatment of Lombroso not only serves as a font of inspiration for the creation of his characters nor solely mocks these pseudo-scientific theories,⁹⁰⁷ but is also consistent with the overall pattern in the novel: The “scientists” of the novel are subject to the same scientific doctrines they advocate.

In no other work which can be attributed to the dynamite genre are the spheres of the perpetrators and the victims intertwined to such an extent as in the *Secret Agent*. In most of the texts, the fate of the terrorist which features prominently in this genre is distinct from that of society and the individual characters representing it. Conrad’s take on anarchism is the most complex text allowing for various

⁸⁹⁹ Conrad. 2008. p. 134.

⁹⁰⁰ Jacobs. 1968. p. 82.

⁹⁰¹ Conrad. 2008. p. 33.

⁹⁰² Hunter. 1983. p. 172.

⁹⁰³ Watts. 2014. p. 92.

⁹⁰⁴ Conrad. 2008. p. 217.

⁹⁰⁵ Conrad. 2008. p. 212.

⁹⁰⁶ Conrad. 2008. p. 46.

See also: Hampson. 1988. p. 322.

⁹⁰⁷ See, e.g.: Hunter. 1983. p. 202.

readings. *The Secret Agent* stands out from the other works pertaining to the genre. The irony pervading the text makes a case for the assumption that the novel is a parody⁹⁰⁸ of the dynamite genre, as it “dismantles the central conceit of the genre, the idea that Britain is imperilled by foreign revolutionaries operating on domestic soil.”⁹⁰⁹ While this interpretation of the *Secret Agent* as a parody makes certainly for one possible reading of Conrad’s novel, another promising approach to *The Secret Agent* in relation to the dynamite genre is based on the assumption that genres do not solely respond to cultural-historical challenges, but may also play on and challenge the readers’ expectations of certain generic conventions. As we shall see in the course of this chapter, there is clearly more to a complex and multi-layered text as *The Secret Agent* than merely satirising the genre that enjoyed most of its heyday about twenty years before the publication of Conrad’s text in 1907.

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Prior to an in-depth analysis of Conrad’s take on anarchism, the structural-aesthetic function of the texts will be analysed in order to elucidate the ways in which the literature unfolds its full socio-cultural potential. Aesthetically, these texts draw on a variety of strategies to convey this sense of insecurity resulting from “renegade developments of ‘Science’”⁹¹⁰ and social developments. That is to say, ever since its genesis, modern terrorism has been affiliated with fiction and the “story” it provokes. In this vein, the dynamite genre also reflects on “the artistic quality”⁹¹¹ of dynamite terrorism. Aesthetically, as Ó Donghaile asserts, blowing up is a fundamentally modern experience and⁹¹² the dynamite genre draws on various textual strategies to convey this sense of avant-gardism, or if not the detonation itself than the sense of threat emanating from the potential harm of the dynamiter.

As Alex Houen observes, many of the texts yoke scientists and militant anarchists together.⁹¹³ *The Man Who Was Thursday*, for example, features a senile and decrepit German nihilist Professor who is a caricature of the real Professor de Worms, impersonated by an actor working for the police. The nihilist Professor in *The Secret Agent* is the only true terrorist of the novel, at all times ready to fire the detonator he carries around with him. The dynamite genre thus reflects the perceived public threat posed by science which can only be aggravated when matched with an ideology or philosophy that imperils the status quo. In this vein, in G.K. Chesterton’s *The Man Who Was Thursday* the policeman tells detective Gabriel Syme:

⁹⁰⁸ See Wayne Booth’s explanation of parody as an imitation and distortion of the “victim’s style.” Hence, “every parody refers at every point to historical knowledge that is in a sense ‘outside itself’ – that is, previous literary works” or genres. Booth, Wayne C. 1974. *The Rhetoric of Irony*. Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press. p. 123.

⁹⁰⁹ Arata. 1999. pp. 175-176.

⁹¹⁰ Houen. 2002. p. 31.

⁹¹¹ Ó Donghaile. 2011. p. 37.

⁹¹² Ibid. p. 37.

⁹¹³ Houen. 2002. p. 31.

The head of one of our departments, one of the most celebrated detectives in Europe, has long been of opinion that a purely intellectual conspiracy would soon threaten the very existence of civilisation. He is certain that the scientific and artistic worlds are silently bound up in a crusade against the Family and the State.⁹¹⁴

The consequences of science being harnessed for radical philosophy are accordingly disastrous for society, whose two fundamental pillars of the family and the state are threatened. Even more so, this sentiment also reverberates in Edward Douglass Fawcett's *Hartmann the Anarchist*. The novel features the scientific discovery of a "silvery grey substance"⁹¹⁵ functioning as "some moving power greatly lighter than any we yet know."⁹¹⁶ This is also the material the airship "Attila" is made of. Set in the future of 1920, Fawcett's utopia relies "on a vision of the impending destruction of London."⁹¹⁷ Mr. Stanley, the first-person narrator, who is devoted to the socialist cause but who advocates reform rather than revolution, is trapped in the hyper-modern zeppelin steered by the German anarchist Rudolph Hartmann, who seeks to turn London from above into "mere shambles with the roof ablaze."⁹¹⁸ Yet despite this ruthless act of destruction ahead, the journey in the Attila is described by Stanley in terms of "the grandeur of the cloud pictures, the glory of the sunsets and the twilights, of the moonlight flooding our decks as we sped over the streaky mists below."⁹¹⁹ The "romance of this voyage"⁹²⁰ is underpinned by the vast descriptions and metaphors pointing to the beauty inherent to the marvels of science. From the "wonderful advances in electricity"⁹²¹ to be found in the engine room of the Attila to the hydrogen-driven buoyancy of the sweeping "albatross,"⁹²² combining the "advantages of the bird and the balloon"⁹²³ – the graceful analogies used for the technical details of this airship make Stanley as well as the reader almost forget that it has been designed as a mere "means to an end."⁹²⁴ Yet, in the wrong hand such as those of the anarchists, the vessel may be used for the nihilist cause to "raze, raze, raze, and let the future look into itself."⁹²⁵ When the Attila is harnessed for its ultimate end of wrecking civilisation,⁹²⁶ the marvellous airship turns into a "huge bird of prey,"⁹²⁷ vomiting flame over the Houses of Parliament:

Horror of horrors, the great tower had fallen on the crowd, bruising into jelly a legion of buried wretches, and beating into ruins the whole mass of buildings opposite. [...] With eyes riveted now to the massacre, I saw frantic women trodden down by men; huge clearings made by the shells and instantly filled up; house-fronts crushing horses and vehicles as they fell; fires bursting out on all sides, to devour what they listed, and terrified police struggling wildly and helplessly in the heart of

⁹¹⁴ Chesterton. 2005. p. 25.

⁹¹⁵ Fawcett. 2009. p. 41.

⁹¹⁶ Ibid. p. 41.

⁹¹⁷ Taylor. 2012. p. 60.

⁹¹⁸ Fawcett. 2009. p. 97.

⁹¹⁹ Ibid. p. 93.

⁹²⁰ Ibid. p. 93.

⁹²¹ Ibid. p. 87.

⁹²² Ibid. pp. 88-89.

⁹²³ Ibid. p. 91.

⁹²⁴ Ibid. p. 91.

⁹²⁵ Ibid. p. 83.

⁹²⁶ Ibid. p. 83.

⁹²⁷ Ibid. p. 121.

the press. [...] The Attila, drunk with slaughter, was careering in continually fresh tracts, spreading havoc and desolation everywhere. To compare her to a wolf in a flock of helpless sheep is idle – the sheep could at least butt, the victims below could not approach, and after some time, indeed, owing to the smoke, could not even see us.⁹²⁸

Thus, as Mr. Stanley's future father-in-law, Mr. Northerton, phrases it, the "wondrous air vessel,"⁹²⁹ could have been utilised for "the cause of civilization, science, and culture."⁹³⁰ Yet, in the 19th century discourse, anarchy was commonly constructed as the absolute opposite to culture and civilisation. In conjunction with science, *Hartmann the Anarchist* suggests, anarchism is nothing, but "destructive madness fuelled by technology,"⁹³¹ thus eradicating every trace of the civilisation and its culture that brought forth the scientific advances used for their destruction.

The novel is a rather simplistic tale brimming with easily digestible sensationalism, but it still illustrates the ambivalence prevailing around the *fin de siècle* towards the embrace of progress and all its amenities, on the one hand, and the fear of the destructiveness it entailed on the other. Towards the end, *Hartmann the Anarchist* gives a very pessimistic outlook on the modern forces: The death of Hartmann's mother resulting from his own campaign of destruction finally leads to the annihilation of the crew on board of the Attila as well as the suicide of Hartmann and the explosion of his vessel. This surely indicates the futility of the anarchist cause. Hence, the moral of the story, as David Weir proposes, is simply that anarchist destruction eventually destroys itself.⁹³² Aesthetically, the text resonates with the sensationalist newspaper accounts of its time which are quintessentially thriving on the news of potential disaster and destruction occasioned by the supposed anarchist conspiracy.

Much more complex and intricate, and even more pessimistic in its treatment of terrorism is Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*.⁹³³ Most precisely, the novel encapsulates the sense of shock brought about by modernity and the destructiveness engendered by science and technology that forms the backdrop, its setting in 1894. It thus stages the anxieties of the late Victorian and early Modernist period, in which, most notably, the experience of shock brought about by technology was first described, and thus the foundations of the concept of 'trauma' were laid. Aesthetically, *The Secret Agent* illustrates this sense of shock and what would be now termed 'trauma' wrought by modernity and the destructiveness of dynamite terrorism as its most dreadful manifestation.

Notably, as Adam Parkes argues, the whole plot is structured around the actual shocking event, the explosion that leaves nothing of Stevie, Mr Verloc's retarded brother-in-law who accidentally triggers

⁹²⁸ Ibid. pp. 136-137.

⁹²⁹ Ibid. p. 174.

⁹³⁰ Ibid. p. 174.

⁹³¹ Weir. 1997. p. 83.

⁹³² Ibid. p. 82.

⁹³³ Lyon, John. "Introduction." In: Conrad. 2008. pp. xi-xxxix. p. xv.

See, e.g., Stephen Arata's overview over the critical reception of the utter bleakness of the novel: Arata, Stephen. "The Secret Agent (1907)". In: Orr, Leonard; Billy, Ted, eds. 1999. *A Joseph Conrad Companion*. Westport/London: Greenwood. pp. 165-195. pp. 167-170.

the detonator, but his fragmented body parts:⁹³⁴ "Blown to small bits: limbs, gravel, clothing, bones, splinters – all mixed up together."⁹³⁵ This incoherence may also be seen as a symbol of the incoherence in the novel's plot.⁹³⁶

The reader learns about this horrific event through hearsay at a relatively early stage of the novel, in chapter 4, when Ossipon relates the news about the Greenwich bombing to the Professor.⁹³⁷ The narrative subsequently proceeds with the details of the background to the accident. However, the actual detonation is absent from the text. In fact, as Parkes argues, the displacement of the explosion from the center of the novel leaves a blank space which thus performs the disappearing act of dynamite which obliterates itself on detonation.⁹³⁸ This absence, moreover, evinces the shock or trauma precipitated by the blows to the fabric of modern life. The viscerality, ferocity and incoherence of modernity was too great to fathom. The blank space in the text, functioning as an "absence" that decomposes the linearity of the narrative, caters this sentiment. Stevie's death represents the sheer monstrosity of the ills of modern civilisation and his death catapults Winnie Verloc into a state of shock after overhearing how her brother died:

She sat at her post of duty behind the counter. She sat rigidly erect in the chair with two dirty pink pieces of paper lying spread out at her feet. The palms of her hands were pressed convulsively to her face, with the tips of the fingers contracted against the forehead, as though the skin had been a mask which she was ready to tear off violently. The perfect immobility of her pose expressed the agitation of rage and despair, all the potential violence of tragic passions, better than any shallow display of shrieks, with the beating of a distracted head against the walls, could have done.⁹³⁹

In this scene, like under "the locking power of a spell"⁹⁴⁰ time and action have been suspended by the trauma precipitated by Stevie's death. The unfathomable horror makes Winnie and her surroundings burn "without a quiver."⁹⁴¹ The utter immobility and suspense transmitted by this scene further performs the blankness and absence precipitated by trauma. Conrad's dynamite novel thus captures and enacts the sense of fragility and uncertainty that is so characteristic of Modernism on both the level of narrative plotting and the level of the text.

Another way of conveying this fundamentally modern sense of uncertainty and moreover of the instability of meaning associated with it is Conrad's use of what he calls "ironic method"⁹⁴² in the Author's Note to the novel. In fact, the "thick fog of irony"⁹⁴³ surrounding the novel is perhaps the most

⁹³⁴ Parkes, Adam. 2011. *A Sense of Shock: The Impact of Impressionism on Modern British and Irish Writing*. Oxford/New York et al.: Oxford University Press. p. 110.

⁹³⁵ Conrad. 2008. p. 154.

⁹³⁶ Parkes. 2011. p. 110.

⁹³⁷ Conrad. 2008. p. 53.

⁹³⁸ Parkes. 2011. p. 110.

⁹³⁹ Conrad. 2008. pp. 155-156.

⁹⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 156.

⁹⁴¹ Ibid. p. 156.

⁹⁴² Ibid. p. 232.

⁹⁴³ Howe, Irving. 1957. *Politics and the Novel*. New York: Horizon. p. 96.

prominent aesthetic feature of the text and has equally amazed and perturbed its critics. Irving Howe, for example, contends that as a result of Conrad's ironic method, the characters are gradually deprived of their pretensions and illusions as well as their dignity and any chance of redemption.⁹⁴⁴ Similarly, Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan regards the narrator's treatment of the characters in their sordid mode of existence which is not ameliorated by the presence of an alternative as "extremely disturbing."⁹⁴⁵ This sense of utter bleakness and hopelessness that might be deemed disturbing is a result of the constant "undercutting of meaning followed in turn by an undercutting of the reconstructed meaning."⁹⁴⁶ Thus, a definite authorial stance is absent from the text.⁹⁴⁷ Rather, the irony dissolves "everything it touches: governmental systems, both actual and those proposed by the radicals; the British police force, international diplomacy; the English aristocracy, middle class and working class; even the institution of marriage and family."⁹⁴⁸

There have been many attempts to pinpoint the make-up and effect of irony. Ernst Behler, for example, defines an ironic manner of expression as an attempt "to transcend the restrictions of normal discourse and straightforward speech by making the ineffable articulate, at least indirectly, through a great number of verbal strategies, and accomplishing what lies beyond the reach of direct communication"⁹⁴⁹ Extrapolated to the *Secret Agent*, the irony here is harnessed to create a form of impartial detachment from the characters, whose ineffable follies and shortcomings are at the same time exposed in an indirect, covert manner.

The only exception to this method of characterisation is the character of Stevie, Winnie's compromised brother, who is treated more benevolently. He is the only individual capable of displaying sympathy for other creatures such as in the often-mentioned scene of the cab ride, in which he displays his ability to feel sympathy for the horses and the driver.⁹⁵⁰ Although he is not "a master of phrases"⁹⁵¹ and his thoughts lack "clearness and precision,"⁹⁵² his lack of verbosity is compensated by his emotional profundity.⁹⁵³ He exhibits a "degenerate form of altruism"⁹⁵⁴ that distinguishes him from the sordid London world he lives in.

⁹⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 96.

⁹⁴⁵ Erdinast-Vulcan, Daphna. "'Sudden Holes in Space and Time:' Conrad's Anarchist Aesthetic in *The Secret Agent*." In: Moore, Gene M. ed. 1992. *Conrad's Cities: Essays for Hans von Marle*. Amsterdam/Atlanta: Rodopi B.V. pp. 207-222. p. 207.

⁹⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 208.

⁹⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 208.

⁹⁴⁸ Ruppel. 2014. p. 86.

⁹⁴⁹ Behler, Ernst. 1990. *Irony and the Discourse of Modernity*. Seattle/London: University of Washington Press. p. 111.

⁹⁵⁰ Conrad. 2008. pp. 124-126.

⁹⁵¹ Ibid. p. 126.

⁹⁵² Ibid. p. 126.

⁹⁵³ Ibid. p. 126. Chapter VIII, which describes the cab ride of Stevie and his family, is the most emblematic representation of Stevie's "universal charity" towards the cab driver and his horse. Conrad. 2008. pp. 112-133.

⁹⁵⁴ Ray.1984. p. 128.

By contrast, all of the other characters – anarchists and police-force alike – are flawed, self-regarding or frail. Adolf Verloc, who is fat, stolid, laconic and middle-aged, is an antithesis of what a fictional Secret Agent is supposed to be.⁹⁵⁵ His motives for using Stevie to cause the desired outrage at the bomb campaign on “science” as symbolised by Greenwich Observatory are fundamentally egotistical, serving his comfort-seeking aims.⁹⁵⁶ Yet, the supposed other end of the law is equally corrupt. The Assistant Commissioner, for instance, is mostly concerned about protecting his wife’s friendship with the influential patroness of Michaelis, the complacent “ticket-of-leave apostle of humanitarian hopes”⁹⁵⁷ Chief Inspector Heat, the Commissioner’s direct subordinate, is not only characterised by a profound sense of superiority, but is also more concerned about “a little personal difficulty”⁹⁵⁸ and the expediency of arresting the unwitting Michaelis than in progressing with the case. However, despite his mediocrity Heat acknowledges the “rules of the game”⁹⁵⁹ which rely on the equality of policeman and criminal, who share the same mind, instincts and thus mutual understanding. In fact, they are “products of the same machine, one classed as useful and the other as noxious.”⁹⁶⁰ This idea of the fundamental likeness of these two opposing poles of the law reverberates throughout Conrad’s tale. The Professor, one of the most alienated albeit most discerning characters of the novel, puts this sentiment in a nutshell, when he claims that revolutionists are:

the slaves of social convention. [...] It governs your thought, of course, and your action too, and thus neither your thought or your action can ever be conclusive. [...] You are not a bit better than the forces arrayed against you – than the police, for instance. The terrorist and the policeman both come from the same basket. Revolution, legality – counter moves in the same game; forms of idleness at bottom identical.⁹⁶¹

In this vein, in the London world *The Secret Agent* depicts, the drawing-room of Michaelis’ influential patroness quintessentially represents the symbiosis of terrorist and establishment the Professor is aware of. This is the place where the “Royal Highnesses, artists, men of science, young statesmen, and charlatans of all ages and conditions”⁹⁶² as well as an Assisstant Comissioner of Police and an ex-convict meet.⁹⁶³

There are two things at play that make *The Secret Agent* unique among the dynamite novels. That is, Conrad’s ironic method underlying the text leads in conjunction with the emphasis on the connectedness of all spheres of society to the full collapse of the traditional oppositions. In this sense, *The Secret Agent* distinguishes itself fundamentally from late Victorian accounts of anarchism, which are based on the clear divides of anarchy and culture, barbarism and civilisation, revolution and tradition and so forth.⁹⁶⁴

⁹⁵⁵ See also: Hunter. 1983. pp. 153-154.

⁹⁵⁶ On Verloc’s motive, see, for example: Howe. 1957. p. 93.

⁹⁵⁷ Conrad. 2008. pp. 77-98.

⁹⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 84.

⁹⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 90.

⁹⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 69.

⁹⁶¹ Ibid. p. 52.

⁹⁶² Ibid. p. 77.

⁹⁶³ Ibid. p. 78.

⁹⁶⁴ Arata. 1999. p. 179.

The absence of “a moral positive to serve literary ends”⁹⁶⁵ renders the definition of the attitude conveyed impossible. While Howe, for example, attributes Conrad therefore “some deep distemper,”⁹⁶⁶ such speculation on the author’s frame of mind conflicts with the notion of literary function underlying this study. Rather, this all-encompassing pessimism and bleakness “in its culminative emphasis on destruction and futility,”⁹⁶⁷ as well as the uncoupling of binaries which are an inherent feature of threat narratives in the aftermath of terrorist events and which provided certainty and stability to the late Victorian forerunners to *The Secret Agent* are indicative of that novel’s modernist ideology.⁹⁶⁸ By contrast, as will be shown subsequently, Henry James’ *The Princess Casamassima* is structured in accordance with the Arnoldian binary of ‘culture’ and ‘anarchy.’ Torn between these two opposites, the novel’s protagonist Hyacinth eventually decides to “oppose anarchist violence in the name of culture,”⁹⁶⁹ a stance which ultimately leads to his suicide.

Only Chesterton’s “strange fable”⁹⁷⁰ *The Man Who Was Thursday*, which plays with ideas of identity of the policeman and the anarchist, of “same” and “other”, serves as another example of a literary representation that defies binary oppositions. The short novel is riddled with double-writing, confusions of identity and allusions to sameness and difference. For example, with his “long, lean, black cigar, bought in Soho for twopence, stood out from between his tightened teeth,”⁹⁷¹ Gabriel Syme, the detective filled with a genuine hatred of anarchism, “looked a very satisfactory specimen of the anarchists upon whom he had waged a holy war.”⁹⁷² The ardent opponent of anarchism is accidentally elected to the General Council of the Anarchists of Europe and is like the other supposed anarchists in a comic book gag manner⁹⁷³ like all the other undercover agents named after a day of the week, Thursday. The text dismantles the alleged threat emanating from the international anarchist conspiracy, operating on British soil. The anarchist menace is deconstructed little by little, as the identities as police spies of five of the anarchists of the European Council are succinctly revealed. Hence, the tale conceives anarchism in terms of a “muted threat,”⁹⁷⁴ which amounts to mere fantasy. Yet, what is more, as the disclosure of the real identities of the anarchists progresses, the audience is made aware that terrorism is not the opposite of justice, but that both are two sides of the same coin. Echoing this sentiment, the poet Lucian Gregory, who is also the only real anarchist of the tale, advocates the abolition of “right” and “wrong” and the

⁹⁶⁵ Howe. 1957. p. 96.

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 96.

⁹⁶⁷ Watts, Cedric. 1994. *Joseph Conrad*. Plymouth: Northcote House. p. 29.

⁹⁶⁸ See, for example: Thompson, Jon. 1993. *Fiction, Crime and Empire: Clues to Modernity and Postmodernism*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. p. 104.

⁹⁶⁹ Arata. 1999. p. 178.

⁹⁷⁰ Cole, Sarah. 2012. *At the Violet Hour: Modernism and Violence in England and Ireland*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 95.

⁹⁷¹ Chesterton. 2005. p. 24.

⁹⁷² Ibid. p. 25.

⁹⁷³ Hapgood, Lynn. “The Chestertonian City: A Singularly Plural Approach.” In: Beaumont, Matthew; Ingleby, Matthew, eds. 2013. *G.K. Chesterton, London and Modernity*. London/New Delhi et al.: Bloomsbury. pp. 35-56. p. 48.

⁹⁷⁴ Cole. 2012. p. 95.

denial of “all those arbitrary distinctions of vice and virtue, honour and treachery, upon which mere rebels base themselves.”⁹⁷⁵

Similarly, in *The Secret Agent* any division between “right” and “wrong”, between the terrorists and the police force is undermined. The irony applied in Conrad’s tale corrodes Manichean ideas of “self” and terrorist “other”, as both ends of this spectrum are equally doomed. Thus, the socio-cultural function is not so much that of a critique of anarchism as an ideology and a motivation for terrorism that is fundamentally opposed to the “culture” embodied by the establishment, but that of the “anarchy of London.”⁹⁷⁶

What is more, the irony pervading the text is indicative of the modernist perspective of the novel, for despite its occurrence throughout literary history, “irony has been considered one of the primary parameters of literary modernism.”⁹⁷⁷ The ironic treatment of the characters corresponds to the ideology-critical paradigm prevailing under the aegis of modernism,⁹⁷⁸ and is a rhetorical manifestation of a growing sense of the instability of meaning associated with Modernism. In this vein, since almost everyone, anarchist or not, is subject to the corrosive power of the “ironic method”, this technique creates a high degree of openness, if not elusiveness. As Arata further points out, “the corrosiveness works to dissolve those bonds of sympathetic attachment”⁹⁷⁹ which is generally seen as one important ethical function literature may serve. Therefore, the relation between ethics and aesthetics has been deemed “problematic.”⁹⁸⁰

However, one could argue that *The Secret Agent* serves a very particular, distinctive ethical function. Instead of confronting the reader with a terrorist “other” whose values are at variance with the dominant cultural value system, the otherness, strangeness and foulness is a ubiquitous feature of the tale. In other words, rather than confirming the moral superiority of the establishment over the insurgents, the novel conveys, like other modernist fiction, a deep sense of alienation from existing social structures, and feelings of fragmentation and ambivalence governing life in the metropolis. The anarchist scares which exerted a hold on London life some twenty years before *The Secret Agent* was published are harnessed to transmit this modernist sense of estrangement, or even, as Jon Thompson contends, to express a nihilist ideology.⁹⁸¹

Similarly, *The Man Who Was Thursday*, which was published around the same time as *The Secret Agent*, “utilizes the ambiguity and equivocal meanings of modernism as means to an end.”⁹⁸² Robert Caserio discusses in his essay how *The Man Who Was Thursday* narratively stages both the “ins and out

⁹⁷⁵ Chesterton. 2005. p. 14.

⁹⁷⁶ Thompson. 1993. p. 101.

⁹⁷⁷ Martens, Gunther. “Literary Modernism, Critical Theory, and the Politics of Irony.” In: Eysteinnsson, Astradur; Liska, Vivian, eds. 2007. *Modernism: A Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. pp. 89-106. p. 93.

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 93.

⁹⁷⁹ Arata. 1999. p. 189.

⁹⁸⁰ Erdniast-Vulcan. 1992. p. 207.

⁹⁸¹ Ibid. p. 101.

⁹⁸² Knight, Mark. 2004. *Chesterton and Evil*. New York: Fordham University Press. p. 3.

of modernism.”⁹⁸³ Conceiving double writing as pairing “equivocal or indefinite discourse with the purpose to resume and to consolidate definiteness,”⁹⁸⁴ he surmises on the to-date neglected simultaneous existence of ambiguity and multiplicity and the definite resolution thereof in modernist works.⁹⁸⁵ In other words, according to Caserio, this two-sided structure of certainty and ambiguity inherent to double-writing is harnessed to ultimately achieve a resolution and thus an “exit from error.”⁹⁸⁶ The pair of poets Lucien Gregory, the only true anarchist of the tale and advocate of poetic disorder and lawlessness,⁹⁸⁷ and Gabriel Syme, the “poet of law and order,”⁹⁸⁸ epitomise this concurrence of error and its dissolution.⁹⁸⁹ Yet, there is a new certainty towards the end of the novel, as the anarchists are revealed to be police spies. Therefore, the text not only suggests that the threat of modernist disorder does not actually exist, but *The Man Who Was Thursday* also arrives at its very own certainty that is predicated on the idea crystallising from the collapsed binary of the police and the terrorists that justice is not the opposite of anarchism and that this sameness embraces all spheres of society, anarchists and the ruler alike.⁹⁹⁰

It becomes clear from the above that there are more parallels between *The Secret Agent* and *The Man Who Was Thursday* than it would initially appear. That is to say, both novels retrospectively deal with the anarchist scares of the 1880s and 1890s. Presenting a confusing net of double-agents, neither of these texts, however, sets out to seriously explore the actual implications of anarchist terrorism, instead preferring to delve into the other dark elements dominating modern life. Mark Knight sees the texts’ resort to a fictional world pervaded with grotesque elements as an important common feature.⁹⁹¹ Viewing the grotesque as governed by the three principles of a “combination of fantasy and reality; the presence of physical distortion and/or exaggeration; and the combination of comedy with terror,”⁹⁹² one can certainly detect these features to different degrees in both novels. Observing the other anarchists, Syme comes to the conclusion that “each man had something about him [...] which was not normal, and which seems hardly human.”⁹⁹³ Their presence seems to be distorted by “the additional twist given in a false and curved mirror.”⁹⁹⁴ In a similar vein, the anarchists in *The Secret Agent* are described in terms

⁹⁸³ Caserio, Robert L. 2000. “G.K. Chesterton and the Terrorist God outside Modernism.” In: Hapgood, Lynn; Paxton, Nancy L, eds. *Outside Modernism: In Pursuit of the English Novel, 1900-30*. Houndmills/Basingstoke et al.: Macmillan. pp. 63-82. p. 64.

⁹⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 66.

⁹⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 67.

⁹⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 67.

⁹⁸⁷ Chesterton. 2005. p. 7.

⁹⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 7.

⁹⁸⁹ Caserio. 2000. pp. 63-64.

⁹⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 74.

⁹⁹¹ Knight. 2004. p. 106.

⁹⁹² The term of the ‘grotesque’ has been subject to great scholarly debate in recent years. Mikhail Bakhtin and Wolfgang Kayser are among the seminal twentieth century theorists of the grotesque (Ibid. p. 68).

However, a detailed discussion of the term lies beyond the scope of this study which will base its notion of the ‘grotesque’ on the well-conceived three principles by Knight.

⁹⁹³ Chesterton. 2005. p. 33.

⁹⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 33.

of surreal, misshapen, at times Lombrosian physiques. The sense of terror in Conrad's tale is much more ubiquitous than in Chesterton's novel, which offers a fantastical plot and a rather buoyant tone. *The Secret Agent*, as Aaron Matz points out, is, on the other hand, a narrative "where the grotesque and the ironic yield a profound melancholy."⁹⁹⁵ In his foreword to the German edition of *The Secret Agent*, Thomas Mann attests the text an "ultra-modern, post-middle-class"⁹⁹⁶ spirit. In this sense, the novel like other modern art "ceases to recognise the categories of tragic and comic [...] It sees life as tragi-comedy, with the result that the grotesque is its most genuine style."⁹⁹⁷

The dissolution of certainties and categories is accordingly indicative of modernism, and it lies at the heart of both *The Secret Agent* and *The Man Who Was Thursday*. However, while *The Secret Agent* is a mostly realistic grotesque whose distortedness does not ultimately amount to the fantastical,⁹⁹⁸ *The Man Who Was Thursday*, on the other hand, requires a high degree of suspension of disbelief from the readership. Similarly, Stevenson's *Dynamiter* draws on fantastical, grotesque and ironic elements which enhance Stevenson's Modernist claims, for according to Alan Sandison, Stevenson's treatment of dynamite terrorism in this absurdist fashion speaks for the distrust in the modes of representation and reality's nature. In other words, the incorporation of Fenianism as an element of the real into the fantastical tale makes a case against the predominately realist mode of storytelling and for the fictionality of fiction.⁹⁹⁹

The Secret Agent, on the other hand, harnesses the theme of dynamite terrorism to render a sense of melancholy and to represent a ubiquitously tainted society. This is further promoted by the narrative situation of the novel. As discussed before, the potential for eliciting ethical judgements or feelings of empathy is bound up with the narrative situation.¹⁰⁰⁰ Instead of an authorial narrator overtly guiding the moral evaluation of the characters, the text features a narrative situation characterised by a point-of-view narration that – drawing on Müller's 'ethical narratology' – indirectly directs the moral stance towards the characters. Thus, the narrator slips in and out of the different characters, and presents us with the whole spectrum of motives, ranging from the utter self-satisfaction of Winnie Verloc's mother at her decision to move to a charity to Verloc's feelings about Stevie's unforeseen death.¹⁰⁰¹

Yet, this technique is far from constituting an 'empathetic narrative', for the free indirect speech used to render the insights of the characters does not so much evoke empathy as illustrate the egotism underlying their actions. Winnie's mother for example contemplates the "heroic" reasons for her actions, thus granting insight into the vanity guiding her motives:

Shedding a few tears in sign of rejoicing at her daughter's mansuetude in this terrible affair, Mrs

⁹⁹⁵ Matz, Aaron. 2010. *Satire in the Age of Realism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 168.

⁹⁹⁶ Mann, Thomas. "Conrad's 'The Secret Agent'" In: Mann, Thomas. 1933. *Past Masters and Other Papers*. London: Martin Secker. pp. 231-247. p. 240.

⁹⁹⁷ Ibid. pp. 240-241.

⁹⁹⁸ Matz. 2010. p. 168.

⁹⁹⁹ Sandison. 2003. pp. 159-160.

¹⁰⁰⁰ See 3.2.4.4.

¹⁰⁰¹ Conrad. 2008. pp. 112-120, pp. 169-170.

Verloc's mother gave play to her astuteness in the direction of her furniture, because it was her own; and sometimes she wished it hadn't been. Heroism is all very well, but there are circumstances when the disposal of a few tables and chairs, brass bedsteads, and so on, may be big with remote and disastrous consequences. She required a few pieces herself, the Foundation which, after many importunities, had gathered her to its charitable breast, giving nothing but bare planks and cheaply papered bricks to the objects of its solicitude. The delicacy guiding her choice to the least valuable and dilapidated articles passed unacknowledged.¹⁰⁰²

Clearly, this technique of exposing the innermost thought of old Mrs. Verloc in what appears to be free indirect speech provides the reader with revealing information about her. She is more concerned about her furniture and the way her self-sacrificial act of moving to a charity for the supposed benefit of her Stevie is perceived by her environment. Yet, once again, the above cited passage brims with irony which cannot be that of the character. Hence, a narrator is not entirely absent,¹⁰⁰³ but there is a subtle narrative voice conveying the ironic characterisations.¹⁰⁰⁴ In this case, it speaks to characterise Winnie's mother indirectly. The technique contrasts the purported motivation of devotion to her children with the subtleties of the actual "act of abandonment"¹⁰⁰⁵ and thus covertly guides the attention towards Mrs. Verloc's vested interests she disguises as "heroism and unscrupulousness."¹⁰⁰⁶ In fact, her sudden departure resembles, as even the unimaginative Mr. Verloc suspects, "rats leaving a doomed ship."¹⁰⁰⁷

The narrative situation in Henry James' *The Princess Casamassima*, an important literary precursor to Conrad's novel, is also characterised by the absence of an omniscient narrator, and the implementation of point-of-view narrative technique.¹⁰⁰⁸ As Seltzer points out, *The Princess Casamassima* marks a technical turning point in James' career as a novelist through the "turning away from the style of omniscient narration towards the technique of the 'central recording consciousness' or 'central intelligence,'"¹⁰⁰⁹ reflecting the character's lived experience.

Here again, this formal aspect chosen by the author famed for the realist mode and apolitical subject matter of his *oeuvre* reveals a lot about the novel's potential socio-cultural function, for the text's flouting of realist conventions by the renouncement of the omniscient third-person narrator has been regarded as an attempt at transcending realism's limitations.¹⁰¹⁰ That is, as Seltzer points out, the traditionally realistic omniscient narration grants the narrative voice unlimited control over the "world" of the text. Nothing escapes the panoptic eye of the narrator who is entirely in control of the narration. According to Seltzer, in *The Princess Casamassima* the panoptic vision is attributed to the

¹⁰⁰² Conrad. 2008. pp. 113-114.

¹⁰⁰³ Ruppel. 2014. p. 86.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Erdinast-Vulcan. 1992. p. 208.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Conrad. 2008. p. 119.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 119.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 131.

¹⁰⁰⁸ See, for instance, Christine DeVine's essay in which she argues that the absence of a narratorial authority renders a more democratic worldview. DeVine, Christine. "Revolution and Conspiracy in the London *Times* and *The Princess Casamassima*." In: *The Henry James Review* 23. 2002. pp. 53-71. p. 57.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Seltzer, Mark. "*The Princess Casamassima*: Realism and the Fantasy of Surveillance." In: *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 35.4. 1981. pp. 506-534. p. 532.

¹⁰¹⁰ Scanlan, Maraget. 1992. p. 382.

revolutionaries: “Hoffendahl’s God-like power is also the power of the omniscient narrator, a power of unlimited overseeing.”¹⁰¹¹ For this reason, Seltzer argues that James’ novel is a distinctly political text not only because of its analysis of anarchist politics, but in particular because of the power play the narrative technique enacts.¹⁰¹² The “ideology of form” in *The Princess Casamassima* is thus the narrative enactment of the ubiquity and powerfulness of the anarchist conspiracy that the middle- and upper classes feared. In this vein, Hyacinth tells the Princess who has just begun to dote on him for being a representative of the “real people” of London and his genuine beliefs:

I am one of many thousands of young men of my class – you know, I suppose, what that is – in whose brains certain ideas are fermenting. There is nothing original about me at all. [...] It’s only a few months since I began to talk about the possibility of a social revolution with men who have considered the whole ground much more than I have done. I’m a mere particle in the immensity of the people.¹⁰¹³

It is this idea that an “immensity of people” seeking to revolutionise current affairs and operating covertly in the “huge, swarming, smoky, city of London”¹⁰¹⁴ are in charge of the providence normally inhabited by the authorial narrator that the particular narrative situation conveys. Thus, the novel is an exploration of the fear of conspirators that prevailed among its audience. It is, according to David Stivers, precisely this dread of “not knowing,” of losing control over the “restless masses”¹⁰¹⁵ that *The Princess Casamassima* is concerned with. The text stages the failure of discerning the conspiratorial activities in the slums of the metropolis. As Seltzer points out, generally supervision and detection traverse the realist novel with its notorious passion for placing the tiniest details under scrutiny. In *The Princess Casamassima* this passion becomes the subject and not merely the mode of the text.¹⁰¹⁶ The hints for an impending act of terrorism are notable in the seemingly slightest detail, including Hyacinth’s observation of his friend’s Paul Muniment’s “way to keep himself clean (except for the chemical stains on his hands).”¹⁰¹⁷ These stains, this passage implies, do not solely stem from Muniment’s work as a chemist, but could at the same time indicate his involvement in the manufacture of a bomb. Such clues for a conspiracy are omnipresent, and secret societies and spies seem to be a common feature of the fictional world of the text. The novel thus plays on existing anxieties picturing an anarchist plot which, if anything, can only be observed by means of mediation.¹⁰¹⁸ Rosy, Paul Muniment’s bedridden sister, exemplifies this central theme of looking at what is going on “beneath the surface.” Uncannily, despite her paralysis, Rosy is capable of describing London’s cityscape without having experienced it

¹⁰¹¹ Seltzer. 1981. p. 531.

¹⁰¹² Ibid. p. 509.

¹⁰¹³ James. 2004. pp. 125-126.

¹⁰¹⁴ Ibid. p. 129.

¹⁰¹⁵ Stivers, David. “Witnessing the Invisible: Narrative Mediation in *The Princess Casamassima*.” In: *The Henry James Review* 28. 2007. pp. 159-173. p. 160.

¹⁰¹⁶ Seltzer. 1981. pp. 528-532.

¹⁰¹⁷ James. 2004. p. 287.

¹⁰¹⁸ Stivers. 2007. p. 165.

herself,¹⁰¹⁹ and these descriptions “are just like the reality.”¹⁰²⁰ Yet, despite her unique vision, she refuses to see her brother’s involvement in London’s anarchist underworld.¹⁰²¹ Hence, even the most discerning character of the novel fails to penetrate the nebulous underworld of the anarchists.

In this realm of the “lower orders”¹⁰²² democracy, socialism and nihilism are often conflated. The true ideological nature of the impending insurgency from below is irrelevant for the representation of the “spy mania”¹⁰²³ and “the ‘play of energy’ in others’ speculations about conspiracy.”¹⁰²⁴ That is, the text is not designed to convey an authentic depiction of the anarchist movement. Yet, it is aimed at conveying a unique vision and a “novelistic truth”¹⁰²⁵ rather than a historically exact representation of the anarchist movement.¹⁰²⁶ In his influential essay “The Art of Fiction,” Henry James makes a case for novelistic realism as the “supreme virtue of a novel – the merit on which all its other merits (including that conscious moral purpose [...]) helplessly and submissively depend.”¹⁰²⁷ Yet, he refers to the rendering of a “truth” representing human consciousness and impressions rather than detailed realistic descriptions.¹⁰²⁸ Placing the novel on a line with 19th-century *Bildungsroman*, featuring “a Young Man from the Provinces,”¹⁰²⁹ Trilling argues that this rendering of truth manifests itself in the “particular gift of human understanding”¹⁰³⁰ and an awareness of human complications that characterise the text. Others have regarded *The Princess Casamassima* as a work that marks the transition from James’s earlier realism informed by romantic influences to experiments with point of view and “psychological realism.”¹⁰³¹

The text is not so much a mimesis of the subversive politics of the London underworld as it creates nuanced and subtle characterisations. We learn about Hyacinth’s emotional development and are made aware of small changes in his perception of the revolution and its adherents. Confused about his roots and particularly affected by the history of his French mother who he only met once, in jail, shortly before she perished, Hyacinth is very susceptible to the radical ideas of Poupin, his French friend at the bookbindery. There seems to be a longing for his French heritage inside of him, and Frenchness in the

¹⁰¹⁹ Ibis. p. 165.

¹⁰²⁰ James. 2004. p. 87.

¹⁰²¹ Ibid. pp. 86-87.

¹⁰²² James. 2004. p. 118.

¹⁰²³ Seltzer. 1981. p. 526.

¹⁰²⁴ Beringer. 2012. p. 26.

¹⁰²⁵ Jameson, Fredric. 1974. *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p. 355.

¹⁰²⁶ Tingle, Nicholas. “Realism, Naturalism, and Formalism: James and *The Princess Casamassima*.” In: *American Literary Realism* 21. 1989. pp. 54-66. p. 64.

¹⁰²⁷ James, Henry. “Henry James, The Art of Fiction: *Longman’s Magazine* (1884)” In: Maitzen, Rohan, ed. 2009. *The Victorian Art of Fiction: Nineteenth-Century Essays in the Novel*. Ontario/New York et al.: Broadway. pp. 317-332. p. 323.

¹⁰²⁸ Quigley, Megan. 2015. *Modernist Fiction and Vagueness: Philosophy, Form and Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 32-33.

¹⁰²⁹ Trilling, Lionel. 1961. *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society*. London: Mercury Books. p. 61.

¹⁰³⁰ Ibid. p. 88.

¹⁰³¹ Rowe, John Carlos. 1984. *The Theoretical Dimensions of Henry James*. London: Methuen. p. 160. See also: Beringer. 2012. p. 29.

world of *The Princess Casamassima* is equated with the spirit of the French Revolution and the subversive and radical ideas associated with it.¹⁰³² However, after Hyacinth's commitment to the German anarchist Hoffendahl, Hyacinth's ardent admiration has made way for a more prosaic perception of Paul Muniment, his erstwhile hero. Commenting on Muniment's "fresh-coloured coolness,"¹⁰³³ Hyacinth observes his friend's attitude:

On behalf of others he never sounded the pathetic note – he thought that sort of thing unbusinesslike; and the most that he did in the way of expatiation on the wrongs of humanity was occasionally to mention certain statistics, certain 'returns', in regard to the remuneration of industries, application for employment and the discharge of hands. In such matters as these he was deeply versed, and he moved in a dry satirical and scientific air in which it cost Hyacinth an effort of respiration to accompany him. [...] He sometimes emitted a short satiric gleam which showed that his esteem for the poor was small and that if he had no illusions about the people who had got everything into their hands he had as few about those who had egregiously failed to do so.¹⁰³⁴

In this passage, the reader witnesses Hyacinth's realisation that Paul obviously lacks empathy and concern for the poor, for his commitment to the social cause is a rather half-hearted decision underpinned by numbers and data. Conveying a sense of utter disenchantment on the part of the protagonist, this passage corroborates Muniment's representation through Hyacinth's eyes as a "cold-blooded Machiavel"¹⁰³⁵ and "diabolical agent of Hyacinth's downfall."¹⁰³⁶

It becomes clear from the psychological profile of anarchists such as Muniment that the novel is far from advocating revolution. Rather, as Margaret Scanlan points out, James suggests the "futility of all revolutions."¹⁰³⁷ The text "is an exemplary instance of realist fiction that explores both the power of nineteenth-century ideology and the possibility of resisting it."¹⁰³⁸ Yet, the protagonist who is tempted to contend with the ideology of the establishment eventually realises that the new anarchist system would amount to nothing more than a mere replacement of the existing structures.¹⁰³⁹ The text suggests that the revolutionaries are motivated by the same desires and ambitions driving those of the aristocratic order. Critics have, moreover, commented on the relative flatness of the anarchist characters. Particularly the scene in the "Sun and Moon" is indicative of their lack of psychological depth. The characters amount to nothing more than mere stereotypes and "popular representations of caricatures."¹⁰⁴⁰

As the narrative unfolds, the reader learns about Hyacinth's growing disenchantment with the ideal of violent revolution which he still so ardently embraces at the meeting at the "Sun and Moon," where he

¹⁰³² Stivers. 2007. p. 161

¹⁰³³ James. 2004. p. 287.

¹⁰³⁴ Ibid. p. 287.

¹⁰³⁵ Rowe. 1984. p. 170.

¹⁰³⁶ Ibid. p. 170.

¹⁰³⁷ Scanlan, Margaret. 1992. p. 382.

¹⁰³⁸ Ibid. p. 381.

¹⁰³⁹ Ibid. p. 382.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Rowe. 1984. pp. 169-170.

DeVine. 2002. p. 67.

declares his fearlessness and eagerness to risk his life for the “cause.”¹⁰⁴¹ In his letter to Princess Casamassima, during his time in Paris, Hyacinth confides to her that he “has lost sight of the sacred cause almost altogether in his recent adventures.”¹⁰⁴² He continues to admit that while the plight of the majority of people he encountered on his journey did not make a big impression on him, the “great achievements of which man has been capable in spite of them”¹⁰⁴³ strikes him most. Clearly, Hyacinth regrets his commitment to the German anarchist Hoffendahl, who, he thinks, does not worship “the monuments, and treasures of art, the great palaces and properties, the conquests of learning and taste, the general fabric of civilization,”¹⁰⁴⁴ which he admits are based upon “all the despotisms, the cruelties, the exclusions, the monopolies, and the rapacities of the past.”¹⁰⁴⁵

Hyacinth is torn between the binaries of anarchy and culture, between his heritage as the illegitimate son of a duke and a murderous Frenchwoman who “has been a daughter of the wild French people,”¹⁰⁴⁶ and between his roots in the English nobility associated with a mainstream elitist view on culture, on the one hand, and the French as the epitome of a revolutionary nation on the other.¹⁰⁴⁷ For this rift, he eventually decides to kill himself instead of the duke. This ending, albeit surprising, is ineluctable after all. Hyacinth prefers suicide to reproducing the act of murder committed by his mother. He cannot escape his fate as an individual who by nature inhabits a space between the poles of anarchism and culture.

*

Having discussed the formal-aesthetic aspects of these five varied fictional representations of dynamite terrorism and the cultural meaning attached to it, one may formulate a socio-cultural function that all of them have in common: that of responding to the increasing pessimism and anxieties elicited by social and scientific progress. The dynamite genre does not so much respond to the Fenian operations in Britain as to the increasing alienation from social and technological processes and the increasingly pessimistic socio-cultural climate this development engendered. The anarchists featured in the dynamite genre epitomise the fears of modernity and decline. These texts, thus, give expression to the menace exuding from “the unknown,” an elusive, albeit destructive danger which was attributed to the anarchist movement, but which was also seen as inherent to modernity itself.

Drawing on Paul Ricœur’s model of the mimetic circle, the relationship of the dynamite literature and its socio-cultural background can therefore be conceived as incorporating existing discourses and threat narratives aimed at constructing a danger emanating from modernity and the anarchist movement and

¹⁰⁴¹ James.2004 p. 206.

¹⁰⁴² Ibid. p. 291.

¹⁰⁴³ Ibid. p. 291.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 291.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 291. See also Clymer, Jeffrey A. 2003. *America’s Culture of Terrorism: Violence, Capitalism, and the Written Word*. London: University of North Carolina Press.

¹⁰⁴⁶ James. 2004. p. 101.

¹⁰⁴⁷ On Henry James’s view of the French as the epitome of revolution, see: Scanlan. 1992. p. 384.

dynamite as one of its most ferocious symptoms (mimesis 1), and giving expression to these fears by portraying fictive conspiracies (*Princess Casamassima*), plots that are mostly driven by anarchist or other foul motivations (*The Secret Agent*, *The Man Who Was Thursday*, *Princess Casamassima*, *The Dynamiter*, *Hartmann the Anarchist*) and the destructiveness of the newly invented dynamite (*The Secret Agent*, *Hartmann the Anarchist*, *The Dynamiter*). *The Princess Casamassima*, *Hartmann the Anarchist* and *The Dynamiter* certainly render these existing fears and anxieties explicit through their fictional exploration of the threat posed by dynamite in the hands of an anarchist conspiracy, or as in Stevenson's case, at the service of clumsy Fenians. These works do not question, but rather thrive on these anxieties and popular terrorism discourses. Playing on threat narratives which construct the dynamite terrorist as fundamentally opposed to the values of Victorian society and culture, they stabilise the predominant late Victorian ideology. *The Secret Agent* and *The Man Who Was Thursday*, on the other hand, both of which were published well after the dynamite campaign afflicting Britain in the 1880s, create in their fictional exploration of terrorism a counter-narrative to dominant discourses that construct anarchism as diametrically opposed to culture. Informed by their modernist perspective, these texts explore the fundamental sameness of terrorists and representatives of justice and even society as a whole (mimesis II). For this reason, these two texts can be viewed in terms of a cultural-ecological "imaginative counter-discourse" that discusses what had remained largely unarticulated, not only in contemporary discourses but also in fictional explorations of the dynamiting movement.

As for the possible effect of these works on their audience (mimesis III), the novels of James, the Stevensons, and Fawcett may certainly fulfil an important cultural function through their fictional exploration of threat scenarios and conspiracy narratives that haunted their contemporaries. Such an endeavour does not only cater to the readership's lust for sensationalism, but may possibly also lead to the mitigation of prevalent anxieties. For the reader's experience of terrorist plots, operations and the catastrophe itself in the fictional world of the "as if" may through the drastic articulation of the worst fears and catastrophic scenarios disparage and ameliorate the actual fear.

The Secret Agent and *The Man Who Was Thursday*, on the contrary, create fictional worlds characterised by fragile identities and the absence of moral certainties. Drawing on the historical material of the anarchist outrage at Greenwich and mocking the British establishment of a spy police in response to dynamite terrorism, these texts draw on the historical dynamite terrorism to create scenarios which respond to the increasing sense of insecurity engendered by modern life. Thus, rather than catering to a lust for sensation, these two texts respond more profoundly to the sense of insecurity and fragility besetting the modern human condition. As such, they may be valuable to a readership beyond those who have experienced the factual scares of dynamite terrorism.

In the wake of the attacks on 11 September, for example, a new relevance and "cult status"¹⁰⁴⁸ was attributed to *The Secret Agent* which became one of the most cited literary works. While many of the

¹⁰⁴⁸ Reiss, Tom. "The True Classic of Terrorism." In: *The New York Times*. 11.09.2005.

post-9/11 comments on Conrad misread the text along the lines of the soaring patriotism in the catastrophe's aftermath,¹⁰⁴⁹ the novel's relevance in the wake of the events lies in encapsulating the trauma and sense of precariousness prevailing after terrorist attacks, while at the same time mitigating the threat scenarios and discursive constructions of the terrorist "other". Despite the lack of empathy with the characters or a moral resolution, the text may potentially affect its readers through the dissolution of binaries prevailing in the aftermath of terrorist attacks. Similarly, *The Man Who Was Thursday* not solely mocks the anarchist threat and police surveillance, but also plays with identities of "good" and "evil." It responds to the modern readers' yearning for certainty through the revelation of the identities of the police spies, and not through the construction of the threat identity of the terrorist other.

As for the mnemonic function of the dynamite genre, the "memory *in* literature" does not play an important role. The staging of memory processes and identity formation is a theme that may be linked to postmodernity or the contemporary novel. Late Victorian and Edwardian works are more concerned with the individual's fate determined by society and circumstances rather than the precariousness of individual cognitive experiences and identity formations. However, these works do fulfil an important mnemonic function through the insights they offer into the cultural and social repercussions of the late Victorian dynamiters. The exclusion of Fenianism from most of the literary discourse of the time is the most pertinent example of how literature is nourished by the historical context and contemporary discourses, and how it may in turn retroact on the memory of terrorism. That is, the literature as a medium of memory echoes contemporary discourse on Irish inferiority and neglects the Fenian cause, thus contributing to their marginalisation and disparagement.

However, all of these texts give expression to cultural anxieties prevailing at the time, and thus create valuable fictional repositories of memory: *The Princess Casamassima* creates a fictional world pervaded by the spy mania and paranoia prevailing at its time, *Hartmann the Anarchist* explores the nightmare scenario of technology at the service of a fundamentally nihilistic ideology, and *The Dynamiter* reflects the colonial anxieties elicited by the threat emanating from the Fenian struggle for Irish independence. Yet as discussed before, they stabilise rather than question dominant discourses. By contrast, *The Secret Agent* and *The Man Who Was Thursday* may function as media of counter-memory through their dissolution of binary opposed identities.

http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/11/books/review/the-true-classic-of-terrorism.html?_r=0
(last accessed 11th August 2015)

¹⁰⁴⁹ Shulevitz, Judith. "Chasing after Conrad's Secret Agent." In: *Slate Magazine*. 27.09.2001.
http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/culturebox/2001/09/chasing_after_conrads_secret_agent.html
(last accessed 11th August 2015)

4.2. Terrorism in Post-War Britain

In his lecture given at Cambridge University in 1883, the historian John Robert Seeley argued that the British Empire had some “of the fundamental conditions of stability.”¹⁰⁵⁰ He believed the Empire to be held together by the “community of race, community of religion, community of interest.”¹⁰⁵¹ According to him, its power rested upon the ten million Englishmen abroad, guaranteeing the stability of the community of English “blood.”¹⁰⁵² Likewise, Seeley saw the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland as “for all purposes one nation,”¹⁰⁵³ even though “in Wales, in Scotland and in Ireland there is Celtic blood and Celtic languages utterly unintelligible to us are still spoken.”¹⁰⁵⁴ As George Boyce argues Seeley’s euphemistic description of the Empire was misleading, since it did not solely incorporate free peoples, sharing a common culture and religion, but comprised and subjugated diverse cultures and religions. Moreover, as he argues, a substantial part of the Irish population did not view Ireland as belonging to the United Kingdom, but as an independent nation with a national identity of its own.¹⁰⁵⁵

Clearly, Seeley’s confidence in the power of the Empire was to be refuted by the process of decolonisation, which set in some decades later: In the course of the 20th century, the disastrous experiences of the two World Wars were to usher in a shift of the British attitude towards their colonies. By the time the Great War concluded, the British Empire had reached its largest territorial extent and comprised a wide range of territories from white colonies of settlement, resembling nation states, to small islands without any sense of identity.¹⁰⁵⁶ Yet this zenith of territorial acquisition also marked the beginning of the end. The Versailles Peace Treaty, which concluded World War I, applied the principle of national self-determination to dissolve the empires of the defeated. This, however, also undermined the legitimacy of the empires of the victors. As a result, what were perceived by the colonial powers as “terrorist movements” seeking to gain national independence developed in all empires, except the new Soviet Union.

World War II further reinforced and enlarged this development.¹⁰⁵⁷ In its aftermath, the Empire was economically unsustainable and “the assertion of pre-war colonial principles” was rendered “unfashionable.”¹⁰⁵⁸ Marginalised by the new bipolar world order, and dominated by the self-declared

¹⁰⁵⁰ Seeley, Sir John Robert. [1883] 2005. *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures*. New York: Cosimo. p.11.

¹⁰⁵¹ Ibid. p. 11.

¹⁰⁵² Ibid. p. 11.

¹⁰⁵³ Ibid. p. 50.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 50. See also Boyce, George D. 1999. *Decolonisation and the British Empire, 1775-1997*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. p. 6.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Boyce. 1999.. p. 70.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 70.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Rapoport. 2004. p. 53.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Darwin. 1988. pp. 20-21.

anti-colonial superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union, the European powers had to relinquish their colonies,¹⁰⁵⁹ and became firmly committed to the principle of self-determination.

However, anti-colonial terrorism emerged particularly in regions where conflicts made the withdrawal of the former colonial powers a politically problematic option as, for example, in Northern Ireland and Palestine.¹⁰⁶⁰ In fact, in some cases, it was the colonial withdrawal that precipitated internal conflicts and terrorist violence on a large scale, as was seen, for example, in Sri Lanka.¹⁰⁶¹

In contrast to their 19th-century progenitors, the anti-colonial terrorist movements of the 20th century were partly successful, and often vital to the foundation of new states such as Ireland, India, Israel and Cyprus, all of which emerged from the British Empire.¹⁰⁶² Thus, the motive impelling the Irish Fenians in the late 19th century was to become the prevailing force behind terrorism. In fact, as Randall Law points out, the prevalence of ethno-nationalist independence movements was one of the defining features of the 20th century.¹⁰⁶³

Yet, as Paul Wilkinson points out, terrorism, guerrilla warfare and insurrection were regarded as fundamentally colonial problems. These were phenomena that did not occur in the mother country, but were experienced at a safe distance in the colonies.¹⁰⁶⁴ This “enormous psychological gulf between domestic tranquillity and foreign strife”¹⁰⁶⁵ continued well into the post-war period when terrorism played an important part in the conflicts in such as, for instance, in Palestine, Kenya or Cyprus. In fact, until the mid-1960s, informed opinion in Britain assumed that once the turmoil of the independence struggles was over, the “home country could return to cultivating its own somewhat neglected economic garden in domestic peace and tranquillity.”¹⁰⁶⁶ Despite this wishful thinking, the conflict that erupted in Northern Ireland in 1969 was also felt by innocent civilians on the British mainland.

Besides, another ideological strand of terrorist violence emerged in Britain in the sixties and seventies. Like in many other Western countries such as the United States, Italy or Germany, Britain was afflicted with its own radical left-wing movement, the Angry Brigade. Yet this movement, like its American and continental counterparts, did not emerge in isolation from the struggle for self-determination. Rather, as Rappoport points out, “radicalism and nationalism often were combined.”¹⁰⁶⁷ In fact, many of these groups identified with those struggling for independence from colonial power. The Angry Brigade, as will be discussed in the following, expressed their solidarity for the Basque movement through the

¹⁰⁵⁹ Palmowski, Jan. 2008. *A Dictionary of Contemporary World History: From 1900 to the Present Day*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 183.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Rapoport. 2004. p. 53.

¹⁰⁶¹ See, for example: Mushtaq, Sehar. “Identity Conflict in Sri Lanka: A Case of Tamil Tigers.” In: *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 2.15. 2012. pp. 202-210.

¹⁰⁶² Rapoport. 2004. p. 53.

¹⁰⁶³ Law. 2009. pp. 157, 180.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Wilkinson, Paul. “Introduction.” In: Wilkinson, Paul, ed. 1981. *British Perspectives on Terrorism*. London: Allen & Unwin. pp. 1-12. p. 1.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 2.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 4.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Rapoport. 2004. p. 56.

bombing of the Spanish embassy and also supported the Irish Republican cause. Alongside this, radical left elements have been a prominent feature of, for instance, the IRA.

For these reasons and because the escalation of The Troubles coincided with the Angry Brigade in the early 1970s, the following sections will outline both the cultural repercussions and public views of these two groups, and the respective literary responses to them. Such an approach affords an impression of the political climate of the time in all its intensity and violence.

4.2.1. Terrorism and the Irish Question

The Fenian dynamite campaign and its aftermath already foreshadowed the Anglo-Irish conflicts dominating UK politics in the later 20th century. Its successor organisation, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) has shaped the public perception of terrorism fundamentally. As Randall points out, “it is the IRA of the last third of the twentieth century that has most fascinated and horrified observers. In fact, the IRA is seen as second only to the PLO as the pre-9/11 world’s most iconic terrorist organization.”¹⁰⁶⁸ In comparison to their progenitors, the IRA is seen as the far more unscrupulous organisation, which accepted or even calculated on the death of civilians.¹⁰⁶⁹

Their activities, stretching over the course of great parts of the century, have been continuous and prolific. This chapter can therefore only delve into the history of a few emblematic events. It aims at providing an overview of the cultural ambience generated by a conflict which formed the background to the majority of Troubles fiction. Thus, particularly the British media’s policies and practices in the wake of The Troubles will be scrutinised, for they fulfil a crucial role in the construction of the public perception of the IRA and their cause.

The inception of the IRA can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century, when the British-Irish conflict gained new virulence over the Home Rule bill, which was to grant Ireland independence within the UK. The fundamental division of the Irish population between those loyal to the British crown and those striving for national independence, which became manifest over the question of Home Rule, was to shape the nature of the Anglo-Irish conflict in the century to come.¹⁰⁷⁰

¹⁰⁶⁸ Randall. 2009. p. 233.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Hartigan, Maureen; O’Day, Alan; Quinault, Roland. “Irish Terrorism in Britain: A Comparison Between the Activities of the Fenians in the 1860s and those of Republican Groups Since 1972.” In: Alexander, Yonah; O’Day, Alan, eds. 1986. *Ireland’s Terrorist Dilemma*. Dodrecht/ Boston et al.: Martinus Nijhoff. pp. 49-60. p. 57.

¹⁰⁷⁰ While the Loyalists formed the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), a paramilitary group dedicated to fight for the union with Great Britain, the Irish Volunteers were founded to show armed support for Home Rule. Connelly, Mark. 2012. *The IRA on Film and Television: A History*. Jefferson/London: McFarland. pp. 11-14.

Particularly, the 1916 Easter Rising is deemed a watershed in Irish history and politics.¹⁰⁷¹ It initiated a string of violent events, including the War of Independence, or Anglo-Irish War, and the Irish Civil War. Britain's draconian reaction to the Rising, including the execution of the ringleaders,¹⁰⁷² the imprisonment of others and imposition of martial law, provoked "great roaring fires of patriotism banked up"¹⁰⁷³ amongst Ireland's populace. These ruthless British measures further proved to be catalyst for the merging of the disparate national groups into a broadly supported Irish Republican Army affiliated to the political party Sinn Féin.¹⁰⁷⁴

Yet the Irish question was at heart not solely about British withdrawal, but has been historically complicated by the presence of around a million Protestants in the six counties of the North, regarding themselves as British subjects. Hence, the question of what was to happen to the mostly Loyalist north or 'Ulster' was high in the agenda for the Anglo-Irish Treaty,¹⁰⁷⁵ intended to put an end to the conflict. The controversial Treaty stipulated the trappings of self-governance of the new Irish Free State,¹⁰⁷⁶ consisting of twenty-six southern counties, and further sealed the partition of a northern province of six counties affiliated to the English Crown.¹⁰⁷⁷ It was "met with tumultuous reception"¹⁰⁷⁸ among the nationalist population of Ireland. While a majority regarded it as the best agreement possible under the circumstances, an anti-Treaty position prevailed in Sinn Féin.¹⁰⁷⁹ The conflict also led to the split of the IRA into the "new" anti-Treaty IRA and the "old" parts of the army who fought the Irish War of Independence and supported the Treaty. Hence, the Anglo-Irish Treaty marks the beginning of a struggle of the "new" IRA to overthrow the settlement by military force which continued well into the 1990s.¹⁰⁸⁰

The use of terrorist violence became a particularly popular strategy once the situation in Northern Ireland exacerbated in the 1960s. Initially, the central issue of conflict was to obtain equal rights for the Catholic minority, who had been oppressed by the majority of Protestant Loyalists. What began as a civil rights campaign in 1968 against anti-Catholic discrimination initiated by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association¹⁰⁸¹ was soon to unleash a violent sectarian conflict. Ignited by the Ulster Volunteer

¹⁰⁷¹ English, Richard. 2004. *Armed Struggle: The Secret History of the IRA*. 2nd ed. London/Basingstoke/Oxford: Pan Macmillan. p. 3.

¹⁰⁷² Particularly the execution of gangrene-stricken James Conolly sparked a spirit of solidarity and martyr worship. Randall. 2009. p. 145.

¹⁰⁷³ Coogan. 1987. p. 38.

¹⁰⁷⁴ O'Brien, Brendan. 1997. *A Pocket History of the IRA*. Dublin: The O'Brien Press. pp. 6-11.

Coogan, Tim Pat. 1987. *The IRA*. 3rd ed. London: Fontana. p. 11.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Taylor, Peter. 1997. *Provos: The IRA and Sinn Fein*. London: Bloomsbury. pp. 12-13.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Knirck, Jason K. 2006. *Imagining Ireland's Independence: The Debates Over the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921*. Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield. p. 1.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Chaplin, Ari. 2003. *Terror: New Theatre of War: Mao's Legacy: Selected Cases of Terrorism in the 20th and 21st Centuries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 210.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Knirck. 2006. p. 1.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 1.

¹⁰⁸⁰ O'Brien. 1997. p. 31.

¹⁰⁸¹ The civil rights movement was according to Taylor soon invaded by republicans and IRA members Taylor. 1997. p. 39.

Force's (UVF) attacks on Catholics to incite violent responses and harden sectarian lines, the conflict in Northern Ireland deteriorated.¹⁰⁸²

The strategy of the IRA saw the "rebirth" of the movement, which again led to their split into the Provisional IRA, generally known as Provos, seeking to retaliate for the attacks on Catholics, and the Official IRA, who took a non-militant, socialist line. The Provos thus reverted to the traditional Republican aim of ending the British occupation of Ireland,¹⁰⁸³ and embraced open militancy to achieve it.¹⁰⁸⁴

While the first two years of armed struggle were targeted against alleged spies, informers and Unionists, later attacks were also aimed at the British army,¹⁰⁸⁵ and subsequent campaigns became increasingly indiscriminate. The strategy of the Provisionals' "war of national liberation against the British presence in Northern Ireland"¹⁰⁸⁶ aimed to harness the contemporary sociological trends working in their favour. Firstly, the British response to revolutionary violence in her overseas colonies generally appeared to conform to a model: The "shrill denial that the government would ever yield to force"¹⁰⁸⁷ and the subsequent application of more insurgent violence were eventually followed by British withdrawal. Thus, regarding Northern Ireland as another British colony to be liberated, the Provisionals believed the killing of British soldiers would soon influence government policy, and lead to the negotiation of withdrawal.

What is more, the media was generally well-disposed towards the insurgent underdogs. Hence, Provos' propaganda machine sought to influence public opinion by depicting Northern Ireland as a "captive province."¹⁰⁸⁸ By these means, the Provisionals were hoping to initiate what Maurice Tugwell calls an "asset-to-liability-shift." That is to say, colonial powers which had regarded their overseas territories as assets perceived them after years of guerrilla war as liabilities. In this vein, their campaign sought to leverage both propaganda of and violence to drive the British out of Ireland.¹⁰⁸⁹

Thus, the conflict was driven by both the actual violence and the propaganda and divergence in the representation of events by the different parties. The Bloody Sunday massacre on 30 January 1972 during a civil rights demonstration in Derry elucidates the power of propaganda and representation. That is, the events of Bloody Sunday illustrate the malleability and constructedness of the mechanisms of memory. On the one hand, the Widgery Report¹⁰⁹⁰ instituted the "official memory" of both the Northern

¹⁰⁸² Randall. 2009. p. 234.

¹⁰⁸³ Coogan. 1987. pp. 365-366.

¹⁰⁸⁴ For this study, only the activities of the Provisionals who were the ones deemed to be terrorists are relevant. Hence, when referring to the IRA, we actually designate the Provisional strand of the organisation.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Tugwell, Maurice. In: Wilkinson. 1981. pp. 13-40. p. 16.

The first British soldier was killed by the IRA in response to the introduction of internment without trial in 1971 and the intensification of operations aimed at seizing IRA weapons and suspects. Randall. 2009. pp. 235-236.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Tugwell. 1981. p. 14.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 15.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 15.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Ibid. pp. 17-18.

¹⁰⁹⁰ For a detailed description of the official version of events, see the Widgery Report: Widgery, John. 1972.

Irish Unionists and the majority of the British public opinion. That is to say, the endorsement of the British Army's account of events, namely that British soldiers only fired at identifiable targets in self-defence, led to the construction of a narrative that served the political ends of the British government.¹⁰⁹¹ On the other hand, the official representation of events was challenged by Irish nationalists and Republicans whose commemoration of events constituted a counter-memory, which centres on the innocence of the victims, and "denounces both the violence and injustice inherent in the British military occupation of the north-eastern corner of Ireland."¹⁰⁹² These competing narratives exemplify how memory may be constructed in accordance with particular political ends, present needs, and notions of identity. Portrayals of the conflict with the IRA are expressive of the crucial role of the political uses of memory and media representation.

As a pivotal event in the unfolding Troubles, Bloody Sunday was also to play into the Provisionals' hands.¹⁰⁹³ The subsequent exoneration of the British troops by the Widgery tribunal, and the suggestion that the 13 victims were either gunmen or bombers, precipitated the desire of revenge, and what is more, the increased influx of recruits into the ranks of the Provos. It can therefore be said that much of the death and suffering in the years to come can be directly or indirectly attributed to Bloody Sunday.¹⁰⁹⁴

In the years following Bloody Sunday, the strategy of the Provos not only included "gun battles and sniping attacks on British troops,"¹⁰⁹⁵ but also gradually came to involve attacks on civilians.¹⁰⁹⁶ In March of the same year, the British government abolished the regional parliament of the province and introduced direct rule from London, and the IRA entered into negotiations with representatives of the British government, which broke up in acrimony, because their list of demands was rejected. Angered at the failure of the meeting, the organisation opened a new offensive in order to refocus the British government on the movement. In the days following the negotiations, nine members of the security forces were killed.¹⁰⁹⁷ The 22 bombs planted in the Belfast city centre on 21 July 1972 were part of this offensive. All of them were timed to explode within an hour, which created an immense sense of insecurity, and fear among the population of Belfast. The day that became known as "Bloody Friday" killed nine civilians¹⁰⁹⁸ and wounded over one hundred. The Irish and British press condemned the attack

Report of the Tribunal Appointed to Inquire Into the Events on Sunday, 30th January 1972 [Widgery Report]. <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/hms0/widgery.htm> (last accessed 3rd June 2014)

¹⁰⁹¹ Dawson, Graham. "Bloody Sunday and the Rule of Law in Northern Ireland." In: *History Workshop Journal* 59. 2005. pp. 151-178. 153.

¹⁰⁹² *Ibid.* p. 153.

¹⁰⁹³ Dawson. p. 151.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Wals, Dermot. "Bloody Sunday and the Rule of Law in Northern Ireland." In: *Reviews in History* 149. 2000. <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/149> (last accessed 12th May 2014)

¹⁰⁹⁵ Randall. 2009. p. 237.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 237.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Neumann, Peter; Smith, M.R.L. 2007. *The Strategy of Terrorism: How it Works and Why it Fails*. London: Routledge. pp. 88-89.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Smith, M.L.R. "Fin de Siècle, 1972: The Provisional IRA's Strategy and the Beginning of the Eight-Thousand-Day Stalemate." in: O'Day, Alan, ed. 1997. *Political Violence in Northern Ireland: Conflict and Conflict Resolution*. Westport: Praeger. pp. 15-32. p. 28.

as a “new level of savagery.”¹⁰⁹⁹ Moreover, metaphors and comparisons invoking German Nazism and references to the Blitz resonated in many of the newspaper accounts, ranging from “killer blitz of stunning ferocity”¹¹⁰⁰ to “virulent Nazi-style disregard for life”¹¹⁰¹ and “fiendish holocaust of murder and hate.”¹¹⁰² Strikingly, the IRA has a strong left-wing socialist strand, which makes this association of the attacks with Nazism seem arbitrary if not absurd. What is more, none of these newspaper headings refer to ‘terror’ or ‘terrorism’. Yet, as Friedrich Ungerer points out in his analysis of English newspaper language, “the Nazi metaphor seems to be a safe way of intensifying the negative evaluation suggested by other aspects of the news story.”¹¹⁰³ In this vein, references to Nazi Germany allow for overtly emotional news reporting that spurns objectivity.

The invocation of atrocities perpetrated by the Germans during World War II, and in particular the references to the *Blitz*, further point to the myth of British resilience in the face of adversity, and invoke the memory of an allegedly great British spirit. These references to World War II and the battle against Nazi Germany fulfil a twofold function:

On the one hand, the Provos are depicted as the acme of evil, as savage perpetrators whose sole cause is to bring death and destruction. That is to say, the complexity of the motives behind the attack, or the actual planning and realisation of hideous terrorist attacks which requires a certain degree of deftness, are neglected in these accounts. Instead, the barbarity and fiendishness of the events are highlighted. The construction of the attacks as comparable to war atrocities committed by the Germans, on the other hand, does not solely indicate British implacability, but also points toward their superiority over the enemy. In other words, Britons whose resilience has been proven by past experiences cannot be brought to their knees by barbaric perpetrators such as the Provisionals. Hence, as Julia Verse points out, the old characterisations of the degenerate, aggressive and simple Irishman ascribed to the Fenians, were revived during The Troubles. The 19th century racialist ideas centering on Irish backwardness and inferiority were accordingly perpetuated in the 20th century. The Irish were once again constructed as the ultimate inferior “other”, serving as a dichotomised focal point for the construction of a British identity.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Headline of *The Daily Mail*. 22.07.1972 In: McKenna, Fionnuala, ed. *Bloody Friday (21 July 1972)*. *The Daily Mail*. 22.07.1972. In: *Northern Ireland Office News-sheet* <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/bfriday/nio/nio72.htm> (last accessed 5th June 2014)

¹¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹¹⁰¹ McKenna, Fionnuala, ed. *Bloody Friday (21 July 1972)* *The Irish Times*. 22.07.1972. In: *Northern Ireland Office News-sheet*. <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/bfriday/nio/nio72.htm> (last accessed 5th June 2014)

¹¹⁰² McKenna, Fionnuala, ed. *Bloody Friday (21 July 1972)* *News Letter*. 22.07.1972. In: *Northern Ireland Office News-sheet*. <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/bfriday/nio/nio72.htm> (last accessed 5th June 2014)

¹¹⁰³ Ungerer, Friedrich. “Emotions and Emotional Language in English and German News Stories.” In: Niemeier, Susanne; Dirven, René, eds. 1997. *The Language of Emotions: Conceptualization, Expression, and Theoretical Foundation*. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: J. Benjamins. pp. 307-326. p. 324.

Consequently, Irish immigrants to Britain felt the resentment towards them among the British majority population. In the 1970s and 1980s, Irish people were generally treated as suspects.¹¹⁰⁴ These resentments were also codified in the *Prevention of Terrorism Act 1974* which allowed for the detention of Irish people on the basis of their nationality.¹¹⁰⁵ Hence, as pointed out before,¹¹⁰⁶ threat narratives centering on the violent Irish “other” were harnessed to legitimise harsh counter-terrorism legislation. It is therefore no surprise that the adage “Innocent until proven Irish” became popular around that time. As Verse contends, the British reaction to the IRA is the precursor to the so-called “War on Terror” in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001. Similar to the “overblown” threat perception after the 9/11 attacks, and the negative stereotyping of Middle Eastern and North African people, Irish people were generally deemed suspicious.¹¹⁰⁷

On a policy level, the British not only sought to recast the IRA as a criminal organisation, but also attempted to combat the Provisionals by means of covert operations combining intelligence gathering, psychological warfare and counter-terror. That is, they used teams of the elite Special Air Service (SAS) and as well as other Provos to eradicate the IRA. These measures resulted in the weakening of the organisation, and in turn, led to a change of the organisation’s strategy.¹¹⁰⁸ That is, “the British insistence on applying the word ‘terrorist’ to all IRA behaviour thus [...] proved to be a self-fulfilling prophecy.”¹¹⁰⁹ In other words, the Provos became more apt to use classical terrorist tactics which did not aim at British officials and soldiers, but unarmed civilians. A campaign on the British mainland was intended to arrest the public consciousness and eventually lead to the desired British withdrawal. It seemed that “the Irish could kill each other off till Tibbs Eve, and even through a bunch of working-class British soldiers into the deadly stew for good measure, without anyone in England becoming unduly worried.”¹¹¹⁰ It seemed that attacks on the British mainland, on prominent British people, and bombings resulting in civilian deaths generated the most publicity.¹¹¹¹

The series of incidents began on 8 March 1972 with explosions at the Old Bailey and Whitehall, and the campaign was to include episodes such as the Birmingham bombings, killing 21 and injuring 168 people, and the shootings and bombings in London’s West End, considerably affecting the social and commercial life of the area. Other attacks such as a bomb in the Tower of London exclusively targeted tourists. A coach bombing on the M62 motorway and the pub bombings in Guildford and Woolwich,

¹¹⁰⁴ Verse, Julia. 2012. *Undoing Irishness: Antirassistische Perspektiven in der Republik Irland*. Bielefeld: Transcript. pp. 137-138.

¹¹⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 137.

See also: *Prevention of Terrorism Act 1974*.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/56/contents/enacted> (last accessed 9th June 2014)

¹¹⁰⁶ See 4.2.3.

¹¹⁰⁷ Verse. 2012. pp. 136-137.

¹¹⁰⁸ Randall. 2009. p. 238.

¹¹⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 239.

¹¹¹⁰ Coogan. 1987. p. 385.

¹¹¹¹ Curtis, Liz. 1984. *Ireland: The Propaganda War: The Media and the Battle for ‘Hearts and Minds’*. London: Pluto. p. 110.

both occurring during election time in 1974 and the numerous other bombing campaigns¹¹¹² were unprecedented in their scope and intensity. By comparison to the Fenian campaigns in the 19th century, the nationalist onslaught appears excessively violent and ruthless. The more selective attempt to kill then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her Cabinet at the Tory Party conference in Brighton in 1984 was further evidence of the IRA commitment to war.¹¹¹³

Hypocritically, as Tim Pat Coogan contends, for years, the official policy on all sides was ‘no talking to gunmen’.¹¹¹⁴ Instead, the only acceptable reaction was “to denounce them, legislate against them, imprison them, torture them, and generally to devote most of one’s political waking hours to them, but never, never to negotiate with them.”¹¹¹⁵ While officially maintaining this posture in public, the British did, in fact, talk to the IRA on several occasions. The British response to the violence was thus shaped by denial and secrecy, and it is thus little surprising that a decade later the conflict had neither been resolved nor had there been a formal acknowledgement that the Provisionals, or rather their cause existed.¹¹¹⁶

The British were afraid of losing the battle for public opinion. With the introduction of interment in 1971, IRA violence was escalated, and concerns grew that the IRA would further their propaganda war. In order to fight back, e.g., the government set up the Information Policy Unit (IGU) which together with the Information Research Department (IRD) embarked on a propaganda war against the IRA.¹¹¹⁷ 1971, thus, marks a turning point in the battle for public opinion, for this is when “overt censorship really began in earnest.”¹¹¹⁸ From the outset, programmes which dealt with nationalist or Republican views of The Troubles, programmes about the IRA and controversies over security policy or the record of the army and police became the target of governmental restrictions.¹¹¹⁹

In this vein, the British media reporting on Ireland became affected by the government’s arcane information policies. In fact, the media inevitably played a fundamental part in the propaganda offensive, and censorship became a consistent feature of the conflict. The hampering of media reporting included both formal, that is, censorship enforced by law and informal self-censorship, or the voluntary suppression of a story in order to avert damage to individual careers. As Ed Molony in his analysis of the Irish and British media landscape in the wake of The Troubles points out, the two forms of censorship

¹¹¹² Coogan. 1987. pp. 385-386, 391.

¹¹¹³ Hartigan; O’Day; Quinault. 1986. p. 57.

¹¹¹⁴ Coogan. 1987. p. 392.

¹¹¹⁵ Ibid. p. 392.

¹¹¹⁶ Ibid. p. 392.

¹¹¹⁷ These organisations sought to discredit the IRA whenever possible. For instance, they attempted to falsely attribute the bombing of a Catholic pub in Belfast in 1971 to the IRA. The argument that an IRA device had gone off by accident, was only refuted seven years later, when the UVF were convicted of the atrocity. Thomson, Mike. “Britain’s Propaganda War During the Troubles.” In: *BBC News*. 22.02.2010. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8577087.stm> (last accessed 25th June 2014)

¹¹¹⁸ Molony, Ed. “Closing Down the Airwaves: The Story of the Broadcasting Ban.” In: Rolston, Bill, ed. 1991. *The Media and Northern Ireland: Covering the Troubles*. Houndsmill/Basingstoke et al.: Macmillan. pp. 8-50. p. 12.

¹¹¹⁹ Ibid. p.12.

coexisted and sustained each other: ¹¹²⁰ “Formal censorship encouraged self-censorship which in turn spread from the electronic to the print media, where official censorship did not apply and by so doing discouraged any challenge to formal censorship.”¹¹²¹

Examples for the more visible form of formal censorship are relatively numerous. Journalists could be held back from exposing controversial policies and actions by a number of statutory instruments such as, for example, the right to injunct publication, or the public interest immunity certificate, which, as already indicated by the name, allows for the suppression of information during a trial “in the public interest.”¹¹²² Furthermore, the 1981 Contempt of Court Act stipulated that journalists could be forced to disclose their source if this served the prevention of disorder and crime, and finally the 1989 Official Secrets Act secured the position of the state against leaks from civil servants.¹¹²³

With regard to these extensive legal tools at the hands of the government, commentators such as Coogan even bring into question whether the press and electronic media deserved the descriptive “half-free.”¹¹²⁴ As John Ware, a BBC journalist, asserts that, not only with regard to Ireland, British policy-making was informed by a great degree of secrecy, and “one by-product is being economical with the truth.”¹¹²⁵ Journalists who sought to get to the bottom of affairs soon had to experience the “British disease”¹¹²⁶ of secrecy. Objective reporting about the British handling of events was further impaired by the Tory government’s insistence on their official versions. Any attempts at investigative journalism undertaken by, e.g., Thames TV, *The Observer* or the *Sunday Times* were scotched by the Downing Street press office and effective spin-doctoring.¹¹²⁷ Peter Taylor, a Thames TV journalist, describes the official British mainland perspective which ran as follows:

Northern Ireland is a state in conflict because Catholics and Protestants refuse to live together despite the efforts of successive British governments to encourage them to do so: we (the British), at considerable cost of the Exchequer and our soldiers have done all that is humanely possible to find a political solution within the structures of the Northern Irish state: now the two communities must come up with a political solution they are prepared to work and accept

¹¹²⁰ Moloney, Ed. “Censorship and ‘The Troubles’.” In: Corcoran, Mary P.; O’Brien, Mark, eds. 2005. Dublin: Four Courts Press. pp. 99-110. p. 99.

¹¹²¹ Ibid. p. 99.

¹¹²² Coogan, Tim Pat. 2002. *The Troubles: Ireland’s Ordeal 1966-1996 and the Search for Peace*. 3rd ed. New York: Palgrave. p. 349.

¹¹²³ Ibid. pp. 350-351.

¹¹²⁴ Ibid. p. 350.

¹¹²⁵ The BBC reporter John Ware quoted in: Coogan. 2002. p. 350.

¹¹²⁶ Ibid. p. 350.

¹¹²⁷ As Coogan points out, prior to the publication of the Widgery report, journalists were reminded that any anticipation of the report would be contempt in the sense of the Contempt of Court Act. Furthermore, after the release of the report, only correspondents of the Ministry of Defence were invited to the press conference, and critical journalists such as Simon Winchester who experienced the events on-site and could have asked awkward questions were excluded. (Ibid. pp. 351-352.) See also Simon Winchester’s retrospective article on the occasion of the Saville report, which vindicated the victims of Bloody Sunday in 2010. He also recapitulates the events and the government’s handling of the press: Winchester, Simon. 15.06.2010. “Amid the tears and cheers, a full stop to Britain’s colonial experience in Northern Ireland.” In: *The Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/jun/15/derry-bloody-sunday-northern-ireland> (last accessed 19th June 2014)

themselves: the terrorists, in particular the Provisional IRA, are gangsters and thugs: they are the cause not the symptom of the problem.¹¹²⁸

The media and politicians¹¹²⁹ were meant to comply with this view if they wanted to avoid to be branded “at best a terrorist dupe, at worst a terrorist sympathiser.”¹¹³⁰ It seems thus little surprising that in the wake of The Troubles, in which this “regime of intimidation and excessive caution”¹¹³¹ prevailed, self-censorship could become a common feature of the media landscape.

Broadcasters and print media were not solely meant to comply with the official version of affairs, they were also faced with the government’s espousal of the argument of “non-exposure.”¹¹³² That is to say, they attempted to break the alleged symbiosis between terrorism and the media by controlling and censoring coverage. Particularly during the premiership of Margaret Thatcher media coverage of IRA members was severely restricted. Thatcher’s famous adage of “starving the terrorists of the oxygen of publicity on which they depend”¹¹³³ reflects the repressive climate in which the media had to operate during the years of her government. The adage has even become a generic phrase in English language.

John David Viera’s essay, for example, illustrates the government’s censorship of the BBC whose documentary *At the Edge of the Union* included an interview with the IRA-leader Martin McGuinness. During the summer of 1985, the film was banned by the BBC’s Board of Governors, who submitted to governmental pressure. In addition, the ban precipitated a nationwide strike of BBC and ITV employees and culminated in the revelation that the British security service had been secretly involved in the hiring and firing of BBC staff.¹¹³⁴ The state-funded BBC, this affair shows, was in a particularly vulnerable position, since its status as a national broadcaster led the government and security service to believe that it was to serve what they defined as the “national interest.”¹¹³⁵

In addition, this climate demonstrates that not solely the BBC, but broadcasters in general found themselves at the centre of a “struggle over the ‘Irish question’ between the requirements of the security establishments and journalistic conceptions of the citizenry’s right to know.”¹¹³⁶ According to Graham Murdock, broadcasters were at the centre of the struggle since they not only reach a wide audience, rendering questions of who is allowed to speak particularly contentious, but also because many

¹¹²⁸ Taylor, Peter. “Reporting Northern Ireland.” In: Campaign for Free Speech on Ireland, eds. 1979. *The British Media and Ireland: Truth - The First Casualty*. London: Information on Ireland. pp. 21-25. p. 21.

¹¹²⁹ Taylor explains how the suggestion of Irish Prime Minister Jack Lynch that Britain should withdraw from the North and encourage the reunification of the country met with an outrage at Westminster and Fleet Street because this indicated that the conflict in Northern Ireland was a British domestic problem. (Ibid. p. 21.)

¹¹³⁰ Ibid. p. 21.

¹¹³¹ Ó Maoláin, Ciaran. 1989. *No Comment: Censorship, Secrecy and the Irish Troubles*. London: Article 19. p. 4.

¹¹³² Viera, John David. “Terrorism at the BBC: The IRA on British Television.” In: *Journal of Film and Video* 40.4. 1998. pp. 28-36. p. 28.

¹¹³³ Cited in: Coogan. 2002. p. 371.

¹¹³⁴ Viera. 1998. p. 28.

¹¹³⁵ Murdock, Graham. “Patrolling the Border: British Broadcasting and the Irish Question in the 1980s.” In: *Journal of Communication* 41.4. 1991. pp. 104-115. p. 105.

¹¹³⁶ Murdock. 1991. p. 105.

broadcasters intended to adhere to the principle of impartiality and reserved the right to investigate governmental malpractice and abuses of power.¹¹³⁷

At the heart of these alleged malpractices was the ambivalent attitude towards Northern Ireland's status. On the one hand, Northern Ireland is officially considered an integral part of the United Kingdom, and thus subject to the same judicial and political system. On the other hand, it is also considered the UK's last colony on the parts of both the Republican movement and the security establishment. In this view, the conflict with the IRA was a guerrilla war requiring the use of "dirty tricks" as employed in previous struggles in Aden, Cyprus or Malaya. The existence of such controversial practices like the "shoot-to-kill" strategy was denied. An open recognition would have undermined the construction of the image of British moral superiority.¹¹³⁸ The deployment of such unacknowledged practices were underpinned by threat narratives, which established the Irish terrorist as the ultimate "other," and as Graham Murdock pinpoints it, as "an enemy with no defensible political purpose or rationale whose actions can only be interpreted as criminal or pathological."¹¹³⁹ In other words, representations of the IRA that diverged from the official discourse were automatically a font of controversy, a development that, in turn, was seen to inhibit an open democratic debate.¹¹⁴⁰

In 1988, this development towards censorship culminated in two major infringements of the freedom of the broadcasting media. To begin with, the controversial killing of the suspected terrorists Mairead Farrell, Sean Savage and Daniel McCann by the Special Air Service (SAS) in Gibraltar "led to a cycle of death in Northern Ireland" and "re-opened claims that the government operated a 'shoot-to-kill' policy."¹¹⁴¹ The documentary *Death on the Rock*,¹¹⁴² a Thames Television production which investigates the circumstances of the death of the unarmed IRA members challenged the government and the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. It produced new eye-witnesses who claimed that the trio had been assassinated without any warnings and that Farrell even appeared to raise her hands in surrender. In response to these allegations, police and security forces obviously briefed particular newspapers in order to discredit the programme and the witnesses. One of the key witnesses, for instance, Carmen Proetta, fell prey to a British newspaper smear campaign designed to discredit her.¹¹⁴³

What is more, not only eye-witnesses, but also the producers of the programme were attacked, for the government refused to accept the claims of a "shoot-to-kill" policy and attacked Thames Television to an extent that the station commissioned an independent inquiry into the charges against the programme.

¹¹³⁷ Ibid. p. 105.

¹¹³⁸ Ibid. p. 107.

¹¹³⁹ Murdock. 1991. pp. 107.

¹¹⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 108.

¹¹⁴¹ Mills, Heather. "Sudden Death and the Long Quest for Answers." In: *The Independent*. 28. 09.1995. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/sudden-death-and-the-long-quest-for-answers-1603189.html> (last accessed 10th July 2014)

¹¹⁴² Bolton, Roger. *This Week: Death on the Rock*. In: *Thames TV*. 1988. accessible on youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7MBqTw2vl0> (last accessed 5th September 2014)

¹¹⁴³ "How Carmen Proetta became the Victim of a Smear Attack." In: *The Observer*. 08.05.1988. p. 13.

This inquiry exonerated *Death on the Rock* from the accusations such as the claim “that the documentary was trial by television.”¹¹⁴⁴ Eventually, the European Court of Human Rights proved Thames Television right in the claim that the death of the three suspects was unnecessary.¹¹⁴⁵

The same year as the controversy surrounding *Death on the Rock*, the restriction of the freedom of information reached its absurd peak with the infamous 1988 broadcasting ban, which requested journalists to refrain from broadcasting “any words spoken whether in the course of an interview or discussion or otherwise”¹¹⁴⁶ by a person adhering to the IRA or affiliated organisations such as the parliamentary arm of the movement, Sinn Féin.¹¹⁴⁷ At the time when the then Home Secretary Douglas Hurd¹¹⁴⁸ announced the ban on interviewing a number of proscribed organisations, the British media industry had already been deeply entrenched in a system of self-censorship. However, the ban on Sinn Féin, a legal political party, made it a special measure. Encouraged by the vague formulation of the ban,¹¹⁴⁹ the media reacted to this ban by broadcasting footage of prominent party representatives who were dubbed by actors.¹¹⁵⁰ In practice, the dubbing created bizarre scenes, including voiceovers for imprisoned IRA members in the H-Blocks of Maze prison, who were also dubbed and subtitled when discussing innocuous topics such as the size of sausage rolls.¹¹⁵¹ Yet, although the ban engendered absurd scenarios and did not have the desired aim of suffocating the armed struggle of the IRA,¹¹⁵² it did have a tremendous impact on journalistic practices, for it led to a conflation of a critique of British policy and support for terrorism. Thus, the “category of prohibited views expanded markedly, yet almost imperceptibly.”¹¹⁵³ The ban was, in fact, very effective when it comes to creating a repressive atmosphere which even continued to encourage intimidation and self-censorship after the ban was lifted in 1994.¹¹⁵⁴

Summing up what has been outlined in this section, it is against this background of negative stereotyping, prejudicial attitudes towards the “savage Irish gunman,” threat constructions on the one hand, and secrecy, denial and restrictive information policies on the other, that the literary representations of IRA activities dealt with in the subsequent chapter ought to be viewed.

¹¹⁴⁴ Reid Grant, Myrna. “Gibraltar Killings: British Media Ethics.” In: *Journal of Media Ethics* 7.1. 1992. pp. 31-40. p. 35.

¹¹⁴⁵ Mills. 1995.

¹¹⁴⁶ Human Rights Watch. 1991. *Human Rights in Northern Ireland: A Helsinki Watch Report*. New York/London: Human Rights Watch. p. 126.

¹¹⁴⁷ The ban was issued under section 29 of the 1981 Broadcasting Act and the BBC’s charter. Human Rights Watch. 1991. p. 126.

¹¹⁴⁸ Hurd is also one of the authors tackling the conflict in Northern Ireland that will be discussed below.

¹¹⁴⁹ Miller, David. “The Media and Northern Ireland: Censorship, Information Management and the Broadcasting Ban.” In: Philo, Greg, ed. 1995. *Glasgow Media Group Reader*, Vol. 2. London/New York: Routledge. pp. 45-75. p. 64.

¹¹⁵⁰ Molony. 1991. pp. 105-107.

¹¹⁵¹ *Ibid.* pp. 55-56.

¹¹⁵² Henderson, Lesley. 1990. *Speak No Evil: The British Broadcasting Ban, the Media and the Conflict in Northern Ireland*. Glasgow: University Media Group. p. 42.

¹¹⁵³ Miller. 1995. p. 58.

¹¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 72.

4.2.2. Literary Representations of the IRA

The conflict surrounding the status of Northern Ireland has provoked a spectacular number of literary responses. The “Brighton bomber” Patrick Magee who dedicated the fourteen years of his internment to the study of Troubles Fiction, an endeavour culminating in his PhD, assumes that there are at least 700 works of prose fiction that deal either substantially or in part with the conflict.¹¹⁵⁵ This estimation, which also includes short stories, was published in 2001, but despite the official settlement of the conflict with the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, there have been even more publications of texts on the IRA in the following years.

It should be recognised that this to-date unprecedented output of literary fiction dealing with an organisation that is deemed as terroristic belongs mostly to the category of popular fiction. That is to say, some of this literature may even be categorised as pulp fiction or penny novels, depicting the IRA in terms of Manichean categories. Their tone and attitude essentially echo the dominant ideas disseminated through the British press coverage and leave no room for a pluridimensional representation.¹¹⁵⁶ As early as in 1980, Joseph McMinn already laments the absence of outstanding literary depictions which achieve a distance from the values perpetuated by the mainstream media and echoed in the vast majority of the Troubles fiction.¹¹⁵⁷ Today, more than 35 years later, with the exception of very few works, such a fictional response has been lacking. Most of the “serious” literature has been written by indigenous writers from Northern Ireland,¹¹⁵⁸ and relatively few Southern writers have been interested in the subject. The vast majority of the Troubles thrillers, on the other hand, have been written by English writers, for which reason the subjectivities of the British establishment predominate in this genre.¹¹⁵⁹

Considering the epistemological interest of this study in determining the literary functions of British fiction on terrorism, this chapter will focus on the literature written by authors from the British mainland. Although Northern Ireland officially belongs to the United Kingdom, the analysis of Northern Irish

¹¹⁵⁵ Magee. 2001. p. 3.

¹¹⁵⁶ Ibid. p. vi.

¹¹⁵⁷ McMinn, Joseph. “Contemporary Novels on the Troubles.” In: *Etudes Irlandaises* 5. 1980. pp. 113-121. p.121.

¹¹⁵⁸ For example, the brilliant epistolary novel *A Little Bit British* by Northern Irish writer Martin Wadall excels most of the works by writers from the British mainland with its witty take on the ideologically charged conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. The story is constructed as the fictitious diary of August Harland, a Unionist and founder of the U.M.P.I.R.E. (Ulster Moderate Protestant Inter-Religious Educationalists) whose daughter gave him a diary to record his loyalist thoughts to posterity. Brimming with sarcasm, the genre of the epistolary novel, which is inherently subjective, seems to be an appropriate means of exposing the racism and fanaticism that inform the opinions of the self-avowed “moderate” protagonist. Thus, the text derives its comic effect from Harland’s view of himself as a moderate man, though he is at heart a bigot and racist whose family have been alienated by or derides his strong views. (Waddell, Martin. 1970. *A Little Bit British: The Diary of the Ulsterman*. London: Tom Stacey.) It can be said that Northern Irish writers seem to be more prone to a balanced view on the conflict. In Shaun Herron’s thriller *Through the Dark and Hairy Wood*, for instance, both sides, Protestants and Catholics are represented as equally warmongering primitives. Herron, Shaun. 1972. *Through the Dark and Hairy Wood*. New York/Toronto: Random House.

¹¹⁵⁹ Kennedy-Andrews, Elmer. 2003. *Fiction and the Northern Ireland Troubles since 1969: (De-)constructing the North*. Dublin: Four Courts. p. 43.

fiction would exceed the boundaries of this study and open up the discussion about a literary discourse that is more related to the cultural and political context of Ireland and the Irish literary tradition than to Great Britain.¹¹⁶⁰ What is more, to remain within the scope of this study, only a few emblematic texts representing the core topics and characteristics of Troubles fiction can be discussed in this section. Most of these texts are thrillers, including Douglas Hurd's *Vote to Kill* (1975), Gerald Seymour's *Harry's Game* (1975), Chapman Pincher's *In the Eye of the Tornado* (1976), Andrew Lane's *Forgive the Executioner* (1978), Martin Walker's *The Infiltrator* (1979), Julian Romanes' *The Cell* (1987), and Ian Rankin's *Watchman* (1988). The works that can be categorised as belonging to a different genre include the comic novel *The British Museum is Falling Down* by David Lodge and Doris Lessing's political novel *The Good Terrorist* (1986).

It becomes clear from the works listed above that, except for Lessing's, Lodge's and Rankin's books, there are only very few novels that can be regarded as "serious" or even "canonical" literature. The dearth of "high" literature written by British authors on the Troubles means, in turn, that the analysis of the functional potential of literature dealing with the IRA must rely on the profusion of popular fiction. Yet, in contrast to high literature, popular texts are suspected of directly reflecting an ideology and therefore of not being amenable to a sophisticated analysis.¹¹⁶¹ It may be argued, however, that a serious analysis of the Troubles fiction "trash"¹¹⁶² is – despite the lack of psychological depth and historical accuracy inherent to the selected texts – still a promising endeavour, because authors of bestselling literature produce a mirror of their time,¹¹⁶³ and their creation of fictional worlds brimming with reductionist views helps to grasp and manifest simplified ideas and images of the conflict.¹¹⁶⁴ Popular fiction "consolidates prejudice, provides comfort, is therapy, offers vicarious reward or stimulus."¹¹⁶⁵ One may thus assume that "the banal, prefabricated narrative of the popular paperback leaves a greater mark on the common reader"¹¹⁶⁶ than any "highbrow" take on the subject matter. In this vein, Magee regards Troubles fiction as worthy of serious critical attention. According to him, the quantity of publications and wide reach of this fiction justifies its consideration: "It is the very popularity of the genre, the fact of its wide readership, that makes it a powerful medium for assigning or fixing meaning, and thus contributes to the shaping or reinforcement of public perception."¹¹⁶⁷

¹¹⁶⁰ See, for example, Laura Pelaschiar, who convincingly argues that Irish literature and Northern Irish literature have in spite of the division of the country more in common with one another than either of them has with Great Britain. Pelaschiar, Laura. 1998. *Writing the North: The Contemporary Novel in Northern Ireland*. Parnaso: Trieste. p. 10.

¹¹⁶¹ Pawling. 1984. p. 8.

¹¹⁶² The often-cited article by John Bowyer Bell refers to Troubles fiction as trash. (Bowyer Bell, John. "The Troubles as Trash." In: *Hibernia Review*. 20.01.1978. p. 22.)

¹¹⁶³ Cockburn, Claud. 1972. *Bestseller: The Books that Everyone Read*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. p. 14.

¹¹⁶⁴ Kennedy-Andrews. 2003. p. 41.

¹¹⁶⁵ Sutherland, John. 1981. *Bestsellers: Popular Fiction of the 1970s*. London: Routledge. p. 34.

¹¹⁶⁶ Titley, Alan. "Rough Rug-Headed Kerns: The Irish Gunman in the Popular Novel." In: *Eire-Ireland* 15. 1980. pp. 15-38. p. 19.

¹¹⁶⁷ Magee. 2001. p. 14.

As such, these popular takes on The Troubles are clearly relevant to our epistemological interest of defining the potential socio-cultural function(s) of the literary representations of terrorism. That is, one may assume that the “publishing phenomenon”¹¹⁶⁸ surrounding the conflict with the IRA may grant deep insights into the relationship between literature on terrorism and its historical context, as well as its potential cultural and ethical implications.

Before delving into the world of the Troubles thriller, it seems worthwhile to consider the literature dealing with the IRA from a different angle; that is, from a perspective centring on the absence of “serious” literary responses, for the massive output of popular literature is at odds with the silence prevailing among Britain’s canonical writers. As explained previously,¹¹⁶⁹ memory and forgetting are essentially two sides of the same coin. Without selectivity, no coherent individual and cultural memory process and identity construction would be possible. The conflict in Northern Ireland, however, seems to be historically too relevant and dominant in the second half of the 20th century to be excluded from cultural memory. Attributing the silence of British writers to their diffidence about their own competence to analyse the conflict or a reluctance to admit its horrors, Margaret Scanlan commented as early as in 1985 on the evasion of this subject in British fiction.¹¹⁷⁰ It can be argued that the non-representation in “serious” literature forms part of a ‘negative memory’, a deliberate avoidance of recollections which are deemed unfavourable to or inappropriate for the British self-concept and identity construction. In other words, there has been no literary response because such an endeavour would require a closer look into affairs and hence threaten the pervasive British self-image as “neutral arbiters”¹¹⁷¹ in Northern Ireland.

Since it is far more difficult a task to deduce the socio-cultural function of works that have not been written than that of the existing novels on terrorism, one may only speculate why this situation has not been the subject of much thoughtful literary analysis. It can be argued that there are three aspects at stake:

Firstly, like their late Victorian predecessors, authors may not have been attracted to the Irish question, because of the Irish stereotypes suggesting racial inferiority which, as discussed in the previous section, were revived during The Troubles. Characters viewed as degenerate might not have constituted an attractive choice for literary endeavours seeking to create an enticing terrorist novel. Secondly, as illustrated above, the British media landscape and public opinion were to adhere to the official narrative of Britain’s role as a “honest broker”¹¹⁷² in Northern Ireland, and the battle for public opinion was fought by means of informal and formal censorship and the politics of denial and secrecy.

¹¹⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 14.

¹¹⁶⁹ See 3.2.3.3.

¹¹⁷⁰ Scanlan, Margaret. 1985. “The Unbearable Present: Northern Ireland in Four Contemporary Novels.” In: *Etudes Irlandaises* 10. 1985. pp. 145-161. p. 145.

¹¹⁷¹ McGarry, John; O’Leary, Brendan. 2004. *The Northern Ireland Conflict: Consociational Engagements*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press. p. 106.

¹¹⁷² Ibid. p. 106.

The pressure that was particularly exerted by the Thatcher government might have also spilled over into the realm of literary production. Despite Derrida's conceptualisation of literature as a "fictive institution" which allows the writer to say everything in the protected space of the "as if," authors might have flinched from the challenge of portraying the decade-long conflict whose public image has been gridlocked between the propaganda and ideologically tainted partiality of both media and fictional representations. The daunting examples of Thames Television and other factual attempts to represent the crisis might have also deterred fiction writers.¹¹⁷³ Thirdly, and closely related to the previous two points is the mechanics of the publishing industry. Following Magee's argument, the British reading public crave popular and essentially escapist fiction, for they "do not want to have their comfortable and comforting assumptions in regard to Britain's role in Ireland challenged by the disconcerting expression of an alternative view. Axe-grinding equals low sales."¹¹⁷⁴ Lulling their readership with the assurance granted by fictional worlds brimming with black and white scenarios, the great success of popular fiction is symbiotic with the readership's demand for easily digestible entertainment. The lack of literary fiction tackling Irish terrorism serves, in turn, the literary function of corroborating this longing for reassurance concerning the integrity of the British government and military. Deviance from the popular staples of stereotypes perpetuating the image of the thick, vicious Irish gunman might have posed a threat to the comfort zone established by the British media and popular fiction, in which the political involvement and responsibility could be neglected. Thus, these works that have never been written play an integral part in the politics of information and representation during the Troubles.

In order to delve deeper into the function(s) of the books that were written and proved popular, this study will proceed with an examination of the thriller as the dominant genre of Troubles fiction. Following the analysis of the basic functions of the genre, the aesthetic value of the works will be discussed. Formally, these novels tend to be simplistic and straight-forward rather than intricate and complex. Therefore, this analysis will mainly focus on the most frequent topics that emerge and the language that is deployed to give sustenance to British mainstream views and discourses. Lastly, the potential socio-cultural function(s) of these texts will be outlined in greater detail.

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As indicated before, Troubles fiction predominantly adheres to the conventions of the thriller. Scholars such as Stephanie Schwerter, for example, conceive the thriller therefore as a subgenre of the genre of Troubles fiction. As Schwerter points out in her PhD project on the literary representation of the divided city of Belfast, the thriller genre is not a homogenous, but a hybrid genre.¹¹⁷⁵ Martin Rubin regards the

¹¹⁷³ Magee even goes so far to ask whether the "media manipulation" by the government also affected publishers, booksellers and writers. Magee. 2001. p. 209.

¹¹⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 16.

¹¹⁷⁵ Schwerter, Stephanie. 2007. *Literarisierung einer gespaltenen Stadt: Belfast in der nordirischen Troubles Fiction vom Realismus zur Karnevalisierung*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag. p. 75.

concept of the ‘thriller’ as falling somewhere in-between a genre proper and a descriptive quality attached to other genres, including the spy or detective novel. He regards the thriller accordingly as a “metagenre” that gathers several others under its umbrella, and attributes the specific characteristics of the thriller to them.¹¹⁷⁶

Generally, the genre is characterised by an action-packed, fast-paced plot which drives rapidly towards the end of the story.¹¹⁷⁷ As discussed previously, terrorism, the discourses it prompts, and fiction are seen to share certain affinities. The lines between the mere reporting of events and the meaning ascribed to them in the news *story* become increasingly blurred. Focusing on the most violent and shocking aspects of terrorism, media representations of the phenomenon appeal to the senses of the audience. Therefore, the thriller genre dealing with the phenomenon which, as will be shown in greater detail below, derives its thrill from inspiring fear, excitement and suspense, lends itself to a sensationalist representation of terrorism which is not too remote from its portrayal in the news media and public discourses. This may also be one of the reasons why a great number of the authors of Troubles fiction are journalists by trade.

Furthermore, as Laura Pelaschiar contends, the conflict surrounding the question of Northern Ireland involving a great deal of palpable tension feeding prejudice and racial hatred “should be a thriller writer’s dream.”¹¹⁷⁸ In other words, one may argue that the thriller rose to its position of being the dominant genre of Troubles fiction because it suits the general partiality and ideologically charged approaches to the subject matter. Pelaschiar, for instance, claims that writers dealing with the question of Northern Ireland invariably express a political standpoint. Therefore, “the writing of a novel in and of Northern Ireland, no matter what the motives, will inevitably be read in itself *also* as a political act, an adoption of a political viewpoint in a world which is a minefield of economic, religious and political sectarian divisions.”¹¹⁷⁹ The thriller genre, which is generally seen as an “incarnation of ideology”,¹¹⁸⁰ thus lends itself to representing such an ideologically divided society and, moreover, to constructing the conflict as “fated, contemptuously dismissed, statically stereotyped.”¹¹⁸¹ The stock characters are resistant to change and deeply entrenched in their role of hero or villain. Clearly, the construction of the IRA as the acme of an unalterable evil by many British Troubles thrillers echoes the views propagated by the British establishment and media industry. Thus, IRA members are often represented as taciturn and menacing,¹¹⁸² “inhuman”¹¹⁸³ to the point that “they aren’t people.”¹¹⁸⁴ Yet, not all of the texts necessarily concentrate on politics, as some rather centre on private and individual matters. Part of the

¹¹⁷⁶ Rubin, Martin. 1999. *Thrillers*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press. p. 4.

¹¹⁷⁷ Schwerter. 2007. p. 76.

¹¹⁷⁸ Pelaschiar. 1998. p. 19.

¹¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p. 17.

¹¹⁸⁰ Palmer, Jerry. 1978. *Thrillers: Genesis and Structure of a Popular Genre*. London: Edward Arnold. p. 66.

¹¹⁸¹ Kelly. 2004. p. 1.

¹¹⁸² Lessing. 1986. p. 233.

¹¹⁸³ Pincher. 1976. p. 49.

¹¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p. 49.

Troubles fiction, for example, also incorporates elements of the romance: The thriller genre “with its predictable pattern of events in a world of pursuit and confrontation between the IRA and the State”¹¹⁸⁵ is supplemented by an often-times melodramatic representation of the conflict as “a threat to privacy and individualism.”¹¹⁸⁶

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Due to the vast number of thrillers that have been written in response to the Troubles the following section is dedicated to the elucidation of the specific aesthetic function of that genre, which will afford further insights into its socio-cultural functionality. This approach may also explain the proliferation and dominance of the thriller genre in the representation of the IRA.

As mentioned above, the thriller genre is by nature one that stresses sensations rather than sensitivity. It depends primarily on feelings of suspense, excitement, exhilaration, and fear.¹¹⁸⁷ Other aspects of literary prose fiction, such as complex characterisation or moral conflict, are in general subordinated to these demands of the genre.¹¹⁸⁸ Instead, the evocation of excitement in the reader is, according to Jerry Palmer, a fundamental aesthetic goal of the thriller. This excitement is conjured up by the portrayal of conspiracies from the perspective of the protagonist. Their perspective usually dominates and makes the reader identify with them as a “source of good in the world.”¹¹⁸⁹ Dramatic and significant events are always shown from the hero’s point of view¹¹⁹⁰ which has to be embraced by the reader to render the reading matter pleasurable.¹¹⁹¹ The hero is also distinguished from other characters through his professionalism, which authors his ultimate success. By contrast, the villains are characterised by their lack of efficiency and unprofessionalism.¹¹⁹²

Moreover, the thriller has traditionally been designed for a male audience.¹¹⁹³ The genre therefore often follows a set of gender conventions. The hero is usually a male character who sets out to fight a conspiracy, and “to prove what one is, to prove that one has (in the context of the thriller) the necessary stature to be a hero.”¹¹⁹⁴ Palmer’s observations of the gender roles in the genre in his 1978 analysis still ring true for many of the contemporary popular thrillers. Female characters often feature all sexual partners, whereas the hero is usually described as a lone wolf, who learns to control his sexuality. To use it as a form of relaxation seems appropriate to him. Women are depicted as “the incarnation of sexual

¹¹⁸⁵ McMinn. 1980. p. 114.

¹¹⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 114.

¹¹⁸⁷ Kennedy-Andrews. 2003. p. 41.

¹¹⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 41.

¹¹⁸⁹ Palmer, Jerry. “Thrillers.” In: Pawling.1984. pp. 76-98. p. 59.

¹¹⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 59.

¹¹⁹¹ Ibid. pp. 64-65.

¹¹⁹² Ibid. p. 14.

¹¹⁹³ Palmer, Jerry. 1991. *Potboilers: Methods, Concepts and Case Studies in Popular Fiction*. Abingdon: Routledge. p.147.

¹¹⁹⁴ Palmer. 1978. pp. 64-65.

temptation”¹¹⁹⁵ and the hero therefore has to demonstrate his superiority to them.¹¹⁹⁶ Analysing the codes of sexuality of the Bond thrillers which were the first thrillers to make sexual encounters central to the plot, Michael Denning notes that “the sexual politics of the Bond thriller are in many ways very traditional.[...] The apparent novelty of Bond was, one might conclude, another version of a persistent and recurrent masculine fantasy dressed up in the latest fashions of consumer society.”¹¹⁹⁷ While, for example, the Bond thrillers represent “a masculinity defined by freedom from marriage, an easy familiarity with the brand names that are the accompaniments to a consumer lifestyle – cars, cigarettes, liquor,”¹¹⁹⁸ the privilege of the male perspective in the thriller genre may also be indicative of a masculinity in crisis. Hence, Aaron Kelly argues in his analysis of the Troubles thriller that the appearance of overtly macho figures in many of these works attest to a failure of masculinity: “such increased visibility of masculinity is of course also centrally tied to the hegemonic breakdown of its dominant modes and the consequent loss of discursive transparency and nominativity.”¹¹⁹⁹

To sum up, by its very formal-structural characteristics, the thriller genre is marked by the adoption of a viewpoint, an ideology, which is constructed in opposition to the evil force epitomised by the villain. It usually privileges a male perspective. In the case of Troubles fiction may be staged as a crisis in masculinity caused by British colonial oppression,¹²⁰⁰ or vice versa by IRA terrorism.

Gerald Seymour’s *Harry’s Game*, for example, strives to juxtapose both the perspective of the British authorities and the “lone wolf” detective Harry, who is appointed to infiltrate the Belfast IRA and the terrorist himself. Opening with the shooting of the British Cabinet Minister Danby, the novel proceeds with the alternating perspectives of the Scotland Yard Commissioner informing the Prime Minister and his Cabinet and the escaping terrorist Billy Downs.¹²⁰¹ Once Harry enters the story his view is contrasted to that of Downs. The characteristic that renders Harry suitable for the role of the hero can be best described as being “never at loss for the appropriate response.”¹²⁰² Harry’s professionalism is highlighted from the very beginning, where the reader learns about his experience in Aden, Cyprus and Borneo,¹²⁰³ all of which have been centres of anti-colonial struggles after World War II. His nemesis is professional enough to dissemble his perpetration and escape the British authorities for a considerable time. Thus, for the sake of suspense, Harry’s opponent is in contrast to many other representations of Irish gunmen not depicted as a “nut.”¹²⁰⁴ One may argue that he has to demonstrate a certain skilfulness

¹¹⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 35.

¹¹⁹⁶ Ibid. P. 35.

¹¹⁹⁷ Denning, Micheal. 1987. *Cover Stories: Narrative and Ideology in the British Spy Thriller*. London/New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul. p. 108.

¹¹⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 113.

¹¹⁹⁹ Kelly, Aaron. 2004. *The Thriller and Northern Ireland since 1969*. Aldershot/Burlington: Ashgate. p. 116.

¹²⁰⁰ Morgan, Eileen. “Ireland’s Lost Action Hero: ‘Michael Collins,’ a Secret History of Irish Masculinity.” In: *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua* 2.1. 1998. pp. 26-42. p. 29.

¹²⁰¹ Seymour. 2013. pp. 8-36.

¹²⁰² Palmer. 1978. p. 78.

¹²⁰³ Seymour. pp. 39-40.

¹²⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 11.

to be a worthy adversary of the incredibly versed and streetwise Harry. Yet, naturally, the terrorist eventually commits a fatal error in that he confides to a fleeting affair that he killed Danby, which leads to his arrest.

Moreover, Harry is an exemplar of the “lone wolf” thriller hero who has learned to control his sexuality and deploys it for professional rather than personal gain. The sexual relationship with Josephine, a local Ballymurphy girl, serves to furnish information about the terrorist. After she tells him about her friend Theresa’s sexual misadventure with the “London man,”¹²⁰⁵ Harry is very pleased with his progress: “Not bad, one good screw in the line of duty, and the big coup.”¹²⁰⁶ These female characters are hence, to their detriment, mere means through which to further the hero’s professional progress. Theresa, who is taken into custody and interrogated, hangs herself in her cell as she fears Provo vengeance.¹²⁰⁷

The thriller genre also features a remarkable degree of passivity on the part of the heroes who function as figures of identification. The protagonists often find themselves caught up in events over which they have only little control. For example, in *Harry’s Game* the bewildered protagonist is brought to England by the British Intelligence Services in a secret overnight operation, and is thus forced to leave his wife and two sons in Berlin. He is thus thrown into his newly assumed identity of Harry McEvoy, a sailor who returns to his native Belfast to support the struggle against the British. In *Forgive the Executioner* Alain Paine’s life changes dramatically when three IRA men rape his daughter and subsequently kill his two children and his wife.¹²⁰⁸ It becomes obvious that the Troubles thriller constructs the crime committed by the IRA as an intrusion that alters the life of the protagonist fundamentally at one blow. However, the world of the thriller is only disrupted for a certain period of time, since the terrorist foray is represented as a resolvable crime. The hero or British state authorities restore the status quo in the end.¹²⁰⁹

A lot of the joy of reading or watching a thriller is derived from the sadistic pleasure of observing the suffering of others, yet the audience also suffers through the identification with these characters.¹²¹⁰ Thrillers therefore also have their own morality which may diverge from the moral values held up in the extra-literary world. There is “no respect for equality, privacy, due process of law or the impartiality of authority.”¹²¹¹ Furthermore, the belief that the ends justify the means is often promoted.¹²¹² For instance, Martin Walker’s *The Infiltrator*, which actually deals with the revolution in Portugal, resorts to the former SAS man David Maddox’ reminiscences about the organisation’s practices:

We worked as a series of self-contained units. We would spot the hard men, the ones who could organise supplies of explosives, and then get hold of detonators and train others to make bombs. [...] We found out who they were and we started to kill them. Those were the orders. Chisholm first got

¹²⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 122.

¹²⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 122.

¹²⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 143.

¹²⁰⁸ Lane. 1978. pp. 5-28.

¹²⁰⁹ Kelly. 2005. p. 15.

¹²¹⁰ Rubin. 1999. p. 7.

¹²¹¹ Palmer. 1978. p. 5.

¹²¹² Ibid. p. 5.

interested in us when we stopped just killing them and started to make the killings look as though they were done by the Catholics. Or the Protestants. Chisholm liked the economy of that. It meant that the UDA and the UVF would start taking on the Provos, and the Provos would start taking on the UDA; and with any luck the British Army could have a quiet life.¹²¹³

Hence, the thriller is prone to openly embrace questionable strategies such as a “shoot-to-kill” policy, which had to be dissembled in the extra-literary world.

These conventions of the genre may furnish the reasons for the frequent deployment of the thriller genre by fiction writers tackling the IRA and the conflict in Northern Ireland: It allows for the creation of a fictional world in which moral values are promoted that are both characterised by a lack of conflict, infallible certainty and strong ideas of right and wrong as well as the determination to impose the “good” embodied by the hero over the “evil” epitomised by the villain, at whatever cost. In the world of the thriller, for example, a shoot-to-kill policy would be – unlike in reality – an unquestioned means to hunt down an IRA terrorist.

The thriller genre displays another common feature: Its concern for verisimilitude, specifically when it comes to factual or technical accuracy.¹²¹⁴ This might explain the often-noted high proportion of journalists among the authors of Troubles fiction.¹²¹⁵ Among the authors discussed in this study who are journalists are Martin Walker, Chapman Pincher, Gerald Seymour and Andrew Lane. Douglas Hurd has even had a long and high-profile political career. These writers often possess knowledge of the inner workings of an organisation such as the IRA or RUC, or of the main political players.¹²¹⁶ Chapman Pincher, for example, claims in the foreword to his novel that he relied on information from officials of a rather extensive list of institutions, including the Ministry of Defence or Scotland Yard.¹²¹⁷

Remarking on this representational dominance of British subjectivities in the Troubles thriller, Aaron Kelly discusses them in terms of their deep entrenchment in discursive structures of knowledge and power.¹²¹⁸ Troubles fiction written by journalists renders seemingly “authentic” and intimate representations of the conflict, which are, however, based on contacts and observation rather than inspired by a direct involvement and sympathy.¹²¹⁹

Drawing on Foucault’s concepts of the relation of power and knowledge, one may argue that these insights into the conflict and workings of organisations such as the SAS or the IRA are among the discursive formations shaping the perception of the Irish situation,¹²²⁰ which may thus be controlled according to needs of the British public. For example, *Harry’s Game* is brimming with insider

¹²¹³ Walker, Martin. 1979. p. 24.

¹²¹⁴ Titley. 1980. p. 19.

¹²¹⁵ McMinn. 1980. p. 114.

Magee. 2001. p. 8.

Kennedy-Andrews. 2003. p. 46.

¹²¹⁶ Kennedy-Andrews. p. 46.

¹²¹⁷ Pincher. 1976. p. 4.

¹²¹⁸ Kelly. 2004. p. 28.

¹²¹⁹ McMinn. 1980. p. 114.

¹²²⁰ Aaron Kelly likewise draws on Foucault’s concept to illuminate the ways in which the mechanisms of the British Troubles thriller sustain a dominant representation of the conflict. Kelly. 2004. pp. 27-28.

information and meticulous descriptions of the covert operations of British intelligence services, government agencies and the IRA does not spare the reader any tiny procedural detail. Yet, by contrast, the name of the terrorist is only revealed at a rather late point in the novel when the British army raids a Belfast social club and takes Billy Downs' details.¹²²¹ Thus, the identity of the terrorist who is until this point only referred to as "the man" is accorded significance through the explicit interest of the British authorities. It becomes thus clear that they possess the representational power and the upper hand. The ostensibly informed account of the conflict with the IRA that is given in *Harry's Game* may essentially be an attempt to mould the public perception of it.

Furthermore, the rather technical method applied in the Troubles thriller may be vital to the generation of voyeuristic pleasures in the audience. To the detriment of profound characterisations and thus a potential ethical function of literature, the genre derives some of its thrill from the "disclosure" of the inner workings of covertly operating terrorist and counter-terrorist organisations.¹²²² For example, Pincher even imagines the crisis management of the Defence Ministry¹²²³ after the capture of the *Mallard*. Moreover, his narrative also discloses Prime Minister Fletcher's innermost emotions. Notwithstanding, such emotional insights lack in depth, yet are deployed to highlight Mrs. Fletcher's femininity. In the male-dominated thriller genre, emotions and compassion, although they are well hidden from the public eye, are only evoked to emphasise the "weakness" of the female Prime Minister. In this vein, she "was shaken by the mental picture of young children coerced by terrorist guns."¹²²⁴ Yet, although she sniffs slightly, she is determined to hide her feelings in public, and keep her stiff upper lip.¹²²⁵ The female Prime Minister is accordingly capable of suppressing her emotions in favour of the British virtues of self-composure and stoicism.

Gerald Seymour's *Harry's Game*, on the other hand, features a tough male protagonist and scarcely discusses emotional matters. This thriller is replete with insider knowledge about the British army, UK institutions and their IRA opponents. Thus, the reader is, for example, informed about army intelligence gathering in the pubs of Belfast,¹²²⁶ the internal decision-making process initiated by the Prime Minister himself resulting in the appointment of Harry for the dangerous infiltration job,¹²²⁷ as well as the account of the meeting of the Army Council of the Provos in the wake of the Danby shooting. Douglas Hurd's *Vote to Kill* has even been dedicated to the former Tory Prime Minister Ted Heath, during whose premiership he served in the Foreign Office. The novel thus also gives a detailed account of internal procedures of the Cabinet, and the fictive Prime Minister's daily business.¹²²⁸

¹²²¹ Seymour. 2013. p. 113.

¹²²² Ibid. pp. 114-115.

¹²²³ Pincher. 1976. pp. 32-33.

¹²²⁴ Ibid. p. 49.

¹²²⁵ Ibid. p. 49.

¹²²⁶ Seymour. 2013. p. 11.

¹²²⁷ Ibid. pp. 41-48.

¹²²⁸ For example, discussions of the PM and his closest confidantes about the arrangement of the publication of the so-called Matheson report questioning the role of the army in Northern Ireland receive considerable attention.

However, a voyeuristic thrill is not the only possible effect rendered by extensive descriptive passages. Instead, these technical and operational deliberations may also provoke boredom among their readership.¹²²⁹ Kelly conceives boredom in his Jamesonian take on Troubles fiction as a utopian longing and impatience for a historical awakening from the stasis in Northern Ireland.¹²³⁰ As indicated by this supposed function of eliciting boredom,¹²³¹ Kelly stresses in his study the dialectic of the potentially redemptive and repressive modalities of the Troubles thriller.¹²³² He attributes boredom to the redemptive side, as it may be indicative of a longing for political change. However, one may instead argue that these technical descriptions are the result of both bad literary craftsmanship and, to borrow from Alan Titley, the attempt to lend verisimilitude through the diligence of external reporting and the meticulous description of the surface reality and military or political details to an otherwise incredible tale.¹²³³

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The putative expert view on the IRA and the British counter-forces not only evokes a voyeuristic pleasure or may elicit boredom, but also reinforces the dichotomous construction of British and Irish identities, as they provide a system of knowledge about the conflict enabling, to borrow from Kelly, the “construction of the stereotype by a dominant gaze.”¹²³⁴ Thus, these works echo threat narratives which, as we have seen,¹²³⁵ centre on the negotiation of a normative position in relation to the threatening Other. In addition, as we have seen before, generally, acts of self-creation are intrinsically linked to ethical judgements relating to an “other”. Troubles fiction thrives on the perpetuation of stereotypes manifesting the otherness of the Irish to forge a British identity in opposition to it. Hence, their main socio-cultural function lies in the construction of mirror images of Irish and British identities.

As discussed earlier, throughout history, Ireland and the Irish have served the British as a nemesis through which their own identity and virtuousness can be established.¹²³⁶ This is also reflected in the literature tackling the IRA, such as David Lodge’s *The British Museum is Falling Down*. Set in a London of the 1960s, the comic novel does not centre on the question of Ireland but on the efforts of Adam Appleby, a British Catholic post-graduate student and father of three young children who seeks to avert further procreation without breaching the sexual doctrine of the Catholic Church. The IRA is, however,

¹²²⁹ Kelly. 2005. p. 156.

¹²³⁰ Ibid. p. 157.

¹²³¹ Douglas Hurd’s novel is a suitable example for the boredom that might be created by prolonged descriptions of technical or organizational procedures. Most of the action seems to be taking place in the Prime Minister’s Cabinet Room and the plot is slowly driven by descriptions of official procedures and internal communication. (Hurd. 1975. pp. 154-157) For example, the visit of Rajnaya and the official proceedings are discussed in great detail, even though the visit has only minor significance to the plot as a whole. Ibid. pp. 46-62.

¹²³² Kelly. 2005. p. 9.

¹²³³ Titley. 1980. p. 19.

¹²³⁴ Kelly. 2005. p. 29.

¹²³⁵ See chapter 4.2.3.

¹²³⁶ See chapter 5.1.1.

mentioned briefly in conjunction with Father Finbar, an Irish Catholic priest who fundamentally opposes any reform of the Vatican. Finbar not only views his London parish as “a piece of the Old Country which had broken off in a storm and floated across the sea until it lodged itself in the Thames Basin,”¹²³⁷ but also refers to “Back Home” in his sermons and sanctions collections for the dependants of the IRA in the church porch.¹²³⁸ This brief mentioning of the Irish priest, who is just an incidental character, reveals the British view on Irishness, which is equated with both the backwardness of a rampant Catholicism and a wide-spread appreciation of the armed struggle and terrorist means for the sake of the Republican cause. Magee comes to a similar conclusion, when he argues that Lodge ranges Catholicism with Irish republicanism and “there is the suggestion that Irish republicanism equals the past, of traditional values having little or no relevance in the modern, hedonistic Sixties.”¹²³⁹ Hence, unlike their modern British foils, the Irish represent an old-fashioned morality as opposed to the economic colonialism the English practised across the world. In contrast to the stiff upper lip-mentality the British ascribe to themselves, Irishness is furthermore equated with excessive emotionality and pathos. In Julian Romanes’ *The Cell*, for instance, the policeman Bill complains about the overlap of their work with the Irish branch: “I don’t want Ireland. Nothing but grief there for a policeman. [...] You know the reason why it’s so hard to deal with the Irish: they’re emotional.”¹²⁴⁰

In Douglas Hurd’s *Vote to Kill* Irishness also bears negative connotations and is harnessed to describe the unacceptable behaviour of the Prime Minister’s son Anthony. Regarding his libertine lifestyle, “the Irish are simple and sane by comparison”¹²⁴¹ to him. What is more, the Irish are described as being obsessed with the Irish question. For example, the ex-boyfriend Barran of the civil servant at 10 Downing Street, Clarissa Strong, was, according to her father Brigadier Strong, such a bigot that he needed to be expelled from their house.¹²⁴² Later on, Barran, who became a Professor of Poetry in Cork with IRA connections, re-emerges and kills Brigadier Strong. At the end of the novel, Clarissa is revealed to be Barran’s accomplice, attempting to assassinate the PM with a crossbow. As the choice of her weapon indicates, Irish terrorists and their supporters are represented as brutal savages using primitive weapons. In a similar vein, Irish people are according to Hurd’s take on them prone to fall prey to lies and legends, and their memory of past grievances and injustices are denigrated to the status of folk tales. These stories are, according to Strong, used by Irish grandmothers to perpetuate the hatred among the Irish people: “They keep them at home, the Catholics, I mean. No question of old people’s homes. So there they sit by the fire, night after night, telling all the old stories, spreading all the old lies. That’s why the different kinds of Irish go on hating each other.”¹²⁴³

¹²³⁷ Lodge. 2011. p. 24.

¹²³⁸ Ibid. p. 24.

¹²³⁹ Magee. 2001. p. 36.

¹²⁴⁰ Romanes. 1987. p. 42.

¹²⁴¹ Hurd. 1975. p. 105.

¹²⁴² Ibid. p. 108.

¹²⁴³ Ibid. p. 109.

In *Vote to Kill*, Irishness is also associated with madness. For instance, the Tory dissenter Jeremy Cornwall, who advocates the British military withdrawal from Northern Ireland, is described as being “drunk on Ireland. Ireland is turning him mad.”¹²⁴⁴ Hence, the madness of the Irish has sprung over to the British politician. This representation of Irishness in terms of a contagious disease recurs at the end of the novel where the PM James Percival describes the “Irish fever” as the “worst variety known to man. It destroys all gentleness, truth, sensible calculation. When Englishmen catch it they get it worst of all. And Englishwomen.”¹²⁴⁵ As Hurd’s take on the Irish question reveals, Irish otherness serves the British as a counterpoint from which the characteristics of unflappability, rationality and resilience, which are deemed desirable for the British identity, may be demarcated. Literary representations of Provos gunmen are even more strikingly stereotyped. The protagonist of Walker’s *The Infiltrator* quite poignantly summarises the perception of the IRA as “a joke, made up of some aged alcoholics and a load of teenage cowboys.”¹²⁴⁶

The characterisations are mostly one-dimensional and centre on their utter maliciousness and inefficiency.¹²⁴⁷ For example, in Pincher’s *The Eye of the Tornado* the IRA gunmen are presented as nemeses to the noble English characters: The fictive IRA explosives expert, Patrick Delaney, disguises his strong Irish accent by putting on “a cultured English voice”¹²⁴⁸ to deceive the English opponents. They are furthermore prone to use violence against women and children, which contrasts the depiction of the Royal Naval Auxiliary Master Keith Sexton, who acts in an honourable fashion and has even been sympathetic to the Irish cause, but condemns the violence harnessed to further it.¹²⁴⁹ What is more, the Irish Republican captors of the *Mallard*, a ferry shipping Polaris missile nuclear warheads, according to the conventions to the thriller genre demanding the inefficiency of the villain, are depicted as fundamentally incompetent. As Sexton observes, the control of the nuclear weapons on board is certainly beyond their capabilities. Hence, he is “appalled by the prospect of such a man tampering with a superbly sophisticated device.”¹²⁵⁰ It becomes clear that nuclear weapons in the hands of a bunch of foolhardy IRA terrorists pose an unpredictable threat to mankind. As a member of the Prime Minister Fletcher’s cabinet remarks:

I fear there’s another factor that must be taken into account – the risk of accidental detonation. I cannot exaggerate the danger of these weapons if they are being tinkered with in the way I suspect. The IRA has a reputation for premature explosions, God knows how many of their own men they’ve blown up this way.¹²⁵¹

Hence, the whole operation of capturing the *Mallard* could not have been the work of these Irish incompetents alone, but must have been conducted under the auspices of professional guidance. Set in

¹²⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 53.

¹²⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 215.

¹²⁴⁶ Walker. 1979. p. 25.

¹²⁴⁷ Bowyer Bell. 1978. p. 22.

¹²⁴⁸ Pincher. 1976. p. 9.

¹²⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 15.

¹²⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 31.

¹²⁵¹ Ibid. p. 41.

the advent of the Thatcher era, the late 1970s, a time when the Cold War re-gained momentum, such a professional guidance could have only come from the KGB.¹²⁵² This construction of the IRA in Pincher's thriller is starkly contrasted with the outwardly resolute and unflinching PM Fletcher, who, as the name indicates, is a fictional herald of Margaret Thatcher's premiership.

The IRA is thus constructed as the ultimate "other" of the British authorities and the society they represent: they do not know the rules of fair play, but they are instead overtly emotional, "uncouth and erratic,"¹²⁵³ likely to mishandle a bombing campaign,¹²⁵⁴ act like "schoolchildren",¹²⁵⁵ yet are cold-blooded enough to use women and children as bait.¹²⁵⁶ What is more, the Provos are not only depicted as evil buffoons,¹²⁵⁷ but their physical appearance often also speaks for their otherness, such as their "decaying teeth,"¹²⁵⁸ and "short upper lips"¹²⁵⁹ giving the face a "ferrety look"¹²⁶⁰ as well as overall physical coarseness or even repulsiveness. To borrow from Titley, the appearance of the IRA terrorist "presents an almost composite picture, or rather silhouette,"¹²⁶¹ comprising everything that is undesirable to the British.

Moreover, their manner of speech reveals their otherness. By contrast to a "cultured English voice,"¹²⁶² the strong Irish accent of these terrorists designates their inferiority: "'It's not tay we'll be wantin'," he said in a strong Southern Irish accent. 'It's something a bit stronger. This'll show yer I mean business.' He fired a short burst with his machine-gun."¹²⁶³ Here, language is "used in the service of politics."¹²⁶⁴ It is a tool for the dehumanisation of the enemy who is derided through the "uncouth, mawkish distortion of standard English."¹²⁶⁵

As Joseph Darlington puts it, "the IRA can take strange shapes in these novels. They appear as forces of nature, as embodiments of pure negation, as bumbling stage-Irish, or as forms resembling the Mafia."¹²⁶⁶ In essence, the Irish terrorist of the Troubles thriller embodies everything the British resent, or strive to outsource onto an Irish "other" in order to exclude them from the shaping of their own

¹²⁵² Ibid. p. 39.

As will be shown in more detail later, such a link between the IRA and Communist or anarchist forces features in several novels on the Troubles or the Angry Brigade. Among them are Lessing's *The Good Terrorist*, Pincher's *The Eye of the Tornado* and Martin Walker's *The Infiltrator*.

¹²⁵³ Romanes. 1987. p. 23.

¹²⁵⁴ As the extreme left German Terrorist tells the IRA man in Romanes' *The Cell*: "You prefer the direct method, don't you, Joe? A truck load of mortar bombs which miss or fail to explode." Romanes. 1987. p. 6.

¹²⁵⁵ Lane, Andrew. 1978. p. 49.

¹²⁵⁶ "Who but the IRA would have been ruthless enough to use children as stalking horses to get on board of a ship?" Pincher. 1976. p. 11.

¹²⁵⁷ Steel. 2000. p. 22.

¹²⁵⁸ Pincher. 1976. p. 17.

¹²⁵⁹ Lane. 1978. p. 16.

¹²⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 16.

¹²⁶¹ Titley. 1980. p. 24.

¹²⁶² Pincher. 1976. p. 9.

¹²⁶³ Ibid. 1976. pp. 9-10.

¹²⁶⁴ Titley. 1980. p. 24.

¹²⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 24.

¹²⁶⁶ Darlington, Joseph. 2018. *British Terrorism Novels of the 1970s*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 72.

identity. As Titley observes, the thriller genre exhibits “general xenophobic undertones”¹²⁶⁷ and disdain for the colonised people, including the Irish.¹²⁶⁸ Thus, Jayne Steel argues that such representations of the IRA to the British character are more revealing when it comes to a British rather than an Irish identity: “An imaginary and ideal British identity needs positive and good attributes that are structured through an imaginary and ideal negative evil Irish other.”¹²⁶⁹ This is one important socio-cultural function the genre fulfils. In turn, such an approach to the IRA is inimical to the ethical function literature may potentially serve. Instead, they are at the service of British propaganda. In this vein, as Bowyer Bell phrases it, “Irish matters may have played a part in the British campaign to restore order, if not justice, to Ulster. In bold strokes of black and white, they have painted a jolly ploughboy, the Irish rebel, the romantic gunman, as a terrorist, futile, brutal, at best misguided, at worst a callous killer. Surely, the British could ask for no more.”¹²⁷⁰

One may argue that this set of discursive formations constituted by most of the Troubles fiction constructs an image of the Irish terrorist which demonstrates “no discernible gulf between the fictional and tabloid accounts.”¹²⁷¹ It furthermore constructs a simplified and poorly researched picture of the conflict.¹²⁷² Magee therefore contends that “they function in the same way as the ‘unofficial’ censorship and later broadcasting ban on Sinn Fein, did by suppressing the discrepant voice whilst supporting the dominant ideology on the causes of the conflict.”¹²⁷³

Adopting Ricœur’s mimetic circle, one could thus argue that most of the Troubles fiction written by authors from the British mainland is simply a fictionalised account of mainstream discourses and official positions disseminated by the press or government institutions. Due to the generic conventions of the thriller, the level of mimesis I, that is, the incorporation of pre-existing discourses and worldviews, is often characterised by its certainty and a lack of ambiguity and multi-perspectivity. In other words, the fiction tackling the IRA often merely echoes the dominant ideas and ideologies, and, moreover, moulds them into simplified black and-white scenarios, which may be further promoted by the generic conventions inherent to the thriller. Due to the adherence to dominant discourses, the second mimetic level, mimesis II, thus leaves little room for elucidating what has been left unsanctioned in public discourses. Instead, the extant ideologies and practices may even be intensified in the fictional world of the “as if.” That is to say, the thriller genre invites not only the representation of established Manichean constructions of British heroes and Irish villains, but furthermore allows for the intensification of such polarised worldviews, including the sanctioning of practices which are controversial, such as the shoot-

¹²⁶⁷ Titley. 1980.p. 26.

¹²⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 26.

¹²⁶⁹ Steele. 2000. p. 17.

¹²⁷⁰ Bowyer Bell. 1978. p. 22.

¹²⁷¹ Magee. p. 2.

¹²⁷² As Stephanie Schwerter points out, *Harry’s Game*, for example, features an IRA splinter group called “Ulster Libertarian Army.” A republican Northern Irish Organisation would, however, never use the term ‘Ulster’ as it implicates a pro-British stance and is usually applied by loyalist organisations. Schwerter. 2007. p. 79.

¹²⁷³ Magee. 2001. vi.

to-kill policy. Thus, on the level of the intersection of the text and the reader (mimesis III) Troubles fiction not solely stabilises popular worldviews, but also, as shown above, serves as a means to establish a British identity which is rooted in the demarcation of an Irish other. Yet, the construction of a noble British self as a superior double of the Irish Catholic is not the socio-cultural function all of the works may serve. Some of the British novels tackling the IRA do not solely focus on the ultimate otherness of Irish Republicans, but take on the question of British and Irish identities in a more nuanced and intertwined way.

Harry's Game, for example, thrives on this dialectic opposition of British "self" and Irish "other", but attempts to abstain from facile black and white categories. As indicated before, structurally, the novel juxtaposes episodes describing internal IRA operations with those of the British counter-forces. While focusing on the antagonism of these two parties, the novel also highlights their very likeness. In this vein, the Chief of Staff of the IRA Army Council echoes the words of the British Prime Minister,¹²⁷⁴ and the reader is made aware that Harry shares many characteristics with his opponent, who is on an equal footing with Harry when it comes to his cold-bloodedness, unfaithfulness to his wife and the distance he maintains to his family. Both men are "loners"¹²⁷⁵ who "instinctively resent bureaucratic or organizational controls, wishing nothing more than to get on with their jobs, i.e. kill the opposition."¹²⁷⁶ Harry Brown "feels more affinity with his prey, Billy Downs, than with his political quartermasters in the British state."¹²⁷⁷ Thus, as Steel points out, *Harry's Game* differs from other Troubles thrillers in that it does not present a clear distinction between good and evil, but problematizes this opposition. Thus, it stages a Manichean-type battle where good and evil mirror each other.¹²⁷⁸ Steel refers to the scene at the social club, where Downs and Harry confront each other and "both experience a sense of the 'uncanny' mutual recognition of the self as the other."¹²⁷⁹ *Harry's Game* thus explicitly stages this doubling of Irishness and Britishness. However, unlike many of its Troubles thriller equivalents, the novel strives to abstain from opening too overt chasms between the two conflicting parties, attempting to represent the game Harry and Downs are playing not in terms of black or white squares of a chess game with a discernible enemy but of a blurred grey.¹²⁸⁰ It can be argued that Seymour's novel makes an attempt at creating a fictional world that refrains from the excessively simplistic construction of the opposition of Irishness and Britishness.

There are further works that take on an alternative perspective on the IRA. Steel, for example, points out that in Doris Lessing's *The Good Terrorist* the IRA serves as a double for the members of a squat

¹²⁷⁴ Seymour. 2013. p. 35.

¹²⁷⁵ McMinn. 1980. p. 115.

¹²⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 115.

¹²⁷⁷ Kelly. 2005. p. 42.

¹²⁷⁸ Steel. 2000. p. 28.

¹²⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 28.

"There was intuitive, deep-based recognition for a moment, and Harry couldn't place it. He looked at the man, who stared straight back at him, challenging." (Seymour. 2013. p. 109)

¹²⁸⁰ Seymour. 2013. pp. 147-148.

in London who aspire to join the Irish fight for independence.¹²⁸¹ The Irish Republicans seem to function for the activists as an idealised version of themselves. From the very beginning of the novel, the IRA is mentioned as an organisation whose ideals are worth striving for.¹²⁸² The activists frequently voice their wish of joining the IRA and offering their “services as an England-based entity.”¹²⁸³ However, according to Steele’s analysis, the squatters are inherently British, despite their desperate attempts to identify with the Irish cause and to join the IRA.¹²⁸⁴ Indeed, the text explicitly highlights the characters’ Britishness. Jasper, for example, a homosexual who displays a certain awkwardness about physical contact is described as being British: “This thing that often happened when Jasper began to speak – a nervousness, even a tendency to titter, or perhaps to interject the odd deflating sardonic remark – was because his style was not the common-or-garden British style, a bit homespun, humorous by preference, down to earth.”¹²⁸⁵ His girlfriend, Alice, admires his “precious”¹²⁸⁶ Britishness. Yet, the squatters’ Britishness merely amounts to the superficial efforts of adopting a particularly British style. At the core, they are not unflappable, unemotional or calm, but rather overtly emotional, even mentally disturbed and amateurish. In fact, it has been often noted that most of the member of the “collection of dissatisfied radicals”¹²⁸⁷ transforming into a “terrorist gang”¹²⁸⁸ display signs of mental illness. The Lesbian activist Faye, for example, is presented with psychiatric problems, possibly a multiple personality disorder. As Scanlan points out, she oscillates between different accents – from Cockney to BBC English¹²⁸⁹ – indicating her different states of being.¹²⁹⁰ Having one of her outbursts, she also seems to transform entirely: “The pretty, wispy, frail creature, Faye, had again disappeared; in her place was a white-faced malevolent woman, with punishing, cold eyes.”¹²⁹¹ Having attempted to commit suicide before the beginning of the novel, she eventually has herself blown up towards the end of the novel.¹²⁹² Moreover, the novel’s heroine, Alice, is described as hard-working, warm-hearted and sympathetic. To the vexation of any feminist critic, she is a 1980s version of the “angel in the house” of nineteenth-century fiction.¹²⁹³ Yet, Alice also has a dark side, her rages and memory lapses indicate incipient madness.¹²⁹⁴ When her father declines to guarantee for her electricity bill, she plunges into her rage: “she exploded inwardly,

¹²⁸¹ Steele 2000. pp. 54-55.

¹²⁸² Lessing. 1986. p. 9.

¹²⁸³ Ibid. p. 9.

¹²⁸⁴ Steele. 2000. p. 55.

¹²⁸⁵ Lessing. 1985. p. 271.

¹²⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 271.

¹²⁸⁷ Lurie, Alison. “Bad Housekeeping: The Good Terrorist by Doris Lessing.” In: *The New York Times Book Review*. 19.12.1985. pp. 8-10. p. 10.

¹²⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 10.

¹²⁸⁹ Scanlan. 2001. p. 79.

¹²⁹⁰ Lessing. 1986. pp. 127-128.

¹²⁹¹ Ibid. p. 145.

¹²⁹² Hacking, Ian. 1995. *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality Disorder and the Sciences of Memory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 79-80.

¹²⁹³ Lurie. 1985. p. 9.

¹²⁹⁴ Scanlan, Margaret. “Language and the Politics of Despair in Doris Lessing’s ‘The Good Terrorist.’” In: *A Forum Fiction* 23.2. 1990. pp. 182-198. p. 189.

teeth grinding, eyes bulging, [...] banging herself against walls, corners of table and stove.”¹²⁹⁵ Hence, *The Good Terrorist* revels in the cliché of the psychopathologic terrorist that dominated the debate about the roots of terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s.

Moreover, being utterly pessimistic in tone and outlook, the terrorists in Lessing’s novel are un-British caricatures whose problematic mental states are indicative of their lack of self-composure and “stiff-upper-lip mentality.” The IRA are represented as the “real” and professional terrorists, while Alice and her gang are small and unprofessional by comparison. In this sense, the roles of the IRA and the British characters in Lessing’s novel are reversed. After being interviewed by two IRA representatives, the disillusioned and “sobered”¹²⁹⁶ activists, Jasper and Bert, return to London. They are merely offered to assist the organisation to alter the public opinion in the “oppressing country itself”¹²⁹⁷ through the distribution of leaflets, a proposition which is due to the activists’ overt excitement and lack of professionalism is eventually withdrawn by the IRA men. In fact, they are amused by Jasper’s emotional speech about “fascist imperialism.”¹²⁹⁸ The British activists are hence represented as unprofessional and emotional, while the IRA men are depicted as taciturn and tough. Lessing’s text strives to satirise the personal shortcomings and denigrate political left-wing idealists¹²⁹⁹ and terrorists. For this reason, the IRA, who are regarded as primitives and “thick Micks” in the public eye, function as an effective mirror image of the squatters, who are thus denigrated as unprofessional and un-British.

However, despite their representation of the IRA and Irishness that diverges somewhat from the mainstream discourse, Seymour and Lessing’s works do not serve as an “imaginative counter-discourse” in Zapf’s sense. Their texts are slightly more ambivalent than equivalent takes on the IRA, when it comes to the representations of Irish and British identities. However, Seymour’s take on the IRA is still too entrenched in conventional British ideas of Irish Republicanism, centring on the cold-heartedness, ruthlessness and bigotry of the terrorists.¹³⁰⁰ Lessing, on the other hand, constructs the IRA as a superior double of the dilettante revolutionaries. However, she is not attempting to redeem the IRA in the public eye. The Irish gunmen function as the superior double of the squatters and are solely briefly described. Their portrayal focuses on their comparatively professional and menacing ways rather than their cause and their cultural background. Hence, the representation of the IRA has the sole function of debunking the incompetence of the self-avowed Communist Centre Union. For this reason, the novel of the former Communist writer has been decried as being an overtly conservative lapsus, a “novel in defense of Thatcher.”¹³⁰¹

¹²⁹⁵ Lessing. 1985. p. 150.

¹²⁹⁶ Lessing. 1985 p. 233.

¹²⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 234.

¹²⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 234.

¹²⁹⁹ Scanlan. 2001. p. 75.

¹³⁰⁰ For example, although he is also a father and husband, Billy Downs shows no scruples when it comes to taking the family of the policeman Rennie as hostages. Seymour. 2013. p. 203.

¹³⁰¹ Donoghue, Denis. “Alice, the Radical Homemaker.” In: *The New York Times Book Review*. 22.09. 1985. pp. 2-4. p. 3.

Thus, it seems, as Titley remarks, the tone of the Troubles fiction is uniform and any expectation of alternative views is futile.¹³⁰² Moreover, these works cannot be suspected of fulfilling an ethical function in the sense that they familiarise the reader with the Irish “other”. Instead, most of the Troubles fiction corroborates and dwells on the alterity of the Irish people and culture as well as the terrorists.

There is, however, one fictional depiction of the IRA that stands out from the other takes on the organisation. Ian Rankin’s *The Watchman* is a complex thriller that refrains from portraying the Irish and the IRA as an obnoxious and inferior “other” to the British. Rather, the text strives to represent Northern Ireland and the Irish as “common,” that is, not strikingly different from the British mainland and its people. In this vein, the protagonist Miles Flint points out, when he arrives in Belfast that “the atmosphere was...well, ordinary.”¹³⁰³ Instead of dwelling on Irish otherness and resorting to the staple of stereotypes constructing the Irish as physically repulsive and intellectually inferior Rankin’s text features “handsome men”¹³⁰⁴ and “professional thugs,”¹³⁰⁵ who demonstrate a “considerable intelligence.”¹³⁰⁶ Miles, a Scotsman living in London, has to revise his view of Ireland and eventually dismisses the idea of the “Paddy Factor,” referring to the view of the IRA as being buffoons “getting themselves blown up more than anybody else.”¹³⁰⁷ Thus, the text explicitly exposes common stereotypes, which are undermined by the “classy show”¹³⁰⁸ the counterforces and terrorists stage in Northern Ireland. We learn how the MI5 agent, Miles, has to change his perception of the Irish and the IRA. *The Watchman* may thus assume a metaethical role through the self-reflexivity and critical distance from predominant views perpetuated by the media and other Troubles fiction. This metaethical function is further promoted through the disclosure of the process of evaluation, that is, the creation and revision of common stereotypes. The reader comprehends how Miles has to change his own view of the Irish people. In particular, this metaethics distinguishes Rankin’s novel from other Troubles fiction, in which the characters demonstrate a high degree of immutability.

What is more, despite the adherence to the conventions of the thriller genre, the roles of villains and heroes are not clearly defined. After an IRA bomb attack in London, Miles is despatched to Northern Ireland in order to assist the RUC in arresting two IRA terrorists. However, he is plunged into the middle of an RUC shoot-to-kill assassination of the two suspected gunmen. He refuses to take his part in the assassination and flees from the RUC officers with the surviving IRA man, William Collins. The text reveals the ambivalences and injustices of the fight against the IRA, which is more about killing rather than arresting their members. Even the adage “one person’s freedom fighter is another person’s terrorist” is harnessed to express this sense of ambivalence that characterises the novel’s representation of the

¹³⁰² Titley. 1980. p. 26.

¹³⁰³ Rankin. 2003. p. 145.

¹³⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 156.

¹³⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 156.

¹³⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 168.

¹³⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 157.

¹³⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 156.

IRA. The lines between terrorist and freedom fighter, between RUC and IRA men are blurred. Hence, the text confronts the reader with ideas of otherness that challenge prevailing views of Irishness and Britishness, the IRA and their British opponents. The RUC officers are the governmentally sanctioned “madmen” using indiscriminate violence and unsound means rather than restoring order and keeping peace.¹³⁰⁹ Thus, in this text, the roles are even reversed. Miles and Collins have to flee from the indiscriminate violence they are confronted with by the counter-terrorism forces.

In this vein, the IRA man Collins is a Protestant, ex-UDA and UDF fighter. He swapped sides after feeling sad for the death of the factual Republican martyr Bobby Sands who died in a hunger strike in Long Kesh prison.¹³¹⁰ Thus, Collins represents a character that embraces both Protestantism and Irish republicanism. He hence possesses a hybrid identity comprising British and Irish characteristics, and most importantly, as his reaction to Sands’ death illustrates, he is capable of feelings of empathy with the other side. Rankin’s novel therefore undermines the opposition of Britishness and Irishness and may also elicit empathy for the “other” among its audience.

This ethical potential is also apparent in the passages dealing with Irishness in general. In contrast to the works tackling the IRA by other authors of Troubles fiction, the representations of Irishness do not per se bear negative connotations. Instead, the Prologue begins with positive descriptions of the Irish countryside and its people by the English policeman Phillip Hayton: The little villages around the coast delighted him, and the people were polite and, he supposed, as friendly as they would ever be to an Englishman. Ah, but he was quick to point out to them that his roots were in Donegal; that in spirit if not in body he was as they were, blood-hot Celt.¹³¹¹ Hence, the text promotes the identification with Irish people. Miles, who observes an alleged IRA cell in London, also empathises, if not identifies with the suspects.¹³¹² The reader is confronted with Irish otherness that diverges fundamentally from the usual stereotypes, and may hence not be harnessed to shape an identity in opposition. Instead, focusing on the very sameness of both sides, the novel celebrates the transgression of Irish and British identities. It could thus fulfil an extraordinary ethical function.

One may argue that this exceptional stance towards the Irish is due to the author’s and the protagonist’s Scottishness. This aspect is also remarked upon in one point of the novel, when Miles visits an Irish pub. He wishes to announce his Scottish background and make clear that he is “not English,¹³¹³ and therefore not to blame. Yet, the text is sensible enough to avoid the pitfall of judging the English by pointing out that “the worst of the Protestant incomers had been Scots.”¹³¹⁴ Thus, it is neither of the identities – Irish, English, Scottish – and the characteristics ascribed to them that are crucial to the conflict. Neither is *The Watchman* a text that is informed by a Scottish perspective. It is

¹³⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 182.

¹³¹⁰ Ibid. p. 183.

¹³¹¹ Ibid. p. xv.

¹³¹² Ibid. p. 109.

¹³¹³ Ibid. p. 194.

¹³¹⁴ Ibid. p. 194.

rather a literary work that fulfils the potential ethical function of staging the encounter with alterity and thus of promoting an understanding of it. It thus sets itself apart from its predecessors who fail to do so. The text may therefore be regarded as an “imaginative counter-discourse,” fostering the ability to listen to the other side “with an unjaundiced ear.”¹³¹⁵ Since literature may retroact on extra-literary reality, such an approach may also function as a “reintegrative inter-discourse” encouraging the creation of empathy in times of hardened ideological lines and violent confrontation.

Summing up what has been said before, the main socio-cultural function of Troubles fiction lies in the establishment of Irish otherness serving as a reference point for the creation of a British self. The representation of the Irish and the IRA in fictional responses to the Troubles by British authors thus often dwells on Irish alterity. The lack of “serious” literary representations of the IRA also underpins this literary discourse, for any sensible literary response may be gauged along the lines of the treatment of sameness and difference, victims and perpetrators. To borrow from the writer Glenn Patterson:

No novel that I know, no good novel that I know, works as a political tract, because novels are too complex, they depend on conflict and contradiction. But novels can ask questions [...] The big versions, the two big blocks in Northern Ireland, scream at you that things are like this and that it's whoever can win in whose version, and that's how they are. I think that what the novel can do, what poetry can do, what art can do, is to add a qualification to the statement that things are like this. What art says is yes, it's like this, but also like this and like this and like this and like this.¹³¹⁶

Ian Rankin's *The Watchman* exemplifies how a novel confronts these contradictions and ambivalences which cannot be answered by the plain Manichean scenarios of most of the Troubles fiction. Yet, due to the battle for public opinion and the enormous pressure put on the media most of the authors refuse to represent the Troubles in a way that diverges from uniform assumptions of British honesty and Irish moral degradation to an extent that some writers chose to avoid the subject matter altogether.

¹³¹⁵ Ibid. p. xv.

¹³¹⁶ Patterson, Glenn. “Writing the Troubles: Talks by Glenn Patterson, Anne Devlin and Colm Tóibín.” In: Cliff, Brian; Walshe, Éibhear, eds. 2004. *Representing the Troubles: Texts and Images, 1970-2000*. Dublin: Four Courts. pp. 15-26. p. 18.

4.2.3. The Angry Brigade

The Angry Brigade was the first “home-grown” terrorist group in the United Kingdom; it was responsible for a number of bombing campaigns, which coincided with the inception of the Northern Irish Civil Rights Movement and the explosion of The Troubles. In fact, the two different movements did not emerge in isolation, but the spiralling violence and in particular the rigid British response to the Irish civil rights campaign and the IRA sparked a wave of sympathy with the Irish cause among the British left-wing counter-culture and the student movement. It can therefore be said that the Angry Brigade was to some extent also inspired by the “law and order” policy towards the Irish Republican movement on the part of Edward Heath’s Conservative government.¹³¹⁷

Accordingly, Britain was confronted with a vast array of revolutionary violence in the late 1960s and 70s. Yet, unlike the IRA, whose “specific and highly circumscribed”¹³¹⁸ cause pursued the concrete aim of independence and self-government, the Angry Brigade sought to subvert the political and social system altogether.¹³¹⁹ The journalist Martin Bright, for instance, conveys the political intensity of the climate – marked by escalating conflicts between the UK state, Irish republicans and the British working class – which engendered the Angry Brigade:

Edward Heath was locked into a lengthy dispute with workers who occupied the Clydeside shipyards in Glasgow, which would eventually end with a humiliating climbdown for the government. Internment was introduced in Northern Ireland and the Bloody Sunday massacre of civil-rights marchers in January 1972 happened while the Angry Brigade suspects were awaiting trial. One document found in the raids across London that weekend brought the three causes together in a mini-manifesto: ‘Put the boot in – Bogside, Clydeside – Support the Angry side’.¹³²⁰

While attracting a lot of attention at the time, the Angry Brigade seems to have almost been forgotten in contemporary Britain.¹³²¹ It might be due to the dominance of the conflict with the IRA that the Angry Brigade has “faded from collective memory.”¹³²² They may now be considered the lesser of two evils, but, as Gordon Carr points out, “the Angry Brigade actions were all before the IRA made bombing a serious business.”¹³²³

The group has also drawn comparatively little scholarly and literary attention. Their German equivalent, the Red Army Faction (RAF), or the Weathermen in the United States, for instance, received much more serious academic consideration, whereas works on the Angry Brigade are often nostalgic

¹³¹⁷ See, e.g., the brief overview of the political climate in which the Angry Brigade emerged by Caroline Hoefflerle: Hoefflerle, Caroline M. 2013. *British Student Activism in the Long Sixties*. New York: Francis & Taylor. pp. 177-178.

¹³¹⁸ Carr, Gordon. 2010. *The Angry Brigade: A History of Britain’s First Guerilla Group*. Oakland: PM. p. 4.

¹³¹⁹ Ibid. p. 4.

¹³²⁰ Bright, Martin. “Look Back in Anger.” In: *The Observer*. 03.02.2002.

<http://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/2002/feb/03/features.magazine27> (last accessed 14th October 2014)

¹³²¹ Green, Jonathon. “The Urban Guerrillas Britain Forgot.” In: *The New Statesman*. 27.08.2001.

<http://www.newstatesman.com/node/141011> (last accessed 6th April 2016)

¹³²² Bright. 2002.

¹³²³ Carr. 2010. p. 182.

accounts of the group which picture them as “British icons of the anarchist revolution at home”,¹³²⁴ or they are mentioned in works of the New Left as a lighter copycat version of these other groups.¹³²⁵ Their contemporary commentators often mocked them as “adventurists” and “authors of ‘gestures of a worrying desperation’”.¹³²⁶ Those who are nowadays aware of them see them as a sort of “quaint Pythonesque version of their more murderous continental counterparts.”¹³²⁷

One of the reasons why the group has been relegated to scholarly and public oblivion could be, as Samantha Christiansen convincingly argues, that it does not fit the concept of a ‘terror organisation’ as other groups would.¹³²⁸ That is to say, albeit resorting to terrorist means, the Angry Brigade eludes categorisation. The group deliberately refrained from killing innocent victims, and instead attempted to bring their message across by means of selecting targets of symbolic significance, and through the publication of communiqués in which they took an at once playful and trenchant tone when claiming responsibility.

They were, furthermore, not an isolated group of fanatics who operated detached from the wider Left. Rather, they can be seen as a product of the left-wing counter-culture of the sixties and seventies, and as such, as being influenced by the upheavals, by student protests, and by a sense of social, political and economic crisis. In her study on the British student activism in the 1960s, Caroline Hoefflerle describes the socio-political climate in which the Angry Brigade emerged as influenced by the economic phenomenon labelled ‘stagflation’. Denoting the concurrence of high unemployment rates, and negligible growth, in Britain, this trend entailed a massive economic and social crisis. With the rising cost of living, many people faced poverty, and rent strikes became a popular form of protest. Employees called unavailingly for higher wages to keep pace with inflation, and both Labour and Tory politicians had failed to find a solution. The Conservative government of Prime Minister Edward Heath intended to tackle the issue by aiding corporations, limiting the power of trade unions and cutting state spending as well as instituting a national wage freeze.¹³²⁹ These policies inimical to powerful trade unions and those most affected by the economic situation were an important source of motivation for the so-called New Left. Other wells of motivation included, e.g., the Vietnam War, the capitalist system, feminism and the aforementioned quest for Irish independence.¹³³⁰

It was when left-wing activism waned in the face of state pressure that, according to former member of the Angry Brigade Stuart Christie, a tiny minority of activists chose to abandon the “ineffective

¹³²⁴ Christiansen, Samantha M.R. “The Brigade is Everywhere: Violence and Spectacle in British Counter-Culture.” In: Brown, Timothy; Anton, Lorena, eds. 2011. *Between the Avant-Garde and the Everyday: Subversive Politics in Europe from 1957 to the Present*. New York: Berghahn. pp. 47-57. p. 48.

¹³²⁵ Ibid. p. 48.

¹³²⁶ Weir, Jean. “Introduction.” In: Weir, Jean, ed. *The Angry Brigade 1967-1984: Documents and Chronology*. 1985. London: Elephant. pp. 7-21. p. 7.

¹³²⁷ Bright. 2002.

¹³²⁸ Christiansen. 2011. p. 48.

¹³²⁹ Hoefflerle. 2013. p. 177.

¹³³⁰ Christie, Stuart. “Preface.” In: Carr, Gordon. 2010. *The Angry Brigade: A History of Britain’s First Guerilla Group*. Oakland: PM. pp. ii-ix. p. iv.

strategy of street protests against injustice and [went] underground to take up the armed struggle.”¹³³¹ The Angry Brigade, as Christie acknowledges elsewhere, “was a creation of its time.”¹³³² As such, the “ad hoc constellation of young people”¹³³³ who were politicised by the politics of Edward Heath’s Tory government was deeply entrenched in the wider British counter-culture. Christiansen, for instance, argues in her essay that violence was solely a strategy drawn on by misguided urban guerrilla groups such as the Angry Brigade, but that violence was integral to the wider counter-culture in Britain. That is to say, young women and men who sought to change the institutions “actively engaged with the question of violence in a much more nuanced way than simply rejecting the tactic altogether.”¹³³⁴ The *International Times*, which was one of the mouthpieces of Britain’s left-wing underground culture, openly approved of their actions, and endorsed an aggressive language.¹³³⁵

The Angry Brigade formed thus an indistinguishable part of the counter-culture and espoused a continuum of violence, ranging from flirtations with violent language to actual physical destruction. Particularly 1968 was pivotal for the “New Left” worldwide. In Britain, that year marked the turning point when a nonviolent strategy no longer seemed to suffice for many leftists.¹³³⁶ At this point, according to Christie, the sense of euphoria that prevailed within the movement began to dissipate under state pressure exerted in response to the strikes, demonstrations and civil disobedience, and the morale of the “New Left” began to dwindle. On the one hand, activists were dispirited by the lack of possibilities to change the system, whilst others chose to work within the system for the sake of piecemeal reform or simply for reasons of self-advancement. A minority of more committed people shifted from symbolic non-violent mass actions towards violent symbolic campaigns and guerrilla tactics.¹³³⁷

The Angry Brigade were moreover inspired by the Situationist International (SI), a highly influential revolutionary group whose reflections on society and art were rooted in Marxism and avant-garde movements such as Dadaism and surrealism. Established in 1957, the Situationists had their origins in the artistic milieu. Later on, the movement articulated a political position that expressed their fundamental hostility to every aspect of society.¹³³⁸ It thus also represents “popular resistance, and autonomous struggle, and its revolutionary stance owes a great deal to this diffuse tradition of unorthodox rebellion.”¹³³⁹ Particularly two thinkers, Raoul Vaneigem and Guy Debord, developed the theoretical grounding of the SI.

¹³³¹ Ibid. p. vii.

¹³³² Christie, Stuart. 2004. *Edward Heath Made Me Angry: The Christie File: Part 3*. Hastings: Christiebooks.com. p. 133.

¹³³³ Ibid. p. 133.

¹³³⁴ Christiansen. 2011. p. 49.

¹³³⁵ See, for example: “Mad Bombers Blow Minds.” In: *The International Times* 1.96. 28.01.1971. p. 3.

¹³³⁶ Christiansen. 2011. pp. 48-49.

¹³³⁷ Christie. 2010. p. viii.

¹³³⁸ Plant, Sadie. 2002. *The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age*. 6th ed. London/New York: Routledge. p. 1.

¹³³⁹ Ibid. p. 1.

In the SI doctrine, the traditional 19th-century working-class movement initiated by Bakunin and Marx had been sold out to capitalism. Accordingly, even the most radical ideas could be appropriated and then returned safely to the working class as harmless ideologies, such as socialism or communism.¹³⁴⁰ Guy Debord's treatise *The Society of the Spectacle* encapsulates the core political ideas of the SI. Debord argues that life in modern capitalist societies has become "an immense accumulation of *spectacles*."¹³⁴¹ He foreshadows Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality, and, moreover, the postmodernist view of the world as uncertain and superficial.¹³⁴² That is to say, the Situationist notion of the 'Spectacle' is that of a consumerism which produces a mediated reality invading people's lived experiences. As a result, reality has deteriorated to a mediated world of appearances and commodities. The world we are used to is, hence, a spectacle, in other words, an illusion we have become accustomed to.¹³⁴³ The SI, thus, addresses the ennui and shallowness pervading a consumer society which due to the constant exposure to Spectacles has lost touch with reality as well as the ability to create its own ideas.

The notion of the 'Spectacle', as Darlington points out, informed much of London's cultural scene.¹³⁴⁴ The Situationists provided a revolutionary idea of society that exceeded the end of a mere improvement of society as it is, and instead envisaged the substitution of the capitalist system for something new and better.¹³⁴⁵ Accordingly, the Situationist Raoul Vaneigem makes in his manifesto *The Revolution of Everyday Life*¹³⁴⁶ a case against the supplantation of old power structures with a new hierarchical order. Instead, he advocates "the construction of a parallel society which can counter the dominant system."¹³⁴⁷ Hence, as Gordon Carr puts it, the "Situationist revolution held out the prospect of the total transformation of the world just when capitalism and communism seemed to have carved it up between them."¹³⁴⁸

The Situationist influence on the Angry Brigade manifested itself therefore, according to Sadie Plant, in the group's "unequivocal demands for the immediate realisation of the radical, desiring subject [sic] within and against capitalist society."¹³⁴⁹ These demands for the radical were not solely communicated through their attacks on a number of symbolic targets, but also expressed in the Communiqués they sent out to all the major newspapers in the wake of their campaigns. Their releases were first signed with the pseudonyms "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" or the "Wild Bunch", and only after the machine-

¹³⁴⁰ Carr. 2010. pp. 6-7.

¹³⁴¹ Debord, Guy. 2010. *The Society of the Spectacle*. 4th ed. Detroit: Black & Red. p. 2.

¹³⁴² Plant. 2002. p. 5.

¹³⁴³ Debord. 2010. pp. 2-5.

¹³⁴⁴ Darlington, Joseph. "Cell of One: B. S. Johnson, Christie Malry and the Angry Brigade." In: Ryle, Martin; Jordan, Julia, eds. 2014. *B.S. Johnson and Post-War Literature: Possibilities of the Avant-Garde*.

Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 87-102. p. 99.

See also Tom Vague, who describes in his work on the Angry Brigade the influence of Situationism on pop culture, the Angry Brigade and the subsequent punk movement. Vague, Tom. 1997. *Anarchy in the UK: The Angry Brigade*. Edinburgh/San Francisco: AK Press. pp. 8-16.

¹³⁴⁵ Carr. 2010. p. 8.

¹³⁴⁶ Vaneigem, Raoul. [1967] 2001. *The Revolution of Everyday Life*. 3rd ed. London: Rebel Press.

¹³⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 273.

¹³⁴⁸ Carr. 2010. p. 8.

¹³⁴⁹ Plant. 2002. p. 126.

gunning of the Spanish Embassy was the name “Angry Brigade”¹³⁵⁰ introduced.¹³⁵¹ These missives of the group were authenticated by a John Bull children’s printing set,¹³⁵² which added a strangely menacing note to them. Thus, the brigade took the idea of terrorism as a violent communication strategy literally, for their deeds were always followed by a subsequent claim of responsibility which elucidated their motivation and gave expression to their Situationist ideology. The enigmatic *Communique 1*, for example, which was published after the bombing of the Spanish Embassy clearly bears Situationist overtones:

Fascism & oppression
will be smashed
Embassies (Spanish Embassy machine gunned Thursday)
High Pigs
Spectacles
Judges
Property

Communique 1
The Angry Brigade¹³⁵³

Here, the term ‘Spectacles’ obviously insinuates Guy Debord’s concept as one among the several targets they enlist. The text further attests to the elusive nature of the group, or, as Plant couches it, “the defiance of identity [which] was [...] cultivated to great effect by the Angry Brigade.”¹³⁵⁴ This elusiveness, according to her, was the biggest strength of the movement. They sought to construct themselves as a ubiquitous, albeit unidentifiable threat.¹³⁵⁵ The Communiqués issued after the bombing of the house of Robert Carr, Secretary of State for Employment, for instance, embraces this idea in the bold claim that “WE WERE INVINCIBLE...because we were everybody. THEY COULD NOT JAIL US FOR WE DID NOT EXIST.”¹³⁵⁶ The menace underlying this statement is also echoed in their last publication: “We are not in a position to say whether any one person is or isn’t member of the Brigade. All we say is: The Brigade is everywhere.”¹³⁵⁷ It is, one could argue, rather this discursive self-construction as a ubiquitous, cryptic and elusive threat to the establishment in their Communiqués rather than the actual terrorist attacks that made for their sociocultural impact. Unlike the Red Brigades haunting Germany and Italy, the Angry Brigade exclusively targeted property and refrained from killing indiscriminately.

Their actions can, according to the editors who subsequently published their Communiqués in book form, be divided into four thematic groups: Firstly, the struggle against the Industrial Relations Bill,

¹³⁵⁰ According to Stuart Christie, the name was an ironic reference to the “Brolly Brigade” of “frustrated middle-class commuters who at the time were attacking rail workers with their umbrellas.” Christie. 2010. p. viii.

¹³⁵¹ *The International Times* 1.96. 28.01.1971. p. 3.

¹³⁵² The John Bull printing set was also found by the Bomb Squad after raiding the flat inhabited by the Angry Brigade in Stoke Newington. Bright. 2002.

¹³⁵³ Bratach Dubh Documents, eds. 1978. *The Angry Brigade*. Bratach Dubh: Port Glasgow. p. 3.

¹³⁵⁴ Plant. 2002. p. 126.

¹³⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p. 127.

¹³⁵⁶ Bratach Dubh Documents. 1978. p. 6.

¹³⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 11.

which was designed to curb the power of the trade unions and to further economic projects of Heath's conservative government. Secondly, the liberation of women serving as the motivation for the bombing of the Miss World competition. Thirdly, attacks against the repressive state apparatus, e.g. the police, and lastly, attempts to intervene in industrial disputes.¹³⁵⁸ All of these targets were of symbolic value and had a specific relevance. For example, the Carr house bombing was perpetrated during a time of protest against the Industrial Relations Bill the minister was advocating.¹³⁵⁹

While previous attacks mystified the police and were downplayed in the media, the Carr initiative on 12 January 1971 changed the public attitude towards the Angry Brigade. The Secretary of State for Employment was the main promoter of the controversial Industrial Relations Bill.¹³⁶⁰ He made "wildcat" strikes illegal and rendered it possible to imprison strikers, which led many to believe that the Conservative government pursued a fundamentally anti-working-class policy. In response, protests flared up in the whole country and half a million workers demonstrated in London in January 1971. This unrest was the biggest labour revolt since the General Strike of 1926.¹³⁶¹

Among the British counter-culture, the Industrial Relations Bill sparked hatred and contributed to the growing indignation. The *International Times*, for example, pinpoints the sentiment of their targeted left-wing readership by claiming that it "would certainly have been no loss to humanity if Carr had been killed."¹³⁶² In fact, the bombs that destroyed the front door and all the windows of the house could well have killed Robert Carr and his family.¹³⁶³ After the bombing of Carr's home, the response of the establishment, spearheaded by Prime Minister Heath, was "frenzied, and often desperate."¹³⁶⁴ A Bomb Squad was set up the same month with the aim of catching the Angry Brigade. After a tip-off in August the same year, the police eventually succeeded in catching the eight members, some of them in their Stoke Newington flat, which lent them the name "Stoke Newington Eight." The police found various pieces of evidence, such as the John Bull printing set, ammunition and a list of the names and addresses of prominent Tory politicians.¹³⁶⁵

As Martin Bright phrases it in *The Observer* on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Angry Brigade trial: "The people they arrested that August day on Amhurst Road fitted perfectly the Establishment's picture of dissolute middle-class revolutionaries plotting to undermine civilised values."¹³⁶⁶ They were mostly university drop-outs who became alienated by the elitist system at Cambridge, tore up their final paper in order to protest against the establishment, or had grown

¹³⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 2.

¹³⁵⁹ Plant. 2002. p. 126.

¹³⁶⁰ Green. 2001.

¹³⁶¹ Crews, Brian. "Writing Political Protest: The Angry Brigade and two English Novels." In: *Journal of European Studies* 40.3. 2010. pp. 219-229. p. 221.

¹³⁶² "Mad Bombers." In: *The International Times* 1.96. 28.01.1971. p. 10.

¹³⁶³ Carr. 2010. pp. 1-4.

¹³⁶⁴ Green. 2001.

¹³⁶⁵ Bright. 2002.

¹³⁶⁶ Ibid.

disenchanted by Labour party politics and their failure to champion the underprivileged.¹³⁶⁷ What united them was their involvement in London's counter-culture and squatting scene, and their hard-left, anarchist views and frustration with the establishment.

Even before their trial, the mainstream press of the time was eager to capitalise on the image of the subversives who they depicted as acting deviantly not only in the realm of political agitation, but in many ways. Particularly, the existence of three female members of the group granted leeway for all sorts of fantastical tales. Among the tabloid, for instance, headlines ranged from "Girl slept with bedside arsenal" or "Dropouts with brains tried to launch bloody revolution." The *Sun* even produced a bizarre story headlined "Sex Orgies at the Cottage of Blood", which claims that in one of their dwellings they ritually sacrificed a turkey, while indulging in both "bizarre sexual activities" and "anarchist-type meetings."¹³⁶⁸ During the trial, the group was mostly represented in a derisory fashion. *The Guardian*, for instance, commented in its wake: "The four found guilty were all young, inexperienced, and politically naïve adults with little understanding of the Labour movement."¹³⁶⁹ They were seen as "freaks" without ideological grounding who followed a lifestyle rather than a serious doctrine, and who all lacked the "self-discipline or application that is needed to work successfully in non-violent community politics."¹³⁷⁰

Britain's underground culture in some parts viewed the activities of the group with suspicion, "because they were seen as adventurers whose actions were linked to the wider Left."¹³⁷¹ However, due to their targets connected with the Industrial Relations Bill the group attracted some support from workers. What is more, solidarity was sparked among the British counter-culture. Thousands of badges with the slogan 'I'm in the Angry Brigade' were sold.¹³⁷² The underground paper *Oz* defended the "Stoke Newington Eight" openly by claiming that the defendants are not terrorists, because all the bombings in the past years were directed against "State property or that of the State functionaries."¹³⁷³ Even a "Stoke Newington Eight Defence Group" was set up to express solidarity with the Angry Brigade,¹³⁷⁴ whose actions, according to *Oz*, reflected the feelings of thousands.

However, despite the passionate plea on the part of the left-wing counter-culture, the end of the to date longest trial in the history of the Old Bailey, four of the defendants, including James Greenfield, John Barker, Anna Mendelson and Hillary Creek, who mostly defended themselves, were sentenced to ten years, while Stuart Christie, Kate McLean and Angela Weir were acquitted. Jake Prescott, the only member with a working-class background and a criminal track record was arrested beforehand on

¹³⁶⁷ See, for example, the article in *The Guardian* that summarises the motivation of the individual members: Leishman, Jackie. "A Trial Without the Angry Brigade." In: *The Guardian* 7.12.1972. p. 12.

¹³⁶⁸ Quoted in: Bright. 2002.

¹³⁶⁹ "The Angry Brigade: Revolutionary Pollyannas." In: *The Guardian*. 07.12.1972. p. 16.

¹³⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p. 16.

¹³⁷¹ Bright. 2002.

¹³⁷² *Ibid.*

¹³⁷³ *Oz* 42. May 1972. p. 35

¹³⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 35.

unrelated fraud charges.¹³⁷⁵ He was convicted of involvement in the bombing of Carr's home and was sentenced to 15 years in prison.¹³⁷⁶

Yet the number of people who were actually involved remains a mystery up to the present day. 25 bombing incidents were ascribed to the "Stoke Newington Eight," but during the trial the bombing continued, which suggested that more members were still at large.¹³⁷⁷ The long silence of these convicted as members of the group underpinned its elusiveness and corroborated the impression that the group was "an idea that anyone can join."¹³⁷⁸ Thus, notably, the final Angry Brigade Communiqué was published in the *International Times* in December 1972, long after the "Stoke Newington Eight" had been arrested, and sentenced. Therein, the authors insist that "the Angry Brigade trial is a trial in the absence of the Angry Brigade."¹³⁷⁹ Hence, the Communiqué claiming responsibility for a number of bombings suggests, as Stuart Christie phrases it in his autobiography, that "you cannot imprison an idea."¹³⁸⁰

4.2.4. Literary Representations of the Angry Brigade

Since the Angry Brigade only occupy a small niche in Britain's collective memory of terrorism the number of literary responses to the group is rather small. Only a couple of novels – B.S. Johnson's *Christie Malry's Own Double Entry* (1973) and Alan Burns' *The Angry Brigade* (1974) – which were published a few years after the Angry Brigade trial refer directly to the organisation. Due to their formally unconventional and innovative literary representation of terrorism, these novels may both be labelled 'experimental'. Yet, they differ tremendously in their approach to explaining the rationale and motivation of the Stoke Newington Eight. While Johnson's take on the Angry Brigade may be described as an avant-garde experimental novel, Alan Burns' response to the Angry Brigade can be categorised within the documentary genre, blending factual and fictional elements. This chapter is therefore, firstly, aimed at elucidating the respective idiosyncracies of these genres in order to, secondly, discuss their aesthetic functional potential and, lastly, to illuminate the socio-cultural functions they may serve.

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¹³⁷⁵ Crews. 2010. p. 222.

¹³⁷⁶ Bright. 2002.

Bright, Martin. "Angry Brigade's Bomb Plot Apology." In: *The Observer*. 03.02.2002.

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2002/feb/03/martinbright.theobserver> (last accessed 14th October 2014)

¹³⁷⁷ Leishman. 1972. p. 12.

¹³⁷⁸ Police commander Bond cited in: Carr. 2010. p. 145.

¹³⁷⁹ *International Times* 144. 14.12.1972. p. 8.

¹³⁸⁰ Christie, Stuart. 2004. *Granny Made Me an Anarchist: General Franco, the Angry Brigade and Me*. London: Scribner. p. 367.

Taking Johnson's experimental mode and Burns' documentary novel as its objects, this section is designed to address the literary strategies inherent to the sub-category of the avant-garde and the documentary novel. The idiosyncracies of these fictional responses to the Angry Brigade, as well as the experimental particulars of Johnson's and Burns' novels, will also be examined. Outlining the basic features of fiction labelled as 'experimental', one may define it as being diametrically opposed to the qualities exhibited by traditional realist writing. While traditional realist fiction is linear and closed, experimental fiction is non-linear, open and plural. That is, it oftentimes challenges the prerogative of a single, unified meaning and favours non-closure. For this reason, experimental fiction poses a difficulty to readers who need to suspend expectations acquired through the reading of conventional works and find new ways of accessing these texts,¹³⁸¹ for they may be "unpredictable, random and confusing."¹³⁸² Experimental narratives defy the Aristotelian principles, stipulating that a novel has a beginning, middle and an end, and which dictate a path marked by a steadily rising action, conflict, climax and resolution. This is, in other words, a closed text.¹³⁸³ As Philip Tew puts it, the experimental novel harnesses its innovations and possibilities "to abjure traditional modes of writing: formally through innovations and self-conscious devices; thematically through ideological intensity or disruptions of the status quo; or by combining a number of these responses."¹³⁸⁴

The emergence of experimental fiction in the 1970s requires the consideration of its historical background. As discussed before, the changes of literary functions also manifest themselves in the emergence of new genres or developments in established genres. They are hence a response to socio-historical changes, and may be seen as 'repositories' of cultural memory. Genres may synthesise cultural material and organise it according to their conventionalised schemata. Therefore, the revival of experimental fiction can be viewed as a form of response to the political, social and cultural turbulences of the 1970s. The sense of impending socio-cultural crises, the economic stagflation, the explosion of the Troubles and the conservative anti-union politics all form the background against which the emergence of the experimental writing of the seventies must be viewed. Philip Tew discusses the writers' response to the sense of accelerating crisis prevailing during the decade. According to him, they were drawn to certain recurrent features:

a mixture of dark comedy with an intensity and perversity of themes; interrelated and overlapping vignettes or episodes that abjure traditional narrative progression and teleology; themes made empathetic through insistent symbols and motifs; a notion of cultural and economic bankruptcy; a sense of social disintegration challenging decaying traditions; a notion of personal entrapment by larger forces; and a crisis of bourgeois identity.¹³⁸⁵

¹³⁸¹ Armstrong, Julie. 2014. *Experimental Fiction: An Introduction for Readers and Writers*. London/New York: Bloomsbury. pp. 5-8.

¹³⁸² Ibid. p. 5.

¹³⁸³ Ibid. p. 5.

¹³⁸⁴ Tew, Philip. "Turbulent Times: Conflicts, Ideology and the Experimental British Novel, 1969-1979." In: Hubble, Nick; McLeod, John; Tew, Philip, eds. 2014. *The 1970s: A Decade of Contemporary British Fiction*. London: Bloomsbury Academic. pp. 145-179. p. 147.

¹³⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 151.

Thus, in contrast to the inner aesthetic struggles of their Modernist forerunners, the experimental writers of the seventies grapple with a more objective world of events as well as its ideological and moral struggles manifesting themselves in traumatic confrontations.¹³⁸⁶ What is more, the mood of the decade is also reflected in the anti-hero protagonists featured in experimental fiction. That is to say, characters such as Christie Malry who are born into social and economic conditions, which they struggle against, thus resorting to violence, are typical for the experimental fiction of the decade.¹³⁸⁷

In this vein, B.S. Johnson's works have been labelled 'experimental', because their aesthetics challenge the realistic mode that had come to dominate British fiction.¹³⁸⁸ In fact, according to many commentators "the experimental nature of Johnson's fiction is its most obvious feature."¹³⁸⁹ His final essay *Aren't You Rather Young to Be Writing Your Memoirs?* Elucidates the writer's commitment to avant-garde literary methods. In its introduction, Johnson makes clear that the form of the nineteenth-century narrative has been rendered irrelevant and anachronistic for the representation of contemporary conditions:¹³⁹⁰ "Life does not tell stories. Life is chaotic, fluid, random; it leaves myriads of ends untied, untidily. Writers can extract a story from life only by close, strict selection, and this must mean falsification. Telling stories is telling lies."¹³⁹¹ Johnson, hence, defies the idea of a "suspension of disbelief" and refuses to "comply with the reader's wish to be comforted with falsehoods."¹³⁹²

Unlike other self-referential and intertextual novels appearing at the time, Johnson's "innovative metafictional techniques"¹³⁹³ are "ever in the service of an absolutely oppositional concept of truth and fiction."¹³⁹⁴ The experimental nature of Johnson's narrative, riddled with self-reflexive elements which have often been denigrated as mere "gimmicry and trickery,"¹³⁹⁵ is actually a formal strategy to approach truthfulness and faithfully depict the randomness of the modern world.¹³⁹⁶ Tew pinpoints this quest for truth in the "Prologue" to his monograph dedicated to the author as follows:

Johnson was concerned centrally and, according to many commentators, almost obsessively with the concept of *truth* as a necessary requirement for the continuing development of the novel. For him the form of the novel functions as a narrative strategy that offers the opportunity for reflection on the

¹³⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 151.

¹³⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 152.

¹³⁸⁸ Lanchester, John. "Introduction." In: Johnson, B.S. [1973] 2001. *Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry*. London Macmillan. pp. v-ix. p. vi.

¹³⁸⁹ Tew, Philip. 2001. *B.S. Johnson: A Critical Reading*. Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press. p. 11.

¹³⁹⁰ Johnson, B.S. "Introduction to *Aren't You Rather Young to Be Writing Your Memoirs?*" In: Bradbury, Malcolm, ed. 1977. *The Novel Today: Contemporary Writers on Modern Fiction*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. pp. 151-168. p. 153.

¹³⁹¹ Ibid. p. 153.

¹³⁹² D'Eath, Paul. "B.S. Johnson and the Consolation of Literature." In: *The Review of Contemporary Fiction* 5.2. 1985. pp. 77-81. p. 78.

¹³⁹³ Waugh, Patricia. 1995. *Harvest of the Sixties: English Literature and its Background 1960 to 1990*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 132.

¹³⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 132.

¹³⁹⁵ Guignery, Vanessa. "Ethics and Experimentalism in B.S. Johnson's *House Mother Normal*." In: Onega, Susana; Ganteau, Jean-Michel, eds. 2007. *The Ethical Component in Experimental British Fiction since the 1960s*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars. pp. 50-70. p. 54.

¹³⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 54.

everyday realities of life as an ontological process and through such reflection these narratives may allow an understanding of truth requirements and their verification.¹³⁹⁷

In other words, the experimental nature of Johnson's fiction is directed specifically towards the idea of a greater verisimilitude. The genre is hence harnessed to explore the nature of things,¹³⁹⁸ and the process of discovering what it is.¹³⁹⁹ The author had according to Vanessa Guignery two main commitments: "the first was to rigorous truth-telling and the second to formal innovation."¹⁴⁰⁰

Despite "its satirical, exaggerated plotting and characterization,"¹⁴⁰¹ *Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry* also displays a great awareness of existing social conditions and debates prevailing at his time. That is, as shall be shown in greater detail below, the novel is concerned with the social politics and political upheavals of its time. Thus, for all its meta-fictional playfulness the text directly feeds from contemporary extra-literary events. In this sense, it can be read as a parody of the left-wing militancy prompted by the repressive measures of the Heath government. It also plays on the anxieties and the paranoia of the establishment dreading the potential threat of violence emanating from the left-wing counter-culture.¹⁴⁰² Moreover, as Brian Crews points out, the novel points to "an undeniable reality,"¹⁴⁰³ that is, it represents a materialistic world in which the protagonist is not granted a chance to succeed.¹⁴⁰⁴ For this very particular blend of avant-garde innovations and the quest for the nature of things and his refusal to embrace either the post-modern condition accepting that truth is a construct of shared communities or in absolute orders existing below the surfaces of everyday experience,¹⁴⁰⁵ Johnson has therefore been regarded as being "paralytically torn between the epistemes of modernity and postmodernity."¹⁴⁰⁶

In contrast to Johnson's darkly comic take on the Angry Brigade, Alan Burns chooses a fundamentally different approach to the phenomenon. Adhering to the conventions of the 'documentary novel', his text strives to represent the members of the Stoke Newington Eight and their increasing radicalisation in the ostensibly most realistic manner possible. The label 'documentary fiction' apparently merges two antithetically polarised concepts. Achieving some popularity in the 1960s, the 'documentary novel' looks back on a long history, since the strategy of combining factual and fictional aspects within an aesthetically appealing narrative is not new to art, only the conception of the genre label is relatively

¹³⁹⁷ Tew. 2001. p. xi-xii.

¹³⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 11.

¹³⁹⁹ Jordan, Julia. "Introduction: Avant-Garde Possibilities – B.S. Johnson and the Sixties Generation." In: Jordan, Julia; Ryle, Martin. 2014. *B.S. Johnson and Post-War Literature: Possibilities of the Avant Garde*. Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 1-13. p. 5.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Guignery. 2007. p. 54.

¹⁴⁰¹ Tew. 2001. p. 48.

¹⁴⁰² Watts, Carol. "The Mind Has Fuses: Detonating B.S. Johnson." In: Tew, Philp; White, Glyn, eds. 2007. *Re-reading B.S. Johnson*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 80-91. p. 90.

¹⁴⁰³ Crews. 2010. p. 224.

¹⁴⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 224.

¹⁴⁰⁵ Waugh, Patricia. 1995. *The Harvest of the Sixties: English Literature and its background, 1960-1990*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 133.

¹⁴⁰⁶ Waugh, 1995. p. 133.

recent.¹⁴⁰⁷ Analysing the documentary novel and its re-emergence in the USA in the 1960s, Leonora Flis associates the rise of the documentary or non-fiction novel with the rising popularity of New Journalism, harnessing literary and subjective writing techniques in order to break free from conformist approaches and methods aimed at capturing the morals of the time.

The documentary novel, a close narrative sibling to this form of journalism, is not an entirely revolutionary genre.¹⁴⁰⁸ As shown before,¹⁴⁰⁹ since the emergence of the cheap press in the 19th century, the boundaries between fact and fiction in news reporting and storytelling have often become blurred. Fiction writers resorted to the stories disseminated in the news media and journalists may have augmented their news story through the incorporation of imaginative elements. The documentary novel and New Journalism, which are both rooted in the postmodern episteme of denying all truth and reality,¹⁴¹⁰ can be seen as a postmodern intensification of this development. Thus, as Flis points out, documentary fiction exists – like all other literary genres – in an interrelationship with its socio-cultural context. Its reappearance in 1960s America concurs with the cultural, political and social revolution that seized not only the American, but the whole western hemisphere: As consumer culture found its way into people’s lives and mass media created surrogate experiences of reality, the traditional dichotomy of fact and fiction broke down.¹⁴¹¹ Hence, this literary genre responds to and reflects on this cultural development.

The collapse of the opposition of reality and fiction abetted by the newly emerged mass media and consumer culture has, as we have seen in the previous section, also been a central topic of the Situationists. Their highly influential notion of the ‘Spectacle’ refers to a consumerism which produces a mediated reality superseding lived experiences. While Johnson is adamant to adhere to a novelistic truth, which he seeks to achieve by means of meta-fictional elements exposing the artefact of fiction,¹⁴¹² and thus to defy the comforting illusions of the Spectacle, Burns seeks a very different avenue to counter the collapse of the opposition of fact and fiction. He harnesses the genre of the documentary novel to both stage and thus expose the culture of the Spectacle within this hybrid genre. Said differently, Burns co-opts the “extremes of documentary realism”¹⁴¹³ to create an “avant-garde statement.”¹⁴¹⁴ The creation of such a boundary-straddling narrative¹⁴¹⁵ representing “real” people at real places through a fictional

¹⁴⁰⁷ Ian Hinchliffe regards Herodotus’ *Histories* dating back to the 450s BC as the inception of documentary fiction and traces the development of the genre throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Hinchliffe, Ian. 1989. *The Documentary Novel: Fact, Fiction or Fraud? An Examination of Three Scandinavian Examples of the Documentary Novel from the 1960s and 1970s*. University of Hull. pp. 2-3.

¹⁴⁰⁸ Flis, Leonora. 2010. *Factual Fictions: Narrative Truth and the Contemporary American Documentary Novel*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars. pp. 15-22.

¹⁴⁰⁹ See chapter 2.2.

¹⁴¹⁰ Flis. 2010. p. 22.

¹⁴¹¹ Ibid. p. 13.

¹⁴¹² Guignery. 2007. p. 53.

¹⁴¹³ Tew. 2014. p. 163.

¹⁴¹⁴ Ibid. p. 163.

¹⁴¹⁵ Flis. 2010. p. 28.

layer¹⁴¹⁶ may hence also be seen as another variant of 1970s literary experimentalism. The extent to which writers of documentary novels base their narratives on the real and the imaginary may vary, yet these works have in common that they grant importance to the attribution of subjectivity to the interpretation of historical events.¹⁴¹⁷

Burns states in the foreword to his novel, which appeared in the aftermath of the Angry Brigade trial, that the group is far from being annihilated by the judicial process. Echoing the Angry Brigade's pretence of complete elusiveness and their claim of posing a ubiquitous threat, Burns asserts that the organisation cannot be pinned down or even destroyed by putting them on trial. According to him, there are three London-based groups that are, on the one hand, affiliated to the Angry Brigade, and, on the other hand, work as autonomous entities. According to Burns, six members of these groups have been interviewed by him, and his audio recordings and notes are the underlying material of this documentary novel. Adopting the method of the 'collective autobiography', he relates the events in the words of the participants without disclosing their identities.¹⁴¹⁸ As will be shown in detail in the following, by adopting this literary strategy, the text centres on the motives for action and stages the increasing radicalisation and embracing of revolutionary actions.

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Formally, these two takes on the Angry Brigade differ fundamentally. While Johnson deploys innovative and self-reflexive narrative strategies allowing for an ironic scrutiny of the relevance of the text itself,¹⁴¹⁹ and hence the 187remised187rization and exposure of the fictionality of fiction,¹⁴²⁰ Burns' text stages the protagonists' narrative expostulation, thus creating a profoundly subjective perspective on the motives for their radical actions and politicisation.

In *Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry*, the dominant author-figure interjecting his or her own views on the relevance and process of writing and reading a novel is an essential feature of the text, which is brimming with metafictional elements. For instance, after the death of Christie Malry's mother, the author figure announces:

I shall now attempt a little dialogue between Christie and the Office Supervisor. [...]

SUPERVISOR: Where were you yesterday afternoon?

CHRISTIE: At my mother's funeral.

SUPERVISOR: Why didn't you ask permission?

CHRISTIE: She died at very short notice. In fact, with no notice at all, on the evening before last.

SUPERVISOR: Long enough for you to arrange for the funeral the next day?

CHRISTIE: There wasn't any more time. It's a short novel.

¹⁴¹⁶ Ibid. p. 26.

¹⁴¹⁷ Ibid. p. 26.

¹⁴¹⁸ Burns. 1973. p. 3.

¹⁴¹⁹ Tew. 2001. p. 56.

¹⁴²⁰ Guignery. 2007. p. 53.

And Christie shrugged his way out, knowing there was no answer to that.¹⁴²¹

Christie and the fictive author are thus competing for the upper hand in the narrative. In the above scene, Christie is merely a puppet of the author figure, whose actions are circumscribed by the intended length of the novel. As Darlington puts it,

Christie and the author-figure appear locked in a battle to control the content of the narrative, in which each seeks to gain power by becoming more ‘real’ than the other. As a result, the world rendered by the novel becomes in some ways depthless, but the novel’s vitality as a creation is unimpeded by questions of authenticity, and the text is free to embrace chaos, contradiction and ambiguity.¹⁴²²

Towards the end of the narrative, the author tells his protagonist: “It does not seem to me possible to take this novel much further. I am sorry.”¹⁴²³ Christie agrees that “the writing of a long novel is in itself an anachronistic act: it was relevant only to a society and a set of conditions which no longer exist.”¹⁴²⁴ Hence, the text ironically plays on the function of the novel in times where you can “have a comparable aesthetic experience in the theatre or the cinema in only one evening?”¹⁴²⁵ Similar commentaries reflecting on the process of creating the short novel recur throughout the text. One may argue that this meta-commentary by the author figure on the function of fiction in an age of consumerism not only echoes the Situationists’ doctrine, but also reflects the major concern of this study. However, Johnson’s text defies any definite answer to these questions. Its metafictional playfulness, black humour, cartoonish qualities and aesthetics render a final interpretation of the text impossible.

However, despite these “overtly self-reflexive and innovative”¹⁴²⁶ narrative strategies deployed in *Christie Malry’s Own Double-Entry*, the text also conveys the protagonist’s emotional life, frustrations and sense of unfairness. As Jonathan Coe couches it in his autobiography of B.S. Johnson, the author’s works distinguish themselves from those of other experimental writers in that he refuses to or is unable “to sacrifice intensity of feeling on the altar of formal ingenuity.”¹⁴²⁷ Christie Malry’s increasing alienation from the hierarchical order of society and his frustration about the unfairness and inequity affecting his life are the novel’s central themes. The plot evolves around Christie’s system designed to find a way of recompensing for the injustices that have been committed against him by balancing them by means of a moral double-entry system. This moral bookkeeping system is designed to outbalance the harm that has been brought upon him by means of retaliative actions. While the perceived injustices are

¹⁴²¹ Johnson. 2013. p. 165.

¹⁴²² Darlington. 2014. p. 100.

¹⁴²³ Johnson. 2013. p. 165.

¹⁴²⁴ Ibid. p. 165.

¹⁴²⁵ Ibid. p. 165.

¹⁴²⁶ Tew. 2014. p. 165.

¹⁴²⁷ Coe, Jonathan. 2004. *Like a Fiery Elephant: The Story of B. S. Johnson*. London/Basingstoke/Oxford: Macmillan. p. 22.

This ability to combine both formal innovations and depth of character may also be due to the autobiographical nature of the text, which according to many commentators may incorporate Johnson’s own experiences as a clerk. (See, e.g.: Tew. 2007. p. 11.) However, this study focusing on the functional potential of literature refrains from making assumptions on possible autobiographical influences.

small at the beginning of the novel, they progressively grow in injurious reproach. Thus, following the golden rule of the father of bookkeeping, the Tuscan monk Fra Luca Bartolomeo Pacioli, “Every Debit must have its Credit”¹⁴²⁸ these injustices call for ever greater recompense. Beginning with rather small accounts that he seeks to settle such as the office building obstructing his freedom of movement which he debits by scratching an unsightly line into the blackened 189remised stone of the building,¹⁴²⁹ his pursuit for “sublime symmetry”¹⁴³⁰ takes on ever more extreme forms. His last aggravations in demand of a recompense include “Socialism not given a chance”¹⁴³¹ and his girlfriend the Shrike not offered an opportunity to “commensurate with her abilities”¹⁴³² provoke Malry to the cyanide poisoning of the drinking water causing the death of more than 20,000 Londoners. Thus, it becomes clear that Christie will never be appeased and his frustration with the social conditions prompts ever more drastic violent reprisals. Hence, only the author figure may end this campaign against society by letting him die immediately from cancer.

Besides this overt sense of social injustice underlying this text, the novel is also deeply infused with the politics and culture of its time, thus corresponding to the tendency of the 1970s novel to blend both historicity and introduce self-reflexivity.¹⁴³³ In this vein, *Christie Malry’s Own Double-Entry* displays a great awareness of the historical events and radical ideas of Britain’s contemporary counter-culture. Some commentators speculate on whether the name Christie may be drawn from the anarchist and alleged Angry Brigade member Stuart Christie.¹⁴³⁴ While this is difficult to prove, there are furthermore obvious references to the group in two scenes of the novel.¹⁴³⁵

Firstly, in the chapter “Scotland Yard is baffled” the Chief Commissioner exclaims after one of Christie’s bomb hoaxes, “it feels like the anarchists again.”¹⁴³⁶ Secondly, the group is also being referred to in the chapter “Christie in his wisdom overhears”, in which the protagonist eavesdrops on the conversation amongst revolutionaries discussing possible targets to attack, which are listed in alphabetical order. Towards the end of the list, some of them exclaim:

‘Socialism has never been given a chance in this country.’

‘It must be given a chance.’

‘We know what it’s like to react against conservatism: now let’s at least find out what it’s like to react against socialism as the dominant idea’¹⁴³⁷

While “socialism not given a chance” and Christie’s frustration about social inequality and the lack of social mobility recur throughout text, these revolutionaries seem to be listing random targets and do not appear to be too staunchly indebted to the seemingly replaceable cause of socialism. Hence, this passage

¹⁴²⁸ Johnson. 2013. p. 24.

¹⁴²⁹ Ibid. p. 24.

¹⁴³⁰ Ibid. p. 23.

¹⁴³¹ Ibid. p. 151.

¹⁴³² Ibid. p. 151.

¹⁴³³ Tew. 2014. p. 149.

¹⁴³⁴ Ibid. p. 165.

¹⁴³⁵ Darlington. 2014. p. 94.

¹⁴³⁶ Johnson. 2013. p. 111.

¹⁴³⁷ Ibid. p. 129.

of the text may also be read as a parody of the left-wing counterculture whose ideals are represented as being as haphazard as their possible targets. Echoing the mainstream view about the Angry Brigade as “adventurists,” “Christie grimaced and passed out from overhearing; for these were but children.”¹⁴³⁸ The chapter further highlights the sense of futility reigning in the fictional realm of the novel, in which violent actions develop their own *raison d’être*, freeing themselves from any ideology or moral ground.

Much of the text’s mood, the sense of futility and frustration, reflects the sentiment that brought forth the Angry Brigade. In Darlington’s words, “the same anger and disillusionment that birthed the Angry Brigade lie too at the heart of Johnson’s black comedy.”¹⁴³⁹ Terrorism and comedy share the same language in *Christie Malry’s Own Double-Entry* and the novel reflects the radical anti-establishment position that was common at the time of its publication.¹⁴⁴⁰ What is more, the tone of the novel is very much reminiscent of the trenchant overtones of the Angry Brigade Communiqués. As Tew phrases it, Johnson inscribes the political tensions of his time “with a cultural anarchism of stylistic quirkiness and striking presentation of events.”¹⁴⁴¹

Moreover, the text is distinguished by the gallows humour¹⁴⁴² that Johnson lavishes on *Christie Malry’s Own Double-Entry* and which “expresses a purely personal, and futile, rebellion against fate.”¹⁴⁴³ Thus, in contrast to what Darlington calls ‘corrective’ political satire, the black comedy of Johnson’s narrative indulges in its own sense of futility.¹⁴⁴⁴ For this reason, the central theme – that of an individual campaign against social injustices – is not resolved at the end. Instead, the author figure opts for the protagonist’s quick demise.¹⁴⁴⁵ Thus, there is no attempt to resolve the novel’s thematic tensions; instead the sudden death of the protagonist as ordered by the author figure emphasizes its underlying nihilistic vision.¹⁴⁴⁶ This futility is further driven by the cartoonish quality of the violence represented in Johnson’s narrative.¹⁴⁴⁷ For example, his first explosive attack carried out by a clockwork train set which Christie runs into the pipe of the Tax Collector’s office in Hythe house¹⁴⁴⁸ is followed by deliberations about explosive, mice, rodents and blackbirds as well as a bomb hoax concerning the premises of the neighbouring Pork Pie Purveyors Ltd. In the world of *Christie Malry’s Own Double-Entry*, the possibilities for creative ways of claiming the compensation for perceived wrongs are, as Christie realises himself, sheer endless.¹⁴⁴⁹

¹⁴³⁸ Ibid. p. 129.

¹⁴³⁹ Darlington. 2014. p. 89.

¹⁴⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 89.

¹⁴⁴¹ Tew. 2001. p. 50.

¹⁴⁴² Darlington. 2014. p. 95.

¹⁴⁴³ Ibid. p. 95.

¹⁴⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 95.

¹⁴⁴⁵ Johnson. 2013. p. 165.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Coe. 2004. p. 27.

¹⁴⁴⁷ Darlington. 2014. p. 97.

¹⁴⁴⁸ Johnson. 2013. pp. 103-107.

¹⁴⁴⁹ Ibid. pp. 123-124.

To borrow from Darlington, “Christie’s world – apparently consequence-free filled with exotic, surprising and imaginative violence – is perhaps best accounted for in the language of the cartoon, and the novel’s cartoon-like qualities license it to represent violence without directly raising moral doubts or quandaries.”¹⁴⁵⁰ Such an approach – just like the meta-fictional strategies deployed in the text – absolves the author from any need of be realistic.¹⁴⁵¹ He may thus represent terrorist violence in an excessiveness that supersedes the actuality of terrorist atrocities, thus ameliorating the dread emanating from the actual left-wing activists of the Angry Brigade. The cartoonish elements may also be seen as a satire of the fears of the establishment. In this sense, the text mocks the bizarre stories about the deviance of the members of the Angry Brigade and their lust for bloodshed disseminated by the mainstream press.

Moreover, similarly to its early modern forerunners *The Secret Agent* and *The Man Who Was Thursday*, *Christie Malry’s Own Double-Entry* can be seen as embracing a grotesque aesthetic. The novel combines fantastic elements with real social grievances and exaggerates tremendously every aspect of Christie’s campaign against society, thus blending comedy with terror. For these reasons, the grotesque elements make for much of the novel’s mood, which is utterly nihilistic and – behind the thick layers of gallows humour – also truly melancholic. His work presents the reader “a vision of life 191remised [sic] on the random moral indifference of material being and the horror of living in a world with no guarantee of any final redemptive order.”¹⁴⁵²

Alan Burns’ literary representation of the Angry Brigade, on the other hand, refrains from such an exaggerated aesthetic representation of terrorist violence. By contrast, the novel chooses an ostensibly realistic approach to reflect on the upheavals of the period, and tells the story of six activists and their shift towards direct action and the endorsement of violence. According to Tew, this move towards violence is explicitly expressed, both formally and thematically, in the narrative.¹⁴⁵³ The chapters of the novel already indicate the different stages of radicalisation. Beginning with “First: Radicalize”, the text relates the family background and childhood experiences explaining the character’s reasons for action. The reader learns that Barry is a homosexual, comes from a working-class background and sees how his retired father realises how he was crushed and robbed of his dreams of becoming a writer because he was poor. This is where much of Barry’s anger originates: “He’s lost out; he’s had to wait till he’s sixty-five to start living. So he’s lost his life. That’s criminal, that’s murder. I would kill to change that. His wasted life can never be replaced.”¹⁴⁵⁴ Dave, another working-class character, radicalised himself in prison. Jean, on the other hand, had an unhappy childhood¹⁴⁵⁵, whereas Ivor, an intellectual Jew comes from a Marxist family and was led into revolutionary politics by the students embracing political

¹⁴⁵⁰ Darlington. 2014. p. 97.

¹⁴⁵¹ Ibid. p. 97.

¹⁴⁵² Waugh. 1995. p. 132.

¹⁴⁵³ Tew. 2014. p. 163.

¹⁴⁵⁴ Burns.1973. pp. 7-8.

¹⁴⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 15.

violence and guerrilla tactics he met during his time at Venezuela University.¹⁴⁵⁶ Having endured a childhood and youth under a controlling, patriarchal father and the regime of the nuns in convent school, Suzanne is dissatisfied by her conventional life of mother and wife.¹⁴⁵⁷ Originally coming from Bombay, Mehta's anger stems from the racism he encounters in London.¹⁴⁵⁸ He makes clear that "direct action is easier for a black man because the total struggle a black man faces makes him more militant and more realistic."¹⁴⁵⁹

It becomes hence clear from the very beginning of the novel that the reasons for the characters' actions and their feelings towards them, not the actions themselves, are at its heart.¹⁴⁶⁰ The chapters' titles already indicate the activists' growing alienation from society and resentment as well as the increasing degree of organisation and propensity to resort to violence: "Second: Organize", "Third: Fraternize", "Fourth: Mobilize", "Fifth: Revolutionize", "Last: Terrorize." Each member of the group narrates his or her perspective of events in relatively short paragraphs bearing their names, thus creating a multi-faceted picture of the events, which are fictionalised and exaggerated versions of the upheavals of the time. The activists of the novel end up blowing an innocent waitress to bits¹⁴⁶¹ and blind a child,¹⁴⁶² while the actual Angry Brigade did not physically harm anybody. The story of how it could come to this excess of violence is not presented as a straightforward linear narrative. Instead, the respective views of the different characters alternate. The effect is that of a mosaic, requiring the reader to assemble the constituent parts. As Crews points out, the formal fragmentation of the narrative reflects Burns' political commitment and his zest to represent the fragmented society and social unrest of his time.¹⁴⁶³

Moreover, the structure and multiperspectivity of the text and the juxtaposition of the six different first-person narrators reflect the spirit of the Angry Brigade: Like the actual group the narrative eludes straightforward interpretations and sense-making. Once the story heads towards closure – after the group bombed the Post Office Tower and Ivor set up an armed guerrilla group – it literally ends with a blow, as two bombs accidentally explode in Ivor's and Suzanne's cellar.¹⁴⁶⁴ Like the Angry Brigade's claim of ubiquity, the novel defies closure and juxtaposes its multiperspectivity to the notion of one coherent Angry Brigade story. To borrow from Darlington, "by bringing together these disparate voices, chopping them and changing them and fitting them into six recognisable characters, Burns is performing formally what many underground press writers were stating rhetorically; that 'we are all the Angry Brigade now'"¹⁴⁶⁵

¹⁴⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 18.

¹⁴⁵⁷ Ibid. pp. 22-23.

¹⁴⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 26-27.

¹⁴⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 29.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Crews. 2010. p. 227.

¹⁴⁶¹ Burns. 1973. p. 162.

¹⁴⁶² Ibid. p. 142.

¹⁴⁶³ Crews. 2010. p. 226.

¹⁴⁶⁴ Burns. 1973. p. 185.

¹⁴⁶⁵ Darlington. 2018. p. 106.

The multiperspectivity of the narrative situation is further ideal to elucidate a variety of individual motivations for action. That is, each first-person narrator creates a subjective voice which models itself on discourses of individual witnesses. This strategy may hence engender a stronger identification with the characters and is more likely to trigger an empathetic response. However, the different perspectives of the characters and their partly divergent views may also be rather contradictory and reveal their shortcomings. Particularly Ivor, the group's most intellectual figure, is thus rendered a highly controversial and unlikeable character. His views of himself diverge fundamentally from those of his friends, which creates much of the tension that drives the narrative. For example, during the outburst of violence against the police after the invasion of the Ministry of Housing in Whitehall, Jean observes how Ivor clearly enjoys watching the police and invaders fighting.¹⁴⁶⁶ Ivor himself asserts, however, that he was shocked by the depth of violence displayed in the fight, and particularly the ability for violent action of his comrade Dave who "doesn't mind if he kills."¹⁴⁶⁷ Hence, considering himself innocent, he tries to absolve himself of any responsibility¹⁴⁶⁸ and makes a "dirty deal" with the police resulting in his release and Dave's and Barry's prison sentences. His subsequent justification of this behaviour centres on the lack of personal and psychological preparedness for prison and his wish to complete his university degree.¹⁴⁶⁹ Ivor's weak character and his utter self-regard become also apparent when his girlfriend Suzanne is beaten up by his acquaintance Vincent. Ivor, who according to Suzanne witnesses how her forehead is being "smashed in",¹⁴⁷⁰ tacitly accepts this abuse of his girlfriend for the sake of the cause. What is more, he even blames Suzanne for having provoked Vincent's outburst. While Suzanne tries to justify his lack of courage and loyalty,¹⁴⁷¹ the reader is made aware of Ivor's selfishness and hypocrisy through Suzanne's retrospective narrative. The use of the subjective voice of the narrative serves to elucidate the activists from different angles, thus exposing both their motivations and reasons for action as well as their character flaws.

Burns' revelatory narrative also accords an identity to the terrorists. Bearing in mind that the characters narrate events retrospectively as part of a semi-fictional interview, this narrative situation is particularly efficient at imitating individual memory processes. The first-person perspective furthers insights into the construction of coherent knowledge about oneself,¹⁴⁷² and thus the mechanics of identity construction. It allows the characters to locate their own stance and feelings in relation to their political ideology and activism. Hence, Burns' documentary novel not only accurately reflects on the upheavals and mood of its time, but also creates fictional terrorists with different histories, personal motivations as well as the ability or, as in Ivor's case, the inability to question their own actions.

¹⁴⁶⁶ Burns.1973. p. 117.

¹⁴⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 118.

¹⁴⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 122.

¹⁴⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 126.

¹⁴⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 150.

¹⁴⁷¹ Ibid. p. 152.

¹⁴⁷² See chapter 3.2.3.1.

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Johnson's and Burns' fundamentally different formal-aesthetic and generic approaches to the Angry Brigade bear a similar functional potential. Both of these works are designed to counter prevailing representations of the Angry Brigade. As Brian Crews contends, "it was [...] the way in which the accused had been treated by the press that led the two novelists to respond with a degree of urgency."¹⁴⁷³ Although one may only speculate about the motivations that drove Burns and Johnson to respond to the Angry Brigade trial, their novels reveal a concern for the frustrations about social injustices that were shared by the members of the Angry Brigade as well as the wider counter-culture.

In terms of Ricœur's mimetic circle, the cultural function of the novels may be seen as potentially forming a counter-narrative to mainstream accounts of the Angry Brigade by, firstly, drawing on the pre-existent cultural background and the political upheavals of their time and incorporating them into the fictional text (mimesis 1). While Johnson's novel barely mentions the Angry Brigade and reflects the political situation of its time through the perspective of "madman" Christie and the thick layer of a cartoonish aesthetic, Burns' approach is, as the title already suggests, much more explicit and seeks to portray the existing discourses of the left-wing counter-culture and the frustrations about the socio-political conditions in the most realistic, semi-documentary manner. Secondly, by transforming this material into fiction, both of the novels portray what has been excluded from mainstream discourses about the Angry Brigade (mimesis 2). While Johnson takes a hyperbolic approach to satirise both the terrorists and the middle classes, while also expounding the reasons for action, Burns' take is of a semi-fictional nature and strives to reveal the "actual" motives by means of a "hyper-real" approach. Thirdly, on the level of 'mimesis 3', both of these novels return to the pre-existing world and may potentially have an impact on the reader by influencing the ways in which they perceive the actions of the Angry Brigade against the backdrop of the political upheavals.

Even though Christie's actions are not motivated by a particular ideological cause, they are born out of his frustration at the face of social injustices. The protagonist being an accountant who sets his face against the establishment which he initially embraces is the crux of the narrative. Christie who strives to "place himself next to money"¹⁴⁷⁴ by socially sanctioned means, believes himself able to achieve this most effectively as an accountant, harnessing the double-entry bookkeeping system, the foundations of the capitalist system, to take revenge on the system itself. Thus, the text reveals in the establishment's fears of the left-wing counterculture which sprang to a great extent from their own middle-class ranks in that it tells the story of an apparently well-adjusted individual attempting to enforce justice by violent means. However, the text does not stop there. It also satirises the Angry Brigade as well as the public

¹⁴⁷³ Crews. 2010. p. 223.

¹⁴⁷⁴ Johnson. 2013. p. 11.

perception of them as a bunch of dilantants not only by featuring a terrorist protagonist whose zest for recompense is as insatiable as it is arbitrary, but also by representing a group of revolutionaries who – following the order of the alphabet – choose their apparently random targets equally randomly. Hence, indulging in its own sense of futility, Johnson’s novel defies a definite statement on the Angry Brigade.

Mnemonically, both of these novels may retroact on the public perception of the group. By virtue of the presentation of social injustices as the main reason for the terrorists’ resort to violence, these works may be regarded as the cultural institution of “counter-memory,” voicing what has been marginalised and suppressed in mainstream representations of the Stoke Newington Eight. They not only contest the hyperbolic tabloid representations of the group as a monstrous sect, but also avoid the adulation and sense of nostalgia reverberating in many of the factual accounts of the group. Burns’ text serves this mnemonic function in a twofold way. On the one hand, due to its interview form, which creates episodes of narrated past by the fictional members of the Angry Brigade, the novel traces the identity formations and increasing involvement in their political activism of the six members. It thus constitutes a “memory *in literature*,” presenting the reader “collected”¹⁴⁷⁵ narrative memories, making sense of the events of their time. On the other hand, by staging these semi-fictional individual memories, Burns’ novel creates collected memory worlds that may challenge existing versions of the past by opposing mainstream representation of the members of the Angry Brigade as deviant, bloodthirsty and preposterous through the character’s subjectivity.

While in Johnson’s novel “commitment is replaced by fatalism,”¹⁴⁷⁶ the characters in Burns’ novel, on the other hand, are fully engaged in the anarchist revolution. However, the representation of the characters is not an idealised version of the Angry Brigade, but represents them as imperfect individuals. It can therefore not be read as a mere political pamphlet rectifying the misrepresentation of the group. Rather, it strives to represent the personalities behind the bombs with all their weaknesses and double-standards, demonstrating that they are not any better or worse than the rest of us. For this reason, Burns’ *The Angry Brigade* may fulfil a pivotal ethical function. It confronts the reader with an “other,” which is in this case the subjective voices of six allegedly real members of the Angry Brigade whose actions and ideology were decried in the public debate. The reader not only learns about the family history that prompted the revolutionaries to oppose the system, but also, for example, their attempt to help homeless children and junkies by housing them in their squat.

However, as discussed before, the specific ethical potential of literature does not solely amount to the reflection of values and moral messages, but is may also reflect the process of value conditioning itself. Burns’ novel scrutinises and exposes the characters’ development from the state of being idealists ready to harness violence for their cause to terrorists embracing the use of ever more extreme forms of violence. For example, after the planting of the bomb at the Post Office Tower, Barry explains that “I

¹⁴⁷⁵ See chapter 3.2.3.1.

¹⁴⁷⁶ Darlington. 2014. p. 93.

could understand Ivor saying killing is part of a policy to get something done, because killing, especially killing civilians, is immediately dramatic.”¹⁴⁷⁷ Clearly, at this stage, the violence is used as a communication strategy serving a certain aim, that is, the class war, yet at the end of the novel, when Ivor runs an armed guerrilla group and forces his comrade Dave at gunpoint to join the armed struggles, the violence takes on an autotelic dimension. As Dave admits, “in the end I was enjoying it, because it was so absurd.”¹⁴⁷⁸

Ethically, Burns’ novel works on different levels. Representing individuals narrating their perspective of events in the first-person creates a great proximity to the characters, and may potentially elicit empathy in the reader, who is made aware of the reasons and perceived grievances, but also of the shortcomings and the ways in which moral justifications are constructed to justify the use of violence to the point where violence becomes an end in itself. Johnson’s take on the Angry Brigade, however, is set free from extra-literary value systems and a metaethical reflection on their construction. They are replaced by Christie Malry’s own moral double-entry system which he operates according to the principles of his great idea.¹⁴⁷⁹ Set free from the cogency of realism, the experimental mode allows the protagonist to act the most absurdly violent means for the aim of social justice. In the world of *Christie Malry’s Own Double-Entry* anything goes, and Malry may commit to the experimental acts of violence that would be morally condemnable in any literary work in a realistic mode. This aesthetic and thematic exuberance, however, does not necessarily indicate a “helpless and sardonic detachment.”¹⁴⁸⁰ Instead, the text is dedicated to an ethics of truth as a reality without the comfort conventional fiction has to offer.¹⁴⁸¹ *Christie Malry’s Own Double-Entry* expresses a notion of truth centring on “the disorder, the inconsequentiality of life, and the impersonality of the world and of its carelessness toward human life.”¹⁴⁸²

Hence, the text also plays on the actual social injustices and the unfairness of Britain’s political and capitalist system. These allusions to extra-literary reality form the germ of the narrative, as they hint at the seriousness lying underneath the extravaganza of violence and thus prevent to render the novel to some sort of depthless “terrorist comedy,” brimming with slapstick violence. The extra-literary references to actual grievances accord a serious, even melancholic overtone to the text. However, *Christie Malry’s Own Double-Entry* defies any definite moral messages, or to borrow from Darlington:

As a result, one is left with a potent set of ambiguities both comically and politically. Are we laughing at Christie as a caricature of the naïve revolutionary, or does the novel give us a sense of catharsis as he lives out our most destructive fantasies? Is the novel a satire on political

¹⁴⁷⁷ Burns.1973. p. 163.

¹⁴⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 184.

¹⁴⁷⁹ Johnson. 2013. pp. 89-90.

¹⁴⁸⁰ Parrinder, Patrick. 1987. *The Failure of Theory: Essays on Criticism and Contemporary Fiction*. Brighton: The Harvester Press. p. 130.

¹⁴⁸¹ Guignery. 2007. p. 56.

¹⁴⁸² D’ Eath. 1985. p. 79.

commitment or is it a call for organised protest instead of individualist revolt?¹⁴⁸³

It is this elusiveness that renders Johnson's text ethically valuable. Defying a culture characterised by moral absolutes and condemnations that prevails in the aftermath of terrorism, it tackles existing grievances, the chaos and unrest of its time, but leaves the interpretation of Christie's moral universe to the readers themselves. Driven by a sense of futility, it creates an open space of "anything goes" that undermines the discourse of "us" versus "them." Like the Angry Brigade themselves *Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry* cannot be pinned down to a one-dimensional worldview.

4.3. The "New Terrorism" of the 21st Century

In the advent of the new millennium, the *New York Times* discussed the dangers emanating from the to-date relatively unknown "new faces of terrorism;"¹⁴⁸⁴ amongst them, most notably, were Osama Bin Laden and his allies. According to the authors of the article, the former members of the US National Security Council, Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, the novelty of this type of terrorism consists not only in a motivation as broad and ferocious as "religiously motivated hatred of the West,"¹⁴⁸⁵ but also in the brutality and scope of their actions. That is to say, what is new to this kind of terrorism "is just this combination – religious motivation and a desire to inflict catastrophic damage."¹⁴⁸⁶ Since the 1990s, this new trend of religiously motivated, or Islamist terrorist violence has become increasingly more virulent. Though the celebrations of the new millennium had – contrary to warnings on the part of the US government – been peaceful, the threat, as Simon and Benjamin point out, had not vanished. As the 11 September 2001 attacks proved, the worst was still to come.¹⁴⁸⁷

After 9/11, the argument that contemporary terrorism has to be assessed by different standards than its historical predecessors became increasingly prevalent. For many commentators the event was too atrocious, spectacular and required too many casualties to cope with it by resorting to the old criteria. Many experts argued that a new understanding¹⁴⁸⁸ was required, for, as Walter Laqueur had claimed already prior to the events, "much of what has been thought about terrorism, including some of our most

¹⁴⁸³ Darlington. 2014. p. 101.

¹⁴⁸⁴ Benjamin, Daniel; Simon, Steven. "The New Face of Terrorism." In: *The New York Times*. 04.01.2000. <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/01/04/opinion/the-new-face-of-terrorism.html> (last accessed 5th January 2015)

¹⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸⁸ See Martha Crenshaw's document examining the logic and empirical grounding behind the arguments for the new paradigm terrorism. Crenshaw, Martha. 2007. "The Debate over "New" vs. "Old" Terrorism." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. Chicago. www.start.umd.edu/start/publications/New_vs_Old_Terrorism.pdf (last accessed 8th January.2015)

basic assumptions, must be reconsidered.”¹⁴⁸⁹ Although this view of a “new” terrorism that surpasses all the “older” forms has been challenged and criticised, it is still worth our consideration as it illustrates the overall sense of the advent of an age of unprecedented violence.

The following chapter begins with the 11 September attacks in the United States in 2001, which have been widely co-opted as a universal trauma whose wide-ranging impact is seen to go far beyond the national borders of the United States. Particularly Britain was considered to be affected by the attacks, as it is seen to exist in a so-called Anglo-American “special relationship.” Thus, the British government joined the United States not only in their counter-terrorism war in Afghanistan, but also in their controversial intervention in Iraq in 2003. Two years after the initial commitment to overthrowing Saddam Hussein, on 7 July 2005 the British capital incurred its very own terrorist attack, which will also be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

4.3.1. 9/11 as a Global Terrorist Threat

Already a couple of years before the 11 September attacks on the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington D.C., the scholar Jessica Stern painted a detailed dystopian picture of the potential harm emanating from what she believed to be a “a new breed of terrorists.”¹⁴⁹⁰ Beginning with the imaginative horror scenario of the terrorist explosion of a nuclear bomb in New York’s Empire State Building, she continues to describe the effect such an attack would have on the actual victims, politics and the “American way of life.” According to her, the consequences of such an atrocity would be devastating not only in terms of human casualties, but also apropos of the threat to civil rights.¹⁴⁹¹ This new, threatening scenario was, according to her, the result of a number of factors, including the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons and, more importantly, the changing motivations of terrorists who are now “ad hoc groups motivated by religious conviction or revenge, violent right-wing extremists, and apocalyptic and millenarian cults,”¹⁴⁹² more likely to resort to such extreme violence.¹⁴⁹³

What appears to be reminiscent of a nightmarish type of sci-fi villain is in fact grounded on the idea that while former terrorists acted more locally and restrained in their use of violence, this new type of mostly religiously motivated terrorist would use violence as an end in itself.¹⁴⁹⁴ Terrorists of this “new” kind have hence more than ever before been deemed to be the ultimate evil with an amorphous and

¹⁴⁸⁹ Laqueur, Walter. 1999. *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press. p. 7.

¹⁴⁹⁰ Stern, Jessica. 2001. *The Ultimate Terrorists*. 5th ed. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. p. 8.

¹⁴⁹¹ Ibid. pp. 1-10.

¹⁴⁹² Ibid. p. 8.

¹⁴⁹³ Ibid. p. 8.

¹⁴⁹⁴ See, Crenshaw. 2007. “new” vs. “old” terrorism. pp. 18-25.

incomprehensible cause¹⁴⁹⁵ that can only be described as “the great rage about everything and nothing in particular, the joy generated by killing and destruction, [...] fanaticism and paranoia.”¹⁴⁹⁶ September 11 was the apotheosis of these propositions. The spectacle immediately attracted global media attention, and, thus, rendered 9/11 a “common, mass-mediated experience of millions of people around the world.”¹⁴⁹⁷ Thus, when the world witnessed how two planes hit both towers of the World Trade Center, these notions of a “new breed” of terrorism appeared to be more than confirmed. The event outreached every other terrorist atrocity to-date in its intricate planning, its ruthless realisation and visual spectacularity.

The effects of the events also engendered unprecedented dimensions. For example, as indicated by a survey conducted by Roxane Silver and her co-authors on psychological responses to the 11 September attacks, the traumatising effects of 9/11 “are not limited to those who experience[d] it directly, and the degree of response is not predicted simply by objective measures of exposure to or loss from the trauma.”¹⁴⁹⁸ Instead, as a result of the global coverage of the dramatic imagery, emotional responses to 9/11 were not only observed among U.S. citizens, but could also be noted on a global scale.¹⁴⁹⁹ Therefore, in the Western hemisphere, 9/11 has been and still is regarded as a ubiquitous trauma.¹⁵⁰⁰

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, ‘trauma’ became a catchword used to express the incommensurability and disruptiveness of an event which has been perceived as a “blow,” a watershed, dividing the commemorative frame of reference into “before” and “after.” The “trauma” of terrorism became an ever-present trope of the transnational public sphere, and prevailed in public discourses on trauma and victimisation. Deeply entrenched in contemporary wound culture, the term ‘trauma’, hence, served as a metaphor rather than as a clinical concept.¹⁵⁰¹ This metaphor was applied in public discourse in order to make sense of atrocities and accounting for the sufferings of the victims rather than assessing the actual psychic damage done.

As mentioned before, representations and narratives are crucial for linking the trauma of individuals or smaller groups to the cultural identity of a broader community. In her essay on public responses to the Bali bombings in 2002, Emma Hutchinson analyses how the media representation of terrorist atrocities led to a broader identification with the suffering and may thus bear a considerable collectivising potential. According to Hutchinson, representations of a traumatic terrorist event may

¹⁴⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 8.

¹⁴⁹⁶ Laqueur. 1999. p. 231.

¹⁴⁹⁷ Stepinska, Agnieszka. “9/11 and the Transformation of Globalized Media Events.” In: Couldry, Nick; Hepp, Andreas; Krotz, Friedrich, eds. 2010. *Media Events in a Global Age*. Oxon: Routledge. pp. 203-216. p. 214.

¹⁴⁹⁸ Silver, Roxane et al. 2002. p. 1235.

¹⁴⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 1235.

See also the following article on the impact of 9/11 on the mental health of citizens outside the US: Apolone, Giovanni; La Vecchia, Carlo; Mosconi, Paola. “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.” In: *New England Journal of Medicine* 346. 2002. pp. 1495-1498.

¹⁵⁰⁰ See, for example: Volkery, Carsten. “New Yorker Trauma: Die Katastrophe war erst der Anfang.” In: *Spiegel Online*. 15.09.2001. <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/new-yorker-trauma-die-katastrophe-war-erst-der-anfang-a-157525.html> (last accessed 13th October 2012)

¹⁵⁰¹ Fassin; Rechtman. 2009. p. 106.

express a sense of “shock, vulnerability, and confusion,”¹⁵⁰² on the one hand, and the trauma of those directly affected may obtain a public meaning through representation on the other.¹⁵⁰³ In other words, discourses surrounding traumatic terrorist events may link the trauma and the sense of victimisation of those directly affected to the fate of a broader community. Critics such as Kohlke and Gutleben therefore quite rightly point to the “*power of trauma* as a cultural force,”¹⁵⁰⁴ shaping cultural memory, identities and often eliciting political activism on behalf of the victims.¹⁵⁰⁵

In this vein, the unfathomable tragedy gained meaning through the myriad of stories recounting personal feelings and experiences at the sight of the disaster, and the fate of those who lost their lives in the catastrophe.¹⁵⁰⁶ Newspapers,¹⁵⁰⁷ blogs¹⁵⁰⁸ and New York’s surfaces¹⁵⁰⁹ – all formed part of the collective commemorative space blanketed with stories, telling the individual traumas of 11 September. Thus, by means of representation, the individual trauma was shifted from the realm of the individual to that of the community.¹⁵¹⁰

Until today, the events have been frequently identified as a trauma that “inflicted a rip in the fabric of the American psyche,”¹⁵¹¹ and, due to the global reach of the disaster, as an incident that has also had a

Hutchinson, Emma. “Trauma and the Politics of Emotions: Constituting Identity, Security and Community after the Bali Bombing.” In: *International Relations* 24.1. 2010. pp. 65-86. p. 66.

¹⁵⁰³ Ibid. p. 68.

¹⁵⁰⁴ Kohlke; Gutleben. 2010. p. 6.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 5.

¹⁵⁰⁶ Weaving his personal account into the narrative framework of global politics and culture, the American novelist Don DeLillo, for instance, provides one of the first non-journalistic texts on 9/11 with his essay “In the Ruins of Our Future.” DeLillo describes his personal feelings concerning the catastrophe, and narrates the experiences of the survivors Karen and his nephew Marc. His account of the experiences of these two individuals gives a face to the thousands of victims whose suffering and fear is only insinuated by the “cellphones, the lost shoes, [...] box cutters and credit cards.” DeLillo, Don. “In the Ruins of the Future.” In: *Harper’s Magazine* December 2001- pp. 33-40. p. 35.

¹⁵⁰⁷ See, for example, the interviews with survivors of the North Tower attack, published in *The New York Times*. Dwyer, Jim. “Accounts from the North Tower.” In: *The New York Times*. 26. 05. 2002. <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/26/nyregion/26NTOWER.html?pagewanted=all> (last accessed 18th November 2012)

¹⁵⁰⁸ After 9/11, the blogosphere provided a forum to people who felt the need to express their feelings, and to communicate with others about the tragedy. Indeed, many bloggers regard 9/11 therefore as the birthday of their medium. See: Andrews, Robert. “9/11: Birth of the Blog.” In: *Wired*. 09.11.2006. <http://www.wired.com/techbiz/media/news/2006/09/71753> (last accessed 18th November 2012) For more detailed information about the blogosphere after 9/11, see also the *September 11 Digital Archive*, which maintains a catalogue containing digital electronic media, presenting the history of 9/11. *The September 11 Digital Archive*. <http://911digitalarchive.org/> Even years after the events, the memory of the victims has been kept alive by blogs such as *roughdraft*, which launched the “project 2,996,” in which the story of those who lost their life on 11 September is narrated by volunteer bloggers. *Roughdraft*. “The Arms of Project 2,996.” <http://www.dcroe.com/heraldry/the-arms-of-project-2996/> (last accessed 18th November 2012).

¹⁵⁰⁹ See, for example, Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett on the transformation of New York’s urban landscape ensued by grassroots responses, “memorializing the missing and presumed deceased” in the immediate aftermath of 11 September 2001. Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. “Kodak Moments, Flashbulb Memories: Reflections on 9/11.” In: *The Drama Review* 47.1. 2003. pp. 11-48. pp. 11-12.

¹⁵¹⁰ Hutchinson. 2010. p. 69.

¹⁵¹¹ Stolorow, Robert D. “What Did We Learn from 9/11?” In: *The Huffington Post*. 12.09.2012. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-d-stolorow/what-did-we-learn-from-91_b_1875767.html (last accessed 19th October 2012) See further, for example: Tanneeru, Manav. “9/11 trauma persists five years later.” In: *CNN.com*. 08.09.2008. http://articles.cnn.com/2006-09-08/us/911.overview_1_terror-attacks-church-gathering-trauma?_s=PM:US (19th October 2012)

tremendous impact on people's lives on a worldwide scale.¹⁵¹² The *New York Times*' front-page the day after the catastrophe reflected this sentiment of being severely traumatised as a nation, and beyond national boundaries, of being faced with an event that shook the whole world.¹⁵¹³ The trauma discourse, hence, not solely accorded meaning to the seemingly senseless atrocities on a national level, but also gave expression to a sense of collective experience and internationally shared meaning,¹⁵¹⁴ thereby gaining a global dimension.

In the aftermath of the events, the identification with the victims, and a fundamentally inclusive sense of victimhood and traumatisation prevailed in public statements and narratives. Terms as broad as “we”, “civilisation”, or even “humanity” were used to refer to the group that shared and identified with the experience of vulnerability and traumatic injury.¹⁵¹⁵ This sense of inclusiveness was echoed, for instance, by Tony Blair, who identified “the democracies of this world”¹⁵¹⁶ as the victims of the attack. As Christian De Simoni argues, the cultural response to 9/11 implies a new self-awareness which grounds on a new and easily defined distinction between friend and foe.¹⁵¹⁷ Thus, the inclusive “Us” was juxtaposed to a “Them”, referring to the perpetrators, who were quickly associated with Islam and Islamic civilisation as a whole. The ideas of Samuel Huntington's controversial and far-reaching 1993 article envision the new fault lines of the post-Cold War era will be cultural, purporting that:

The fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.¹⁵¹⁸

¹⁵¹² See, for example, the open thread in *The Guardian* in which people from all over the world are invited to comment on how their lives have changed since the events of 9/11. Spencer, Ruth. “How has your life changed since the events of 9/11? Open thread.” In: *The Guardian*. 10.09.2010. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/sep/10/9-11-life-changed-open-thread> (last accessed 19th October 2012)

¹⁵¹³ Apple, R.W. “A Day of Terror: News Analysis; Awaiting the Aftershocks.” In: *The New York Times*. 12.11.2001. <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/12/us/a-day-of-terror-news-analysis-awaiting-the-aftershocks.html?pagewanted=all> (last accessed 19th November 2012)

See also the *New York Times* front-page article by Elisabeth Bulmiller, who refers to 11 September 2001 as “a day of trauma.” Bulmiller, Elisabeth; Sanger, David E. “A Day of Terror: The President; A Somber Bush Says Terrorism Cannot Prevail.” In: *The New York Times*. 12.09.12.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/12/us/a-day-of-terror-the-president-a-somber-bush-says-terrorism-cannot-prevail.html?pagewanted=1> (last accessed 18th November 2012)

For more information on the *New York Times* front-page of 12 September, see the digital *New York Times* front-page image map provided under the following link:

<http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/nyregion/911imagemap.html> (last accessed 18th November 2012)

¹⁵¹⁴ See Hutchinson on the generation of shared meaning and the perception of a collective experience by traumatic events. Hutchinson. 2010. p. 66.

¹⁵¹⁵ De Simoni, Christian. “Betroffenheitsgesten in politischen, publizistischen und literarischen Antworten auf 9/11.” In: Poppe; Schüller; Seiler. 2009. pp. 81-102. pp. 81-82.

¹⁵¹⁶ Blair, Tony. 2005.

¹⁵¹⁷ De Simoni. 2009. p. 81.

¹⁵¹⁸ Huntington, Samuel. “The Clash of Civilizations?” In: *Foreign Affairs* Summer 1993. pp. 22-49. p. 22.

After 9/11, his ideas gained currency, as they appeared visionary and plausible to many, and dovetailed well with a rhetoric centring of Western victimhood against the Islamic perpetrators. Postcolonial theory and its ideas of cultural consensus rather than cultural antagonism appeared to be deficient in the light of the attacks.¹⁵¹⁹ Hence postcolonial thinkers such as Edward Said felt compelled to defend ideas of cultural hybridity. He points to the presence of Muslims in Western societies, and locates Islam at the centre of the Western hemisphere and not at its fringes. According to him, “the problem with unedifying labels like Islam and the West”¹⁵²⁰ lies in their propensity to “mislead and confuse the mind, which is trying to make sense of a disorderly reality that won’t be pigeonholed or strapped down as easily as all that.”¹⁵²¹

The simplifying unambiguity of “reassuring battle orders (a crusade, good versus evil, freedom against fear, etc.)”¹⁵²² and a rhetoric emphasising the trauma and sense of victimisation also informed the following policy strategies. The U.S. coordinator for security and counterterrorism, Richard A. Clark, for instance, argues that the post-millennial trauma discourse after 9/11 did not solely give expression to the sense of deep shock at the atrocities and sense of victimhood, but was further used by the Bush administration to justify their counter-terrorism policy in the years following the event. According to him, the White House forcefully invoked the traumatic memory of 9/11 in order to excuse the national security policies, including the establishment of Guantanamo Bay, where prisoners were held without being charged, the use of extreme interrogation measures such as waterboarding, or the invasion of Iraq.¹⁵²³

Thus, by way of the logic of an anticipated repetition, the traumatic memory of what happened served as an explanation for the strong determination to prevent such an event from happening again, no matter how extreme the preventive measures were going to be. This logic of an anticipated repetition reappears in Tony Blair’s recollections of the 11 September events. He appeals to the memories of the feelings of 11 September, for “that feeling shaped the events that followed.”¹⁵²⁴ This way, Blair invokes the trauma of 9/11 to justify his determination to become part of the highly controversial “coalition of the willing”, joining the United States. He thus politicises the fear of terrorism to further his political agenda. Moreover, not only the memories of the traumatic event but also the impending “threat to our way of life,” and our “decent values” convinced Blair to stand “‘shoulder to shoulder’ with the United

¹⁵¹⁹ Schüller. 2009. p. 27.

¹⁵²⁰ Said, Edward W. “The Clash of Ignorance.” In: *The Nation*. 22.10. 2001.
<https://www.thenation.com/article/clash-ignorance/> (last accessed 19th August 2016)

¹⁵²¹ Ibid.

¹⁵²² Ibid.

¹⁵²³ Clark, Richard A. “Richard A. Clarke – Cheney and Rice Remember 9/11. I Do, Too.” In: *The Washington Post*. 31.05.2009.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2009/05/29/AR2009052901560.html>
(last accessed 20th October 2012)

¹⁵²⁴ Blair, Tony. “Remaking the World after 9/11.” In: *The Washington Post*. 09.10.12.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/guest-voices/post/remaking-the-world-after-911/2011/09/09/gIQAchBXEK_blog.html (last accessed 19th October 2012)

States.”¹⁵²⁵ The invocation of the past trauma inflicted by 9/11, and the reference to an elusive future threat posed by terrorism against “us” and “our norms” were at the heart of the Anglo-American counter-terrorism rationale.

Furthermore, this sense of being targeted by the attacks and the expression of full solidarity with the United States is also rooted in the longstanding idea of an Anglo-American “special relationship,” a controversial notion that describes the complicated historical, cultural and military alliance between Britain and its former colony. This relationship has, however, never been on an equal footing. Having dominated affairs in the 19th and early 20th centuries, Britain was relegated to the role of the junior partner due to its waning power and global influence. What is more, this idea of a “special relationship” is, as Kathleen Burke points out, “very problematic,”¹⁵²⁶ because it is generally “the weaker power which needs it: the stronger power tends to get what it wants without such supplication.”¹⁵²⁷

In the wake of 9/11, this idea was vehemently invoked for two reasons: Firstly, the United States needed a loyal European ally in the Iraq crisis,¹⁵²⁸ and secondly, the British government invoked the idea of the special relationship in order to justify unpopular and controversial involvement in this operation. After the failed attempts on the part of the government to persuade the US administration to take action without a UN-sanctioned alliance, Britain still joined their senior partners in the 2003 invasion of Iraq;¹⁵²⁹ a manoeuvre that prompted harsh public criticism. To many observers, Britain seemed to have “become a client state”¹⁵³⁰ and the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, was seen to have surrendered the national sovereignty in favour of being “patted on the head”¹⁵³¹ and patronised by the Americans. This view corresponds to the popular image of Tony Blair being George W. Bush’s lapdog or poodle, which resonated in many comments on the Anglo-American counter-terrorism measures in the years following 9/11.¹⁵³² Furthermore, as Rebecca Carpenter phrases it, “the widespread representations of Blair as Bush’s poodle or lapdog not only depict him as a dog, but as a fluffy,

¹⁵²⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵²⁶ Burke, Kathleen. “Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning.” In: Dumbrell, John; Schäfer, Axel R., eds. 2009. *America’s ‘Special Relationships’: Foreign and Domestic Aspects of the Politics of Alliance*. Abingdon/New York: Routledge. pp. 24-44. p. 24.

¹⁵²⁷ Ibid. p. 24.

¹⁵²⁸ Ibid. p. 24.

¹⁵²⁹ Fröhlich, Stefan. 2006. “Special Relationship: Großbritannien und die USA.” In: Kastendiek, Hans; Sturm, Roland, eds. 2006. *Länderbericht Großbritannien*. 3rd ed. Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, pp. 533-548. p. 545.

¹⁵³⁰ Leigh, David; Norton-Taylor, Richard. “We are now a client state.” In: *The Guardian*. 17.07.2003. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2003/jul/17/usa.world> (last accessed 28th January 2015)

¹⁵³¹ Ibid.

¹⁵³² See, for instance, the poll conducted in late 2002, which suggests that half of the British public see Tony Blair as George Bush’s lapdog “50% see Blair as Bush’s lapdog.” In: *The Guardian*. 14.11.2002. <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2002/nov/14/foreignpolicy.uk1> (last accessed 28th January 2015). See further, the cartoon depicting Blair as Bush’s lapdog on his last official visit: Bell, Steve. “Untitled.” In: *The Guardian*. 18.05.2007. <http://www.theguardian.com/cartoons/stevebell/0,,2082804,00.html> (last accessed 28th January 2015)

cossetted, drooling, obedient, feminine one who wants nothing more than to be stroked by his owner.”¹⁵³³

The commitment of British forces to the “coalition of the willing” fighting Saddam Hussein, who – as the justification went – was in possession of weapons of mass destruction, was hugely unpopular. Yet the global mass protests, including the largest rally in UK history in London, on 15 February 2003, could not dissuade him from his decision to act unilaterally side by side with the United States. Even after the assumption of Iraq’s possession of weapons of mass destruction proved to be false, Blair adhered to this discredited cause instead of admitting that he and George W. Bush had erred if not lied in their justification of events.

This political strategy has been linked to future harm inflicted by terrorism: As it was “asserted and reasserted by personnel of various kinds [...] that the attack would give rise to terrorism against [Britain].”¹⁵³⁴ A terrorist atrocity was anticipated for Britain, and as it was oftentimes stated it was not the question *if*, but *when* it would happen.

4.3.2. 9/11 and the British Novel

In the shadow of the 11 September attacks, any Hollywood disaster genre seemed to have been rendered obsolete by these boundary-straddling events’ sheer visual monstrosity, which appeared to spring from the realm of fiction. As Ian McEwan formulated it on September 12, 2001, “American reality always outstrips the imagination. And even the best minds, the best or darkest dreamers of disaster on a gigantic scale, from Tolstoy and Wells to Don DeLillo, could not have delivered us into the nightmare available on television news channels yesterday afternoon.”¹⁵³⁵ Confronted with such a powerful and devastating catastrophe, some commentators and writers even invoked the end of fiction.¹⁵³⁶ Martin Amis even goes so far as to claim that “after a couple of hours at their desks, on September 12, 2001, all the writers on earth were reluctantly considering a change of occupation.”¹⁵³⁷ In a similar vein, Jacques Derrida speaks

¹⁵³³ Carpenter, Rebecca. “‘We’re not a Friggin’ Girl Band’: September 11, Masculinity and the British-American Relationship in David Hare’s *Stuff Happens* and Ian McEwan’s *Saturday*.” In: Keniston, Ann; Follansbee Quinn. 2008. *Literature after 9/11*. London: Routledge. pp. 143-160. p. 144.

¹⁵³⁴ Honderich, Ted. 2006. *Humanity, Terrorism, Terrorist War: Palestine, 9/11, Iraq, 7/7*. London/New York: Continuum. p. 167.

¹⁵³⁵ McEwan, Ian. “Beyond Belief.” In: *The Guardian*. 12.11.2001.
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/12/september11.politicsphilosophyandsociety> (last accessed 12th November 2016)

¹⁵³⁶ Mishra, Pankaj. “The End of Innocence.” In: *The Guardian*. 19.05.2007.
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/may/19/fiction.martinamis> (last accessed 19th February 2016)
R.B. “How 9/11 Changed Fiction: After the Unthinkable.” In: *The Economist*. 02.09.2011.
<http://www.economist.com/blogs/prospero/2011/09/how-911-changed-fiction> (last accessed 19th February 2016)

¹⁵³⁷ Amis, Martin. “The Voice of the Lonely Crowd.” In: *The Guardian*. 31.05.2002.
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/jun/01/philosophy.society> (last accessed 19.02.2016)

about the impossibility of capturing the essence of the attacks with language. In an interview conducted by Giovanna Borradori in the immediate aftermath of the event, he claims that “the place and meaning of this ‘event,’ remains ineffable, like an intuition without concept, like a unicity with no generality on the horizon or with no horizon at all, out of range for a language that admits its powerlessness.”¹⁵³⁸ Hence, one of the central questions of the post-9/11 era centred on the issue of how to interpret and give meaning to the ‘event’ that seems to be too enormous to be contained within the ‘process’ of meaning-making and interpretation. On the other hand, Adorno’s moral dictum which dismisses the writing of post-Holocaust poetry as barbaric has been evoked, along this line of thought, cultural productions and fiction were not solely regarded as incapable of capturing new realities but also repudiated as morally unacceptable.

A sense of unease when it came to fiction prevailed in the direct aftermath of the events. Arin Keeble, for example, contends that many novels tackling 9/11 “were written under the pressure of an expectation that literature would provide answers and give meaning to a newly uncertain world.”¹⁵³⁹

This embrace of non-fiction may also be due to the demands that were placed on fiction tackling 9/11. Richard Gray, for example, expresses in his much-cited essay his disappointment at the lack of innovation in American fiction after 9/11. According to Gray, 9/11 forms part of the soil and deep structure underlying American literary production, because it altered the American consciousness: He considers the attacks as “a defining element in our contemporary structure of feeling and they cannot help but impact profoundly American writing.”¹⁵⁴⁰ Such a demand for an “enactment of difference”¹⁵⁴¹ in terms of the recognition of an altered consciousness, and a formal-aesthetic translation of these changes into literature were not solely posited in relation to American fiction, but were extended to Western art in general. As Rachel Greenwald Smith pinpoints it, a traumatic event of the magnitude of 9/11 may well be expected to produce new ways of seeing and thinking, for as history had shown, major literary shifts have often been the products of violent changes.¹⁵⁴² Hence, strikingly, as Peter Boxall points out, in the post-9/11 period, the fate of the novel had been tied to that of terrorism before the first literary responses had even been formulated.¹⁵⁴³ Not only aesthetic innovations were demanded, but also the exceptional authorial powers to face strangeness¹⁵⁴⁴ and to render an empathetic vision of events in times in which threat narratives centring on identity constructs of “us” versus “them” dominate the

¹⁵³⁸ Derrida, Jacques. “9/11 and Global Terrorism: An Interview with Jacques Derrida.” In: *The University of Chicago Homepage*. <http://press.uchicago.edu/books/derrida/derrida911.html> (last accessed 13th September 2016)

¹⁵³⁹ Keeble. 2014.. p.6.

¹⁵⁴⁰ Gray, Richard. “Open Doors, Closed Minds: American Prose Writing at a Time of Crisis.” In: *American Literary History* 21.1. 2009. pp. 128-148. p. 129.

¹⁵⁴¹ Ibid. p. 134.

¹⁵⁴² Greenwald Smith, Rachel. 2015. *Affect and American Literature in the Age of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 62.

¹⁵⁴³ Boxall, Peter. 2013. *Twenty-First Century Fiction: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 123-124.

¹⁵⁴⁴ Gray. 2009. p. 135.

public debate. In this vein, writing some weeks after the events, Ian McEwan emphasises the importance of empathy and an ethics of imagining oneself into the position of the other, a quality that is strongly associated with narrative fiction, with its interest in interiority and character development:

If the hijackers had been able to imagine themselves into the thoughts and feelings of the passengers, they would have been unable to proceed. It is hard to be cruel once you permit yourself to enter the mind of your victim. Imagining what it is like to be someone other than yourself is at the core of our humanity. It is the essence of compassion, and it is the beginning of morality.¹⁵⁴⁵

However well-intentioned McEwan's statement may have been, as Daniel O'Gorman quite rightly points out, despite this advocacy for the empathy-inducing power of literature, McEwan does fall into the trap of perpetuating the binary "us versus them" – discourse which has shaped the post-9/11 political and cultural landscape like no other. Referring to the "core of *our* humanity,"¹⁵⁴⁶ McEwan implicitly conjures an "imagined" community of those who share Enlightenment liberalism, or at least evokes a binary of those who are members of our humanity versus the terrorists, who decided to step out of it.¹⁵⁴⁷

Yet, McEwan's call for empathy is heavily suggestive of a role for literature and writers in the post-9/11-era and sets the agenda for a new writing.¹⁵⁴⁸ After the initial shock, those voices declaring the inadequacy of fiction in the face of disaster made way for demands for the 9/11-novel which was supposed to give a meaning to new realities. Robert McCrum, for instance, argues in *The Observer* on 23 September 2001 that "novelists at their best have privileged access to truths about the human condition."¹⁵⁴⁹ He further claims that in the midst of "the smoke and the rubble,"¹⁵⁵⁰ paradoxically, it has been the imaginative writers "who have provided the most trustworthy response to the dreadful irruption of horrifying reality"¹⁵⁵¹ in their abundant narrative output in the wake of the events. As Ulrich Baer points out in his collection of "personal essays, political opinion pieces, and testimonials"¹⁵⁵² by New York writers in the aftermath of the catastrophe, these stories all address the need for narrative. They adumbrate how the atrocity may be remembered and how the incomprehensible disaster may be moulded into a story without neglecting its "shocking singularity."¹⁵⁵³

Clearly, despite the widely pronounced need for a fictional counter-narrative, Birgit Däwes contends, fiction writers were hesitant to use the distancing device of fiction and drew on means of expressions

¹⁵⁴⁵ McEwan, Ian. "Only Love and Then Oblivion. Love Was All They Had to Set Against Their Murderers." In: *The Guardian*. 15.11.2001.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/15/september11.politicsphilosophyandsociety2> (last accessed 3rd March 2016)

¹⁵⁴⁶ Ibid. (My emphasis)

¹⁵⁴⁷ O'Gorman. 2015. pp. 2, 5.

¹⁵⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 1.

¹⁵⁴⁹ McCrum, Robert. "The Journalism of Novelists Can Supply Insights People Need at Times Like These." In: *The Observer*. 23.11.2001. p. 18.

¹⁵⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 18.

¹⁵⁵¹ Ibid. p. 18.

¹⁵⁵² Baer, Ulrich. "Introduction." In: Baer. 2002. pp. 1-9. p. 1.

¹⁵⁵³ Ibid. p. 2.

that were more contingent on authenticity.¹⁵⁵⁴ However, after a hiatus characterised by the profusion of the myriad of non-fictional narratives, later narratives were indeed fictional and have been dubbed by Peter Boxall and other critics¹⁵⁵⁵ the “9/11 novel.”¹⁵⁵⁶

However, considering the transnational scope of the disaster and its far-reaching geopolitical repercussions, how can such a genre possibly be conceptualised? Literary responses to the event are notably diverse and include novelistic endeavours from all over the globe. Critics have therefore been eager to point out that 9/11 literature is an international and transnational phenomenon.¹⁵⁵⁷ Richard Gray, for instance, observes that many literary responses to the event were informed by a vision of the world as “fluid ethnic and geographic boundaries, where every day is a crossing of borders,”¹⁵⁵⁸ thus creating transnational literary endeavours that are detached from bipolar or biracial discourses in American writing.¹⁵⁵⁹ O’Gorman discusses in his study *Fictions of the War on Terror; Difference and the Transnational 9/11 Novel*¹⁵⁶⁰ Anglophone literature, which is “not limited to a particular place.”¹⁵⁶¹ This transnational analysis of later publications dealing with 9/11 is predicated in the assumption that these responses differ from early 9/11-fiction in that they break away from the insularity of their predecessors, which tend to focus on the attacks and their direct aftermath.¹⁵⁶²

However, this study argues that despite the global spectacle of 9/11, the literature tackling these events often formulates strikingly nation-centric answers to the supposedly new realities. For example, social divisions in contemporary British society are given prominence in native authors’ responses to 9/11. Yet, there are also some common themes that may be identified as forming part of the body of transnational fictions on 9/11: many of the works review to varying degrees the discourse of “us versus them”, the ubiquitous trauma discourse as well as the poststructuralist framing of 9/11 in symbolic terms. Furthermore, most of the British novels discussed below launch a debate on the value of art and more precisely the part their own craft of narrative fiction may play in the post-9/11-world.

It may therefore be argued that despite the transnational scope of the catastrophe and the imprint the repetition of the televisual images left on the cultural memory of a global audience, the literary responses cannot be gauged in terms of a supra-territorial publishing phenomenon. Instead, the literary fiction discussed in this section draws on the global event of 9/11 and its aftermath to discuss the problems on

¹⁵⁵⁴ Däwes. 2011. p. 29.

¹⁵⁵⁵ See, for example: Holloway, David. 2008. *9/11 and the War on Terror*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. pp. 107-128. Keeble. 2014; Jones, David Martin; Smith, M.L.R. “Terror and the Liberal Conscience: Political Fiction and *Jihad* - The Novel Response to 9/11.” In: *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33.10. 2010. pp. 933-948.

¹⁵⁵⁶ Boxall. 2013. p. 126.

¹⁵⁵⁷ Araújo. 2015. p. 1.

¹⁵⁵⁸ Gray. 2011.p. 88.

¹⁵⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 100.

¹⁵⁶⁰ O’Gorman. 2015.

¹⁵⁶¹ Ibid. p. 10.

¹⁵⁶² Ibid. p. 11.

their doorsteps. For this reason, this study is seeking to carve out the particularly British response to the attacks of 11 September 2001.

To this end, five examples of literary responses to 9/11 by British writers will be analysed in this section. These include Pat Barker's *Double Vision* (2003), Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003), Ian McEwan's *Saturday* (2005), Zadie Smith's *On Beauty* (2005) and Chris Cleave's *Incendiary* (2005). To do justice to these versatile and complex literary endeavours, the taxonomic principles that have been readily applied to arrive at the genre category of "9/11" novels as well as the feasibility and relevance of such a category for the British novels listed above will be scrutinized. One of the key questions will be whether the label of the "9/11 novel" is applicable in view of the enormous diversity of the fictional texts it comprises. Subsequently, the specific formal-aesthetic features of the texts will be elucidated in order to, finally, seek insights into their potential socio-cultural function(s).

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With the profusion of fictional responses to the attacks on 11 September 2001 also the new genre category of '9/11'-fiction emerged. This genre label has been readily applied to refer to the great body of inter- and transnational literary works tackling the events. As discussed before, genre is inextricably linked to the concept of *Funktionsgeschichte* in that it responds to new socio-cultural developments and moulds them into recognisable, conventional forms that give expression to respective socio-cultural demands of an era. 9/11, which has been immediately interpreted as a watershed, may hence well be predestined to have engendered a new literary genre.

However, there is little clarity when it comes to the thematic contents and formal-aesthetic features that could define such a genre. One approach is that of David Martin Jones and M.L.R. Smith who regard "9/11 fiction" as a distinct genre of the political novel.¹⁵⁶³ Their taxonomy centres on the depiction of the cosmopolitan life of the disenchanted urban middle- and lower middle classes who project their anxieties onto the urban landscapes they inhabit in New York, London or Sydney.¹⁵⁶⁴ Yet, the multifarious and diverse approaches to 9/11 by British authors do not necessarily adhere to these characteristics. With the exception of Ian McEwan's *Saturday*, most of the works do not solely focus on the alienated urban middle class, but also discuss the state of Britain and the world after the events from the perspectives of different social strata, ethnic groups and professions. Other attempts at conceptualising the genre centre on common themes. Conceding that the classification of any literary genre is a fraught process and that the conception of new genres is never watertight, David Holloway argues that the early 9/11 novel casts history often as an "affliction that engulfed human agency and influence."¹⁵⁶⁵ He further discerns the writers' self-reflexive concern with the capacity of language and

¹⁵⁶³ Jones, Smith. 2010. p. 933.

¹⁵⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 934, p. 937.

¹⁵⁶⁵ Holloway. 2008. p. 107.

their own fictional narratives to give meaning to the events. Accordingly, “the 9/11 novel sometimes seemed more concerned with debating the responsibilities and limitations of writers, than writing about 9/11 itself.”¹⁵⁶⁶ Apart from the high degree of self-reflexion, O’Gorman detects in the later fictional responses a common interest in the deconstruction of differences between and within cultures, nations and individuals.¹⁵⁶⁷ In addition, Kristine A. Miller identifies in her introduction to the seminal edition *Transatlantic Literature and Culture After 9/11: The Wrong Side of Paradise*¹⁵⁶⁸ two major theoretical and fundamentally opposed strands of trauma and post-structuralist theory which have been applied to give meaning to events and have been reflected in the media. While, according to Miller, the former has cast 9/11 as a ‘wound beyond words’, the latter centres on the event as a media spectacle. However, although trauma and poststructuralist theories define themselves in opposition to one another, Miller argues that both theoretical strands share an emphasis on repetition in terms of a traumatic event that haunts us or a media spectacle that mesmerises us.¹⁵⁶⁹

Yet, despite these common thematic concerns displayed in the literary responses to 9/11, there are also critical voices questioning the validity of the genre label ‘9/11 novel’ which discounts not only the differences between, for example, American writers who may have a closer emotional proximity to the attacks than, let us say, a British author, but also ignores the broad thematic forcefield the cipher 9/11 has come to encompass in the years after its occurrence. Susana Araújo, for instance, argues that 9/11-literature does not solely comprise commentaries on the events themselves, but also on the subsequent political developments such as the War on Terror.¹⁵⁷⁰ Hence, 9/11-fiction may refer to a broad thematic range that extends beyond 9/11 to the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. Moreover, due to the transnational reach of the catastrophe, 9/11 has been incorporated into and shaped by various cultural perspectives and literary discourses.

A very sensible approach to the concept describing a 9/11 genre by Däwes acknowledges the vagueness of previous attempts at defining such literature. Focusing on the American 9/11 novel, Däwes distinguishes six categories to contain the “richly diverse range of novels”¹⁵⁷¹ she discusses in her study. While her approach relates to the tradition of American fiction and to American representations of 9/11 and is therefore not applicable to the British literary discourse examined below, her emphasis on the generic and stylistic varieties of the American literary responses and their complex “poetic morphology of the 9/11 novel”¹⁵⁷² is certainly very valid for our approach to British literature dealing with 9/11.

¹⁵⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 108.

¹⁵⁶⁷ O’Gorman. p. 11.

¹⁵⁶⁸ Miller, Kristine A. “Introduction: American Exceptionalism and the Special Relationship After 9/11.” In: Miller, Kristine A., ed. 2014. *Transatlantic Literature and Culture after 9/11: The Wrong Side of Paradise*. Houndsmill/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 1-13.

¹⁵⁶⁹ Ibid. pp. 3-6.

¹⁵⁷⁰ Araújo.2015. p. 4.

¹⁵⁷¹ Däwes. 2011. p. 19.

¹⁵⁷² Ibid. p. 24.

In this sense, *Double Vision*, *Brick Lane*, *Saturday*, *On Beauty* and *Incendiary* share a keen interest in capturing 9/11 and the state of the world in its aftermath, but vary considerably in scope, intensity and the perspectives of their representation of the subject matter. One may therefore argue that a common taxonomy of the “9/11”-novel would be inadequate for categorising the responses to the events by British authors. In contrast to the genre of ‘dynamite fiction’, which also encompasses a variety of different types of literature including sci-fi, social and early Modernism, the British responses to the events of 11 September do not necessarily take the centre stage but focus on other aspects instead. Smith’s, Ali’s and Barker’s texts, for instance, comment on the events, and their socio-cultural repercussions, but they are merely in the background of the narrative alongside other, broader cultural questions. In *Saturday*, on the other hand, McEwan dedicates a whole novel to capturing the threat scenarios of terrorist atrocities prevailing in the aftermath of 9/11, and relates these apprehensions to competing discourses of sciences and arts, and *Incendiary* links its representation of the life in London after a fictional terrorist attack to an exploration of the social inequality in Britain’s capital. In this vein, Boxall notes the difficulty of delineating the extent to which a novel actually represents the time after 11 September 2001 or may be regarded a 9/11 novel in itself.¹⁵⁷³ There are, however, some more nuanced approaches to the discussion of post-9/11 fiction. Matthew Brown, for example, observes that authors writing about 9/11 resort to three different genre categories: trauma narrative, family melodrama, and immigrant fiction.¹⁵⁷⁴ The first category is the most obvious one which responds to the sense of rupture and the trauma discourse that unfolded in the aftermath of the attacks. Brown regards it as dynamically intertwined with domestic fiction, casting the domestic melodrama as a reaction to and formation of the trauma narrative. The family is thus reconceived as the moral and legitimate stronghold against the “dissipative forces of history.”¹⁵⁷⁵

Taking a look abroad, the American 9/11 novel is mostly characterised by a focus on individual suffering and the impact of the attacks on domestic life. However, commentators note a change in the genre in the course of the first decade of its existence. Arin Keeble, for example, argues that all of the novels in the years after 9/11 centre on the sense of rupture, the politics of the time after the events and questions of identity as well as the location of the individual trauma within the wider larger collective trauma of 9/11. She identifies a slight development of these major themes and regards Hurricane Katrina as a landmark at which the mood of the novels shifted. Thus, the novels published after Hurricane Katrina reflect the politicised mood of dissent, which had taken root in the aftermath of 9/11.¹⁵⁷⁶ Despite these more politicised later works, the American literary representations of 9/11 have been criticised for domesticating the cataclysmic events which “are measured purely and simply in terms of their impact

¹⁵⁷³ Boxall. p. 126.

¹⁵⁷⁴ Brown, Matthew. “Joseph O’Neill and the Post-9/11 Novel.” In: Miller. 2014. pp. 110-128. p. 114.

¹⁵⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 115.

¹⁵⁷⁶ Keeble. 2014. pp. 13-15.

on the emotional entanglements of their protagonists.”¹⁵⁷⁷ Pieter Vermeulen and many other commentators have hence noted that the novels dealing with 9/11 routinely reference the trauma paradigm, but fail to hit an imaginative nerve. Time and again, American authors have been criticised for showing a lack of formal innovation, but also the sense of misrepresenting the global dimension of the changes ushered in by the 11 September attacks.¹⁵⁷⁸ Gray convincingly argues that the failure of American writers to give adequate answers to 9/11 reflects the reaction of many politicians and the mainstream media in the aftermath of the events, which resorted to old sureties including the enticing myth of American exceptionalism.¹⁵⁷⁹

Responses by British novelists, on the other hand, tend to assume a viewpoint which is shaped by the interest in the particular political and cultural significance of 9/11 for Britain. Magali Cornier Micheal states that the British perspective differs from its American counterparts in terms of its geographical distance from the attacks, its experience with previous terrorist groups such as the IRA and its position as a former colonial power.¹⁵⁸⁰ Yet, as Micheal also points out, however geographically remote the 11 September attacks were, the British public was politically closely involved in the War on Terror waged by the Bush administration and shared with the Americans and the rest of the world the experience of the relentless global media coverage of events.¹⁵⁸¹ As will be shown in more detail by means of the analysis of *Double Vision*, *Brick Lane*, *Saturday*, *On Beauty* and *Incendiary*, the political involvement of the British government under Tony Blair in George Bush’s campaign and the fear of a terrorist attack afflicting the capital created a very unique British literary discourse.

Novels like McEwan’s *Saturday* and Cleave’s *Incendiary* play on threat scenarios and the ‘logic of anticipated repetition’ reverberating in the UK in the aftermath of 9/11, thus staging the sense of impending doom and disaster. Ali’s *Brick Lane*, which is also set in London, describes the ramifications of the attacks from the perspective of a member of the deprived Bangladeshi community in East London. Set in the United States, Smith’s *On Beauty* does not discuss the fear of an apparently inevitable attack on the UK, but comments on the state of the post-9/11 world at large. Barker’s *Double Vision*, on the other hand, captures the traumatising effects of the images of war and terrorism, and raises questions about the ethics of 21st-century exhibition of atrocity. Each of these novels take different perspectives when it comes to negotiating the socio-cultural repercussions of these events. While McEwan, Cleave and Ali predominantly focus on the consequences for Britain, Smith and Barker raise ethical issues relevant to the global socio-cultural fault lines in the new millennium.

¹⁵⁷⁷ Gray. 2009. p. 134.

¹⁵⁷⁸ Vermeulen, Pieter. 2015. *Contemporary Literature and the End of the Novel: Creature, Affect, Form*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 126.

¹⁵⁷⁹ Gray. 2011. p. 17.

¹⁵⁸⁰ Cornier Micheal, Magali. “Writing Fiction in the Post-9/11 World: Ian McEwan’s *Saturday*.” In: Cilano, ed. 2009. pp. 25-51. p. 25.

¹⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.* p. 25.

Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, for example, describes the changes after 9/11 through the eyes of the female Bangladeshi immigrant Nazneen, and the protagonist in Chris Cleave's novel is a member of the white East End working-class who struggles economically after losing her husband in a terrorist attack. For this reason, these novels may be subsumed under different genre categories defining them more accurately than by means of the exclusive focus on their treatment of the 9/11 attacks. Hence, Ali's novel may be categorised as a *Bildungsroman* that traces the protagonist's maturation process from being a passive adjunct to her husband into an independent woman. Smith's *On Beauty* merely touches upon the 11 September attacks and may be defined as a campus novel representing life in a fictional American university town. Cleave's epistolary novel centres on the traumatic events of a fictive terrorist attack in London and Pat Barker's trauma narrative straddling the boundaries of a realist novel launches a discussion about the ethics of representing the horror of events like 9/11.

To begin with Ian McEwan's *Saturday*, which is often referred to as the quintessential British 9/11-novel, this text may be read as both a novel dedicated to gauging the relationship between arts and science, literature and medicine¹⁵⁸² and as a Condition-of-England novel.¹⁵⁸³ Moreover, it has been widely recognised and praised for its ability to capture the atmosphere charged with anxiety¹⁵⁸⁴ and the terrorism angst prevailing in London. Focusing on one day in a man's life and his domestic routine, the text reverses the tendency of the American novels to domesticate 9/11. Instead, it politicises the private domestic realm and shows that there is no sanctuary from world politics.¹⁵⁸⁵ The ramifications of the events form the background to the narrative and the threat posed by the political situation in its aftermath is palpable throughout the text. Set on 15 February 2003, the day of the historical mass demonstration against the British participation in the invasion of Iraq, *Saturday* portrays this day from the perspective of the successful neurosurgeon Henry Perowne. Evolving against the backdrop of an apprehended terror attack in London after 9/11, the story centring on Perowne's experiences on that day reflects the mood of the early millennium overcast with impending disaster. Thus, as the *Guardian* columnist Mark Lawson points out in his review of the novel, McEwan "gives a global dimension to the details of a neurosurgeon's day."¹⁵⁸⁶

Because of this interest in exploring the impact of world politics on the lives in a microcosm, that is the link between the public and the private, the book has also been categorised as a 'Condition-of-England novel', a subgenre that has Victorian and Edwardian forerunners and focuses on "landmark

¹⁵⁸² Fischer, Pascal. "Literature and Medicine in Ian McEwan's *Saturday*." In: Lembert-Heidenreich, Alexandra; Mildorf, Jarmila, eds. 2013. *The Writing Cure: Literature and Medicine in Context*. Berlin/Zürich: Lit. pp. 95-111.

¹⁵⁸³ Ross, Micheal L. "On a Darkling Planet: Ian McEwan's *Saturday* and the Condition of England." In: *Twentieth Century Literature* 54.1. 2009. pp. 75-96.

¹⁵⁸⁴ Greiner, Ulrich. "McEwan, der Zauberkünstler." In: *Zeit Online*. 28.07.2005.
<http://www.zeit.de/2005/31/L-McEwan> (last accessed 1st Mach 2016)

¹⁵⁸⁵ Cornier Micheal. 2009. p. 28.

¹⁵⁸⁶ Lawson, Mark. "Against the flow." In: *The Guardian*. 22.01.2005.
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/jan/22/bookerprize2005.bookerprize> (last accessed 1st Mach 2016)

movements of society,”¹⁵⁸⁷ and which “put social consciousness and social intervention high on the agenda.”¹⁵⁸⁸ Traditionally, the ‘Condition-of-England novel’ hinges on class conflicts and frictions between owners and their workforce. Ross, however, argues that *Saturday* is set in a time that long post-dates the Industrial Revolution, yet still displays some of the main traits of the genre. The urban setting, frequent references to the rally against the war on Iraq, an event of public importance, the conflict between a member of the elite and the derelict Baxter are all typical features of the genre.¹⁵⁸⁹

Furthermore, like the historical precursors of the genre, the text captures the political mood and contemporary developments. The “special relationship” of the UK and the US, which was much fortified in the post-9/11 era, looms large over the squash game between Henry Perowne and his American colleague Jay Strauss. As Molly Hillard Clark points out, the twenty-page long squash scene functions as a “national metaphor”¹⁵⁹⁰ for the Anglo-American relationship in the wake of 9/11. While Perowne’s stance towards the Anglo-American counter-terrorism politics is ambivalent, Strauss’ attitude seems to be much more definite. He is “a man of untroubled certainties, impatient of talk of diplomacy, weapons of mass destruction, inspection teams, proofs of links of al-Qaeda and so on.”¹⁵⁹¹ During the game, Perowne’s “incarnation of British upper-class masculinity squares off directly against his somewhat formulaic picture of American masculinity.”¹⁵⁹² What is more, the game “becomes an extended metaphor of character defect.”¹⁵⁹³ That is, Strauss’ “muscularity is treated with distaste; his hawkishness is indivisible from his American identity.”¹⁵⁹⁴ As Rebecca Carpenter points out in her essay “‘We’re Not a Friggin’ Girl Band’: September 11, Masculinity, and the British-American Relationship in David Hare’s *Stuff Happens* and Ian McEwan’s *Saturday*,” the opposition of these two identities – of the English upper class and the crude American – eventually collide in this scene, and the game that has been competitive from the outset becomes combative in the end. When Strauss misses the match ball and claims that it was Perowne’s fault because he got in his way, the two players start a surrogate argument about the outcome of the game. While Strauss childishly insists on his having lost the game due to Perowne’s mistake and attempts to manipulate the game, the latter reacts in a mature manner. In contrast to the effeminate and weak media representation of Britain’s role in the Anglo-American special relationship, the behaviour of the rivals is emblematic for their nationalities, and the need for a balanced, “typically” British fair play attitude in a world on the brink of war that may keep the belligerent American tendencies in check.¹⁵⁹⁵

¹⁵⁸⁷ Ross. 2009. p. 75.

¹⁵⁸⁸ Ganteau, Jean-Michel. 2015. *The Ethics and Aesthetics of Vulnerability in Contemporary British Fiction*. New York/Abingdon: Routledge. p. 133.

¹⁵⁸⁹ Ross. 2009. pp. 75-76.

¹⁵⁹⁰ Hillard Clark, Molly. 2008. “When Desert Armies Start to Fight: Re-reading McEwan’s *Saturday* and Matthew Arnold’s ‘Dover Beach’.” In: *Partial Answers* 6.1. 2008. pp. 181-206. p. 197.

¹⁵⁹¹ McEwan. 2005. p. 100.

¹⁵⁹² Carpenter. 2008. p. 152.

¹⁵⁹³ McEwan. 2005. p. 106.

¹⁵⁹⁴ Hilard Clark. 2008. p. 197.

¹⁵⁹⁵ Carpenter. 2008. p. 153.

The condition of England is also tackled through a common theme of McEwan's fiction, that of a violent intrusion from the outside. In *Saturday* it has been harnessed for the politics of the post-9/11 world. While on the global scale, London is represented as apprehending its own attack, on the level of the novel's microcosm, the domestic sanctuary of the Perowne family is violated by a white English male.¹⁵⁹⁶ Hence, as has been noted, the work corresponds thematically to McEwan's fiction, which persistently tackles the themes of the intrusion "of brutal, inescapable reality into comfortable lives."¹⁵⁹⁷ *Saturday* thus portrays the sense of vulnerability that has afflicted contemporary urban societies ever since the atrocities of 11 September 2001. The text is engrossed in questions relating to the state of the world and the menace to Britain and, in particular, its capital. This is raised at the very beginning of the text, when the protagonist Perowne, a neurosurgeon, wakes in the dawn and watches the burning engine of a plane in London's skyline, a scene which "construed from the outside, from afar like this, is also familiar."¹⁵⁹⁸ The association with 9/11 is thus inevitable, for "everyone agrees, airliners look different in the sky these days, predatory or doomed."¹⁵⁹⁹ The novel is infused with premonitions of terrorist attacks and discusses the ramifications of such an anticipation of disaster. It is this climate of angst dominating life in London that forms the unsettling background to Perowne's experience of this *Saturday* in February.

What is more, it exemplifies the intensity of the mnemonic imprint of 9/11 on individual and cultural memory on a transnational scale. The interpretation of a plane suffering from mechanical problems as a terrorist attack is indicative of the trauma of the Western psyche. At the sight of the burning plane, Perowne is instantly reminded of the 11 September attacks and expects the worst.¹⁶⁰⁰ Later in the day, Perowne resents himself for "foolishly apocalyptic"¹⁶⁰¹ assumptions which, however, reflect the general paranoia and fear of an attack in Britain. In the course of the day, Perowne cannot escape the news on the radio: the pilot and the co-pilot of the burning plane are said to be of Chechen origin and a Koran was allegedly found in the cockpit,¹⁶⁰² which was a rumour that was also spread online.¹⁶⁰³ The images of the pilots' arrest haunt Perowne even during the squash game, when the hour of recreation at the squash court is infected by the public domain brought to him via silent television.¹⁶⁰⁴ Ultimately, it is revealed that the pilots are Russian Christians. They are exonerated by the authorities and freed to return to their homes.¹⁶⁰⁵ This early apprehension of disaster, however, presages the actual threat to the Perowne family towards the end of the day. Micheal L. Ross therefore regards the initial disturbance of British airspace by putative enemies as proleptic of the later penetration of the private space of the Perowne family and

¹⁵⁹⁶ Ross. 2009. pp. 75-96. p. 78.

¹⁵⁹⁷ Rennison, Nick. 2005. *Contemporary British Novelists*. London/New York: Routledge. p. 110.

¹⁵⁹⁸ McEwan. 2005 p. 16.

¹⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 16.

¹⁶⁰⁰ Cornier Micheal. 2009. p. 33.

¹⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.* p. 76.

¹⁶⁰² *Ibid.* p. 126.

¹⁶⁰³ *Ibid.* p. 151.

¹⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.* p. 108.

¹⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p. 179.

the intended violent sexual penetration of Daisy.¹⁶⁰⁶ The whole ‘Condition-of-England’ and the life of its inhabitant Henry Perowne is therefore inundated with premonitions of doom and disaster which, one may argue, reflect the ‘logic of anticipated repetition’ prevailing in the aftermath of 9/11.

Saturday is, however, not the only novel that responds to the apprehension of further violence to come, proceeding from the assumption of another terrorist attack to happen on British soil. *Incendiary* also reflects an atmosphere dominated by that logic. The novel plays on real fears of terrorist atrocities by staging a fictive attack on the Arsenal football stadium in North London, and embeds these events, as we shall see, into an oftentimes tragicomic narrative that celebrates the protagonist’s truculence in the face of disaster.

Saturday, by contrast, does not feature an actual attack on British ground, but conveys the unsettling sentiment that a terrorist attack on London is both imminent and ineluctable. Unlike *Incendiary*’s endorsement of the refusal to succumb against all odds, *Saturday* conveys a sense of defencelessness and futility of action. From Perowne’s point of view, a terrorist attack seems inevitable and London cannot but to await its bomb.¹⁶⁰⁷ Perowne perceives the mass demonstrations against the war in Iraq in a similar vein. He claims that “the war is going to happen, with or without the UN, whatever any government says or any mass demonstrations. The hidden weapons, whether they exist or not, they’re irrelevant. The invasion is going to happen and militarily it’s bound to succeed.”¹⁶⁰⁸ This “discussion of the disempowerment of citizens”¹⁶⁰⁹ recurs throughout the novel and takes on a more abstract form of discussion about the limits of human agency.¹⁶¹⁰ At many instances, Perowne meditates on the illusion of playing an active part and contributing something to the story of world politics.¹⁶¹¹ As a scientist, he believes in pure chance and physical laws and rejects the ideas of providence or fate.¹⁶¹² Yet, there is a sense of unease about this submission to the will of the forces of nature that accompanies Perowne and makes him feel culpable in his helplessness.¹⁶¹³

To return to *Incendiary*, this text also captures the entanglement of private and public experiences and vulnerabilities that are beyond the protagonist’s control. While McEwan’s *Saturday* invokes this sensation of vulnerability by staging a “catastrophic vision of a disaster that never happened,”¹⁶¹⁴ Cleave’s post- 9/11 novel imagines the disastrous consequences of a fictional terrorist attack in London resulting in mass casualties and the severe traumatisation of the female protagonist as well as the metropolis of London. Harnessing the genre of the epistolary novel, Cleave’s narrative embraces the

¹⁶⁰⁶ Ross. 2009. p. 78.

¹⁶⁰⁷ McEwan. 2005. p. 276.

¹⁶⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 189.

¹⁶⁰⁹ Holloway. 2008.. p. 113.

¹⁶¹⁰ Ibid. p. 113.

¹⁶¹¹ McEwan. 2005 p. 180.

¹⁶¹² Ibid. p. 128.

¹⁶¹³ Ibid. p. 22.

¹⁶¹⁴ Golimowska, Karolina. 2016. *The Post-9/11 City in Novels: Literary Remappings of New York and London*. Jefferson: McFarland. p. 135.

interiority the genre provides¹⁶¹⁵ to represent the protagonist's lived experience after her husband and son die in an attack during a football match. The central character, whose name is never revealed in the course of the novel, relates the anguish of losing her four-year-old boy and her spouse, and the struggles in a London transformed into a dystopian police state dominated by paranoia and racism in her letter to an imagined Osama bin Laden addressee.

Against this backdrop, the choice of the fictional letter form is particularly interesting. As Anne Bower argues, the epistolary form has traditionally been applied to female letter writers who inhabited a marginalised position in society. Thriving on the absence of an "other," the letter writer may "take control of language in a particularly direct, personal, accessible form of communication."¹⁶¹⁶ Choosing the epistolary form hence is apt to reinforce the woman's right to her own discourse.¹⁶¹⁷ Thus, the choice of the letter form in Cleave's post-9/11 novel indicates a desire to control one's discourse and language in order to regain power over a world¹⁶¹⁸ that has been utterly shaken by the terrorist event. The novel displays further characteristics inherent to the traditional epistolary novel, in which the antagonist of the female voice is usually male, and the battered woman eventually succumbs to the mores, or is punished for her transgressions.¹⁶¹⁹ In *Incendiary*, the male antagonism is even twofold. Firstly, he is constituted by the imaginative Osama bin Laden figure who functions as the recipient of the letter. He is the terrorist ringleader icon of the post-9/11 world and thus deemed responsible for all the subsequent attacks in Western cities. In Cleave's narrative, his presence is that of a phantom repository for the protagonist's pain. Secondly, on the level of the actual story, Jasper Black, the protagonist's wealthy neighbour, and his girlfriend function as her nemeses.

Incendiary derives much of its tension from the social inequality of the characters representing the chasm between the upper middle class and working-class Londoner. The narrator herself is described as uneducated and frequently quotes headlines on the *Sun*, her major source of information. Her working-class background is underscored by her language, the local Cockney dialect. However, the reader may detect from her letter that she is naturally intelligent and plain-spoken and Jasper is instantly drawn to her warm-heartedness. The protagonist, in turn, seeks warmth and intimacy in her sexual encounters with Jasper to distract herself from the feelings of anxiety caused by her husband's work as a bomb disposal expert. As Reina van der Wiel points out, the narrator is predominantly characterised in terms of her maternal identity. Lacking family and friends, and having been a stay-at-home-mum prior to the terrorist attack, in the aftermath of her son's death, she extends her mothering behaviour to the adult male characters of the novel, including Jasper Black, her husband's former boss, Terence Butcher, and

¹⁶¹⁵ Kempner, Brandon. "Blow the World Back Together: Literary Nostalgia, 9/11, and Terrorism in Seamus Heaney, Chris Cleave, and Martin Amis." In: Cilano, ed. 2009. pp. 53-74. p. 64.

¹⁶¹⁶ Bower, Anne. 1997. *Epistolary Responses: The Letter in 20th Century American Fiction and Criticism*. Tuscaloosa/London: University of Alabama Press. p. 7.

¹⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 7.

¹⁶¹⁸ Kempner. 2009. p. 65.

¹⁶¹⁹ Bower. 1997. p. 7.

Osama bin Laden.¹⁶²⁰ In particular, her life is inextricably linked to that of Jasper through their collective experience of the trauma of witnessing the terrorist attack on the television set and the guilt associated with it. Through their shared experience of the terrorist attack and the resulting post-traumatic stress, their initially affectionate relationship is turned into obsession and sexual violence.¹⁶²¹

Hence, the novel also focuses on the trauma discourse of the aftermath of 9/11 and transposes the post-9/11 notion of a trauma inflicted by terrorism to Britain, thus exploring the repercussions of a possible terrorist attack against the socio-economic and cultural backdrop of its capital. Soon dubbed as “May Day”, the attacks inflict the traumatic injury on both the protagonist and London. The metropolis also suffers deeply from the effects of the trauma induced by terrorism, which provokes panic and blatant racism.¹⁶²² The barrage balloons intended to protect high-rise buildings are a reminder that another attack could happen again any time soon. *Incendiary* may therefore also be classified as trauma fiction, as it attempts to capture both the individual as well as the public trauma affecting London. The epistolary form is used to contain and control this trauma of the narrator and her city by returning to the means of self-expression provided by the novel of letters. It is through the medium of the letter that she can make sense of her surroundings which are inundated by the sense of rupture and loss.¹⁶²³

Pat Barker’s *Double Vision* discusses 9/11 in terms of the trauma visited on the Western psyche, yet as critics such as John Brannigan have pointed out, “the novel engages critically and imaginatively with the politics of post-9/11 vulnerability.”¹⁶²⁴ The text which can be both thematically – and as will be outlined in the next subsection – formally defined as trauma fiction engaging with questions concerning the ethics of representing violence and suffering. Thematically, it deals with trauma as “a metaphor [...] for the unassimilable in historical and social crisis, and its traces in culture”¹⁶²⁵ by featuring a protagonist who displays signs of PTSD. The setting of the novel is not London, which as we have seen in this study features so prominently in texts representing terrorism, but rural Northumbria, where the war correspondent Stephen Sharkey seeks to recover from the failure of his marriage and the traumatising effects of the violence he witnessed working in many violent conflicts around the globe. Yet, the pastoral idyll of the rural setting is also haunted by violence and conflict.¹⁶²⁶ First of all, the protagonist cannot escape the intrusion of the traumatic memory of his time as a war correspondent. He shows symptoms of PTSD including flashbacks to the eversame image of a raped girl who he and his friend and colleague Ben Forbisher, a war photographer, encounter in Sarajevo: “In a corner of the landing, away from the danger of flying glass, a girl huddled on a mattress. She didn’t speak or cry out or try to get away. [...]

¹⁶²⁰ Van der Wiel, Reina. “Dear Osama: Impersonal Intimacy and the Problem of Mothering in Chris Cleave’s *Incendiary*.” In: Cooke, Jennifer, ed. 2013. *Scenes of Intimacy: Reading, Writing, Theorizing Contemporary Literature*. London/New York: Bloomsbury. pp. 171-189. p. 182.

¹⁶²¹ Ibid. p. 173.

¹⁶²² Muslims are suspended from working as they are deemed to pose a security risk. Cleave. 2005. p. 91.

¹⁶²³ Kempner. 2009. pp. 65-67.

¹⁶²⁴ Brannigan, John. 2005. *Pat Barker*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. p. 153.

¹⁶²⁵ Rawlinson, Mark. 2010. *Pat Barker*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. p. 133.

¹⁶²⁶ Ibid. p. 156.

Eyes wide open, skirt bunched up around her waist, her splayed thighs enclosing a blackness of blood and pain.”¹⁶²⁷ Haunted by this harrowing image, Stephen suffers from insomnia and avoids any kind of stimuli that might provoke the recurrence of traumatic memory. For example, he wishes to move his desk in his brother’s cottage away from the window to make sure he cannot be hit by flying glass,¹⁶²⁸ an assumption that seems absurd in the rural setting of Northumbria, but which reveals the degree of his traumatisation. Secondly, some of the characters Stephen encounters in his refuge either have to experience violence or have inflicted harm themselves. Amongst them are Justine, Stephen’s young girlfriend who is assaulted during a burglary, Peter Wingrave, an ostensible psychopath who murdered an old lady as a child,¹⁶²⁹ as well as Stephen’s autistic nephew with a passion for collecting animal bones. They all form the backdrop of “Barker’s figuration of the rural as the scene of devastation, abandonment and crisis.”¹⁶³⁰ The remnants of the foot-and-mouth-disease are indicative of the setting’s bleakness:

Certainly, Stephen had returned to find a countryside in crisis. Boarded-up shops and cafés, empty fields, strips of yellow tape that nobody had bothered to remove even after the paths reopened, just as nobody had bothered to remove the disinfectant mats that now lay at the entrance to every tourist attraction, bleached and baking in the sun.¹⁶³¹

The 11 September attacks are just one event among a series of crises affecting the life of the protagonist. His memory of events is shaped by the relentless repetition of imagery he sees on the television set from his hotel room in New York. As a media expert, Stephen perceives 9/11 firstly in terms of its media representation. Evoking Baudrillard’s statement that 9/11 outstripped fiction, Stephen observes: “The television screen domesticated the roar and tumult, the dust, the debris, the cries, the thud of bodies hitting the ground, reduced all this to silent images, played and replayed, and played again in a vain attempt to make the day’s events credible.”¹⁶³² His professional eye notes that the repetitive broadcasting of the imagery cannot contain the visual spectacularity of the atrocity. Instead, by means of perpetual mediation, the violence is reduced to hyperreal scenarios and the boundaries between reality and the simulacra become ever more blurred.

Similar representations of 9/11 as a media spectacle can also be found in other British novels. It shows how remote, and at the same time, cataclysmic these events have been to a British audience. *Incendiary*, for instance, stages a fictive attack during a live broadcast and thus the televised terrorism of 9/11. The scenario in the witnesses living room further exacerbates the experience. That is, the narrator invites Jasper over to her house to watch the football game on television. Beforehand, she saw her husband and son off to watch the game in the stadium. With the game on television in the background, Jasper and the

¹⁶²⁷ Barker. 2003. p. 45.

¹⁶²⁸ Barker. 2003. p. 41.

¹⁶²⁹ Ibid. p. 233.

¹⁶³⁰ Brannigan. 2005. p. 156.

¹⁶³¹ Barker. 2003. p. 168.

¹⁶³² Brannigan. 2005. p. 81.

female protagonist have sexual intercourse, which comes to a halt when they witness the terrorist attack on screen:

I was thinking nothing much I was watching the telly. The fog bank faded into a big dirty ball of smoke and orange flame boiling up where the East Stand used to be. The keeper was flat on his face he wasn't moving. The flames rolled over him. [...] Some of the players were down and the rest were running now. They were running for the tunnel ahead of the waves of smoke and fire and some of them didn't make it. The other players had their arms up to cover their heads because half the Gunners fan club was falling down around them in bits. There were feet and halves of faces and big lumps of stuff in Arsenal shirts with long ropes spilling behind them like strings of sausages I suppose it was guts. All of it was falling out of the top of the screen. It didn't seem real. I looked out on the street. It was still very sunny and quiet out there. The old dear was shuffling off up the road and the 3 kids were still running in circles on their bikes.¹⁶³³

As van der Wiel phrases it, “in this one, traumatic moment, public and private domains collide.”¹⁶³⁴ The narrator's and her lover's infidelity is inextricably linked to the traumatic terrorist attack. As their intercourse comes to a halt, the narrator notes, “Jasper Black pulled out of me. I felt so empty. There had been something inside me but now there was nothing.”¹⁶³⁵ This sensation of emptiness refers not only to the end of their love-making, but also to the drastic rift in her life engendered by the attacks, and as will be shown later on, the metaphor of the hole recurs throughout the novel in an attempt to convey the incredible grief of the protagonist. Although *Incendiary* does not represent 9/11 itself but a fictive attack, the above scene reflects, however, the often-noted hyperreality of the events as a televised quasi-fictive experience. In the above passage, the narrator is also unable to take those images for real. They seem to have sprung from a Hollywood disaster movie with flying limbs looking “like some chippie was trying to climb out of the earth.”¹⁶³⁶ Cleave's novel paints a dystopian picture of future horrifying televised terrorism, leaving the spectator, just as on 9/11, prostrate with incredulity and grief.

Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* also depicts the televisual experience of 9/11 of the protagonist Nazneen and her husband Chanu. In Ali's multicultural *Bildungsroman* the attacks and their public mediation function as a personal turning point for the protagonist, who subsequently decides to take her life into her own hands. In the scene in which the family witnesses the attacks, the televised images are described through Nazneen's eyes as “a thick bundle of black smoke is hanging outside the tower. It looks too heavy to hang there. An aeroplane comes in slow motion from the corner of the screen. It appears to be flying at the level of the buildings. Nazneen thinks she had better get on with her work.”¹⁶³⁷ At this point, the protagonist does not comprehend that the images are real. The slow motion of the aeroplane and the view at the television screen seem to suggest that it is a film. Yet, she is eventually captured by the perpetual repetition of the images: “The plane comes again and again. Nazneen and Chanu fall under its spell.”¹⁶³⁸ While before Nazneen was focaliser, now the couple's joint experiences of the event are

¹⁶³³ Cleave. 2005. pp. 55-56.

¹⁶³⁴ Van der Wiel. 2013. pp. 171-189. p. 173.

¹⁶³⁵ Barker. 2003. p. 59.

¹⁶³⁶ Ibid. p. 55.

¹⁶³⁷ Ali. 2003. p. 397.

¹⁶³⁸ Ibid. p. 398.

described: “Now they see smoke: a pillar of smoke, collapsing.”¹⁶³⁹ They even have the same physical reactions: “Nazneen and Chanu rise. They stay on their feet and watch it a second, a third time.”¹⁶⁴⁰ The images thus have a mesmerising effect on the audience, and what is more, Nazneen perceives their experience of the events through the television screen as something they have survived together as a family.¹⁶⁴¹ Moreover, 9/11 functions as a “key episode,”¹⁶⁴² and epiphany moment for the protagonist. Particularly the harrowing image of the falling men triggers the “dormant political awareness”¹⁶⁴³ in her: “A small figure leaning out of a window; high up, maybe a hundred floors in the air, he reaches out and cannot be saved. Another figure jumps and at that moment it seems to Nazneen that hope and despair are nothing against the world and what it holds and what it holds for you.”¹⁶⁴⁴ These thoughts rendered by the third-person narrator reverse the message of Nazneen’s favourite sura, part of which says:

The life to come holds a richer prize for you
 Than this present life. You shall be gratified
 With what the Lord will give you.¹⁶⁴⁵

Instead of accepting passively what is given to her in the hope of a better life after death, watching the images of 9/11, Nazneen is set to explore what the world holds for her. The atrociousness and incommensurability of people falling to their deaths awake Nazneen from her passive and accepting slumber. As Pleßke argues, “Nazneen’s emancipation is founded on the uncertainty principle which furthers anxiety but also leads to manifestations of fatalist agency.”¹⁶⁴⁶ Her character development is further abetted by the political repercussions of the attacks such as the invasion of Afghanistan and the racial hatred the Muslim community faces in the wake of 9/11.¹⁶⁴⁷ Thus, Nazneen’s awakening induced by the attacks on the World Trade Center and their consequences for her community in East London is transferred from the private realm of *Bildung* into the public arena of world politics.¹⁶⁴⁸

As Anna Rettberg points out, 9/11 has been the most crucial turning point for the conviviality of cultures in Britain,¹⁶⁴⁹ and this turning point is in Ali’s novel not only staged in terms of a private moment of awakening of the protagonist, but also as a watershed for the communities in East London, marked by the riots instigated by the fundamentalist Muslim Bengal Tigers in response to the English far-right group called The Lion Hearts. Thus, the terrorist attacks that happened far away, across the

¹⁶³⁹ Ibid. p. 398.

¹⁶⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 398.

¹⁶⁴¹ Ibid. p. 399.

¹⁶⁴² Mustafa, Shakir. “Defending the Faith: Islam in Post 9/11 Anglophone Fiction.” In: *Religion & Literature* 41.2. 2009. pp. 281-288. p. 282.

¹⁶⁴³ Feng, Pin-Chia. “Out of Brick Lane: The Novel of Awakening and Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*.” In: *Tamkang Review* 401. 2009. pp. 15-28. p. 20.

¹⁶⁴⁴ Ali.2003. p. 399.

¹⁶⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 53.

¹⁶⁴⁶ Pleßke. 2012. p. 496

¹⁶⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 496.

¹⁶⁴⁸ Feng. 2009. p. 20.

¹⁶⁴⁹ Rettberg, Anna. “Remediating Turning Points for Conviviality and Englishness in Contemporary Black British Literature.” In: Nünning, Ansgar, Sicks, Kai Marcel, eds. 2012. *Turning Points: Concepts and Narratives of Change in Literature and Other Media*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter. pp. 175-190. p. 185.

ocean, have a concrete impact on the life of the Bangladeshis in Tower Hamlets. The narrator portrays the transformation of the cultural relations in the wake of the events as “a pinch of New York dust”¹⁶⁵⁰ that settles on the estate the protagonist and her family live in. A girl’s hijab is pulled off and Razia’s Union Jack sweatshirt is spat on. The growing uncertainty and anxiety also has a direct impact on the protagonist’s life. While Chanu wants to leave the UK, Nazneen seeks to establish an independent life in London. She emancipates herself from both her arranged husband Chanu and her lover Karim, a British-born Bangladeshi, who identifies Nazneen with what he considers to be “the real thing.”¹⁶⁵¹ That is to say, he thinks of her as a genuine Muslim woman with a “real” Bangladeshi identity, rather than being a westernised version of Bangladesh’s original culture.

9/11 therefore functions as the turning point in what Micheal Perfect regards as a multicultural *Bildungsroman* tracing “Nazneen’s narrative of emancipation and enlightenment.”¹⁶⁵² To begin with, in order to elucidate in how far the *Bildungsroman* genre applies to Ali’s novel, it seems worthwhile to examine its origins and contemporary forms. Having been a staple of the British novel since its inception in the early eighteenth century,¹⁶⁵³ the *Bildungsroman* is a genre that features a plot line that incorporates the different social and cultural environments through which the protagonist moves.¹⁶⁵⁴ In its contemporary *gestalt*, which has been shaped by postcolonial writers, the genre often centres on the development of a subaltern subject such as female and migrants who struggle with the limitations their position in society imposes.¹⁶⁵⁵ Tracing the development of the young Nazneen who lives by the standard that fighting one’s fate may be fatal to become a self-maintained, independent woman who works as a designer in her friend Razia’s tailoring business, Ali embraces the *Bildungsroman*, frequently deployed by the later generations of postcolonial writers labelled ‘Black British’. This comprehensive label refers to literature written by postcolonial immigrants to Britain¹⁶⁵⁶ dealing “with the situation of those who came from former colonies and their descendants, but also the society which they discovered and continue to shape.”¹⁶⁵⁷ The prominent themes Mark Stein ascribes to the genre include the construction

¹⁶⁵⁰ Ali. 2003. p. 400.

¹⁶⁵¹ Ibid. p. 419.

¹⁶⁵² Perfect, Micheal. “The Multicultural Bildungsroman: Stereotypes in Monica Ali’s Brick Lane.” In: *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 43.3. 2008. pp. 109-120. p.119.

¹⁶⁵³ “The *Bildungsroman* emerged from the particular historical and intellectual circumstances of eighteenth-century Germany. [...] The genre embodies the Goethean model of organic growth: cumulative, gradual, total. Originating in the Idealist tradition of the Enlightenment, with its belief in human perfectibility and historical progress, this understanding of human growth assumes the possibility of individual achievement and social integration.” Abel, Elizabeth; Hirsch, Marianne; Langland, Elizabeth, eds. 1983. *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development*. Hanover/London: The University Press of New England. p. 5.

¹⁶⁵⁴ Bentley, Nick. 2008. *Contemporary British Fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. p. 22.

¹⁶⁵⁵ Solomon, Jeff. “Bildungsroman.” In: Booker, Keith, ed. 2005. *Encyclopedia of Literature & Politics*. Vol I. Westport: Greenwood. pp. 83-85.

¹⁶⁵⁶ As John Skinner points out, the label “Black British” includes African, Caribbean and Asian writers, and has therefore been deemed ideological and, in the least, chromatic. According to him, the reductionist label has, however, been used as a shorthand to refer to writers of African, Caribbean and Asian descent who were actually born in Britain. Skinner, John. “Black British Interventions.” In: Shaffer, Brian W. 2005. *A Companion to the British and the Irish Novel 1945-2000*. Malden/Oxford: Blackwell. pp. 128-143. pp. 128-129.

¹⁶⁵⁷ Stein, Mark. 2004. *Black British Literature: Novels of Transformation*. Columbus: The Ohio State University

of a place called home, the search for one's own history, issues of identity, cultural hybridity and difference, racism and cultural change.¹⁶⁵⁸ These features of 'Black British' fiction reflect the concerns of Ali's post-9/11 *Bildungsroman*., a genre which by definition tackles transformation and change. Moreover, Ali's take on the genre should also be assessed with regard to the distinctive features of female *Bildung*. According to Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch and Elizabeth Langland, two narrative forms predominate in the female *Bildungsroman*: Firstly, they identify the narrative of apprenticeship which follows the male narrative pattern and relates the female process of learning from childhood onwards chronologically. The second discernible pattern is that of awakening, in which the female development is deferred and takes place after marriage, when the protagonist fails to find fulfilment in marriage. The growth according to the pattern of awakening may be induced by a few epiphanic moments and is often accompanied by adultery. This novel of awakening often features the break away from marital authority.¹⁶⁵⁹ *Brick Lane*'s description of female *Bildung* corresponds to this template in that it turns on moments such as 9/11 with its repercussions for the Bangladeshi community and Nazneen's affair with Karim. These two key epiphanies facilitate the heroine's emancipation from her husband and the strict religious mores of her community. Pin-chia Feng accordingly regards Ali's novel as an "ethnic female *Bildungsroman*, with a special emphasis on the theme of awakening."¹⁶⁶⁰

Another contribution from the realms of Black British Literature comes from Zadie Smith. *On Beauty* shares with *Brick Lane* an awareness of the ways in which the notions of identity and hybridity have been shaped by 9/11. In contrast to Ali's novel, Smith avoids an unprivileged perspective of an immigrant and discusses the aftermath of the attacks in the milieu of the US-American academia instead. Adhering to the campus novel type, Smith's *On Beauty* considers the relationship of aesthetics and ethics in the post-9/11 world. The novel's microcosm is described as being characterised by hardened ideological lines and threat narratives centring on binary oppositions of "self" and "other". The genre of the campus novel deployed by Smith is ideal for a discussion of the philosophy of art, ethics, aesthetics as well as politics¹⁶⁶¹ in the post-9/11- world. Elaine Showalter notes in her study of the Anglo-American academic novel that the genre has evolved substantially since its inception in the 1950s. While the first campus novels were essentially light-hearted representations of the microcosm of the ivory tower, later exponents of the genre became increasingly sinister and serious. These novels always reflect on the dilemmas of the wider society, presenting them as a microcosm.¹⁶⁶² Hence, instead of addressing the cultural challenges of the post-9/11 era directly, the campus genre allows for a condensed view of post-

Press. xii.

¹⁶⁵⁸ Ibid. p. xii.

¹⁶⁵⁹ Abel; Hirsch; Langland, eds. 1983. pp. 11-12.

¹⁶⁶⁰ Feng. 2009. p. 18.

¹⁶⁶¹ Selejan, Corina. "Aesthetics, Form and Consolation in Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*." In: Childs, Peter; Colebrook, Clare; Groes, Sebastian. 2014. *Women's Fiction and Post- 9/11 Contexts*. Lanham/Boulder et al.: Lexington. pp. 35-49. p. 37.

¹⁶⁶² Showalter, Elaine. 2005. *Faculty Towers: The Academic Novel and Its Discontents*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 145-152.

9/11 fault lines in terms of the confined microcosm of the fictive US-American university town of Wellington. While Ali's *Brick Lane* features deprived cosmopolitan figures,¹⁶⁶³ Smith's novel is an academic satire revolving around the conflicts and rivalries within and between the families of the two university professors, Howard Belsey and Monty Kipps.¹⁶⁶⁴ What is more, Catherine Lanone places Smith's novel firmly within the tradition of the campus novel by stressing the function of extra-marital affairs in the genre. "In a world of gloom," she argues, "budget cuts and racial divisions, of insecure yearnings for stability and tenure, seduction provides compensation for professional discontent and sublimates ambitions."¹⁶⁶⁵ In this vein, the various incidents of erotic love – Howard's affair with his colleague and friend Claire, Victoria's seduction of both Howard and his son Jerome, and Monty Kipps' affair with his student Charlene – may be seen as a diversion from the conflicts of the post-9/11 world.

The events of 9/11 form a gloomy and unobtrusive background to the narrative and are merely mentioned in passing or alluded to. For example, Howard's and Kiki Belsey's wedding anniversary is on September 11. Yet the date is not even directly mentioned in the text, but one may deduce from other people's reaction that it is September 11.¹⁶⁶⁶ The date of their 30th anniversary is also the day when Kiki finds out about her husband's affair with their mutual friend Claire,¹⁶⁶⁷ which marks the point when the couple split. Hence, the plot evolves against the backdrop of both the dichotomies within the Belsey family and the global binaries dividing the post-9/11 world into "us" and "them". Yet instead of featuring these conflicts directly, the division in *On Beauty* revolves around the two opponents Howard and Monty and their academic feud as well as the disunion within the Belsey family and, in particular, the rupture between Kiki who is depicted as sensual and warm-hearted, and her overtly intellectual husband. The 11 September attacks are also mentioned in another passage of the text in order to illustrate the striking differences between Howard and Kiki. During an argument, Kiki brings up Howard's reaction to the 11 September attacks:

'It's like after 9/11 when you sent that ridiculous e-mail round to everybody about Baudry, Bodra-
'Baudrillard. He's a philosopher. His name is Baudrillard.'
'About simulated wars or whatever the fuck that was...and I was thinking: *What is wrong with this man?* I was *ashamed* of you. I didn't say anything, but I was. 'Howard,' she said, reaching out to him but not far enough to touch, 'this is *real*. This life. We're really here – this is really happening. Suffering is *real*. When you hurt people, it's *real*. When you fuck one of our best friends, that's a *real* thing and it *hurts* me.'¹⁶⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶³ Loh, Lucienne. "Postcolonial and Diasporic Voices: Contemporary British Fiction in an Age of Transnational Terror." In: Bentley, Nick; Hubble, Nick; Wilson, Leigh, eds. 2015. *The 2000s: A Decade of Contemporary British Fiction*. London/New York: Bloomsbury. pp. 115-144. p. 125.

¹⁶⁶⁴ Itakura, Gen'ichiro. "On Beauty and Doing Justice to Art: Aesthetics and Ethics in Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*." In: *ariel: a review of international english literature* 41.1. 2011. pp. 27-44. p. 28.

¹⁶⁶⁵ Lanone, Cathrine. "Mediating Multi-cultural Muddle: E.M. Forster Meets Zadie Smith." In: *Études Anglaises* 60.2. 2007. pp. 185-197. pp. 189-190.

¹⁶⁶⁶ When Kiki tells a friend about it his "face gave into that tiny involuntary shudder with which Kiki had, in recent years, become familiar." Smith. 2005. p. 68.

¹⁶⁶⁷ Smith. 2005. p. 121.

¹⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 394.

Howard's email referring to Baudrillard's poststructuralist theories on the hyperreality of mediated warfare and carnage thus underscores his own intellectual, albeit uncompassionate approach to the events. As stated earlier, Baudrillard responded to 9/11 with a similar intellectual abstraction focusing on the altered relationship between reality and fiction rather than on the actual victims. Similar to Kiki's criticism targeting Howard's lack of compassion, Baudrillard was criticised for his "cerebral cold-bloodedness"¹⁶⁶⁹ after the publication of *The Spirit of Terrorism*. Hence, 9/11 illustrates the fundamental fault line between Howard, the cynical and hypocritical intellectual, and his wife with the beauty of an African queen,¹⁶⁷⁰ who is represented as an emotional and authentic character, become starkly apparent. The campus novel genre allows for such an inclusion of contemporary cultural theories to – as shall be shown in more detail below – make a point about the cultural, political and ethical schisms after 9/11. Moreover, the genre makes it possible to comment on the interpretation of 9/11 as poststructuralist media spectacle without the actual inclusion of the televisual representation of the event in the novel.

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As the variety of genre categories to which the novels may be allocated indicate, the five British literary takes on 9/11 make use of diverse formal-aesthetical strategies. Ian McEwan's *Saturday* has, for example, been categorised as neo-Modernist¹⁶⁷¹ in its depiction of one single day in the life of the protagonist and the city. Thus, the novel has been associated with the great modernist city texts of *Mrs Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf and *Ulysses* by James Joyce.¹⁶⁷² Like Woolf and Joyce, McEwan takes the protagonist on a symbolic perambulation of the city's streets.¹⁶⁷³ The time frame of 24 hours allows him like his modernist forerunners to focus on the "nature of experience in relationship to time."¹⁶⁷⁴ Thus, rendering a versatile picture of both the consciousness of the protagonist and its surroundings of post-9/11 London, apprehending a terrorist attack in the wake of the invasion of Iraq. While a substantial part is dedicated to Perowne's weekend routine, the encounter with the anti-war demonstration in Central London and the burning plane show that the private and the public sphere cannot be separated.¹⁶⁷⁵ Cornier Micheal contends that like its modernist precursors, such as Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, McEwan intends to represent human consciousness plagued by apprehensions of unimaginable

¹⁶⁶⁹ Kirn, Walter. "Notes on the Darkest Day." In: *The New York Times*. 08.09.2002.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/08/books/review/08KIRNRET.html?pagewanted=all> (last accessed 19th April 2016)

¹⁶⁷⁰ Smith. 2005 p. 313.

¹⁶⁷¹ Ganteau. 2015. p. 148.

¹⁶⁷² Marcus, Laura. "Ian McEwan's Modernist Time: *Atonement* and *Saturday*." In: Groes, Sebastian, ed. 2013. *Ian McEwan: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*. 2nd ed. London/New York: Bloomsbury. pp. 83-98. p. 85.

¹⁶⁷³ Rudaitytė, Regina. "'And Now What Days Are These?': The Public and the Private in Ian McEwan's Novel *Saturday*." In: Rudaitytė, Regina, ed. 2012. *Literature in Society*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars. pp. 226-236. p. 226.

¹⁶⁷⁴ Groes, Sebastian. "Ian McEwan and the Modernist Consciousness of the City in *Saturday*." In: Groes. 2013. pp. 99-114. p. 105.

¹⁶⁷⁵ Cornier Micheal. 2009. p. 28.

violence.¹⁶⁷⁶ Critics have also noted the vicinity of the Perowne's family home in Fitzroy square with Virginia Woolf's former home.¹⁶⁷⁷

As discussed earlier, *Saturday* is replete with potential threat scenarios, thus rendering the protagonist's withdrawal into the domestic domain impossible. This is being underscored by the narrative situation of *Saturday*. Emulating Modernist writers like Woolf and Joyce, McEwan resorts to the free indirect discourse, granting the reader ostensibly unmediated insights into Perowne's consciousness. The protagonist's "perspective is the primary focus in the novel, even though he uses third-person narration. Indeed, the issue of point of view is crucial in *Saturday*: the novel employs free indirect speech extensively."¹⁶⁷⁸ Yet, the rendering of Perowne's consciousness is sometimes overridden by authorial comments, thus creating what has been regarded by Elaine Hadley as a "yoking of the modernist stream of consciousness made famous by Virginia Woolf with the characteristically Victorian, free and indirect discourse of an omniscient narrator."¹⁶⁷⁹ Hence, rather than using the stream of consciousness method, McEwan allies restrictive third person discourse and free indirect discourse, which is intensified by the use of the present tense.¹⁶⁸⁰ This creates a very insightful double voice of the narrator and Henry's interior monologue.¹⁶⁸¹ This dualism becomes apparent, for example, when Perowne prepares the family dinner against the background of the mute television set showing the latest news:

An establishing shot shows the United Nations building in New York, and next, Colin Powell getting into a black limousine. It's denomination for Henry's story, but he doesn't mind.[...] He runs the cold tap over the leaves. An officer, barely in his twenties, is standing outside his tent pointing with a stick at a map on an easel. Perowne isn't tempted to disable the mute – these items from the front have a cheerful, censored air that lowers his spirits.[...] His preparations are done, just as the burning plane story comes up, fourth item. With a confused sense that he's about to learn something significant about himself, he turns on the sound and stands facing the tiny set, drying his hands on a towel.¹⁶⁸²

In this scene, the dual voice renders both Perowne's consciousness and parenthetical perception of the news and explains how some items do not arouse his interest, while the story of the plane arrests his attention. Henry being the focaliser of the free indirect discourse, we are made aware that he mainly concentrates on the dinner preparations and the television is just in the background, yet he still subconsciously takes the images in. The voice of the narrator, however, interjects comments of his perceptions, and even mocks his lack of interest in the current political developments in the United

¹⁶⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 27.

¹⁶⁷⁷ Rudaitytė. 2012. p. 228. Groes. 2013. p. 107

¹⁶⁷⁸ Bentley, Nick. "Mind and Brain: The Representation of Trauma in Martin Amis' *Yellow Dog* and Ian McEwan's *Saturday*." In: Lustig, T.J.; Peacock, James, eds. 2013. *Diseases and Disorders in Contemporary Fiction: The Syndrome Syndrome*. New York/London: Routledge. pp. 115-129. p. 123.

¹⁶⁷⁹ Hadley, Elaine. "On A Darkling Plain: Victorian Liberalism and the Fantasy of Agency." In: *Victorian Studies* 48.1. 2005. pp. 92-102. p. 94.

¹⁶⁸⁰ Groes. 2013. p. 105.

¹⁶⁸¹ Habibi, Seyed Javad. "A Shadowy Mental Narrative': Free Indirect Discourse in Ian McEwan's *Saturday*." In: *Writers Editors Critics* 4.1. 2014. pp. 21-28. p. 24.

¹⁶⁸² McEwan. 2005. pp. 178-179.

States despite his approval of the controversial invasion of Iraq. The narrator also reveals that he prefers not to see images of war because they have a negative impact on his mood. This narrative situation reveals his ignorance when it comes to engaging with world politics and the actual implications of warfare. Hence, the authorial comment filtered on Perowne's consciousness can be seen as "a formal strategy which in turn raises the issue of ironic distance."¹⁶⁸³ As Sebastian Groes points out, the disparagement of the narrator "foregrounds the role of the reader, who is forced to collude with the curious voice, based in a complex language and referentiality narrating Perowne's consciousness from the inside while incessantly offering a commentary upon him."¹⁶⁸⁴ He further regards the "loss of narratorial authority"¹⁶⁸⁵ created by the dual voice as undermining "any comfortable or simple reading of the novel, while capturing the post 9/11-climate of anxiety."¹⁶⁸⁶ One may even go so far as to say that the narrator's intrusion in the representation of Perowne's consciousness enacts the major theme of McEwan's novel, that of the tension between the "padded privacy"¹⁶⁸⁷ of the 21st century individual and the intrusions into that privacy of the dangers of the public sphere. Like the smouldering apprehension of terrorist violence that interferes with Perowne's comfortable life, the narrator intrudes upon the sanctuary of Perowne's private thoughts. The voice of the narrator invades the private space of Perowne's consciousness, comments on and evaluates any detail of Perowne's perception of the world. This choice of narrative situation hence affirms, as Regina Rudaitytė phrases it, that "the private is always entrenched in the public, it is affected and controlled by it while the public is made private through introspection [...] allowing the writer to make important statements about human nature, humanity and political as well as social issues of our times."¹⁶⁸⁸

Barker's *Double Vision* also stages the intrusion of the external world of political conflicts into private spheres. In contrast to *Saturday*, the protagonist in Barker's text is not troubled by imminent threats that the future might hold for him, but is rather haunted by the traumatic experiences of his past. As explained before, individuals cannot grasp the traumatic event at the time of its occurrence, and therefore relive it time and again through intrusive recall or flashbacks.¹⁶⁸⁹ *Double Vision* is interspersed with Stephen's traumatic memories, and the recurrence of the harrowing image of the raped girl suggests that he suffers from PTSD. The narrative shows the disruptiveness and belatedness of trauma through the interruption of the action by episodes from Stephen's life, including memories of the break-up of his marriage on 9/11,¹⁶⁹⁰ and the loss of his friend Ben in Afghanistan.¹⁶⁹¹ Corresponding to Anne Whitehead's notion of trauma fiction, Pat Barker mimics the forms and symptoms of trauma, "so that temporality and

¹⁶⁸³ Bentley. 2013. p. 123.

¹⁶⁸⁴ Groes. 2013. p. 104.

¹⁶⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 104

¹⁶⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 104.

¹⁶⁸⁷ McEwan. 2005.p. 121.

¹⁶⁸⁸ Rudaitytė. 2012. pp. 226-227.

¹⁶⁸⁹ See chapter 3.2.3.4.

¹⁶⁹⁰ Barker. 2003. pp. 80-85.

¹⁶⁹¹ Ibid. pp. 255-256.

chronology collapse.”¹⁶⁹² In this vein, Barker’s text can be read as an attempt to register “the shocking and unassimilable nature of its subject matter in formal terms”¹⁶⁹³ by its formal enactment of the intrusive nature of traumatic memories, the recurrence of Stephen’s memory of the image of the raped girl in Sarajevo evokes the relentless return of trauma. The end of the novel, however, suggests a way out of the inexorable recurrence of the imagery. The hold of the image of the girl in Sarajevo has on Stephen eventually ceases as his relationship with Justine grows more intimate. During their trip to the Farnes toward the end of the novel, “he saw the girl in the stairwell in Sarajevo, but she’d lost her power. This moment in this bed banished her, not for ever perhaps, but for long enough.”¹⁶⁹⁴ Moreover, the memory of another traumatic experience is eventually released at the end of the novel, namely that of finding the corpse of his friend Ben after a sniper attack in Afghanistan, an experience that has numbed him emotionally.

He was shaking with rage and grief. He wanted to huddle down somewhere private and cry, but when he got into the backseat and turned his face away the tears wouldn’t come. He felt totally dry – no spit, no sweat, no tears. Like one of those trussed up, desiccated bundles you see in a spider’s web. He still hadn’t cried for Ben. Missed the funeral. Hadn’t managed to squeeze out one single tear.¹⁶⁹⁵

This fictional exploration is further abetted by the suspension of the realist mode. Structurally, as Merritt Moseley has noted, the novel can be considered as ensemble fiction, featuring minor and major characters such as Kate Forbisher and Stephen Sharkey and no single narrative that connects them. Furthermore, the narrative situation creates the double vision the title presages: while the beginning of the novel mainly focuses on Kate’s perspective, in the course of the narrative her character slides into the background.¹⁶⁹⁶ *Double Vision* defies the conventions of the realist novel through the absence of a chronological, straightforward plot line. However, there is another way of interpreting the disruption of unity via the interspersed text with memories from warzones. Responding to critics who comment on the implausibility of Stephen attending the Milosevic trial and the presence of both Stephen and Ben in New York on 9/11¹⁶⁹⁷ Krista Kauffmann argues that *Double Vision*, which, as we shall see later, deals with the question of authenticity of representing war, is not simply a conventional realist novel. Its unity is disrupted in order to make a meta-commentary showing that there is no such thing as a strict verisimilitude accurately representing reality.¹⁶⁹⁸ Such an approach does not exclude the view of *Double Vision* as trauma fiction. Rather, the notion of trauma gives further credit to the unreliability and fragility

¹⁶⁹² Whitehead. 2004. p. 3.

¹⁶⁹³ Ibid. p. 83.

¹⁶⁹⁴ Barker. 2003. p. 253.

¹⁶⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 256.

¹⁶⁹⁶ Moseley, Merritt. 2014. *The Fiction of Pat Barker*. Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 110-111.

¹⁶⁹⁷ Gordon, Neil. “Double Vision: Something Not Quite Right.” In: *The New York Times*. 14.12.2003.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/14/books/review/14GORDONT.html?pagewanted=all> (last accessed 12th August 2016)

¹⁶⁹⁸ Kauffmann, Krista. “One Cannot Look at This / I Saw It: Pat Barker’s *Double Vision* and the Ethics of Visuality.” In: *Studies in the Novel* 44.1. 2012. pp. 80-99. p. 83.

of individual and cultural memory. Trauma thus underpins *Double Vision*'s exploration of the workings of the media as a vehicle of cultural memory, and the ethical issues arising from it.

Cleave's *Incendiary* can also be classified as trauma fiction. The subjectivity of the epistolary form allows for a very empathy-evoking, emotive depiction of trauma. In accordance with Müller's ethical narratology¹⁶⁹⁹ the internal perspective of the letter form is predestined to promote empathy among the audience. This is further encouraged by the style of the protagonist's narrative that expresses the severity of her traumatisation. It can be best described as a wild rambling,¹⁷⁰⁰ or incessant outpouring of grief, which is underpinned by strings of short sentences lacking commas. Her letter to bin Laden resembles a "dramatic monologue"¹⁷⁰¹ that is aimed at containing the hole that her boy left behind.¹⁷⁰² This metaphor of the "boy-shaped hole" recurs throughout the narrative as a metaphor to describe the anguish and the emptiness created by the traumatic rupture. Avril Horner notes that it is in fact the vivid portrayal of PTSD that makes the novel so memorable. The narrator is haunted by the loss of her son and her husband to a degree that she has become possessed by it.¹⁷⁰³ During her shopping trip with Petra Sutherland, the protagonist suffers from hallucinations, involving flames consuming Petra in the dressing cubicle,¹⁷⁰⁴ and describes the hold the trauma has on her in terms of an unextinguished fire:

Before you bombed my boy Osama I always thought an explosion was such a quick thing but now I know better. The flash is over very fast but the fire catches hold inside you and the noise never stops. You can press your hands on your ears but you can never block it out. The fire keeps on roaring with incredible noise and fury.¹⁷⁰⁵

This passage highlights the paradoxical nature of trauma,¹⁷⁰⁶ which is intrusive and uncontrollable in the present because it has not been fully experienced at the time of its occurrence. Hence, the narrator has to relentlessly re-experience the catastrophe. Moreover, this passage reveals that the protagonist's trauma is linked to the memory of the Great Fire of London. She echoes the novel's epigraph from the inscription on the Monument to the Great Fire of London "...a most terrible fire broke out, which not only wasted the adjacent parts, but also places very remote, with incredible noise and fury."¹⁷⁰⁷ Cleave's narrative suggests that London and its inhabitants have previously been plagued by comparable catastrophes. *Incendiary* therefore adopts, as Avril Horner argues, the sense of a cyclical and unresolved history. This becomes particularly apparent at the end of the novel,¹⁷⁰⁸ when the narrator challenges her addressee "Come to me Osama. Come to me and we will blow the world back together WITH

¹⁶⁹⁹ See chapter 3.2.4.4.

¹⁷⁰⁰ Kempner. 2009. p. 65.

¹⁷⁰¹ Golimowska. p. 123.

¹⁷⁰² Ibid. 4.

¹⁷⁰³ Horner, Avril. "Apocalypses Now: Collective Trauma, Globalisation and the New Gothic Sublime." In: Nada, Marita; Calvo, Mónica, eds. 2014. *Trauma in Contemporary Literature: Narrative and Representation*. New York/Abingdon: Routledge. pp. 35-50. p. 41.

¹⁷⁰⁴ Cleave. 2005. p. 227.

¹⁷⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 235.

¹⁷⁰⁶ Horner. 2014. p. 40.

¹⁷⁰⁷ Cleave. 2005. epigraph.

¹⁷⁰⁸ Horner. 2014. p. 41.

INCREDIBLE NOISE AND FURY.”¹⁷⁰⁹ The recurrence of the trauma manifests itself, firstly, in the narrator echoing the words “noise and fury” of the novels’ epigraph, thus suggesting non-closure or resolution at its end.¹⁷¹⁰ Secondly, the protagonist herself suffering from the trauma induced by the attack by Al-Qaeda invites Osama bin Laden, the organisation’s figurehead and culprit to “blow back the world together”, which indicates that the cycle of violence and suffering that London and her protagonist had to endure will continue.¹⁷¹¹ To borrow from Horner, the novel’s end suggests a cyclical history, “as a series of quasi-apocalyptic events rather than a linear progression towards End and Revelation.”¹⁷¹² The subjectivity of the letter form further intensifies this conveyance of trauma by granting access to the protagonist’s private thoughts. The epistolary form may thus not only be considered an act of self-creation, but also allows for an apolitical and emotional¹⁷¹³ rendering of the protagonist’s trauma.

However, despite its emphasis on individual suffering, the novel manages to lighten the gravity of the narrator’s pain by the deployment of humour and a remarkable amount of wit. For this reason, *Incendiary*’s tragicomic elements also need consideration. According to Randall Craig, the tragicomic mode predestined for the genre of novel with its multifarious and at times conflicting ideas as it is antithetical in nature and embraces a dualistic conception of existence. The characters’ existence is hence poised between antipodal elements and they “experience lives of laughable but painful chaos.”¹⁷¹⁴ One may wonder how such a tragicomic mode may be deployed to write literary fiction on a matter as grave and grievous as terrorism. *Incendiary*, however, illustrates how a deep sense of pain and trauma that is conveyed may at times be undercut by humorous episodes. For example, after witnessing the terrorist attack on the television screen, as the protagonist and her lover Jasper make their way to the football stadium, the protagonist notices that the streets are completely empty:

- No wasters drinking cider from cans and no yummiie mummies pushing their babies in 3 wheel buggies.
- It was like this when Charles and Di got married.
 - What on earth are you talking about? said Jasper Black.
 - The empty streets. The Royal Wedding. I was only a little girl but I remember the streets were empty like this. [...]
 - Yes, said Jasper Black. Well listen it isn’t Diana this time it’s something quite else. I think you need to prepare yourself mentally.¹⁷¹⁵

The heroine’s comparison of the terrorist attack to Lady Diana’s wedding seems absurd and completely out of place. Yet, it serves three functions: Firstly, this rather bizarre reference to the Royal Wedding centring on its place in the annals of recent history as a bombastic transnational media event illustrates the protagonist’s shock at the imagery she has just witnessed on television. The terrorist event thus also

¹⁷⁰⁹ Cleave. 2005. p. 338.

¹⁷¹⁰ Horner. 2014. p. 41.

¹⁷¹¹ Ibid. p. 41.

¹⁷¹² Ibid. p. 41.

¹⁷¹³ Kempner. 2009. p. 66.

¹⁷¹⁴ Craig, Randall. 1989. *The Tragicomic Novel: Studies in a Fictional Mode from Meredith to Joyce*. Newark: University of Delaware Press. p. 12.

¹⁷¹⁵ Cleave. 2005. p. 61.

becomes first and foremost a media spectacle. This passage, secondly, highlights her status as a real “London girl” and native inhabitant of the metropolis who knows the Shoreditch of “wasters” and “yummie mummies” by heart. Thirdly, it creates a comic relief with the reference to Princess Diana in a scene fraught with tension and uncertainty, which reveals the protagonist’s liking of the Royal Family who represent both quintessential traditional Britishness and easily digestible entertainment and gossip. Hence, in a scene full of suspense and horror at the attacks that have been witnessed by her and Jasper on the television screen, the grotesque Royal Family analogy may evoke “contradictory aesthetic emotion” by rendering a “trenchant perception of human limitation and suffering, combined with an empathetic and amused acceptance of them.”¹⁷¹⁶ It can be argued that because of this tragicomic depiction of the narrator as imperfect and humanly flawed the reader’s identification with her may be facilitated and empathy in the audience may be evoked, in particular when they are confronted with her anguish at the terrible loss of her family.

Among the literary responses to 9/11 by British writers, there is another example of the fictional letter form, deployed to grant insights into the psyche of a female correspondent. While mostly relying on a traditionally realist third-person narrative, *Brick Lane* also includes the letters of Nazneen’s sister Hasina, who lives in Dhaka, in which she describes her plight as a “fallen woman” in Bangladesh. However, although they are intended to inform about the status of women in Bangladesh and contrast Hasina’s experiences with Nazneen’s fate in England, as well as possibly evoke empathy with their situation through the access they grant to the thoughts of Nazneen’s sister, these letters appear artificial and overtly constructed. They have been widely criticised for being presented in English such as this missive from Hasina:

I so happy now I almost scared. Hardly dare opening my eye. Why it is? What is bringing fear? God not putting me on earth only to suffer. I know this always even when days bringing no light. Maleks uncle have got for him First Class job in railway company. This uncle very High Up at railway. Malek go out early in morning and coming back late. He not knowing much about trains and such like but he say too also that do not matter. What matter is being smart. Nobody smarter than my husband. [sic]¹⁷¹⁷

Rachel Bower is among those who make clear that it is highly unlikely that the sisters are capable of speaking or writing in English, in Nazneen’s case this would be standard English and in Hasina’s a strikingly broken English.¹⁷¹⁸ As the above passage illustrates, Hasina’s broken English underscores her characterisation as a naïve and passive woman full of uncritical reverence and adulation towards her husband. The epistolary language is thus “geared to target an anglophone implied reader.”¹⁷¹⁹ Jane Hiddleston contends that the style of Hasina’s letters feeds the expectations of her “foreignness” and her inability to express herself by means of rational and argumentative language on the part of the

¹⁷¹⁶ Craig. 1989. p. 13.

¹⁷¹⁷ Ali. 2003. p. 17.

¹⁷¹⁸ Bower, Rachel. “Epistolary Craft and the Literary Field.” In: *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 49.3. 2014. pp. 315-331. p. 316.

¹⁷¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 318.

anglophone reader.¹⁷²⁰ The representation of Hasina's character is "undoubtedly a little unsubtle in its collusion with Western preconceptions of women's subjugation under Islam."¹⁷²¹ Hence, the letters are more revealing when it comes to Western stereotypes of Islamic women than in conveying an accurate representation of Bangladeshi culture. The stock images of the naïve and vulnerable oriental woman in Hasina's letters demonstrate how such clichés prevail in Western culture and how difficult it is to free representations of cultural identities from such preconceptions.¹⁷²²

However, the epistolary conversation of the novel constitutes only a small part of the text. Much of the narrative is driven by the desire to represent "the secrets of Nazneen's existence."¹⁷²³ The novel therefore combines postcolonial content and a rather traditional realist form, relying on a linear narrative, character development, the cultivation of linguistic transparency and the invitation to identify with the protagonist.¹⁷²⁴ However, as will be shown in the following, tackling innovative cultural content by means of traditional realism may face some pitfalls. Like other traditional realist narratives, the omniscient narrator in *Brick Lane* mostly uses Nazneen as focalizer and renders the character's innermost feelings and developments. The novel's realism creates the impression of a documentary aspect to the depiction of the Bangladeshi community.¹⁷²⁵ Hence, as Dominic Head points out, productive cultural hybridity here does not – as often assumed – go hand in hand with experimental forms.

In such a view, you either have a startlingly innovative style *and* a rapturous presentation of multicultural energies, or you have neither. [...] However, such an easy equation between experiment and cultural hybridity can imply a simple opposition between experiment and tradition that is inappropriate, with traditional realism coming to embody reactionary conservatism.¹⁷²⁶

Accordingly, cultural hybridity may as well be expressed by means of the traditional forms such as the realist *Bildungsroman* genre. However, it has been noted that the ways in which Bangladeshi life in London is presented through the gaze of the realist narrator is not free from contradictions. As Nick Bentley points out, *Brick Lane* adopts the conventions of a traditional Western form in order to make it more palatable for the white middle-class readership at which the text has been targeted, a strategy which drew a lot of criticism from the actual inhabitants of the area that is represented in the novel.¹⁷²⁷

According to Alistair Cormack, who also uses Head's aforementioned statement as a point of departure, the application of a traditionally Western discourse to the postcolonial subjectivities may

¹⁷²⁰ Hiddleston, Jane. "Shapes and Shadows: (Un)veiling the Immigrant in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*." In: *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 40.1. 2005. pp. 57-72. p. 63.

¹⁷²¹ Ibid. p. 63.

¹⁷²² Ibid. pp. 62-63.

¹⁷²³ Ibid. p. 67.

¹⁷²⁴ Cormack, Alistair. "Migration and the Politics of Narrative Form: Realism and the Postcolonial Subject in *Brick Lane*." In: *Contemporary Literature* 47.4. 2006. pp. 695-721. pp. 695- 696.

¹⁷²⁵ Gunning, Dave. "Ethnicity, Authenticity, and Empathy in the Realist Novel and its Alternatives." In: *Contemporary Literature* 53.4. 2012. pp. 779-813. p. 781.

¹⁷²⁶ Head, Dominic. 2002. *The Cambridge Introduction to Modern British Fiction, 1950-2000*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 172.

¹⁷²⁷ Bentley. 2008. p. 86.

stretch the formal constraints of the realist novel too far. In his view, “realism’s drive toward transparency and its linear conception of development inevitably mean that it will tend to endorse a notion of subjectivity that is at odds with more radical notions of hybridity.”¹⁷²⁸ This tension comes to the fore when the narrator attempts to incorporate cultural experiences that lie outside of the practices of meaning-making the realist novel normally embraces. It becomes, for example, apparent when Nazneen for the first time leaves the family flat on Brick Lane on her own. Wandering around the City of London, she observes the businessmen and -women and marvels at their strange behaviour:

Men in dark suits trotted briskly up and down the steps, in pairs or in threes. They barked to each other and nodded somberly. Sometimes one clapped a hand on his companion’s shoulder and Nazneen saw that this was not for reassurance, but for emphasis. Every person who brushed past her on the pavement, every back she saw, was on a private, urgent mission to execute a precise and demanding plan: to get a promotion today, to be exactly on time for an appointment, to buy a newspaper with the right coins so that the exchange was swift and seamless, to walk without wasting a second and to reach the roadside just as the lights turned red.¹⁷²⁹

This passage renders Nazneen’s perception of the strange culture she encounters once she leaves the confinement of the family flat and the familiar Brick Lane area without the company of her husband Chanu. Through Nazneen’s eyes, the culture that is familiar to the Western eye becomes defamiliarised.¹⁷³⁰ The “other” is comprised by thriving members of the majority population and not immigrants like herself. Hence, it may be argued that Ali attempts to expose the practices of othering by means of the presentation of the member of the white British middle class through the lense of an outsider. Such an endeavour may potentially debunk the threat narratives centring on the oriental terrorist “other” of the post-9/11 era. Yet, upon closer scrutiny, this passage also raises questions concerning the frame of reference that is applied to describe the “other” Nazneen encounters. While the first lines appear to render Nazneen’s actual perception of her surroundings, the latter musings about the motivations for the great rush of the people passing by could only be added by a narrator who is familiar with British culture. It becomes clear from this passage that the portrayal of cultural hybridity and literary realism are at odds with one another. As Cormack phrases it, “the Western world is seen through the eyes of someone whose frame of reference is radically different, but this event is rendered by a voice that is not so unsophisticated.”¹⁷³¹

This, as Hiddleston points out, raises the question of who speaks for whom, as in *Brick Lane*, the narrator tends to impose crafted metaphors onto the heroine rather than rendering genuine, immediate insights into the psyche of the migrant woman.¹⁷³² Ending her affair with Karim, Nazneen ponders about the nature of their affair, and the words of her interior monologue are framed through the narrator: “How had she made him? She did not know. She had patched him together, working in the dark. She had made

¹⁷²⁸ Cormack. 2006. p. 718.

¹⁷²⁹ Ali. 2003. pp. 51-52.

¹⁷³⁰ Bentley. 2008. p. 88.

¹⁷³¹ Cormack. 2006. p. 709.

¹⁷³² Hiddleston. 2005. pp. 64-65.

a quilt out of pieces of silk, scraps of velvet, and now that she held it up in the light the stitches showed up large and crude, and they cut across everything.”¹⁷³³ The metaphor of the ‘patchwork quilt’ is an intervention of the narrator who intrudes into her ostensibly private thoughts. Representations of the life of Bangladeshi immigrants in London and in particular the feelings of the protagonist are therefore often filtered through the lens of a narrative stance which is affiliated to Western culture. Moulding the protagonist’s diverging cultural signifying system into a traditional *Bildungsroman*, which celebrates Nazneen’s ostensible emancipation and westernisation towards its end, the novel embraces a stable and linear form of subjectivity, and thus seems to suggest, as Cormack points out, that Western reason is the answer to the problem.¹⁷³⁴

Zadie Smith’s *On Beauty* also explores the politics of identity and hybridity, albeit more unobtrusively. The genre of the campus novel allows for a subtle discussion of the negotiation of identity in the cultural and political climate of the post-9/11 era, which is imbued with political, ethical and cultural theories. To this end, Smith takes her cues from two main hypotexts. Firstly, in the novel’s acknowledgements, Smith states that “it should be obvious from the first line that this novel is inspired by a love for E.M. Forster,”¹⁷³⁵ to whom she has dedicated this novel as an homage. Much has been written about the extent to which Smith’s novel can be seen as a post-millennial, multicultural reworking of Forster’s Condition-of-England novel *Howards End* (1910).¹⁷³⁶ The relationship between the texts is, as Laura Marcus pinpoints it, “neither that of parody or that of ‘pastiche’, but one in which the author sets up a dialogue with a literary predecessor.”¹⁷³⁷ According to Peter Childs’ and James Green’s analysis, Smith “places herself in the humanist tradition”¹⁷³⁸ and explores whether its “liberal values, cultural critique and narrational approach apply well to a twenty-first-century transatlantic world.”¹⁷³⁹

Such an intertextual relationship suggests that the comparison of the two different novels may yield valuable insights into the functional potential of the text. To begin with, the intertextual presence of the Edwardian forerunner is particularly evident in terms of the plot lines and character constellations centring on two diametrically opposed families. As Stephan Karschay points out, even though *On Beauty* and *Howards End* may be similar in terms of their plotting, their contents diverge due to their respective contexts of production.¹⁷⁴⁰ *Howards End* much like *On Beauty* deploys character constellations which are divided into binary oppositions. In *Howards End* the modern Schlegel sisters are juxtaposed to the

¹⁷³³ Ali.2003. p. 498.

¹⁷³⁴ Cormack. 2006. p. 717-718.

¹⁷³⁵ Smith. 2005. “Acknowledgements.”

¹⁷³⁶ Forster, Edward Morgan [1910] 2012. *Howards End*. London/New York: Penguin.

¹⁷³⁷ Marcus, Laura. “The Legacies of Modernism.” In: Schiach, Morag, ed. 2007. *The Cambridge Companion to the Modernist Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 82-98. p. 95.

¹⁷³⁸ Childs, Peter; Green, James, eds. 2015. *Aesthetics and Ethics in Twenty-First Century British Novels: Zadie Smith, Nadeem Aslam, Hari Kunzru and David Mitchell*. London/New York: Bloomsbury. p. 50.

¹⁷³⁹ Ibid. p. 50.

¹⁷⁴⁰ Karschay, Stephan. “Only Connect! The Negotiation of Identities in E.M. Forster’s *Howard’s End* and Zadie Smith’s *On Beauty*.” In: Kamm, Jürgen; Sedlmayr, Gerold, eds. 2007. *Insular Mentalities: Mental Maps of Britain*. Passau: Karl Stutz. pp. 201-213. p. 201.

traditional Wilcoxes. The Schlegels are not “English to the backbone,”¹⁷⁴¹ but the daughters of a German father and an English mother. As Karschay sums it up, the opposite categories drawn upon in Forster’s novel range from “masculinity versus femininity, pragmatism versus idealism, conservatism versus liberalism, prosperity versus poverty etc.”¹⁷⁴² Portraying the lives of the two families of the Wilcoxes and the Schlegels, who could not be more different, the novel contrasts the dichotomous ideas both sides harbour. The Schlegel household comprises two sisters Margaret and Helen and their younger brother Tibby. Due to their Anglo-German heritage they are more internationally minded than the Wilcoxes. Unlike the Schlegel sisters, the Wilcoxes are dominated by their male family members and in contrast to the artistic and empathetic Schlegels, they are characterised by their staunch Englishness, utilitarian values, conservatism and patriarchy.¹⁷⁴³ However, despite their oppositional characteristics and ideologies, there exists a disposition to transcend these boundaries. During her stay with the Wilcox family, Helen Schlegel had been fascinated by them. In a state of “abandonment of personality that is prelude to love”¹⁷⁴⁴ she had liked being told by the Wilcoxes that “Equality was nonsense, Votes for Women nonsense, Socialism nonsense, Arts and Literature, except when conducive to strengthening the character, nonsense.”¹⁷⁴⁵ The abandonment of her opinions is only shaken up, when her short-lived affair with the Wilcoxes’ youngest son Paul ends unhappily. Similarly, in *On Beauty*, Jerome who spends a summer at the Kippes’ house, where he surrenders himself to the other family and their conservative, Christian values. “It was a kind of blissful un-selfing, a summer of un-Belsey; he had allowed the Kippes’ world and their ways to take him over entirely.”¹⁷⁴⁶ Like Helen, Jerome is disenfranchised after the end of his ill-fated affair with Victoria Kipps, and like in Forster’s precursor, the plot is driven by the negotiation of these differences between the two opposites. As Karschay explains, *Howard’s End* major concern is encapsulated in the novel’s epigraph *Only Connect*, that is the reconciliation of apparently incompatible sides in society to create a new English national identity.¹⁷⁴⁷

What is more, not only does *On Beauty* stage the negotiation of identity in terms of a neo-Forsterian take on a post-9/11 world riddled by ostensibly insurmountable binaries of “us” and “them”, but also does the narrative situation instantiate this sentiment of connecting these oppositions embodied by the different characters. *On Beauty*’s Forsterian narrator exposes the character’s feelings through the frequent delving into their thoughts.¹⁷⁴⁸ As Corina Selejan observes, Smith emulates Forster’s narrative style by slipping in and out of the characters, who are to a great extent characterised by authorial comments.¹⁷⁴⁹ This is also exemplified by Kiki’s deliberations about the alleged one-night-stand of her

¹⁷⁴¹ Forster. 2012. p. 27.

¹⁷⁴² Karschay. 2007. p. 204.

¹⁷⁴³ Ibid. pp. 204-205.

¹⁷⁴⁴ Forster. 2012. p. 22.

¹⁷⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 22.

¹⁷⁴⁶ Smith. 2005. p. 44.

¹⁷⁴⁷ Karschay. 2007. pp. 205-206.

¹⁷⁴⁸ Wells, Lynn. “The Right to a Secret: Zadie Smith’s *NW*.” In: Tew, Philip, ed. 2013. *Reading Zadie Smith: The First Decade and Beyond*. London/New York: Bloomsbury. pp. 97-110. p. 97.

¹⁷⁴⁹ Selejan. 2015. p. 44.

husband and her son's emotional state: Kiki felt that the two of them, mother and son, were now moving steadily in obverse directions:

Kiki to forgiveness, Jerome to bitterness. For though it had almost taken a year, Kiki had begun to release the memory of Howard's mistake. She had had all the conversations with friends and with herself; she had measured a nameless, faceless woman in a hotel room next to what she knew of herself; she had weighed one stupid night against a lifetime of love and felt the difference in her heart. [...] But for Jerome, friendless and brooding, it was clear that one week with Victoria Kipps, nine months ago, had expanded in his mind until it now took up all the space in his life. Where Kiki had felt her way instinctively through her problem, Jerome had written his out, words and words and words. [...] Jerome had not given his mother any details when it happened and he wasn't going to give her any details when it happened and he wasn't going to give her any now. It was a matter of an impossible translation – his mother wanted to know about a girl, but it wasn't *about* a girl or, rather, it wasn't about *just* the girl. Jerome had fallen in love with a family.¹⁷⁵⁰

Here Kiki's feelings about her husband's infidelity are juxtaposed to Jerome's coping strategies with his unhappy romance. Mother and son seem to be developing into different directions, yet they are linked by the narrator who glides from Kiki's consciousness to Jerome's innermost thoughts and feelings. As Philip Tew observes, Smith makes use of a technique of "overlying and multiplying viewpoints, often refracted by others."¹⁷⁵¹ He therefore concludes that the overlapping consciousness universalises her characters without negating differences such as ethnicity, gender or disposition.¹⁷⁵² Following Forster's *Only Connect* dictum, the narrator creates characters who are despite their differences connected through their shared humanity. Notwithstanding their intertextual links, the novels diverge from one another when it comes to their mood. "*On Beauty* feels more pessimistic than Forster's work. *On Beauty* mourns the loss of apprehensible meaning signified in the failure to recognize simple truths and celebrate beauty."¹⁷⁵³

The novel's concern for the absence of beauty from academia and the lives of the people who inhabit this world is also indebted to the second intertextual reference, *On Beauty and Being Just*¹⁷⁵⁴ by the US-American philosopher Elaine Scarry, from which Smith borrows the novel's title and the title of the novel's third part "On Beauty and Being Wrong."¹⁷⁵⁵ Scarry's essay provocatively challenges academic standards with her "old-fashioned Keatsian claim that beauty may be equated with truth."¹⁷⁵⁶ She grants beauty an ethical function which she associates with our perception of the particularities of our environment: "Beauty seems to place requirements on us for attending to the aliveness or (in the case of objects) quasi-aliveness of our world, and for entering into its protection".¹⁷⁵⁷ She proceeds from the assumption of "a contract between the beautiful being (a person or thing) and the perceiver,"¹⁷⁵⁸ thus

¹⁷⁵⁰ Smith. 2005. pp. 43-44.

¹⁷⁵¹ Tew, Philip. 2010. *Zadie Smith*. London/New York. p. 102.

¹⁷⁵² Ibid. p. 102.

¹⁷⁵³ Ibid. p. 94.

¹⁷⁵⁴ Scarry, Elaine. 2001. *On Beauty and Being Just*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

¹⁷⁵⁵ Smith. 2005.. "Acknowledgements."

¹⁷⁵⁶ Lanone. 2007. p. 189.

¹⁷⁵⁷ Scarry. 2001. p. 90.

¹⁷⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 90.

rendering a new perspective on the world, as “we cease to stand [...] at the center of our own world. We willingly cede our ground to the thing that stands before us.”¹⁷⁵⁹ Hence, beauty is inextricably linked to “ethical fairness,”¹⁷⁶⁰ the discouragement of egocentrism and the increase of an awareness of the Other.

Alexander Dick and Christine Lupton hence point out that “the assumption behind Scarry’s and Smith’s arguments is that beauty, and all that it implies as the focus of a moral disposition and a practical engagement with life, exists somewhere outside the liberal academy.”¹⁷⁶¹ Similarly, Scarry states that “to misstate, or even merely understate, the relations to beauty is one kind of error that can be made. A university is among the most precious things that can be destroyed,”¹⁷⁶² Smith illustrates the power of beauty in the character of Kiki Belsey. In contrast to her husband and his rival, she is able to see beauty and is furthermore described as remarkably beautiful. This is underscored by Smith’s endorsement of another intertextual layer which Lanone calls “pictorial intertextuality.”¹⁷⁶³ Harnessing the power of the visual, in *On Beauty*, the implications of the aesthetic experience of beauty become, for example, apparent in the description of Kiki as an “African queen”¹⁷⁶⁴ or as belonging to “a fountain in Rome.”¹⁷⁶⁵ Already the first depiction of Kiki is reminiscent of a painting: “Light struck the double glass doors that led to the garden, filtering through the arch that split the kitchen. It rested softly upon the still life of Kiki at the breakfast table, motionless, reading.”¹⁷⁶⁶ Furthermore, as Selejan points out, Smith’s prose reads at times like poetry, fashioning rhythmic and musical passages to create vivid images in the minds of the readers. Praising Smith’s use of rhetorical and poetic devices, as well as her avoidance of stock phrases and stock imagery,¹⁷⁶⁷ Selejan remarks, for instance, on the passage picturing the scene of Carlene Kipp’s funeral that it deploys like in the above description of Kiki’s still life imagery of light to create a vivid image replete with movement: “Ribbons of daylight threaded through the shady interior, tying up a stack of guilt hymn books in their radiance, highlighting the blonde hair of a pretty child, the brass edging on the octangular font.”¹⁷⁶⁸ As Selejan argues, the radiance of the light pouring through the church doors indicates the movement which punctuates the milestones of a person’s life, proceeding from baptism (as epitomised by the font), as well as the wedding and the funeral represented by the walk down the aisle of “Carlene Kipps, boxed in wood.”¹⁷⁶⁹ Hence, *On Beauty* endorses an aesthetics that is overtly complying with the notion of literary discourse as ‘perceivable by the senses’ rather than offering general notions to the reasoning mind.¹⁷⁷⁰ It thus evinces the novel’s concern for the ethical value of

¹⁷⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 112.

¹⁷⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 95.

¹⁷⁶¹ Dick, Alexander; Lupton, Christina. “On Lecturing and Being Beautiful: Elaine Scarry, Zadie Smith and the Liberal Aesthetic.” In: *ESC* 39.2-3. 2013. pp. 115-137. p. 117.

¹⁷⁶² Scarry. 2001. p. 95.

¹⁷⁶³ Lanone. 2007. p. 194.

¹⁷⁶⁴ Ali. 2003. p. 313.

¹⁷⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 121.

¹⁷⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 8.

¹⁷⁶⁷ Selejan. 2015. pp. 43-44.

¹⁷⁶⁸ Smith. 2005. p. 286.

¹⁷⁶⁹ Smith. 2005. p. 286. Selejan. 2015. p. 43.

¹⁷⁷⁰ See chapter 3.2.1.

beauty, which is deemed particularly relevant in the face of the horrors of 9/11 and the ensuing war on terrorism.

By means of the Forsterian character constellations, *On Beauty* discusses the ways on which the ostensibly fierce binaries of “us versus them” may be overcome. The characters who are most capable of transgressing the fault lines of the ideological battles between the Belseys and Kipps are Kiki and Carlene. In contrast to her husband and Monty Kipps, and like Margaret Schlegel, who befriends Mrs Wilcox, Kiki is able to begin a friendship with Carlene Kipps without surrendering her own personality and beliefs. At their first encounter, the similarities between the two women rather than their differences are stressed. When Carlene recites a line from a poem “*There is such a shelter in each other*”¹⁷⁷¹ – which is in fact taken from the poem “Imperial” by the author’s husband Nick Laird, both women discover common ground in their natural and authentic approach to art and consequently their ability to connect with one another. A connection which is also expressed in the idea of finding “shelter in each other.” This notion is also echoed by the novel’s epigraph quoting H.J. Blackham’s *We refuse to be each other*,¹⁷⁷² which underscores the text’s concern for overcoming divisions.

When Carlene shows Kiki the painting of the voodoo goddess *Maîtresse Erzulie* by the Haitian painter Hector Hyppolite, Kiki immediately acknowledges Erzulie’s beauty. She embodies “love, beauty, purity, the ideal female and the moon...and she’s the *mystère* of jealousy, vengeance and discord, and, on the other hand, of love, perpetual help, goodwill, health, beauty and fortune.”¹⁷⁷³ Incorporating ostensibly dichotomous qualities, Erzulie symbolises qualities which are anathema to Howard and Monty. She thus epitomises *On Beauty*’s thematic concern for dichotomies running between the two families and within the Belsey family, and which are also prevailing in the aftermath of the 11 September attacks. As Kiki puts it, “we’re so binary, of course, in the way we think. We tend to think in opposites, in the Christian world. We’re structured like that – Howard always says that’s the trouble.”¹⁷⁷⁴ Erzulie represents the interest in “individuals who seek human connection beyond the confines of their exclusive social milieu.”¹⁷⁷⁵ Hence, the “rewriting of the campus novel in a multicultural perspective”¹⁷⁷⁶ may be read as defense of hybridity that fends off ideological fundamentalism and questions rituals of identity.¹⁷⁷⁷ The text thus transposes the Forsterian “muddle”¹⁷⁷⁸ to the post-9/11 era which is further linked to Scarry’s defense of aesthetic pleasure that Howard, the poststructuralist academic, treats with scepticism and disdain. Victoria Kipps, who has a brief affair with Howard, aptly summarises his academic stance.

¹⁷⁷¹ Ali. 2003. p. 93.

¹⁷⁷² Smith. 2005. Epigraph.

¹⁷⁷³ Ibid. p. 175.

¹⁷⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 175.

¹⁷⁷⁵ Anjaria, Ulka. “*On Beauty* and Being Post-Colonial: Aesthetics and Form in Zadie Smith.” In: Walters, Tracey Lorraine, ed. 2008. *Zadie Smith: Critical Essays*. New York/Oxford: Peter Lang. pp. 31-55. p. 39.

¹⁷⁷⁶ Lanone. 2007. p. 192.

¹⁷⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 192.

¹⁷⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 192.

Your class is all about never *ever* saying *I like the tomato*. [...] Because the tomato is not there to be *liked*. That's what *I love* about your class. It's properly intellectual. The tomato is just totally revealed as this phoney construction that can't lead you to some higher truth – nobody's pretending the tomato will save your life. Or teach you how to live or *ennoble* you or *be a great of the human spirit*.¹⁷⁷⁹

By contrast, Carlene Kipps does not view herself as an intellectual, but approaches literature and art in a way that enables her to “love poetry,”¹⁷⁸⁰ Howard, on the other hand, is cast as the stereotypical academic who has been blinded to the beauty of art and the world by his postmodern scepticism. Moreover, his rejection of a conventional aesthetic approach to art also affects his private life. Not only does he insist on listening to atonal music and rejects and form of portrait painting, but Howard also fails to see his wife's beauty. Despite his rejection of conventional aesthetic norms, he falls for the most traditional and clichéd forms of beauty, represented by his nemesis' daughter Victoria Kipps,¹⁷⁸¹ who represents a physical antithesis to his middle-aged and overweight wife. Lacking any appreciation of an ethical value of art, the actions in his private life are also characterised by moral vacuousness. The affair with the much younger Victoria, who previously also had an affair with his son Jerome, is the apex of his flawed character.¹⁷⁸²

However, the novel's end suggests that even Howard is not beyond redemption. When he is to hold a lecture critical to his stagnating career about Rembrandt's painting *Hendrickje Bathing*, and he forgot his notes, he is forced to reconsider the painting of Rembrandt's lover wading in the water. Noticing that his estranged wife is among the audience, he sees the painting with different eyes: “The woman's fleshiness filled the wall. He looked out into the audience once more and saw Kiki only. He smiled at her. She smiled. She looked away, but she smiled. Howard looked back at the woman on the wall, Rembrandt's love, Hendrickje.”¹⁷⁸³ Kiki's presence signalling the prospect of reconciliation induces him to look at the woman whose beauty is the centre of Rembrandt's painting. Howard for the first time acknowledges “the *moral* element of aesthetic value”¹⁷⁸⁴ he vehemently rejected before. As Kathleen Wall remarks, the painting functions as a mediator between husband and wife, who “agree to make Hendrickje's elusive, reflective beauty part of their lives.”¹⁷⁸⁵ Kiki's smile suggests that she has noticed the change in his perception and Howard's speechless recognition of Hendrickje's beauty and humanity and the chance of forgiveness can be read not only as a fictional enactment of Scarry's ethical association of beauty,¹⁷⁸⁶ but also as a statement on the function of art in the post-9/11 world. With the aid of the surrogate conflicts between Howard and Kiki, and the Belseys and the Kipps, *On Beauty* makes clear

¹⁷⁷⁹ Smith. 2005. p. 312.

¹⁷⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 94.

¹⁷⁸¹ Itakura. 2011. p. 30. Anjaria. 2008. pp. 45-46.

¹⁷⁸² Ibid. p. 47.

¹⁷⁸³ Smith. 2005. p. 443.

¹⁷⁸⁴ Anjaria. 2008. p. 48.

¹⁷⁸⁵ Wall, Kathleen. “Ethics, Knowledge and the Need for Beauty: Zadie Smith's *On Beauty and Being Just* and Ian McEwan's *Saturday*.” In: *University of Toronto Quarterly* 77.2. 2008. pp. 757-788. p. 774.

¹⁷⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 774.

that politics, ethics and aesthetics are inextricably linked, and stresses the role of art as one possible manifestation of beauty for redrawing the boundaries of “us versus them” in the post-9/11 world.

The link between ethics and aesthetics and the politics of the post-9/11 world are also central to *Double Vision*. During his recovery stint in the rural north of England, Stephen begins with the work on his book about “ways of representing war.”¹⁷⁸⁷ The novel’s epigraph quotes Goya’s caption for the 1863 series *Los desastres de la Guerra: No se puede mirar*. One cannot look at this. *Yo lo vi*. I saw it. *Esto es lo verdadero*. This is the truth¹⁷⁸⁸ looms over this endeavour as well as over Kate Forbisher’s sculpture of Jesus Christ and Peter’s attempts at writing fiction. Hence, *Double Vision* raises questions about the ethics of representation in the post-9/11 world, in which atrocity exhibition, the blurring of reality and fiction and the collapse of the boundaries between the perpetrators, the victims and the witnesses of trauma, have been taken to new extremes. Against this backdrop, “Barker’s way with Goya is [...] humanist, a defence of art in the face of the hegemony of the photographic and the televisual.”¹⁷⁸⁹ At the heart of the novel lies, as Stephen puts it, “this tension between wanting to show the truth, and yet being sceptical about what the effects of showing it are going to be.”¹⁷⁹⁰

The 11 September attacks represent the acme of this tension inherent to ethical questions on representing violence and carnage. Stephen remembers how his friend Ben returned to his hotel room in New York on 11 September 2001 after having spent the whole day photographing the incredible catastrophe:

Ben said, ‘Do *you* think the world just changed?’

‘I think America will.’

‘I think things have changed. I mean real change. That was designed as a photo-opportunity, and what have I done? I’ve spent the whole bloody day photographing it. Along with everybody else.

Because we can’t escape from the need for a visual record. The appetite for spectacle. And they’ve used that against us, just as they’ve used our technology against us.’¹⁷⁹¹

Echoing the famous adage of the symbiosis of media and terrorism,¹⁷⁹² Ben critically reflects on his own role in catering the need for spectacle that the terrorists exploited in their plotting of a Baudrillardian notion of the ‘mother’ of all events. Hence, the witness makes himself complicit in acts of terrorism aiming at the biggest showcase of spectacular violence, thus creating “one of the most photogenic war zones of modern times.”¹⁷⁹³ Clearly, that “there is beauty in ruins”¹⁷⁹⁴ and that there is an aesthetic value in the photographs of Ground Zero is hard to admit in the aftermath of the event.¹⁷⁹⁵

¹⁷⁸⁷ Barker. 2003. p. 100.

¹⁷⁸⁸ Ibid. epigraph.

¹⁷⁸⁹ Rawlinson. 2010. p. 128.

¹⁷⁹⁰ Barker. 2003. p. 100.

¹⁷⁹¹ Ibid. p. 84.

¹⁷⁹² See chapter 2.1.

¹⁷⁹³ Georgiana. 2012. p. 227.

¹⁷⁹⁴ Sontag. 2003. p. 76.

¹⁷⁹⁵ Ibid. 76.

Premonitions of the dawn of a new era – despite Ben’s contention that “things have changed” – are overruled by the presence of Goya’s anticipation of this ethical dilemma¹⁷⁹⁶ of wanting to show the truth, on the one hand, and its moral implications on the other. The novel suggests that the quandary arising from the New York rubble is not unprecedented, but has arisen during previous conflicts. By placing the events in one line with previous representations of violence, war and trauma, Barker puts the “exceptionalist discourses of 9/11 as unprecedented, unrepeatable und impossible to describe”¹⁷⁹⁷ into perspective. 9/11 marks the day on which Stephen’s marriage ends. As in *Saturday* and *Incendiary* the terrorist attacks are represented as a public event that intrudes into the personal lives of the protagonists. While the main characters in McEwan’s, Cleave’s and Ali’s novels are more directly affected by the anxiety of future attacks or the loss of the family, for Stephen 11 September 2001 is overshadowed by the phone call from his hotel room in New York in which he learns about his wife’s infidelity. He readily admits that “many had far worse personal reasons for remembering”¹⁷⁹⁸ that day, however, his association of 9/11 with the personal catastrophe of the end of his marriage makes clear that even on that day the clocks did not stop. “People fell in love, or out of love, or down flights of badly lit stairs, got jobs, lost jobs, had heart attacks and babies, stared at the shadow on an X-ray, or the second blue line of a pregnancy-testing kit.”¹⁷⁹⁹ In Stephen’s memory the experience of 9/11 is overshadowed by the breakup with his wife, even though “on that day, having any kind of personal crisis seemed selfish.”¹⁸⁰⁰ Yet, Barker’s novel suggests that these nevertheless happened. 9/11 is thus stripped off its hyperbolic status as the ultimate trauma of the Western hemisphere or even the world at large that brings life on the planet to a hold. The experience of the atrocity is normalised by the description of the bereft husband in a New York hotel room who drowns his pain of being deceived in alcohol and numbs himself with sleeping pills. Ulrike Tancke, for instance, argues, that the novel goes further than just hinting at the inadequate trauma discourse.¹⁸⁰¹ Instead of dwelling on what some commentators call the “far-fetching consequences of the events in New York,”¹⁸⁰² it debunks “the seductively simplistic nature of the immediate associations, ‘common knowledge,’ and assumed collectivities”¹⁸⁰³ and focuses on the immediacy and disruptiveness of trauma.¹⁸⁰⁴ The recurrent image of the raped girl in Sarajevo that haunts Stephen throughout the novel alongside Kate’s car accident and the assault of Justine by burglars illustrates the brutality and intrusiveness of trauma in the sense of a physical or psychological injury and not as a mediated experience or a “hermeneutical tool.”¹⁸⁰⁵

¹⁷⁹⁶ Rawlinson. 2010. p. 130.

¹⁷⁹⁷ Banita. 2012. p. 230.

¹⁷⁹⁸ Barker. 2003. p. 80.

¹⁷⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 80.

¹⁸⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 80.

¹⁸⁰¹ Tancke. 2009. p. 91.

¹⁸⁰² Barnita. 2012. p. 231.

¹⁸⁰³ Tancke. 2009. p. 91.

¹⁸⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 91.

¹⁸⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 79.

However, even though 9/11 is deprived of the status of a watershed it is still the point of departure for Stephen's contemplations on the tension between the dilemma of wanting to show the truth, and the ethical problems arising from this pursuit. This becomes clear when Stephen explains that his book about representing war was inspired by Jules Naudet, the filmmaker who followed firemen around New York on 11 September 2001, and happened to be caught up in the catastrophe: "Well, something he said haunted me. At one point, he turned his camera off – he wouldn't film people burning – and he said, 'Nobody should have to see this' – and of course immediately I thought of Goya."¹⁸⁰⁶ Krista Kauffmann argues that the novel's title already points at its endorsement of this tension. According to her, it advocates seeing doubly, in the sense of seeing the dangerous and the beneficial sides.¹⁸⁰⁷ *Double Vision* reflects the ethical discussions and the visual turning point 9/11 induced,¹⁸⁰⁸ which according to Thomas Stubblefield reinforced the move away from Adorno's dictum of unrepresentability to a recognisable visual trope.¹⁸⁰⁹ Similar to Adorno's deliberations about the relationship between ethics and aesthetics in the representation of the Holocaust which was revisited in the immediate aftermath of 9/11,¹⁸¹⁰ *Double Vision* addresses the question of how abhorrent acts of violence may be represented without the exploitation of human suffering. It thus scrutinises the effects of the unprecedented flood of images exhibiting atrocities. Yet rather than condemning the power of images, her novel engages in a nuanced, ethical discussion of their enormous power.¹⁸¹¹

Pat Barker credits Susan Sontag's *Regarding the Pain of Others* in her "Author's Note", and the influence of Sontag's ideas about the functions and features of war photography emerge in many instances in the text. Sontag – like *Double Vision* – raises questions about what it means to look at photos recording crime and cruelties, and the capacity to actually assimilate what they show. She purports that with the notable exception of Goya's representation of *Los Desastres de la Guerra* "most depictions of tormented, mutilated bodies do arouse a prurient interest."¹⁸¹² She recognises that the repulsiveness of the images may also allure the spectator and asserts that all images showing the violation of an attractive body are in essence pornographic.¹⁸¹³

Similarly, in *Double Vision*, images of violence are associated with erotic love. As Tancke points out, already the first sexual encounter between Stephen and Justine explores the links between eroticism, sex and death.¹⁸¹⁴ On their way home Stephen hits an animal with his car, leaving behind "a red mess of spiky fur and splintered bone."¹⁸¹⁵ Their first kiss takes place after Justine has hurt her neck on a barbed

¹⁸⁰⁶ Barker. 2003. p. 100.

¹⁸⁰⁷ Kauffmann. 2012. p. 81.

¹⁸⁰⁸ Schüller. 2009. p. 33-34.

¹⁸⁰⁹ Stubblefield. 2015. p. 176.

¹⁸¹⁰ See chapter 3.2.4.2.

¹⁸¹¹ Kauffmann. 2012. p. 85.

¹⁸¹² Sontag. 2003. p. 85.

¹⁸¹³ Ibid. p. 85.

¹⁸¹⁴ Tancke. 2009. p. 86-89.

¹⁸¹⁵ Barker. 2003. p. 77.

wire, leaving a “long red line, beaded with drops of blood that in this light looked black”¹⁸¹⁶ on the side of her neck. Also, the line between Justine and the girl in Sarajevo blurs increasingly after Justine’s assault.¹⁸¹⁷ Having reported to the police what he witnessed, flashbulbs of raped and tortured girls explode in Stephen’s head: “It would not have surprised him to find her lying like a broken doll at the foot of the stairs, her skirt bunched up around her waist, eyes staring.”¹⁸¹⁸

This disturbing alliance of sex, death and violence also illustrates the novel’s concern with voyeurism. The consumption of images showing other people’s pain points to the parallels between watching the suffering of others and the objectification of sexual voyeurism. This also comes to the fore during a discussion between Stephen and Justine about her reluctance to watch the news. When asked about her refusal to consume news on the television, Justine retorts:

I don’t see the point. There’s nothing I can do about it. If it’s something like a famine, OK, you can contribute, but with a lot of this there’s nothing anybody can do except gawp and say, ‘Ooh, isn’t it awful?’ when really they don’t give a damn. It’s all pumped-up emotion, it’s just false, like when those families come on TV because somebody’s gone missing, or thousands of people send flowers to people they don’t know. It’s just *wanking*.¹⁸¹⁹

Again, it is the quandary of censoring information and thus endangering the democratic tenet of free press and the “voyeurism of *looking* at it”¹⁸²⁰ that is reflected in their discussion. However, echoing Baudrillard’s controversial *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*,¹⁸²¹ which purports that the factual violence has been reduced to hyperreal scenarios, Stephen wonders how public opinion in democracies is shaped by imagery of televised high-tech wars such as the bombardment of Baghdad in 1991. In this war, bloodless computer game-like scenarios conceal the “collateral damage” and hide the pain and suffering that had been caused.¹⁸²²

What becomes clear from the above is that *Double Vision* like *Regarding the Pain of Others* is also dedicated to the truth question of representation, which resonates with the Goyan ethical dilemma between wanting to show the truth and the effects this pursuit may ensue. With their inbuilt “credentials of impartiality”¹⁸²³ photographs appear to bear witness to the real. However, as Sontag points out, not only appear many iconic new images to be staged, but they have in fact been staged.¹⁸²⁴ In a similar vein, Barker’s novel illustrates both that the notion of truth is a very fragile one and that its pursuit may be detrimental to preserving the dignity of the victim. When Stephen and Ben encounter the corpse of the girl in Sarajevo, he decides to pull her skirt down to cover the demeaning traces of her suffering.

¹⁸¹⁶ Ibid. p. 76.

¹⁸¹⁷ Tancke. 2009. pp. 87-88.

¹⁸¹⁸ Barker. 2003. p. 210.

¹⁸¹⁹ Ibid. p. 118.

¹⁸²⁰ Ibid. p. 118.

¹⁸²¹ See chapter 2.2.

¹⁸²² Barker. 2003. p. 203.

¹⁸²³ Sontag. 2003. p. 23.

¹⁸²⁴ Ibid. p. 49.

During one of his visits at Ben's widow Kate, he finds a photograph of the scene and realises that Ben had obviously returned to the crime scene the next morning and taken a photograph of the girl:

He'd restored her skirt to its original position, up round her waist. Its was shocking. Stephen was shocked on her behalf to see her exposed like this, though, ethically, Ben had done nothing wrong. He hadn't staged the photograph. He'd simply restored the corpse to its original state. And yet it was difficult not to feel that the girl, spreadeagled like that, had been violated twice.¹⁸²⁵

Ben's subsequent restoration of the original crime scene shows how the pursuit of truth may be at odds with ethical representations of atrocities. Even though the scene was not staged by Ben, the quest for authenticity creates according to David Waterman a great deal of "ethical uncertainty and instability."¹⁸²⁶ Waterman refers to the selectivity of memory when he contends that despite Ben's geographical return to the crime scene and his restoration of the initial image, there is no going back to the actual event. It can merely be a reconstruction.¹⁸²⁷ He argues that Ben and Stephen can only infer what has happened from the girl's corpse and the environment of the scene. Thus, he contends that memory and the representation of the past allow for such inferences, which can never secure veracity, but cater to the need for consistency.¹⁸²⁸ Another photograph of an execution Stephen encounters in Ben's collection also substantiates these doubts about the conveyance of truth through the visual:

A man on his knees staring up at the men who are preparing to kill him. But Ben had included his own shadow in the shot, reaching out across the dusty road. The shadow says I'm here. I'm holding a camera and that fact will determine what happens next. In the next shot the man lies dead on the road, and the shadow of the photographer, the shadow of a man with a deformed head, has moved closer. This wasn't the first execution recorded on film, nor even the first to be staged specially for the camera, but normally the photographer's presence and its impact on events is not acknowledged.¹⁸²⁹

The photographer plays self-consciously with his power to stage reality, and renders himself – just like the numerous media representatives on 11 September 2001 – complicit with the perpetrators. Both atrocities have apparently been designed as a photo opportunity. In a similar vein, Sontag relates the incident of a staged execution of a Vietcong suspect at the hands of a South Vietnamese Brigadier, General Loan, in the streets of Saigon. According to Sontag, General Loan led the prisoner on to the streets where the photographers had gathered in order to have them witnessing it: "Positioned beside his prisoner so that his profile and the prisoner's face were visible to the cameras behind him, Loan aimed pointblank."¹⁸³⁰

¹⁸²⁵ Barker. 2003. p. 102.

¹⁸²⁶ Waterman, David. 2009. *Pat Barker and the Mediation of Social Reality*. Amherst/New York: Cambria. p. 136.

¹⁸²⁷ Ibid. p. 136.

¹⁸²⁸ Ibid. p. 136.

¹⁸²⁹ Barker.2003. p. 103.

¹⁸³⁰ Sontag. 2003. p. 53.

Double Vision and Sontag explore how the categories of fact and fiction, of witness and perpetrator collapse. As Waterman puts it, “there is no such thing as a simple witness,”¹⁸³¹ the bystander may also have an effect on the action, particularly when a camera is involved.¹⁸³² The invisible touch of the witness is further dramatised through Peter Wingrave’s intervention in Kate’s creation of the sculpture of Christ.¹⁸³³ Kate finds her assistant Peter one night as he mimes her work on the sculpture:

Peter Wingrave stood there, a torch propped up on one of the benches behind him, his shadow huge against the wall of the studio, but this was Peter as she’d never seen him before. Her mind grappled with the wrongness of the image, and then she realized he was wearing her clothes [...]. He looked ridiculous and terrifying. Deranged. [...] He looked mad. He looked totally, utterly deranged, and he was destroying her Christ. [...] He was miming. Pretending to be her. In his own mind, perhaps, he had become her.¹⁸³⁴

In this scene, Peter’s role as the novel’s unsettling presence is starkly illustrated. Although he does not actually harm the statue, his actions appear to be a strange encroachment upon Kate’s personality, or even an attempt at “stealing her identity.”¹⁸³⁵ It becomes clear from this scene that Peter does not respect boundaries, and is incapable of feelings such as compassion. He is an aspiring artist himself. Yet his short stories dealing with “torture. Mental and physical. Murder”¹⁸³⁶ bear witness to his lack of empathy¹⁸³⁷ and fascination with human suffering. Hence, he is also drawn to Kate’s unfinished sculptures of the terrorists of 9/11, “the young men at the controls who’d seized aeroplanes full of people and flown them into the sides of the building. They were, lean, predatory, equally ready to kill or die. She thought the figures might be rather good in the end. They certainly frightened her.”¹⁸³⁸ Peter, who to her discomfort suddenly appears in this scene, is described in similar terms to those figures: “she saw that Peter had come in and was standing by the door, a tall, thin, dark figure starkly elongated against the white wall.”¹⁸³⁹ His lean, dark figure is mirrored in the figures of the terrorists, which underscores his menacing aura, and suggests that he would be ruthless enough to be capable of equally horrendous atrocities.

However, the miming scene not solely emphasizes the discomfort Peter elicits in his environment, the *Doppelgänger* motif of Peter’s miming reveals the mechanisms of meaning-making. As Waterman puts it, Peter does not merely mime her actions, but although he did not even touch the sculpture, his actions create meaning and thus leave traces on the object. This way, Peter’s strange act of miming enacts the

¹⁸³¹ Waterman. 2009. p. 138.

¹⁸³² Ibid. p. 138.

¹⁸³³ Sontag refers to the innumerable visual representations of the Passion of Christ to illustrate the ostensible human passion to represent suffering induced by divine or human wrath which is intended to move and excite, instruct and exemplify. (Sontag. 2003. p. 36.)

¹⁸³⁴ Barker.2003. pp. 148-149.

¹⁸³⁵ Ibid. p. 150.

¹⁸³⁶ Ibid. p. 178.

¹⁸³⁷ As his ex-girlfriend, Justine, puts it, “he thinks he’s got exceptional powers of empathy. And he hasn’t, of course. What he does is dump his own emotions on the other person and then he empathizes with himself.” Ibid. p. 160.

¹⁸³⁸ Ibid. p. 56.

¹⁸³⁹ Ibid. p. 56.

power of meaning-making the photographer holds over his image.¹⁸⁴⁰ *Double Vision* hence joins the discussion on the sense of crisis in the relationship between the mediated image and the reality it references. It not only reflects the sentiment of the post-9/11 era which saw the relationship between reality and fiction altered, but also questions the postulate of authenticity held by visual media. In Sontag's words, "a photograph is always the image that someone chose; to photograph is to frame, and to frame is to exclude."¹⁸⁴¹ While a painting is held to be fake when it is not by the artist it was attributed to, a photograph or televisual footage is deemed to be fake when its contents are revealed to be deceptive. While Goya's *Desastres de la Guerra* evoke the horror of war and show what it could have been like, photographs and films claim that this is exactly how it was.¹⁸⁴² In this sense, *Double Vision* launches a meta-discussion about the value of art and its ethico-political function in an age of televisual atrocity exhibition.

Another novel dealing with the state of the world after 9/11 that extensively discusses the links of ethics, aesthetics and politics in its wake is *Saturday*. It engages like *Double Vision* in a discussion about the value of art in an age characterised by the supremacy of the televisual image which, in the case of 9/11, primes human memory to the extent that the protagonist instantly feels threatened at the sight of a burning plane in London's nocturnal skyline. Because of its concern for the value of art vis-à-vis the discourse of science, McEwan's novel also shares certain affinities with *On Beauty*. As Kathleen Wall contends, Smith's and McEwan's texts "complement one another insofar as *On Beauty* considers the effect of an individual's relationship with beauty on his or her character, whereas *Saturday* concerns itself with the way in which beauty enlarges our attention to and knowledge of the world."¹⁸⁴³ Both novels engage in questions of how the ability to perceive beauty may foster empathy and thus make humans more capable of attending to the complexities of the "other". Moreover, both Henry Perowne's and Howard Belsey's inability to connect with beauty is associated with their inability to see the humanity of others.¹⁸⁴⁴ What is more, *Saturday* like *Double Vision* frames 9/11 as a violent intrusion of the public into the private sphere, and at the same time shows – similarly to Barker's text – that the true perils are much closer to home than the medially disseminated threat scenarios make believe. Hence, like the burglars breaking into Justine's house, the threat that shakes up the Perowne family emanates by Baxter and his accomplice.

In addition, *Saturday* may not solely be reduced to its preoccupation with the world after the 11 September attacks. It sets out to explore the tension between scientific determinism and choice, and what is more, between science and literature.¹⁸⁴⁵ As Susan Green observes, Ian McEwan merges the two

¹⁸⁴⁰ Waterman. 2009. p. 147.

¹⁸⁴¹ Sontag. p.41.

¹⁸⁴² Ibid. pp. 41-42.

¹⁸⁴³ Wall. 2008. p. 758.

¹⁸⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 758.

¹⁸⁴⁵ Courtney, Hannah. "Distended Moments in the Neuronarrative: Character Consciousness and the Cognitive Sciences in Ian McEwan's *Saturday*." In: Danta, Chris; Groth, Helen, eds. 2014. *Mindful Aesthetics: Literature and the Science of Mind*. London/New York: Bloomsbury. pp. 173-188. p. 177.

traditionally rivalling discourses of art and science in order to explore the human condition.¹⁸⁴⁶ The interest manifests itself on different levels. For one thing, the novel explores “the matter of how we know, of how we experience the world”¹⁸⁴⁷ through its protagonist, a successful neurosurgeon, who muses about his operational success and the workings of the brain from the very beginning of the novel.¹⁸⁴⁸ Henry Perowne is as unimaginative, fundamentally rational and obtuse as he is a gifted neurosurgeon. He has, however, two artistically talented children: Theo, an aspiring Blues musician, and Daisy, an up-and-coming poet. Naturally, Perowne and Oxford-educated Daisy, who has enjoyed a very different education to that of her father, have frequent discussions about the value of literature as well as politics.¹⁸⁴⁹ Perowne does not share Daisy’s belief in literary genius, nor is he interested in literature because he does not “want to be a spectator of other lives.”¹⁸⁵⁰ He is indifferent to having “the world reinvented; he wants it explained,”¹⁸⁵¹ and dismisses his daughter’s credo that one cannot live without stories. He considers himself to be the living proof that one can live without literature.¹⁸⁵² Therefore, Perowne and his father-in-law, Grammaticus, who is also a poet, have never been able to establish a warm relationship with one another. Rather, “the two men are superficially friendly and at bottom bored with each other.”¹⁸⁵³

Perowne and his daughter also fundamentally disagree when it comes to the imminent invasion of Iraq by the “coalition of the willing.” Despite his rather ambivalent private thoughts about the coming war, when he discusses the matter with Daisy, Perowne takes a much more definite pro-war stance.¹⁸⁵⁴ The discussion soon turns into an argument and the opposition of the two characters becomes apparent. While Perowne argues that the invasion of Iraq is inevitable and might eventually turn out to be successful in leading to the deliverance of the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein’s regime, Daisy’s argument opposes her father’s idea that there is no choice but to invade Iraq. While Daisy believes in the fundamental immorality of the war, Perowne takes a much more relativist stance nurtured by his scientific ideas on chance and the randomness of the forces of the universe. Since McEwan sets his presentation of these two colliding worldviews against the backdrop of his evocation of London on the 15 February 2003, a highly politicised day, the novel renders rationalism as the force that “works against expanded sympathy, an inclination that is arguably necessitated by the allusion to an increasingly complicated world of conflicting and potentially colliding sensibilities.”¹⁸⁵⁵ In other words, the novel is

¹⁸⁴⁶ Green, Susan. “Consciousness and Ian McEwan’s *Saturday*: What Henry Knows.” In: *English Studies* 91.1. 2010. pp. 58-73. pp. 58-59.

¹⁸⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p. 62.

¹⁸⁴⁸ McEwan. 2005. pp. 7-12.

¹⁸⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 58.

¹⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 66.

¹⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 66.

¹⁸⁵² *Ibid.* p. 68.

¹⁸⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 195.

¹⁸⁵⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 186-192.

¹⁸⁵⁵ Kowaleski Wallace, Elizabeth. “Postcolonial Melancholia in Ian McEwan’s *Saturday*.” In: *Studies in the Novel* 39.1. 2007. pp. 465-480. p. 470.

an imaginative test field for the potential impact the discourses of literature and science may have on the altered post-9/11 individual and collective psyche.

In a similar vein, *On Beauty* stages the collision of two worldviews, that of a natural ability to perceive beauty versus an unhinged intellectualism which strips every piece of art off its aesthetic and its ethical value. Howard Belsey and Henry Perowne have, hence, more in common than their different professions and their familial situations may superficially indicate. Both men lack to a certain extent the ability to empathise and both embrace a cold-blooded rationalism and intellectualism bordering on cynicism. Furthermore, both of them eventually learn a lesson in an epiphanic moment. While Howard is made aware of the beauty of his wife through Rembrandt's painting during a mishap lecture in the novel's last scene, in *Saturday*, Perowne realises through the recitation of a poem the humanity of the "other" when Baxter and his friend Nark break into his house and take his daughter hostage.

However, during their first encounter, after a minor car accident earlier in the day, Baxter arouses Perowne's "professional attention,"¹⁸⁵⁶ by his condition, which the protagonist diagnoses as Huntington's disease. Perowne's allusions to a possible cure of his condition, which inspire hope in Baxter, allow him to callously escape an assault through Baxter and his friends Nigel and Nark. Perowne perceives Baxter only in terms of the "biological determinism"¹⁸⁵⁷ of the disease and all of its symptoms, including tremors of Baxter's hand and his false sense of superiority.¹⁸⁵⁸ Considering Baxter's plight caused by the condition, Perowne "knows himself to be incapable of pity,"¹⁸⁵⁹ and leaves Baxter who has been cheated and humiliated in front of his friends behind.

The question of "who will ever find morality, an ethics down among the enzymes and amino acids",¹⁸⁶⁰ raised during this first encounter, becomes ever more virulent in the climactic scene of the novel, in which Baxter and Nigel threaten Perowne's family at knifepoint. Perowne comes to realise that it was "dangerous to humble a man as emotionally labile as Baxter,"¹⁸⁶¹ and that he misused his authority as a doctor to play on Baxter's hopes for a cure in order to get himself out of the situation.¹⁸⁶² After the intruder breaks Grammaticus' nose, Perowne makes a further attempt at veering Baxter away from his family promising him to get him on an allegedly new drug trial that has shown fantastic results.¹⁸⁶³ However, Baxter is reluctant to believe Perowne a second time and instead forces his daughter to strip naked, which unveils her early pregnancy to her family. The unease triggered by the sight of the pregnant woman stops the two thugs from raping Daisy, and they make her read out her "best" poem. Daisy, however, follows her grandfather's hint and does not recite one of her works, but Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach". Baxter is immediately elated by the beauty of the poem which reminds him of where

¹⁸⁵⁶ McEwan. 2005. p. 87.

¹⁸⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 93.

¹⁸⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 91.

¹⁸⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 98.

¹⁸⁶⁰ Ibid. pp. 91-92.

¹⁸⁶¹ Ibid. p. 211.

¹⁸⁶² Ibid. p. 211.

¹⁸⁶³ Ibid. p. 215.

he spent his childhood.¹⁸⁶⁴ It is, as Susan Green points out, not Perowne's alleged scientific expertise promising a possible cure that rescues the situation, but the imaginative power of literature, in the form of poetry that averts the disaster. She further contends that McEwan most notably harnesses the power of art and literature to make a statement about our ways of knowing,¹⁸⁶⁵ and as an "invitation to reshape perceptions, redirect meaning and provoke an affective response."¹⁸⁶⁶

Moreover, by means of this meta-fictional statement, the novel suggests that literature may potentially fulfil an ethical function in terms of enabling people to imagine the thoughts and feelings of others. His novel thus echoes the author's proposition in the immediate wake of 9/11, in which he attests the hijackers of the planes a lack of empathy. In this sense, *Dover Beach* represents a moral force, a metaphor for ways of knowing as well as a useful plot device.¹⁸⁶⁷ Hence, Ian McEwan plays on nineteenth-century Arnoldian ideas of the civilising power of literature. Almost naively, the novel displays a "Victorian faith in the amelioratory power of the novel."¹⁸⁶⁸ According to David Amigoni, McEwan creates a parody of such claims by transforming the "simian" Baxter, whose actions and mood swings are largely determined by his neurological condition, into an "Arnoldian best self."¹⁸⁶⁹

However, it is not only a neo-Victorian cultural contest between the discourses of science and humanities that is at play in this scene. It is most of all the contemporary setting of the post-9/11 era that renders *Saturday*'s climax particularly meaningful. Echoing the view of many commentators in the immediate aftermath of the spectacle, Perowne wonders about the purpose of fiction: "The times are strange enough. Why make things up?"¹⁸⁷⁰ Thus, as Zoe Heller phrases it, McEwan reflects the questions regarding the value of literature that were raised in the time after 9/11. That is to say, "in a world that can present us with the phantasmagorical spectacle of 9/11, what has fiction to offer?"¹⁸⁷¹ The climactic scene of the novel functions as an allegorical moment, illustrating literature's power. Perowne is being taught the lesson that "literature cannot give absolute answers, or furnish watertight explanations,"¹⁸⁷² but "what it can do [...] is capture the moral tangle of personal life and historical context that is our lived experience."¹⁸⁷³ According to Arthur Bradley and Andrew Tate, the novel allegorically stages the conflict he saw on 11 September 2001: "literature versus terror, empathy against solipsism."¹⁸⁷⁴ Clearly,

¹⁸⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 222.

¹⁸⁶⁵ Green. 2010. p. 66.

¹⁸⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 67.

¹⁸⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 68.

¹⁸⁶⁸ Bradley, Arthur; Tate, Andrew. 2010. *The New Atheist Novel: Philosophy, Fiction and Polemic after 9/11*. London/New York: Continuum. p. 23.

¹⁸⁶⁹ Amigoni, David. "The Luxury of Storytelling: Science, Literature, and Cultural Contest in Ian McEwan's Narrative Practice." In: Ruston, Sharon, ed. 2008. *Literature and Science*. Cambridge: Brewer. pp. 151-168. 162.

¹⁸⁷⁰ McEwan. 2005. p. 66.

¹⁸⁷¹ Heller, Zoe. "Saturday: One Day in the Life." In: *The New York Times*. 20.03.2005.

http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/20/books/review/saturday-one-day-in-the-life.html?_r=0

last accessed 14th March 2016

¹⁸⁷² Ibid.

¹⁸⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷⁴ Bradley; Tate. 2010. p. 29.

McEwan's take on the world after 9/11 does not attempt to explain terrorism, but is, like most of the other British approaches to the events, a meta-commentary on the role of art, and in particular, "the obligations and limitations of the *novel*."¹⁸⁷⁵

In a similar fashion, *On Beauty* underscores the importance of beauty and its instantiation in art and literature. The professor for creative writing at Wellington, Howard's lover Clair, is the character who is most articulate about the political responsibilities of writers. Frequently referring to the state of the world after the 11 September attacks, she contends that "the war continues, the President's an ass, our poets are failing to legislate, the world's going to hell."¹⁸⁷⁶ In her view, poets have a political responsibility to "legislate" in the aftermath of 9/11. She thus echoes the expectations raised after the first shock in the aftermath of events had waned: namely, that it is on writers to attribute meaning to the events, and to reflect the new realities of the post-9/11 world.

In a similar vein, *Saturday* stages a lesson illustrating the powers of beauty, in this case the beauty of literature. Perowne's previously unfettered belief in science and his rejection of art and literature leaves him with a feeling of doom in the face of the impending war in Iraq. His ways of knowing the world are utterly shaken, when Daisy's recitation of "Dover Beach" reveals the power of beauty to disarm and inspire hope.¹⁸⁷⁷ *On Beauty* similarly advocates "the redemption of form and aesthetic sensibility"¹⁸⁷⁸ as it suggests that the rejection of the aesthetics may destroy the life of the individual.¹⁸⁷⁹ Both *Saturday* and *On Beauty* suggest that aesthetics is inextricably linked to the ethical.

Confronting the questions of class and social status, the ethical questions raised in the British novels on 9/11 go beyond the cultural negotiation of the terrorist threat of the 21st century.¹⁸⁸⁰ In *Saturday*, Perowne's lack of ability to empathise with other people is intensified by Baxter's lower social status. As Ashley Dawson contends, Baxter remains a complete cipher to Perowne. The appearance of the thug, according to her, embodies the radically uneven geography of London and of the situation in contemporary Britain in general, as well as the inability of the elite which Perowne epitomises to connect with the increasingly downtrodden majority.¹⁸⁸¹ Despite Baxter's provenance from a white lower class background, his role in the novel has been cast in racial terms. In this vein, Dawson purports that Baxter and his friends are made to represent all the forces within and outside the nation that threaten its bourgeois beneficiaries. Hence, Baxter assumes the role of the unwanted intruder. His sudden

¹⁸⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 23.

¹⁸⁷⁶ Smith. 2005. p. 151.

¹⁸⁷⁷ Wall. 2008. p. 761.

¹⁸⁷⁸ Anjaria. 2008. p. 49.

¹⁸⁷⁹ Ibid. pp. 48-49.

¹⁸⁸⁰ Susana Arújajo, for example, associates Baxter's criminalization with the scapegoating of the white American soldier Lyndie England, who has been convicted for torture in the infamous Abu Graib torture scandal. Arújajo. 2015. p. 59.

¹⁸⁸¹ Dawson, Ashley. "The 2000s." In: Arata, Stephen; Haley, Madigan et al., eds. 2015. *A Companion to the English Novel*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell. pp. 72- 86. p. 74.

appearance points to the status of postcolonial immigrants in Britain, who were perceived as a threat to the purportedly homogenous English way of life.¹⁸⁸²

On the other hand, it may also be argued that Baxter and Nark not only represent the perceived threat posed by immigration, but also enact threat scenarios of a much-apprehended terrorist intrusion. As Gauthier puts it, “Baxter gives form to Perowne’s generalized anxieties. For though he presents an immediate danger to the protagonist, his family, and home, he also embodies a potential cataclysm that looms throughout *Saturday*: to London, to Britishness, to Western civilization, and more.”¹⁸⁸³ What is more, Gauthier regards *Saturday* as the fictional replication of the binary that has already been noticed in McEwan’s non-fictional response in the immediate aftermath, centring on those whose ability for empathy enables them to see the humanity and the others who are positioned outside of that framework. It is a binary based on Western civilisation embodying humanity and reason, on the one hand, and the destitute and irrational Other, on the other. In this vein, the relations between Perowne and Baxter are fundamentally asymmetrical in that there remains a “suspicion of superiority in Perowne’s interaction with Baxter.”¹⁸⁸⁴ Baxter suffering from a neurological condition inducing irrational behaviour and violent outbursts cannot be an opponent on an equal footing. This inequity is further abetted by Perowne’s distance created by his medical profession. Gauthier hence argues that Perowne does not empathise with Baxter. The relationship of unequal power relations between the two characters is more aptly described in terms of Perowne feeling sympathy with Baxter’s pitiable state. Such a dynamic requires a differential positioning of the sympathiser and the sympathised, the act of feeling pity for the “other” impedes any empathetic connection.¹⁸⁸⁵

Baxter may epitomise an irrational and unpredictable “other”, thus creating a fictional reflection on the unease and sense of impending catastrophe that prevailed in the aftermath of 9/11. Yet, what is striking is that McEwan’s text deploys a perpetrator stemming from the inside of British society, which appears to be unusual in the light of the looming presence of 9/11. It draws attention to class conflicts and the disintegration of social cohesion, which has deteriorated “since the days of Margaret Thatcher’s famous pronouncement ‘there is no such thing as society.’”¹⁸⁸⁶ Thus, it is not the Muslim “other” threatening the privileged in British society, but a destitute member of the lower strata that may threaten the status quo. While addressing the post-9/11 anxieties in Britain, the novel illustrates the overblown terrorist threat prevailing in the early 2000s, and points to quotidian, albeit equally perilous socio-political conflicts which threaten to tear society apart. *Saturday* addresses the “prejudice, misunderstanding, and over-interpretation in an increasingly paranoid London”¹⁸⁸⁷ after 9/11 by deploying Baxter and not an Oriental terrorist as a villain.

¹⁸⁸² Ibid. p. 74.

¹⁸⁸³ Gauthier. 2015. p. 174.

¹⁸⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 180.

¹⁸⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 181.

¹⁸⁸⁶ Dawson. 2015. p. 74.

¹⁸⁸⁷ Bradley; Tate. 2010. p. 30.

By contrast to *Saturday*'s implicit subversion of the image of the terrorist Other, *Brick Lane* does explicitly address the stereotypes Muslims living in Britain were confronted with in the aftermath of 9/11. The text strives to debunk many of the stereotypes of the immigrant Other, particularly when it comes to the topics of radical Islam and terrorism. Nazneen is introduced to the radical Bengal Tigers through Karim, who is being increasingly radicalised. Towards the end of the novel, Karim eventually leaves Britain. It remains unknown if he moves to Bangladesh or even joins the jihad. His activism is, however, represented as a way of responding to the racism and injustices he and the Muslim community are faced with after the 11 September attacks rather than in terms of religious fervour and radicalism. In this vein, the Bengal Tigers organise a counter-demonstration against the "March against the Mullahs" by the far-right "Lion Hearts". They are represented as reactive rather than proactively violent. Moreover, during a meeting, one of the participants presents the audience with the incongruence of the attention paid to the "collateral damage" of the invasion of Afghanistan and the worldwide mourning after 9/11:

A few weeks ago, persons unknown launched an attack on American soil. Innocent people were killed. Civilians. Men, women, and children. The world wept and sent money. Now, America is taking her revenge and our brothers are being killed. Their children die with them. They are not any more or less innocent. But the world does not mourn them.¹⁸⁸⁸

The perception among the Bengal Tigers that the plight of the poor remains unrecognized by Western nation states prevails. As the young female participant exclaims, 11 September 2001 also marks the date on which thirty-five thousand children died from starvation in the poorest countries in the world: "Appeals for the victims and their families: none. Messages from heads of state: none. Candlelight vigils: none. Minutes of silence: none."¹⁸⁸⁹ The text hence suggests that the motivation for radicalisation and the disposition to engage in jihad is not a blindfold radicalism, but a genuine sense of injustice.

What is more, the Bengal Tigers are represented as a chaotic group comprising a vast number of different views on Islam. As the discussion about their attitude to live music shows, they have not reached a consensus about the things which are deemed un-Islamic yet. Moreover, this scene also parodies the staunch and austere image of Muslims. The spiritual leader is consulted to decide whether all music is to be considered un-Islamic. Yet, while he decides to ban all music, he has to grapple with his very own sin, resulting in an enormous weight gain within a very short period of time, for "the little conference on sharia did not interfere with his consumption of a very large, lavishly glazed pastry."¹⁸⁹⁰ *Brick Lane* thus seeks to reconstruct the public image of the post-9/11 image of the Muslim "other" by way of pointing to the existence of their grievances, their perception of being demoted to inferior and wretched human beings by the West, and her facetious representation of their vices, and shortcomings, thus creating a "humanizing representations of Muslim characters in Anglophone fiction."¹⁸⁹¹

¹⁸⁸⁸ Ali. 2003. p. 453.

¹⁸⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 453.

¹⁸⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 453.

¹⁸⁹¹ Mustafa. 2009. p. 282.

On Beauty, on the other hand, refrains from a discussion of the social status from the perspective of a deprived minority group. Instead, the novel links the individual behaviour of the members of an elitist academic circle to the ability or inability to perceive beauty. Howard's focus on Marxist theory and abstract thought inhibits him to perceive beauty and the particularities of art, which leads him to commit ethical errors such as the betrayal of his wife and the affair with his son's former girlfriend.¹⁸⁹² Despite their ideological differences, Howard and his nemesis, Sir Monty Kipps, a British Afro-Caribbean art professor, have, due to their inability to perceive beauty, more in common than one would initially suspect. Monty views art as "a gift from God" and a "blessing of only a handful of masters,"¹⁸⁹³ a view which corresponds to his rejection of affirmative action.¹⁸⁹⁴ Referring to Charlene, an unprivileged student, Monty asserts that Charlene has no right to obtain a place in college because she lacks the qualifications for an academic career. Being black and poor does not justify her entrance into Wellington.¹⁸⁹⁵ As Wall pinpoints it, "affirmative action horrifies and angers him because it abrogates the 'natural' order of privilege."¹⁸⁹⁶ It would thus threaten his status as a member of the "merited" elite. However, his status does not impede him from engaging in a morally dubious sexual relationship with Charlene. His inability to perceive the beauty of art thus leads him not only to betray his wife but also to take advantage of his disadvantaged student who he excoriates on the grounds of her social background.

Thus, in contrast to its progenitor *Howards End*, in which the English class conflict is so central, Smith's novel is set in a well-to-do university town in supposedly "class-less" America,¹⁸⁹⁷ and the representation of the conflicts between the middle-class Belseys and the middle-class Kipps¹⁸⁹⁸ largely excludes the less privileged. However, there are some occasions on which members of both families get in contact with people from the working class or minority population. Most notably, the character of Carl, a young working-class man from Boston, has been identified as the 21st-century counterpart to Forster's Leonard Bast. Zora, who is attracted to Carl and launches a patronising and self-interested battle to keep him in the poetry class, is ultimately debunked as a self-driven exoticization of the social "other".¹⁸⁹⁹ As Fernández Carbajal puts it, "Carl remains the exotic black object of Zora's unfulfilled mixed-race bourgeois fascination, the 'toy' with which she plays from the safety of her privileged cultural and economic position."¹⁹⁰⁰ She thus exposes the dynamics of a misguided appropriation of an

¹⁸⁹² Wall. 2009. p. 762.

¹⁸⁹³ Smith. 2005. p. 44.

¹⁸⁹⁴ Wall. 2009. p. 764.

¹⁸⁹⁵ Smith. 2005. p. 365.

¹⁸⁹⁶ Wall. 2009. p. 764.

¹⁸⁹⁷ Driscoll, Lawrence, Victor. 2009. *Evading Class in Contemporary British Literature*. New York: Basingstoke. p. 64.

¹⁸⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 67.

¹⁸⁹⁹ Fernández Carbajal, Fernando. 2013. "'A Liberal Susceptibility to the Pains of Others': Zadie Smith's *On Beauty*, Haiti, and the Limits of a Forsterian Intervention." In: *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature* 43.3. 35-57. p. 38.

¹⁹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p. 42.

“other” from a privileged position. In her rewriting of the Forsterian cross-class relations, Smith launches a postcolonial critique of the bourgeoisie’s inability to transcend its social boundaries.¹⁹⁰¹ The incidental character, Katie Armstrong, who comes from a poor family and made it into Wellington with a full academic scholarship, further illustrates how class barriers still linger on in the 21st century. Not only is Katie extremely shy and lacks confidence despite her capabilities, but she is also invisible to Howard, who only perceives her as a “strange ghost girl.”¹⁹⁰² Levi, on the other hand, strives to overcome his own middle-class mixed-race status, and searches for what he regards as an authentic black identity, which he associates with street life rather than the academic Wellington milieu his father represents.¹⁹⁰³ His involvement with a group of mostly Haitian migrants is thus an attempt to construct his own authentic blackness, which diverges from his own privileged background. His admiration for Felix’s, the group’s leader’s, skin colour as “the *essence* of blackness,”¹⁹⁰⁴ epitomises the uncompromised racial identity Levi longs for. However, as Fernandez Carbajal points out, his engagement with the Haitian cause remains rather abstract; he is “learning” about the “political vibe” that fascinates him through a book on Haitian history.¹⁹⁰⁵ The novel is thus a postcolonial dialogic take¹⁹⁰⁶ on Forster’s *Howards End*, shares an interest in the “play of similarity and difference”¹⁹⁰⁷ with its hypotext, and transposes the cross-class examination of its Edwardian progenitor to the race and class relations of the USA in the early 21st century.

The class conflict also features prominently in *Incendiary*. After the fictive terrorist attack, Jasper Black and his girlfriend Petra Sutherland treat the narrator’s working-class status with “sadistic voyeurism.”¹⁹⁰⁸ Like *Saturday*, the text stages a class conflict within British society rather than an intercultural conflict between the British mainstream society and Muslims as the cultural “other”. However, while in McEwan’s novel the danger emanates from an individual pertaining to the lower social class, *Incendiary* centres on the exploitative and demeaning behaviour of the British middle class.¹⁹⁰⁹ Moreover, these class relations are inextricably linked to the geography of London, and the protagonist’s fate seems to be intimately tied to that of London. This connection is forged to a degree that her identity melds with that of the metropolis. The narrator is not only severely traumatised by the loss of her family, but she also suffers from the social imbalances dividing the population of the metropolis into rich and poor, advantaged and marginalised or, as the protagonist phrases it, into “SNEERING TOFFS London” and “EVIL CRACK MUMS London.”¹⁹¹⁰ The female voice of

¹⁹⁰¹ Ibid. 42.

¹⁹⁰² Smith. 2005. p. 255.

¹⁹⁰³ Tynan, Maeve. “‘Only Connect’: Intertextuality and Identity in Zadie Smith’s *On Beauty*.” In: Walters. 2008. p. 73-89. p. 86.

¹⁹⁰⁴ Smith. 2005. p. 242.

¹⁹⁰⁵ Smith. 2005. p. 248.

¹⁹⁰⁶ Tynan. 2008. p. 77.

¹⁹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 77.

¹⁹⁰⁸ Loh. p. 135.

¹⁹⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 135.

¹⁹¹⁰ Cleave. 2005. p. 38.

Incendiary adheres to the London inhabited by the latter of the two groups. The novel frequently addresses these imbalances, describing, for example, how the narrator witnesses her native Shoreditch becoming transformed into a gentrified hotspot “with excellent transport links” for upper middle-class newcomers.¹⁹¹¹ *Double Vision*, by contrast, does not discuss class conflicts, but, as shown above, adumbrates a countryside in crisis and the problems devastation brought about by the foot-and-mouth-disease.¹⁹¹² Hence, with the exception of *On Beauty*, which is set in the US and takes an approach based on academic ideas, all of the British responses to 9/11 are not only characterised by their pursuits of “framing and interpreting terrorism and 9/11,”¹⁹¹³ but also distinguish themselves from other international literary approaches to 9/11 in that they relate the events to the socio-cultural context of contemporary Britain.

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The above examination of the generic diversity and different formal-aesthetic strategies deployed in the British literary responses to 9/11 reveals both their common ground as well as their thematic and formal-aesthetic disparities. While the novels are too diverse to be categorised in terms of the vague genre of the 9/11-novel, they have a number of similar thematic concerns, and may potentially fulfil a variety of shared literary functions.

To begin with, all of these novels respond to the 11 September attacks in terms of a media spectacle. Following Ricœur’s mimetic circle, these texts all reflect on or incorporate the post-9/11 poststructuralist discourse by featuring terrorist attacks that are brought into the lives of the characters in the form of a live television spectacle. Apart from the fictional atrocity in *Incendiary*, the attacks are always depictions of the actual attacks on 11 September 2001. It can be argued that these novels deal with the poststructuralist discourse framing 9/11 in terms of its symbolic value and its potential redefinition of the relationship between sign and referent. There are differences regarding the focus and intensity of the ways in which the poststructuralist discourse constructing 9/11 as a television spectacle is transposed into fiction. *Brick Lane* stages the televisual experience of the attacks on the Twin Towers as both mesmerising and awakening and in *Incendiary* the live broadcast of a football game turns into a nightmarish and horror film-esque disaster of fire, smoke and flying body parts. These two novels represent the terrorist attacks as both surreal, televised events and actual life-changers. Witnessing the horror of 9/11 on screen is a turning point in Nazneen’s life and for the nameless narrator in Cleave’s novel witnessing the tragedy on the television creates a harrowing scenario infused with anguish and guilt. *Saturday* is set after 9/11 and does therefore not feature the events themselves. Instead it illustrates by Perowne’s immediate suspicion of a terrorist attack on London’s skyline how the media imagery has left its mark on individual and cultural memory. Thus, although the actual events are absent from the

¹⁹¹¹ Ibid. p. 38.

¹⁹¹² Barker. 2003. p. 168.

¹⁹¹³ Kempner. 2009. p. 56.

text, their mnemonic presence is almost palpable throughout the novel. *On Beauty*, on the other hand, only mentions the attacks in passing. Yet the reference to Baudrillard's controversial ideas on 9/11 as the "mother of all events" and as an essentially hyperreal scenario is used as a foil to project the novel's ethical agenda for the post-9/11 world. *Double Vision* also implicitly reflects the poststructuralist discourse of the post-9/11 era through the protagonist's professional and detached observation of the relentless media coverage of the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York.

Configuring this discourse into the realm of fiction (mimesis II) enables these works to discuss the effect of the media images on the observer by staging the characters' subjective experience. This approach by British authors of framing and scrutinising 9/11 as a media spectacle inevitably leads to a meta-discussion on the role of the texts' own trade, that is, of art and more specifically of narrative fiction. All of these texts may be interpreted as what Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg calls "distanced-observer literature."¹⁹¹⁴ Paying tribute to the transnational scale of 9/11 and the global dissemination of the iconic images, these distanced-observer narratives reinforce "the mediated quality of the traumatic event experienced through representation rather than upon the body."¹⁹¹⁵ As a result, many literary texts engage in a meta-textual commentary about their own "representational acts."¹⁹¹⁶ The gist of these reflections grants art and literature a paramount role in the processing of the notorious imagery that shaped the world's *Bildgedächtnis*.¹⁹¹⁷ While *Brick Lane* and *Incendiary* do not actively engage in this meta-discussion, their depiction of the spectators' shock watching a terrorist atrocity and their sense of disbelief in the face of the transmitted brutality does also feed into this debate. *Saturday*, however, more explicitly frames literature as an amelioratory force that disarms the surrogate terrorist Baxter. Hence, the novel suggests in its highly implausible climactic scene that literature, and in this particular case poetry, has the power to raise human awareness for the world and the human beings that inhabit it. Not only Baxter seems to be elated by the beauty of Arnold's "Dover Beach", but also Perowne seems to be able to see the humanity behind Baxter's neurological condition. *On Beauty* is also indebted to the idea that there is a strong moral-philosophical dimension to the beauty of art, which may be conducive to ethical behaviour mitigating the conflicts of the post-9/11 era. *Double Vision*, in turn, openly reflects concerns about an artistic or fictional representation of the catastrophe raised in the aftermath of 9/11. The Goyan representation of war proves that freed from the imperative of truthfulness or objectivity, these pictures convey the horrors of war, of violence that is almost unbearable to watch, without the imperative of authenticity or objectivity. Yet, what they may transmit is an idea of what it could have been like. By contrast, the relentlessly repeated images of the 9/11-attacks become vacuous vessels failing to convey the actually authentic horrors of the attacks. Barker's novel further launches a discussion about the prerogative of authenticity held by the news media. It becomes clear that media are

¹⁹¹⁴ Swanson Goldberg, Elizabeth. 2007. *Beyond Terror*. New Brunswick/London: Rutgers University Press. p. 165.

¹⁹¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 165-166.

¹⁹¹⁶ Ibid. p. 166.

¹⁹¹⁷ See chapter 3.2.3.2.

no objective vessels containing information, but are active participants in the creation of our world. The photographer's shadow in the image reveals how media proactively shape our perception and how the creator of the image may control its setup and thus its effect on the audience.

In terms of a potential refigurative (mimesis 3) cultural function, it may be argued that these texts may initiate a debate on medial world creation and its influence on the global perception of high-profile violent events such as 9/11. Their meta-discussion about their own role vis-à-vis the ubiquity of the news media also initiates a discussion of the mnemonic implications of these two forms of world-making, the fictional and the factual. Most notably, *Double Vision* questions in how far an image can convey the truth as it is always influenced by its creator. Moreover, in *Saturday*, Perowne's paranoia at the sight of a burning plane and the false media reporting on the pilots' alleged Islamist cause that follows him through the day reveals how the memory of the images of 9/11 has instantly led him to believe that the burning plane has to be another terrorist attack, and how this belief is being reinforced by the media reporting he cannot escape. Hence, these novels reflect on the ways in which individual and cultural memories are shaped. Through their capacity for memory reflexivity, literature on 9/11 may hence become a relevant medium of cultural memory. In their self-reflexive scrutiny of media construction and the impact of such constructions on the individual and collective psyche, these texts go far beyond a mere aim of representing the attacks. They function as media of cultural communication in that they open up spaces of cultural self-reflexion that would otherwise remain closed. *Double Vision* as well as *Saturday* and *On Beauty* initiate a meta-debate about the role of art for the representation and interpretation of these events. They may therefore also be conceptualised as a cultural-ecological "imaginative counter-discourse", which in Zapf's sense uncovers developments lying outside the mainstream discourse of 9/11. One may assume that such a self-reflexive approach to the individual and cultural perception of the events would have been dismissed as trivial in the light of the catastrophe or even as blasphemous and disrespectful towards the victims of an event that has been deemed as one of the major traumas in recent history. Instead of dwelling on Adorno's dictum on the barbarity of producing fiction in the face of atrocious violence, these works acknowledge the very need of creating an imaginative counter-discourse that challenges dominant discourses and creates an empathetic vision through a meta-discussion of the representation of 9/11.

It becomes apparent from the above that *On Beauty*'s, *Saturday*'s and *Double Vision*'s mnemonic function is contingent on memory reflexivity which is, in turn, closely tied to questions of the ethics of representation. Smith's novel, for instance, embraces beauty as moral force of good and links the inability to see beauty to a lack of empathetic behaviour. The novel, thus, suggests that the aesthetic value of art is inextricably linked to ethics, and the ability to perceive the beautiful may have an impact on the hardened ideological lines in the post-9/11 era. McEwan's text embraces a similarly unfettered belief in the power of literature. This ethical power of a literary work is starkly contrasted to the discourse of science, which Perowne represents with his extreme rationality. Therefore, by joining the discourse of science and rationality and the discourse of literature and the ethical value of the aesthetic

– in terms of Link’s interdiscourse analysis – this novel brings into dialogue what would otherwise remain separated. *Saturday* arrives at the conclusion that ethical behaviour the “other” may be triggered through art, not by rational scientifically informed thinking. It thus strives to formulate a vision of empathy that has already been conveyed in McEwan’s first statement in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. Echoing the author’s immediate post-9/11 statement contrasting “the core of our humanity” with the terrorists who are excluded from these boundaries of empathy, which is affirmed as the foundation of Western societies, *Saturday* establishes a relationship of empathiser and empathised which is overridden by a power differential between the privileged Perowne and the destitute Baxter.¹⁹¹⁸ Thus, while aiming at an endorsement of the empathy-inducing powers of fiction, *Saturday* actually perpetuates the discourse of “us” versus “them”, of “brute force versus intellect”¹⁹¹⁹ prevailing in the post-9/11 era. However, this effect is mitigated by the peculiar narrative situation, allowing the reader direct access to Perowne’s consciousness which is at the same time subject to incessant commentary by the narrator. The resulting exposure of Perowne’s own weaknesses and shortcomings by the mocking narratorial voice suggests that those claiming to represent Western “humanity” are as prone to ignorance and a lack of empathy as their supposed “other”. Thus, *Saturday*’s potential ethical function may work on different levels. Firstly, like Barker’s and Smith’s novels, *Saturday* engages in the literary meta-discourse on the role of art in its facilitation of empathy in the aftermath of 9/11. The choice of a thug with a serious neurological condition as the epitome of the post-9/11 perils putting the comfortable life of the urban middle-classes in danger does reproduce the pattern of the Manichean discourse after the attacks. Yet, it may also disarm the notion of terrorism as the main threat to Western civilisation, and show that the real dangers are produced by the widening gaps between the different social strata in British society. These problems are homemade and diverge fundamentally from the threat scenario centring on Muslim terrorists capturing a plane to attack the capital. Secondly, the text may also expose Western ignorance and self-assuredness through the one-day glimpse into the mind of a privileged urbanite. Clearly, Perowne prefers shunning the reality of warfare, while arguing for the invasion of Iraq. His argument for the war is further informed by a sense of his own powerlessness with regard to world politics. The assumption that “the troops are in place, they’ll have to fight”¹⁹²⁰ not only illustrates his sense of futility of all political protest, but also hankers for a moral cause driving such an inevitable military intervention. Perowne finds such a moral cause in Miri Taleb’s account of the torture and despotism he had to face under Hussein’s regime.¹⁹²¹

His deliberations reveal the mechanics in Western normative constructions of the aim of ending Saddam Hussein’s terror regime, and the value promoting democracy deployed to justify the invasion. By means of probing the boundaries of the values justifying the invasion within the realm of fiction,

¹⁹¹⁸ Gauthier. 2015. p. 168.

¹⁹¹⁹ Ibid. p. 175.

¹⁹²⁰ McEwan.2005. p. 62.

¹⁹²¹ Ibid. p. 62.

these reflexions about the coming war may possibly influence extra-literary processes of value construction. Perowne's stance on the Iraq war is not untroubled, though. The audience witnesses how he adjusts his viewpoint to different situations: with his American colleague, he takes a less definite stance, while he argues passionately for the removal of Saddam Hussein with his daughter. Ever since he met Taleb, the narrator adds, he "has had ambivalent or confused or shifting ideas about the coming invasion."¹⁹²² It becomes clear that despite Taleb's harrowing account of the inside of an Iraqi prison, Perowne's arguments for the invasion are malleable. *Saturday* may hence play an important normative function by exposing the process of value construction underlying the advocacy for war. Overall, *Saturday* is concerned with the political and the aesthetic, which is inextricably intertwined with the ethical that is so central to McEwan's overall oeuvre.¹⁹²³

On Beauty, on the other hand, eschews the debate about class relations and post-9/11 politics in contemporary Britain. Instead, Smith's homage to Forster transposes his concern for cross-cultural relations to 21st-century multicultural America. The novel tackles the navigation of identities through the 21st-century chaos of different racial and social interpretative frameworks which, most notably, has been made at a time when the very concept of hybridity was challenged by a post-9/11 recourse to Manichean worldviews. Her ethical endorsement of the aesthetic hence envisages the connection of human beings through the power of art. In other words, like *Saturday* it formulates a vision centring on art as a mediatory force that can possibly connect various cultural and social identities in times of division and a growing belief in essentialism. *Double Vision* most explicitly raises ethical questions about the Goyan dilemma of wanting to show the truth of the horrors of war that would otherwise be unknown and forgotten. What is more, the novel goes even further in questioning the very notion of truth in an age of atrocity exhibition. It reveals the world-making power of the media, and their potential manipulation.

9/11 is, however, not only dealt with in terms of a media spectacle which ushers in a meta-debate on the relation of aesthetics and ethics; another pillar of post-9/11 discourse, the construction of these events as the ultimate trauma is also being dealt with in some of the works. Instead of merely perpetuating the mainstream trauma discourse, some of the novels discussed may also fulfil an important mnemonic and ethical function by putting the hermeneutic tool of trauma into perspective. Particularly *Double Vision* questions the exceptional status as a watershed that has been attributed to the attacks. On that day, the protagonist's realisation that his marriage has come to an end supersedes the public tragedy. Furthermore, by placing 9/11 in line with a number of other violent events, *Double Vision* seeks to debunk the construction of 9/11's uniqueness and unprecedentedness.

Saturday also challenges the view of 9/11 as the ultimate trauma of the 21st century. Perowne's belief that he has witnessed an aerial terrorist attack on London is a product of both his memory of the Twin

¹⁹²² Ibid. p. 62.

¹⁹²³ Nicklas, Pascal. "The Ethical Question: Art and Politics in the Work of Ian McEwan." In: Nicklas, Pascal, ed. 2009. *Ian McEwan: Art and Politics*. Heidelberg: Winter. pp. 9-22. p. 10.

Towers' spectacular destruction and the ubiquity of the reporting on the suspected London terrorists. The choice, however, of a white working-class man as the source of the serious threat to the Perowne family indicates that the real dangers are much closer to home than any overblown terrorist scenario might suggest. By setting a potentially traumatic attack on the family in the realm of domesticity, *Saturday* questions the trauma discourse and its recourse to exceptionalism. It is the quotidian phenomenon of violence which may affect anybody anytime that takes centre stage rather than a terrorist attack. In contrast to the logic of anticipated repetition which predicted the recurrence of a terrorist catastrophe in Britain, McEwan's novel shows that there are far more pervasive conflicts in British society than terrorist threat narratives suggest. *Double Vision* and *Saturday* therefore debunk narratives focusing on an Islamist "other" allegedly posing a major threat to Western life.

There is also another ethical dimension to works like *Brick Lane* which seek to give voice to those who have been marginalised in dominant post-9/11 discourses. Ali's text strives to unveil the experiences of the life in London from the perspective of a female member of the Bangladeshi community in East London. Her account may be westernised and inaccurate, yet in the fictional mode the authenticity may be suspended in favour of a narrative that seeks to focus on the discrimination and the quotidian difficulties Muslim immigrants in Britain are confronted with, in particular in the aftermath of 9/11. The *Bildungsroman* genre and the presentation of the protagonist as focalizer enable the reader to identify with Nazneen and empathise with her development towards emancipation and westernisation. Furthermore, the representation of the Bengal Tigers diverges from the prevailing stereotype of the Islamist terrorist seeking to destroy Western society in the pursuit of the utopia of the caliphate. Instead, she describes their turn towards radical Islam as a reaction to the increasing racism and islamophobia which has gained currency after 9/11.

Another marginalised voice takes centre stage in *Incendiary*. The monologue in letter form by a bereaved working-class Londoner may potentially be very empathy-evoking. In terms of ethical narratology,¹⁹²⁴ her self-narration grants direct access to her feelings and may therefore engender a strong character identification. Her authentic voice narrating the aftermath of terrorist attacks from the fringes of society may hence open up a perspective that is unheard in the public post-9/11 discourses.

The ethical dimension of the text exceeds the representation of an individual trauma and the coping strategies of the afflicted individual, but also raises crucial social questions by means of juxtaposing her position on the social fringes of the capital to that of her upper middle-class neighbours. Hence, *Incendiary* harnesses the trauma discourse to convey the suffering of the marginalised. The novel does not only deal with her tragic loss, but also her social relegation after her husband's death, leading to the eviction from her flat and poverty. This text illustrates the potential of literature for giving voice to the suffering of anonymous victims, and particularly to those who are social outsiders.

¹⁹²⁴ See chapter 3.2.4.4.

This social dimension to *Incendiary* hints at another thematic pattern that all of the novels discussed in this section share: they are striving to gauge the events of 9/11 in the light of social challenges and perils local communities have to face. The social questions they address range from class conflicts between the lower and the upper British middle class (*Saturday, Incendiary*), an unhinged sense of entitlement leading to the sexual exploitation of a student by a professor (*On Beauty*), the devastated countryside setting in the aftermath of the foot-and-mouth-disease (*Double Vision*) and, as already mentioned, the consequences of 9/11 for the Bangladeshi community in East London (*Brick Lane*). Thus, they deal with the global event of 9/11 in order to tackle the pressing social questions at home. What is more, they may elicit an ethical experience in the reader by presenting them with an “other” that is not a Muslim terrorist, but represents those whose voices are usually unheard in British public discourse. Katharina Rennhak, who discusses Cleave’s *Incendiary*, argues that the text replaces the East-West binary which was prominent in the post-9/11 era with the binary of rich versus poor.¹⁹²⁵ However, as this chapter has uncovered, a shift in binaries towards a marginalised perspective is not only limited to this particular work tackling terrorism, but can be seen – to varying degrees – as common concern of all the British novels discussed in this section.

This concern for representing an “other” that is not a terrorist, but represents respective marginalised groups of society is also indicative of an epistemological shift in British literary representations of terrorism. By contrast to the literary representations of previous terrorist movements, which have mainly focused on the terrorist “other”, their mindset and motivation, the novels of the post-9/11 era are predominantly characterised by an interest in the repercussions of the attacks for both individuals and societies. While still a number of novels tackling the terrorist suspect appeared, the fate of the perpetrator is often narratively linked to that of the victims. In other words, even if the terrorist is an essential part of the novel, post-9/11 cultural responses tend to tie a knot between victim and perpetrator.¹⁹²⁶ This, in turn, reflects the increasing trend towards wound culture fostered by the ubiquity of survivor accounts and the flood of images exhibiting the atrocity and focusing on the survivors’ point of view in the wake of the attacks. While in this study, 9/11 will not be elevated to the status of a “master signifier”¹⁹²⁷ of preeminent importance which overshadows the socio-cultural significance of all terrorist atrocities to date, it may well be seen as a turning point in the history of the representation of the phenomenon in British as well as international terrorism novels. The events initiated a paradigm shift away from a cultural interest in the mind of the terrorists towards the predominant concern for the trauma of both individuals and societies. This shift illustrates the post-millennial aesthetic mood which Tew quite rightly describes as being “of a traumatological, rather than postmodern bent.”¹⁹²⁸ While these novels are characterised by a sense of uncertainty, they abjure the postmodern abandonment of certainty and

¹⁹²⁵ Rennhak, Katharina. “Philosophical and Literary Dialogues in a Time of Terror.” In: Mohr; Däwes, 2016. pp. 56-78. p. 65.

¹⁹²⁶ Boxall. 2013. p. 128.

¹⁹²⁷ Vermeulen. 2015. p. 15.

¹⁹²⁸ Tew, Philip. 2007. *The Contemporary British Novel*, 2nd ed. London/New York: Continuum. p. 191.

meaning, and “its deconstructive dissolution of identities.”¹⁹²⁹ Thus, the traumatological texts after 9/11 respond to the historical event and show an awareness of the changes of both individual identity and social order.¹⁹³⁰ While British novelists defy the notion of 9/11 as the ultimate trauma of Western societies, their response to the events is marked by a paradigm shift away from the focus on the figure of the terrorist that has been central in previous novels tackling terrorism from the late Victorian dynamite novel to Troubles fiction and the experimental takes on the Angry Brigade. Instead, the novel of the post-9/11 world focuses on the individual and social repercussions of terrorism, which is no longer a national, but a global phenomenon.

4.3.3. The 2005 London Bombings

In the years after the 11 September attacks, a ubiquitous sense of fear and anxiety pervaded the quotidian life in Britain, and in particular life in London appeared to have become unsafe in new ways. The public sphere seemed precarious, and suspicion as well as a sense of threat grew among the population of the metropolis.¹⁹³¹ The Tube was one of the urban sites most associated with anxieties. Previous accidents caused a considerable number of casualties and, as Nora Pleßke explains, have left their imprint on the collective consciousness of the metropolis’ subterranean commuters, thus producing a “mentality that persistently deals with the potential of catastrophe.”¹⁹³² Hence, already prior to 9/11, the Underground had become a place of danger which was influenced by the Fenian attacks or threats by the IRA.¹⁹³³ Since the inception of terrorism in the late 19th century, the Tube has provided a fertile ground on which feelings of anxiety and terror could be projected, and furthermore it has inspired mistrust towards fellow citizens.¹⁹³⁴ Yet, as Pleßke points out, these feelings were even intensified after the 11 September attacks in the United States, with signs constantly reminding passengers to be alert and cautious whilst in transit. She also discusses in her work the urban mentality of London and concludes that “terror must be considered as a London-specific frame of mind”¹⁹³⁵ which is deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness.¹⁹³⁶ After 9/11, postmillennial anxieties became an integral part of the Londoner’s mental state.¹⁹³⁷

¹⁹²⁹ Ibid. p. 191.

¹⁹³⁰ Ibid. p. 191.

¹⁹³¹ Jeleniewski Seidler. 2007. p. 24.

¹⁹³² Pleßke, Nora. 2014. *The Intelligible Metropolis: Urban Mentality in Contemporary London Novels*. Bielefeld: Transcript. p. 487.

¹⁹³³ Ibid. p. 487.

¹⁹³⁴ Ibid. p. 492.

¹⁹³⁵ Ibid. p. 510.

¹⁹³⁶ Ibid. p. 510.

¹⁹³⁷ This corresponds to Ian Mc Ewan’s view that with the rise of religious fundamentalism, end-time thinking has gained new virulence. McEwan, Ian. “Day of Judgement.” In: *The Guardian*. 31.05.2008. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/may/31/fiction.philosophy> (last accessed 9th February 2015)

However, in spite of this underlying anxiety, a great part of the extrinsic mental state was informed by the discursive invocation of Britishness and particularly of a traditional “Keep Calm and Carry On” mentality, constructing the British as remaining calm and unflappable in the face of adversity. Thus, when on 7 July 2005, one day after the euphoria about the successful Olympic bid had filled the air of the metropolis, four bombs detonated in London’s transport system, killing 52 people and injuring more than 770, the response to this long-apprehended attack was fundamentally janiform. On the one hand, life in the capital did not seem to have come to a halt, and people appeared to have stoically continued with their normal lives, on the other, as Ian McEwan points out in an interview with the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, in the aftermath of the events, this outward stoicism was often just masking feelings of insecurity and vulnerability.¹⁹³⁸ In this vein, in his emotional essay published in *The Guardian* one day after the bombings, McEwan describes the mood in the aftermath as a “numb acceptance, or a strange calm.”¹⁹³⁹ According to him, the event was to leave its mark on the collective consciousness, although London had been the target of a number of attacks in the past and it was difficult to knock a huge city like this off its course, the capital was far from returning to business as usual. People were abruptly woken from the pleasant dream that made them oblivious to the fact that this was always going to happen.¹⁹⁴⁰ The threat of a terrorist attack in London had always been present, but had been momentarily obscured by the Olympic success. McEwan’s article thus speaks for those who felt deeply affected by the atrocity, and formulates a sensitive response to the events that were long anticipated.¹⁹⁴¹

However, the mainstream reaction to the attacks was not informed by the open expression of feelings of vulnerability and a sense of fear but by the invocation of British resilience. In this vein, a survey conducted by James Rubin and his co-authors on the psychological responses to the London subway bombings in 2005 indicates that, compared to the American reaction to 9/11, Londoners showed an overall higher resilience to the attacks. According to the researchers, this can be explained by the greater loss of life and dramatic live coverage on 11 September, but it could also be attributed to the fact that Londoners have grown more accustomed to terrorism through previous experiences with the IRA,¹⁹⁴² or even the *Blitz*.¹⁹⁴³

¹⁹³⁸ Hage, Volker; Matussek, Matthias. “Spiegel-Gespräch: Wir sind verunsichert bis ins Mark.” In: *Der Spiegel* 29. 18.07.2005. pp. 112-114. p. 114.

¹⁹³⁹ McEwan, Ian. “How could we have forgotten that this was always going to happen?” In: *The Guardian*. 08.07.2005. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/jul/08/terrorism.july74> (last accessed 9th February 2015)

¹⁹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴² According to the survey conducted by Rubin and his co-authors, around 31% of Londoners reported substantial stress. Rubin, James A. et al. “Psychological and Behavioural Reactions to the Bombings in London on 7 July 2005: Cross-Sectional Survey of a Representative Sample of Londoners.” In: *BMJ* doi:10.1136/bmj.38583.728484.3A. 2005. pp. 1-7. pp. 3,6.

¹⁹⁴³ Massie, Allen. “The Blitz.” In: *The Independent*. 08.07.2005. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/london-under-attack-497984.html> (last accessed 7th November.2012)

Indeed, this sense of resilience and the view that the attack would “make Londoners more determined to resume their normal lives”¹⁹⁴⁴ reverberated in a great number of official and unofficial comments in the wake of the events. Thus, as Hamilton Bean, Lisa Keränen and Margaret Durfy illustrate in their analysis of the discourse of resilience in the aftermath of 7/7, instead of narratives conjuring up the trauma and the sense of victimisation, Londoners were almost unanimously constructed as being extraordinarily robust.¹⁹⁴⁵ They point out, for example, that *The Guardian* reported that Prince Charles “spoke in admiration [...] of the ‘extraordinary resilience’ of the British people,”¹⁹⁴⁶ a praise which was echoed by Tony Blair, who lauded the “stoicism, resilience and sheer undaunted spirit”¹⁹⁴⁷ of Londoners. Similarly, newspaper accounts of people’s responses and the blogosphere mostly underscored Londoners’ unflappability. “This is London,” one blogger, for instance, asserted. “We’ve dealt with your sort before. You don’t try and pull this on us. Do you have any idea how many times our city has been attacked? Whatever you’re trying to do, it’s not going to work.”¹⁹⁴⁸ According to this statement, the terrorist’s attempt to instil fear and panic, and thus to bring the life of the metropolis to a halt, was rendered futile through the resilience that – resulting from the collective experience of past attacks – Londoners had acquired in the course of history.

Bean, Keränen and Durfy also show that particularly the evocation of the “*Blitz* spirit,” as a cultural narrative which celebrates the capacity of the British people to cope with the German bombing during World War II, became a recurring reference point to describe the response to 7/7.¹⁹⁴⁹ British citizens were thus not only depicted as “hardy, resourceful, and unflappable,”¹⁹⁵⁰ but the references to the *Blitz* invigorated the assumption that these characteristics have accrued to the British within processes of socialisation,¹⁹⁵¹ and are thus part of their national identity. As a result, the circulation of such trans-historical narratives on the British tradition of resilience does not only constitute a collective purpose to come through this disaster, but also requires Londoners to “act in ways that honor the legacy of their resilient forefathers.”¹⁹⁵² These narratives serve, according to Kelsey, a specific function, that of creating an image of consensus:

‘Business as usual’ and ‘London can take it’ slogans that play a role of national narration in popular memory; they bind different generations together through recognisable stories (myths) from the past.

¹⁹⁴⁴ “London Under Attack: After the Joy of Winning the Olympics, Evil Came Swiftly.” In: *The Economist* 07.07. 2005. <http://www.economist.com/node/4166694> (last accessed 7th November 2012)

¹⁹⁴⁵ Bean; Keränen; Durfy. 2011. pp. 427-428.

¹⁹⁴⁶ Bates, Stephen. “Praise for Hospital Staff.” In: *The Guardian*. 09.07.2005. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2005/jul/09/hospitals.attackonlondon1> (last accessed 12th November 2012)

¹⁹⁴⁷ Hoggart, Simon. “Praise All Round in the Face of a Common Enemy.” In: *The Guardian*. 12.07.2005. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2005/jul/12/houseofcommons.politicalcolumnists> (last accessed 14th November 2012)

¹⁹⁴⁸ European Surrender Monkey. “London Tonight.” In: *Daily Kos*. 07.07.2005.

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2005/07/07/128692/-London-Tonight> (last accessed 12th December 2012)

¹⁹⁴⁹ Furedi, Frank. “From the Narrative of the Blitz to the Rhetoric of Vulnerability.” In: *Cultural Sociology* 2.1. 2007. pp. 235-254. pp. 237-238.

¹⁹⁵⁰ Hamilton; Keränen; Durfy. 2011. p. 452.

¹⁹⁵¹ Ibid. p. 440.

¹⁹⁵² Ibid. p. 445.

After 7 July, Blitz spirit slogans encompassed the symbolic and emotional of a Second World War narrative. They provided broad generalisations through references to the response of Britain as a nation after July 7. These generalised and unsupported comments lacked any systematic evidence regarding whom and how many people accepted or conformed to this mentality.¹⁹⁵³

Nevertheless, the discourse of resilience does not undermine the notion of the danger emanating from terrorism. Unlike the trauma discourse, which emphasises the uniqueness of the catastrophe, it challenges the assumption that this danger is a new or unprecedented problem. Instead, the discourse draws on public memory.¹⁹⁵⁴ In other words, while the discourse after 9/11 focused on the uniqueness of the catastrophe that supposedly bears little or no comparison to previous events, this attack on the London Underground was seen as just one among a legion of attacks on Britain, and in particular on the British capital.

However, the discursive cultivation of resilience does not necessarily inspire unflappability within a society. In fact, after 7/7, the construction of resilience as a patriotic duty might have been a heavy responsibility to bear for some survivors suffering from the trauma of the attacks. What is more, not only the grievances of those who directly experienced the attacks might have been delegitimised through the discursive cultivation of resilience,¹⁹⁵⁵ but also those of approximately one third of London's population who actually showed increased substantial stress as a result of the attacks.¹⁹⁵⁶ Thus, just as Ian McEwan assumed after the events, the discourse of resilience dissembled the pervasiveness of feelings of anxiety and insecurity in the wake of the events.¹⁹⁵⁷ Yet a decade after the bombings, the official narrative shaping the memory of events still centres on the extraordinary resilience of Londoners. On the occasion of the tenth anniversary, the Metropolitan police commissioner, for example, reflects on the life in the city after the attacks, and "how strongly we came together to stand up to the threat we faced, and to send a message to terrorists that London was, and continues to be, strong, united and vibrant."¹⁹⁵⁸ During the ceremony in remembrance of the attacks and their victims, the idea that London defied the terrorists reverberated.¹⁹⁵⁹ The cultural memory of events has hence also been shaped by the notion of British resilience in the face of disaster, pointing to past courage and indicating that this spirit will remain unbroken.

¹⁹⁵³ Kelsey. 2015. pp. 83-84.

¹⁹⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 452.

¹⁹⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 453.

¹⁹⁵⁶ Rubin et al. 2005. p. 1.

¹⁹⁵⁷ By contrast, see, for example, Victor Jeleniewski Seidler's textbook compiling a variety of London voices that bear witness to the fear and feelings of helplessness and disruptiveness prevailing in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 7 July. Jeleniewski Seidler, Victor. 2007. *Urban Fears and Global Terrors*. Abingdon/New York: Routledge.

¹⁹⁵⁸ Hogan-Howe, Bernard cited in: Caroline, Davies; Addley, Esther, eds. "7/7: London comes together to remember and reflect 10 years on." In: *The Guardian*. 07.07.2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/jul/07/77-bombs-london-memorial-10-years> (last accessed 15th November 2016)

¹⁹⁵⁹ Dudge, Paul cited in: "7 July London bombings: Ceremonies in Memory of Victims." In: *BBC*. 07.07.2015. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-33407554> (last accessed 15th November 2015)

What is more, despite all the emphasis on Britain's past grandeur in withstanding inimical attacks, which serves to embed the events into a frame of reference begetting continuity and stability, the fact that most of the four young men responsible for the attacks were British citizens added a new and unprecedented dimension to them. As announced by the police shortly after the events, "the London terror bombings were the first suicide attacks on British soil and were carried out by home-grown terrorists."¹⁹⁶⁰ Unlike the threat posed by other terrorist groups such as the Fenians, anarchists, or the IRA, all of which were external enemies, the "new terrorist" threat emanating from radical Islam was to be found at home. In unprecedented ways, the Islamist radicalisation of young men who would turn into suicide bombers, targeting large civilian groups aroused widespread fears.¹⁹⁶¹ This is due to the fact that, on the one hand, the enemy seemed to diverge fundamentally from British culture and values and yet, on the other hand, these young men are after all British citizens who share most of the socio-cultural experiences, the same educational history and professional developments of the majority population.

This fear of the "enemy within" was particularly abetted by the media. Already prior to 7/7, after the 11 September attacks, the frequency of news reporting on Islam in general and particularly British Muslims not only rose sharply,¹⁹⁶² but the narratives disseminated by the media also almost exclusively focused on negative representations which emphasised the threat to British society embodied by the British Muslim community. What is more, Rusi Jaspal and Marco Cinnirella claim in their essay on the media construction of the perceived threat of British Muslims that the overall absence of "normalised" depictions of Muslims in popular culture and literature contributed to the rise of Islamophobic prejudice in the press.¹⁹⁶³ As already pointed out in chapter 2.5, threat narratives impinge on identity constructions, as the negative image of the group associated with terrorism calls for differentiation from it. British Muslims have therefore been frequently constructed as antithetic to the British majority population.¹⁹⁶⁴

On the first anniversary of the 7 July bombings, for example, *The Times*' article "Faiths Unite Against Terrorism"¹⁹⁶⁵ describes how Jewish and Christian religious leaders decry the atrocities committed by the radicalised Muslim men. As Nahid Afrose Kabir points out, omitting any reference to a Muslim leader joining in this condemnation, this article implies a superiority of Judeo-Christian values over

¹⁹⁶⁰ Jeffrey, Simon; Smith, Mat. "London Bombs 'were first British suicide attacks.'" In: *The Guardian* 12.07.2005. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2005/jul/12/july7.uksecurity6> (last accessed 16th February 2015)

¹⁹⁶¹ Eatwell, Roger; Goodwin, Matthew J. 2010. *The New Extremism in 21st Century Britain*. Abingdon/New York: Routledge. p. 4.

¹⁹⁶² See, e.g. Elizabeth Poole who examines the coverage of global matters and British Muslims in *The Guardian* and *The Times* in the years following 11 September 2001, and in particular in the year 2003, in which the Iraq War broke out. Poole, Elizabeth. "The Effects of September 11 and the War in Iraq on British Newspaper Coverage." In: Poole, Elizabeth; Richardson, John E., eds. 2006. *Muslims and the News Media*. London/New York: I.B. Tauris. pp. 89-102.

¹⁹⁶³ Jaspal, Rusi; Cinnirella, Marco. "Media Representations of British Muslims and Hybridised Threats to Identity." In: *Contemporary Islam* 4. 2010. pp. 289-310. p. 290.

¹⁹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 294.

¹⁹⁶⁵ Gledhill, Ruth. "Faiths Unite Against Terrorism." In: *The Times*. 07.07.2006. <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article1945203.ece> (last accessed 3rd March 2015)

Islam.¹⁹⁶⁶ According to public debates, not only their religious background makes Muslims prone to violence, but also their general otherness from and disloyalty to the majority society in Britain is seen as a cause for terrorism. The article, e.g., published in *The Daily Telegraph* on the occasion of the second anniversary of 7/7 demands “We must make Muslims loyal subjects again,”¹⁹⁶⁷ thus claiming that it is the lack of identification with British values which can be regarded as the source for the radicalisation of young Muslims. The rhetoric exemplified in these press articles can be found in many media representations of Muslims across the globe. Since the 11 September attacks, after which “new boundaries were being formed, allegiances solidified, people excluded,”¹⁹⁶⁸ “us” and “them” became the dichotomy spreading in “varying forms across the globe.”¹⁹⁶⁹

With the moral separation from the Muslim “other” resonating in many media accounts, the Islamic world has been construed as being fundamentally opposed to the West.¹⁹⁷⁰ In this sense, the “manifestation of Islamophobic prejudice perhaps provides the Press with a suitable ‘Other’ to derive a sense of self-esteem and distinctiveness.”¹⁹⁷¹ This dichotomy of the ‘Orient’ as being constructed as the pejorative other of the ‘Occident’ is, of course, a familiar concept, as it is also the principle of Edward Said’s work *Orientalism*, which is foundational to Postcolonial Studies. However, some media representations not only highlighted the terrorists’ otherness, but also their similarity with majority society. As the headline of *The Times* “The Unexpected Profile of the Modern Terrorist: 26, from a Caring Family, Married, with Children, Graduate”¹⁹⁷² on 7 July 2007 suggests, “we cannot necessarily distinguish ‘Them’ from ‘Us’.”¹⁹⁷³ It is accordingly the likeness of the other that serves to exacerbate fear and suspicion.¹⁹⁷⁴

Moreover, after the attacks on the London transport system on the 7 July 2005, the fact that the “other” was “homegrown,” that is British citizens committed these attacks on their compatriots, did not allow for such an easy distinction from the perpetrators. The video footage showing one of the bombers, Mohammed Siddique Khan, explaining his motivation for the attack in his native Yorkshire accent rendered a clear distinction from an alien “other” impossible. This man was obviously talking in a

¹⁹⁶⁶ Kabir, Nahib Afrose. 2012. *Young British Muslims: Identity, Culture, Politics and the Media*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. p. 132.

¹⁹⁶⁷ “We must make Muslims loyal subjects again.” In: *The Daily Telegraph*. 07.07.2007.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/letters/3641134/We-must-make-Muslims-loyal-subjects-again.html> (last accessed 3rd March.2015)

¹⁹⁶⁸ Poole, Elizabeth. 2009. *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims*. 2nd ed. New York: I.B. Tauris. p. 2.

¹⁹⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 2.

¹⁹⁷⁰ Jaspal; Cinnirella. 2010. p. 294.

¹⁹⁷¹ Ibid. p. 306.

¹⁹⁷² Norfolk, Andrew. “The Unexpected Profile of the Modern Terrorist: 26, from a Caring Family, Married, with Children, Graduate.” In: *The Times*. 07.07.2007.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/crime/article1872881.ece> (last accessed 3rd March 2017)

¹⁹⁷³ Kabir. 2012. p. 133.

¹⁹⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 133.

“language of homicidal hatred against his own county.”¹⁹⁷⁵ There was no getting away from the fact that, within British society, young suburban boys turned against the society that had nurtured them.¹⁹⁷⁶

The Sun headline “The Brit Bomber”¹⁹⁷⁷ on 13 July 2005 exemplifies this quandary. Following Sheila Ghose’s felicitous interpretation, “the headline points to the bomber’s Britishness, but also foregrounds the fact that the bomber bombed Brits. He is an insider who has rendered himself an outsider, the headline suggests, a traitor who has negated British belonging.”¹⁹⁷⁸ The evasion of the fact that the bombers were Muslims further indicates that Britishness is not to be equated with whiteness anymore, but with the “new” multicultural Britain. The binary, as Ghose further contends, lies now between the liberal and secular multicultural mainstream Britain and a fundamentalist and un-British version of Islam. Accordingly, the Orientalist discourse that gained currency after 9/11 resurfaced in a British 7/7-version, constructing a dichotomy between the “Brit” who evokes liberalism and openness and the “bomber” representing fundamentalism and “radical foreignness.”¹⁹⁷⁹ Anxieties and the fear of the “other” who was born and bred in the very society they targeted persisted underneath the urge for calmness and resistance, and an ambivalent stance towards an enemy who all too often seemed to resemble the majority population rather than to diverge fundamentally from it resonated in many post-7/7 public representations and debates.

4.3.4. 7/7 and the British Novel

As shall be shown in the following, these discourses centring on resilience and the definition of Britishness against an “other” in the age of terrorism have been reflected in the literary responses by British writers. Yet, prior to the analysis of post-7/7 fiction, this section will discuss British fiction dealing with 9/11. The themes dominating the post-7/7 discourse that are already present in British 9/11 literature will be discussed. This allows for an analysis of how the self-image of unflappability has become an integral part of British culture that may be invoked in times of crisis.

Saturday and *Incendiary*, as shall be shown, invoke the history of terrorism in London. Thus, in the light of the apprehended disaster, the scale of the bloodshed for the cause of an Islamist society, Perowne reminisces wryly “as a Londoner, you could grow nostalgic for the IRA. Even as your legs left your

¹⁹⁷⁵ Phillips, Melanie. 2006. *Londonistan*. New York: Encounter. p. 77.

¹⁹⁷⁶ Ibid. p. viii.

¹⁹⁷⁷ “The Brit Bomber.” In: *The Sun*. 13.05.2005. p. 1.

¹⁹⁷⁸ Ghose, Sheila. “Brit Bomber: The Fundamentalist Trope in Hanif Kureishi’s *The Black Album* and ‘My Son the Fanatic’.” In: MacPhee, Graham; Poddar, Prem, eds. 2007. *Empire and After: Englishness in Postcolonial Perspective*. Oxford: Berghahn. pp. 121-138. p. 123.

¹⁹⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 123.

The right-wing press, on the other hand, did not embrace liberalism and multiculturalism as British values, but centred on *Blitz* nostalgia, arguing that Britain had lost its spirit of the past, and that it was time to revert to past values. (Kelsey. 2015. p. 152, p. 154.)

body, you might care to remember that the cause was a united Ireland.”¹⁹⁸⁰ It becomes clear from this ironic proclamation of nostalgia that the terrorists’ cause in “pursuit of utopia”¹⁹⁸¹ and the ruthlessness of the means for its achievement¹⁹⁸² of the Islamist terrorists is unprecedented, whereas the IRA pursues a concrete, theoretically attainable and more comprehensible aim.

Similarly, albeit less ironically, *Incendiary* invokes previous traumatic events that befell London, and links them to the current trauma of post-millennial terrorism. Both the narrator and London have trouble recovering from the terrorist attacks. Telling Osama about her time in hospital, she states “London and me healed slowly. They worked on the city to make it stronger and they worked on me too.”¹⁹⁸³ Karolina Golimowska hence argues that the female narrator embodies the city and personifies its distortion and chaos.¹⁹⁸⁴ Despite the myriad of setbacks and assaults on her dignity, including the sexual assault by Jasper and the betrayal of Terrence Butcher, the narrator has to suffer after the attack, she proves to be extraordinarily resilient, and refuses to surrender. Drawing on the history of the disasters London had to face in the past, *Incendiary* describes London in terms similar to those used to convey the protagonist’s will to survive:

London is a city built on the wreckage of itself Osama. It’s had more comebacks than the Evil Dead. It’s been flattened by storms and flooded out and rotted with plague. Londoners just took a deep breath and put the kettle on. Then the whole thing burned down. Every last stick of it. I remember my mum took me to see the Monument of the Great Fire. London burned WITH INCREDIBLE NOISE AND FURY is what the Monument has written on it. People thought it was the end of the world. But the Londoners got up the next day and the world hadn’t ended so they rebuilt the city in 3 years stronger and taller. Even Hitler couldn’t finish us though he set the whole on fire. Bethnal Green was like hell my grandma said. Just one endless sea of flames. But we got through it. We built on the rubble. We built tower blocks and the NHS and we kept on coming like zombies. [...] London’s like me it’s piss poor and ignorant to know when it is finished.¹⁹⁸⁵

The themes of defeat and recovery and the memory of the Great Fire and the *Blitz* reverberate throughout the text. Alongside frequent references to the inscription on the Monument to the Great Fire of London, Adolf Hitler and the *Blitz* are also mentioned at the very beginning of the novel.¹⁹⁸⁶ Thus, the novel’s invocation of memory of past disasters and the resilience of the Londoners is somewhat proleptic of the dominant discourse in the aftermath of the actual terrorist attacks on 7 July 2005. As has been often noted, uncannily, Cleave’s novel was first published on the very day of the terrorist attacks in London.

The protagonist’s husband is described as the embodiment of British resilience. Risking his life working in bomb disposal, he was what “the Sun would call a QUIET HERO it’s funny how none of them are NOISY I suppose that wouldn’t be very British.”¹⁹⁸⁷ Hence, Britishness is constructed in

¹⁹⁸⁰ McEwan. 2005. pp. 33-34.

¹⁹⁸¹ Ibid. p. 34.

¹⁹⁸² Ibid. p. 34.

¹⁹⁸³ Cleave. 2005. p. 86.

¹⁹⁸⁴ Golimowska. 2016. p. 124.

¹⁹⁸⁵ Cleave. 2005. pp. 114-115.

¹⁹⁸⁶ Cleave. 2005. p. 6.

¹⁹⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 11.

opposition to the “noise and fury” of the city’s great traumas. Calmness and the suppression of emotions in extreme situations are traditional national characteristics. The self-important upper middle classes embodied by Jasper and Petra are excluded from this coding of Britishness. Yet, despite this display of preparedness for catastrophe and carnage, and the defiant resilience of both the protagonist and her city, under the veneer of calmness, the terrorist attacks have wounded the psyche of both London and the narrator, who will never come to terms with the loss of her boy.¹⁹⁸⁸

Furthermore, as the above passage indicates, the NHS comes to stand for British preparedness in the face of adversity. When Prince William visits the survivors of the attack in the hospital, where the narrator is also being treated, a doctor wheels the most advanced medical machines in to show that “the NHS is fully equipped for the 21st century.”¹⁹⁸⁹ The National Health Service, which was founded in the post-World War II era on the principles of socialised medical care, defies, like the protagonist and London as a whole, the challenges posed by the mass casualties of the 21st century. However, as often occurs in Cleave’s narrative, the tragedy and severity of the hospital scene is overridden by dark humour. The machines wheeled into the ward are absolutely inadequate for the treatment of the patients’ injuries and are solely showcased to prove the technological modernity of the beleaguered public health service. The NHS is thus identified as the acme of unflappability, even though this outward resilience may just be a superficial demonstration of strength. Julian Roberts’ post-7/7 novel *How the Dice Fell* also depicts the NHS and its preparedness for the disaster as being “all about care and professionalism and technology, all there for ordinary people.”¹⁹⁹⁰ It is hence a great source of pride in being British.¹⁹⁹¹

While 9/11 has inspired a plethora of literary responses, the literary output dealing with the attacks on the London transport system has been comparatively small. The British Library lists very few English language novels dealing with this subject. Among them are: Carol Smith’s *Without Warning* (2007), Roma Tearne’s *Brixton Beach* (2010), and John Roberts’ *How the Dice Fell* (2012). Like the literary responses to 9/11, these novels tackling 7/7 harness a variety of genres: Roberts’ and Smith’s novels may be categorised as popular fiction, featuring flat characters, black and white scenarios as well as the perpetuation of stereotypical representations of Muslim terrorists, on the one hand, and popular notions of British resilience on the other. Tearne’s novel, in contrast, may be regarded as the most serious literary take on 7/7. The text may be classified as Black British Fiction that echoes many of the themes raised by the literary takes on 9/11. In general, like their literary predecessors dealing with 9/11, novels on 7/7 are mostly concerned with the perspective of the victims or the bystander. However, Tearne’s novel, in particular perpetuates the themes of 9/11 fiction including their focus on trauma, memory and the redemptive power of art.

¹⁹⁸⁸ Ibid. pp. 119-120.

¹⁹⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 80.

¹⁹⁹⁰ Roberts. 2012. p. 85.

¹⁹⁹¹ Ibid. p. 85.

Notwithstanding, there are some substantial thematic differences between novels on 9/11 and their successors tackling 7/7: Firstly, Roberts' text makes an attempt at representing the perspective of an Islamist terrorists, a view that has mostly been avoided in British fiction on 9/11. Secondly, similarly to the responses to 9/11, some of these texts link social issues of contemporary Britain to the terrorist attack. Yet, drawing on a glorified version of Britain's history, some of the 7/7 novels go beyond the concern for the marginalised subject of the new millennium displayed in British 9/11 fiction. Instead, they launch a discussion on notions of Britishness and British values in the face of adversity. Thirdly, while the literary fiction on 9/11 discussed above avoids first-hand representations of the atrocity and focus on the events as a media spectacle, the works on 7/7 do not circumvent the description of the actual attacks. In contrast to 9/11 fiction, the media representation of the events does not play a role in these works. They are described in terms of first-hand experience, thus avoiding an analysis of the reality-making power of literature. Novels tackling 7/7 focus rather on coping strategies with respect to violence and terrorism which are contingent on the power of memory and history. The different angle may be due to the national scope of the calamity, and the fact that most of the bombers were British citizens. Such a scenario inevitably raises questions about Britishness and the values associated with it. In order to elucidate the differences in the works' approach, the generic idiosyncrasies will be outlined. Subsequently, the specific formal-aesthetic idiosyncrasies of the texts will be illuminated in order to finally analyse their functional potential.

*

Generically, the three novels discussed in this section draw on patterns that have been harnessed by previous fiction on terrorism. Roberts' and Smith's texts can be categorised as popular fiction, with Smith's text being a thriller and Roberts' novel adhering to the genre pattern of the romance novel. Tearne's text, on the other hand, is not only semi-autobiographical¹⁹⁹² but also shares some of the thematic concerns of Smith's *On Beauty* and Ali's *Brick Lane*. Firstly, the work by Tearne may also be classified as Black British Fiction tackling questions of identity, cultural memory and alterity. In this vein, the text centres on Alice's hybrid identity as the daughter of a Tamil father and a Sinhalese mother in times of civil war between those two ethnicities. Moreover, after her flight from the war at the age of

¹⁹⁹² The novel is dedicated to "the memory of N.M.C.", who, as Charles Sarvan suggests, is a family member of the author: Sarvan, Charles. 2011. *Literary Essays & Sketches*. London: Sterling. p. 163. The author – like the protagonist in *Brixton Beach* – is the child of a Tamil father and a Sinhalese mother and fled to London at the age of 10. Apart from her career as a writer, Tearne is like Alice Fonseka a visual artist. Hickling, Alfred. "A Healing Art." In: *The Guardian*. 04.07.2009. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/jul/04/brixton-beach-roma-tearne-review> (last accessed 28th November 2016) For more detailed information on the autobiographical content of the novel, see: "Roma Tearne on Brixton Beach." In: *The Guardian's Book Podcast*. 10.07. 2009. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/audio/2009/jul/10/roma-tearne-brixton-beach> (last accessed 28th November 2016). However, as explained previously, the autobiographical content is irrelevant to the analysis of the novel's potential function(s).

ten, it deals with her struggle to adjust to a new life in London, as well as the role of her childhood memories of her family, and in particular, her grandfather Bee and the life by the seaside whose light and rich colours are also reflected in her work as an artist. In this vein, towards the end of the novel, Alice explains to Simon Swann, who is one of the few people to whom she can open up:

‘All my life is built on memories,’ she said over lunch.

Her eyes glowed with dark intensity. Sunlight poured into her colourful kitchen, slanting across her face. She’s beautiful he thought, mesmerised.

‘To be an immigrant is to be sandwiched between two worlds,’ she told Simon Swann, without a trace of self-pity.

The flatness that he had heard when he had first talked to her had gone from her voice.

‘The effort it takes to be a person who does not belong is unimaginable, you know, I am one of those people, living that life.’¹⁹⁹³

Secondly, like Smith’s response to 9/11, *Brixton Beach* displays a great awareness of the redemptive power of visual art, and initiates a meta-discussion about the role of art in the processing of violence and trauma. Thirdly, Tearne’s novel – much like *Brick Lane* – makes use of the genre of female *Bildung*, tracing Alice’s development from her childhood in Sri Lanka to her escape to London, the birth of her son and her failed marriage, to her forties when she finally finds her peace in the relationship with Simon and subsequently dies in the bombing of the London tube. The narrative is framed by the attacks of 7/7, which mark the beginning and the end of the protagonist’s story. According to Abel’s, Hirsch’s and Langland’s distinction¹⁹⁹⁴ between two forms of female *Bildung*, Alice’s development may be classified in terms of both a narrative of apprenticeship and awakening. Not only is the reader made aware of Alice’s extraordinary talents, but her *Bildung* is also furthered by her unfulfilled marriage, which makes her focus on her development as an artist. Her art also helps her cope with the loss of her homeland and the trauma of violence prevailing in her family history. Yet, she eventually finds the place she has longed for throughout all those years in the relationship with Simon. She names this place ‘Brixton Beach’, which serves as a name for the house she shares with her husband Tim and their son Ravi. It harks back to her childhood memories of her grandparents’ house by the seaside. In Alice’s life in London, the beach assumes the role of some mystical place of yearning, symbolising the void created by her family’s flight from their home. Brixton Beach, the house, turns onto a canvas on which she projects all these memories and feelings:

In their new home in Brixton, after a honeymoon of a week of cloudy weather in the Lake District, a sudden memory of the Sea House broke over Alice like a squall of monsoon rain.

It caught her unawares and took her breath away, floating in the September sky like a kite released from the string. Because of this when they returned, she gave their new home a name. She called it Brixton Beach.¹⁹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁹³ Tearne. 2010. p. 376.

¹⁹⁹⁴ See chapter 4.3.2.

¹⁹⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 324.

Indulging in the decoration of their Brixton house, she paints the bedroom in a “deep aquamarine turquoise”¹⁹⁹⁶ which reminds her of the seaside, constructing her own memory world of her homeland in London. Brixton Beach thus comes to stand for the losses Alice has experienced, including that of her beloved Sri Lankan seaside, her family and the troubles created by her “sandwiched” identity as the child of a Tamil father and a Sinhalese mother, growing up in Britain.

However, Brixton Beach does not only refer back to the loss of Sri Lanka, but also denotes the emotional vacuum created after her failed marriage and her parents’ demise. Thus, at the beginning of Alice’s romance with Simon, the voice of her grandfather Bee, who follows Alice in her dreams, states “*Brixton has its own beach now.*”¹⁹⁹⁷ After years of “mercilessly crushing out her memories, hoping they would finally die down”¹⁹⁹⁸ Alice has finally found a place in which she can make peace with her past. Equally, after years of an unhappy marriage, Simon has found his place “on the moonlit beach of Brixton.”¹⁹⁹⁹

Alice’s *Bildung* centres on her development towards personal and artistic fulfilment, her search for her “beach” in London and her extraordinary talent as an artist, which is discovered by her art teacher and mentor David Eliot. The two of them develop a friendship that goes beyond an ordinary pupil-teacher-relationship. When she is a young girl, he is the only person in London she can relate to. She cannot trust her father Stanley, who is described as utterly selfish and unfaithful, and her mother Sita has been numb and unresponsive after she lost her baby when – because of her Sinhalese ethnicity – a Tamil doctor deliberately denies her medical help. Since that traumatic incident “Sita’s heart had become hard as a rambutan stone; shrunken and hard and unbreakable.”²⁰⁰⁰ Mother and daughter no longer have a bond. After Alice and Sita learn of the brutal assassination of Bee and grandmother Kamala for sheltering Tamil refugees, the alienation of mother and daughter comes drastically to the fore:

Silent, slender Alice, with her mane of dark hair and her face pinched with shock, brewing tea as though it were tears. When had Alice the child become so inscrutable? Sita asked herself, bewildered. They drank tea with the electric light switched on and the paraffin heater spluttering fumes. They talked in shocked, low voices, not knowing how to communicate with each other. It had been so long since they had had anything to say.²⁰⁰¹

The speechlessness between mother and daughter is contrasted to the exceptional relationship of Alice and Mr Eliot. He is the only adult character Alice can confide in: “‘They killed him...’ she cried before she could stop herself, and then with no warning she burst into tears. Sitting in David Eliot’s office she told him the story, slowly, bit by disjointed bit.”²⁰⁰² He does not only listen to the painful story of losing Bee and Kamala, but also encourages her to feed her pain into her extraordinary and, as he phrases it,

¹⁹⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 325.

¹⁹⁹⁷ Tearne. 2010. p. 391.

¹⁹⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 404.

¹⁹⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 388.

²⁰⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 88.

²⁰⁰¹ Ibid. p. 290.

²⁰⁰² Ibid. p. 291.

poetic sculptures and paintings.²⁰⁰³ With his help and after winning an art competition, she goes on to attend art school, but quits when she meets her husband Timothy West.

The devastating consequences of terrorism form the backdrop against which Alice's story unfolds. Not only does 7/7 mark the beginning and the end of the novel, but it also juxtaposes the violence and terrorism in Sri Lanka to post-9/11 Britain. The narrative of Alice's childhood begins two days before her ninth birthday. The first pages introducing the character of the then tomboyish and light-hearted girl, spurning the apple, a luxury, her father gives her as a special treat,²⁰⁰⁴ and who – in contrast to the other well-kept children leaving the school building – has undone hair with bits of twig in them and a school uniform soiled with paint. Her wildness and spiritedness suggest that she experiences an ordinary and happy childhood. However, the casual mentioning of “the tight security since the bomb had gone off”²⁰⁰⁵ by the narrator sheds a different light on the buoyant scenario at the schoolgate. From the very beginning, terrorism creates the unsettling background of the narrative. Moreover, also towards the end of the novel, the characters' fate is inextricably linked to terrorist violence. The introduction of the character of Simon Swann, for example, immediately evokes the anxiety of the early 2000s in the face of a “rolling rogue wave of terror.”²⁰⁰⁶ Reminiscing on the occasion of his first meeting with Alice at the Royal Opera house, Simon states:

The world had become a different place since that evening, changed beyond recognition – 9/11 had altered everything. The country he lived in was no longer what it once was. Terror had returned to Britain and it was here to stay, leaving the inhabitants of the small island xenophobic and fearful. Once we had an Empire, he often thought, wryly; now we just have the suspicions left by the Empire!²⁰⁰⁷

Interestingly, Simon addresses the negative effects of 9/11 on British society such as xenophobia and suspicion, developments which have been extensively dealt with in *Brick Lane*. Moreover, the last chapter begins with a panoramic view over Brixton on the morning of 7 July 2005. The narrator delves into the homes of Alice and her neighbours, including two citizens with Middle Eastern backgrounds:

In Cranham Park Road, SW9. In the top flat, Kavi Mustafa is praying. Dawn is a time for cleansing his soul in the warm summer air. Kavi is praying for peace. Not in the Middle East, that is something he has given up hoping for, no, he prays for peace in his neighbourhood. He is a citizen of this community, with a wife, two children, and a sub-post office. Last week someone threw a brick through its window. It is the third brick this year.²⁰⁰⁸

While Kavi is grappling with the repercussions of the post-9/11 xenophobia, the description of his neighbour two houses down the road insinuates the double life the bombers of the London transport system are said to have led before the attacks:²⁰⁰⁹

²⁰⁰³ Ibid, p. 294.

²⁰⁰⁴ Ibid. pp.13-14.

²⁰⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 15.

²⁰⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 349.

²⁰⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 351.

²⁰⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 394.

²⁰⁰⁹ “7/7 bombings: Profiles of the four bombers who killed 52 people in the London attacks.” In: *The Independent*. 06.07.2015

A young man of Middle Eastern appearance stands in a doorway. Since he left his home, he has become a shadowy figure. As he stands watching the first plane over London, he notices a flock of sparrows rise from the trees. After his travels to foreign parts he has been living alone, moving from house to house, learning to sleep anywhere with a minimum of fuss. Last night he moved again. This time it is a place south of the river. None of his family knows where he really is or what he is doing. His mother and sister think he is elsewhere, studying. They have accepted that he has little time to phone them because he is so busy.²⁰¹⁰

Heavy with a sense of foreboding, this passage indicates that the nameless man may well be the Tube bomber who will take Alice's life later in the day. While his identity is not revealed, the foreboding of the "first plane over London" conjures up the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, and the startled birds evoke the danger emanating from the terrorist attack that is to strike London.

In addition, the narrator's panoptic perspective allowing a glimpse into the lives of those affected by terrorism and one of its perpetrators mirrors the debate in the aftermath of 7/7: the distinction between "Us" and "Them" has become complicated if not made impossible. The terrorist is a neighbour, or even friend. He is part of the very society he despises.

Moreover, terrorism plays a pivotal role in the development of the novel's plot. From childhood to her early death, Alice's fate is inextricably linked to the cruelties of terrorism, eventually claiming her life at the moment when she has finally found her personal "Brixton Beach." Terrorism and its dreadful repercussions of death, trauma and loss, are hence a driving force directing Alice's development in many ways. Alfred Hickling summarises the far-reaching consequences of terrorism for the Fonsekas:

At first, the war seems safely remote from Alice's blissful childhood. But intimations of the conflict begin to infiltrate; first when Alice is discriminated against at school for having a Tamil father; then when her mother loses her baby due to the wilful negligence of a Sinhalese doctor. The family head for Britain, where the Fonsekas' marriage crumbles as Alice's father joins a radical sect which supports the Tigers, and her mother slips into dementia, crafting cardboard coffins and dressing a collection of dolls in her dead baby's clothes.²⁰¹¹

Thus, violence and terrorism inform almost every part of Alice's and her family's life and only the "therapeutic power of art"²⁰¹² keeps her alive. It is thus a dominant force of Alice's *Bildung*. In addition, the association of the civil war in Sri Lanka and 7/7 cast terrorism as an ubiquitous threat, independent from time and space. Moreover, the shared history of Sri Lanka and Britain is emphasized when the war erupts in January 1974. Then, "Ceylon was no more. [...] The country appeared to be fighting for its life, eradicating the foreign rule with a new, faceless persona."²⁰¹³ Bee's scornful reaction to this attempt to wipe out the traces of the former British colonial rule centres on the shared cultural memory of the colonisers and the colonised:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/77-bombings-london-anniversary-live-profiles-of-the-four-bombers-who-killed-52-people-in-london-10369984.html> (last accessed 25th November 2016)

²⁰¹⁰ Tearne. 2010. p. 394.

²⁰¹¹ Hickling. 2009.

²⁰¹² Ibid.

²⁰¹³ Tearne. 2010. p. 254.

‘Fool!’ cried Bee scornfully. ‘The British *were* here. That’s a fact. Can’t they see they will always be present in our collective psyche, one way or another? They will be present in the language, our love of it, our use and mis-use of it. Our tastes, the feelings we have about parks and landscapes. These idiots call it imperialism, but to me it’s simply a collective memory.’²⁰¹⁴

It becomes thus clear that Tearne’s novel seeks to link the history of Sri Lanka to that of post-colonial Britain. Not only is the novel dedicated to showing the civil war waged in Sri Lanka after the withdrawal of the British that has been largely neglected by the West, but it also describes the hardships of the Fonsekas who are seeking refuge in London. A substantial part of the novel is devoted to the family’s life in post-colonial London, and finally the last part of this novel of female *Bildung* comments on contemporary cultural relations in the post-9/11 world. Thus, it strives to relate Alice’s story to the wider context of cross-cultural, post-colonial and transnational relations. Terrorism as a phenomenon haunts her throughout her journey, from the schoolgates in Sri Lanka to the Tube in London. The text thus represents the attacks of 7/7 as embedded in a wider web of political and post-colonial relations. However, Tearne’s representation of Sri Lanka and the war on the island is criticised by Charles Sarvan as being tailored to the expectations of a British audience, who regard the tropical beauty of the island as well as the violence as exotic in the sense of alien. He claims that for all its concern with the aesthetic beauty of Sri Lanka the novel therefore lacks political depth.²⁰¹⁵

How the Dice Fell and *Without Warning*, on the other hand, only center on the attacks on London’s transport system on 7 July 2005. References to other violent incidents usually perpetuate the mnemonic myth of Britain’s resilience during the *Blitz* or when faced with IRA terrorism. In Smith’s thriller *Without Warning* the Metropolitan Police undercover agent and ex-SAS man Andy Brewster is the embodiment of this British self-image of unflappability. Having barely survived a bomb attack that killed his closest partner Finch serving in the Iraq war, Brewster fights hard to recover and to return to work as quickly as possible:

But Brewster was made of sterner stuff, despite sweating and panic attacks; as his spine was fixed and his legs improved, so too did his fighting spirit. He knew he owed it to both of them to get back in the saddle as fast as he could to justify Finch’s meaningless death by continuing with the fight. He had no inclination to do anything else, even if he’d had the choice. [...] Life on the edge really suited him best: he liked to stay constantly on his toes. His firearms training and specialist degree had let him to some of the world’s hottest spots. He had kept super fit and emotionally free and worked out regularly in the gym. At forty-two he had been at his fighting best.²⁰¹⁶

Hence, Brewster is depicted as an extreme exemplar of British resilience, and in addition, as a fighter with a moral cause of eradicating all evil. In *How the Dice Fell*, the theme of recovering from a traumatic event is also central. While in *Without Warning* this theme of recovering from the injuries inflicted by a bomb is deployed to characterise the protagonist, and thus to highlight his sternness and capability as

²⁰¹⁴ Ibid. pp. 254-255.

²⁰¹⁵ Svaran. 2011. pp 163-168.

²⁰¹⁶ Smith. p. 6.

a police officer, in *How the Dice Fell*, which belongs to the genre of romance, the theme of recovery plays a crucial role in the plot.

That is, the romance notoriously revolves around the development of a relationship and a positive resolution or happy ending.²⁰¹⁷ As Maryan Wherry points out, “like all literature, every element of the formula is infinitely adaptable, which both explains and provides for the continuing popularity of the romance genre. Because the romance is character driven, there is an almost infinite variety of combinations and permutations of people, personalities, places, issues, conflicts and sensuality.”²⁰¹⁸ In traditional romance novels Pamela Regis identifies the triumph of freedom over the limitations posed by society, the state or the church, mainly on the female heroine, as one of the key features of the romance novel.²⁰¹⁹ Moreover, she discerns eight structural elements which take the heroine to her freedom:

The initial state of society in which heroine and hero must court, the meeting between heroine and hero, the attraction between heroine and hero, the declaration of love between heroine and hero, the point of ritual death, the recognition by heroine and hero of the means to overcome the barrier, and the betrothal. [...] In addition, the romance novel may include scenes depicting a scapegoat exiled, bad characters converted to goodness, and the wedding, dance or fete that traditionally ends the comedy.²⁰²⁰

Most of these structural elements can also be found in *How the Dice Fell*, in which the genre is adapted to the context of post-millennial terrorism. However, the society outlined in this particular novel is not so much corrupted or superannuated as in Regis’ definition of the romance novel,²⁰²¹ but a reflection of multi-cultural Britain, which is depicted as imperfect due to its capacity of engendering native terrorists. Moreover, the heroine and hero are not two new lovers who meet and have to free themselves from the constraints of society, but rather are already engaged, when their relationship is put to the test by the attacks on 7 July, in which the successful businessman Mike loses his legs. 7/7 is hence framed as coincidental event over which the hero and heroine have no control, and which impedes the wedding of the couple.²⁰²² His inability to cope with the tremendous loss of his mobility induces him to reject her. He cannot bear the prospect of being a burden on her. It thus creates an internal barrier which prevents the union of Mike and Sue.²⁰²³ The moment he breaks up with Sue marks the point of ritual death which is “the moment in the narrative when the union between heroine and hero, the hoped-for resolution, seems absolutely impossible.”²⁰²⁴ In the course of the novel, however, Mike eventually comes to terms

²⁰¹⁷ Wherry, Maryan. “More Than a Love Story: The Complexities of the Popular Romance.” In: Berberich, Christine, ed. 2015. *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Popular Fiction*. 2015. London/New York: Bloomsbury. pp. 53-69. pp. 53-54.

²⁰¹⁸ Ibid. p. 54.

²⁰¹⁹ Regis, Pamela. 2003. *A Natural History of the Romance Novel*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. p. 30.

²⁰²⁰ Ibid. p. 30.

²⁰²¹ Regis. 2003. p. 31.

²⁰²² Ibid. p. 32.

²⁰²³ Ibid. p. 32.

²⁰²⁴ Ibid. p. 35.

with the amputation. As he becomes more mobile, he also yearns for the continuation of the relationship with Sue. Particularly their mutual attraction, which is frequently described in the emails Sue addresses to Mike and in his sexual fantasies of her,²⁰²⁵ enables them to “surmount the barrier.”²⁰²⁶

The novel focuses on two further narrative strands, that of Amjad, the Tube bomber, and his family, and of Lee, a prisoner who is being released on the day of the explosions. Lee, who saves Mike’s life at the scene of the terrorist attack, takes offence at the Asian community that dominates the streetscape upon his return to Bradfield. Like Brewster in *Without Warning*, Lee has served in Iraq, an experience that has left him traumatised. However, unlike Brewster, who is depicted as extremely resilient, Lee’s experiences rendered him unable to cope with his environment. According to him, in Basra “more Muslims had been killed by other Muslims than by American and British forces combined,”²⁰²⁷ an assumption which nurtures his suspicions regarding the Muslim community in Bradfield. Disoriented after his release, he feels offended by women with niqab and their “aggressive assertion of being different.”²⁰²⁸ The narrative strand focusing on Lee’s zeal for revenge on the Tube bomber leading to the kidnapping of Amjad’s uncle Hussein converges with the story of Mike and Sue. Having been discharged from hospital, Mike ventures watching the stars with his telescope, when he accidentally witnesses how Lee’s accomplice Barry tortures Hussein, and later also ties up Lee and threatens to harm him. Contacting Sue for help, the couple recognise their feelings for each other during their rescue of Lee and Hussein. In this scene, Mike and Sue overcome the mainly internal barrier between them and declare their love for each other.²⁰²⁹ Lee is depicted as an essentially benevolent man who draws the wrong conclusions, but who eventually takes the right decisions and attempts to save Hussein. He thus functions as the bad character of the romance novel who followed the wrong path and eventually turns to goodness.²⁰³⁰

Finally, the novel ends with the 2009 unveiling of the 7/7 memorial in Hyde Park, which the couple and their toddler son Matthew attend together with Lee and Hussein. Recapitulating the time following the attack, Sue realizes that “she would never forget the months that followed the bombings: the loneliness and very different struggles each of them had had. But of them had come a deeper appreciation of each other.”²⁰³¹ Hence, the novel adopts the stereotypical “happy-ever-after” ending of the romance novel, though not celebrated in a wedding or fete,²⁰³² but a solemn ceremony in memory of the attacks. Sue’s reflection on their struggle and eventual triumph recapitulates the pattern of the romance novel, following the formula by overcoming the barrier created by terrorism.

²⁰²⁵ Roberts. 2012. p. 205.

²⁰²⁶ Regis. 2003. p. 33.

²⁰²⁷ Roberts. 2012. p. 71.

²⁰²⁸ Ibid. p. 73.

²⁰²⁹ Ibid. p. 36. Regis. 2003. p. 34.

²⁰³⁰ Roberts. 2012. p. 39.

²⁰³¹ Roberts. 2012. p. 327.

²⁰³² Regis. p. 38.

The eventual happy end as a romantic couple suggests that resilience and endurance are eventually rewarded, thus perpetuating the discourse of resilience in the aftermath of 7/7. The novel may therefore serve as an apt example for the new resonance of popular fiction Kaye Mitchell describes as induced by popular fiction's offer of "both the means of consolidating or reinforcing older, more conservative or traditional norms and identities in the face of these new challenges, *and* the means of negotiating new paradigms and helping us to cope with the particular anxieties – and opportunities – that they might occasion."²⁰³³ In this sense, *How the Dice Fell* resonates with the post-7/7 discourse of resilience in its celebration of the supposedly traditional British values of unflappability and perseverance. Its whole romance plot is driven and informed by the assumption that resilience and an innate sense directing the characters "to do the right thing" will in the end prevail. Traditional British self-images are hence evoked in order to culturally process and come to terms with the new challenges presented by terrorism from within contemporary multicultural society.

Without Warning also celebrates the notion of British resilience. In contrast to *How the Dice Fell*, the attacks of 7/7 take a sideline to the main engine of the plot, the serial killing of innocent women in London by a psychopathic murderer. Following the conventions of the thriller, the novel features a hero (Brewster) who is distinguished from other characters through his professionalism and sternness, which authors his ultimate success. By contrast, the villain (Oberon Forrester) is characterised by his lack of professionalism and his propensity for emotional outbursts. Thus, as already shown in the chapter on Troubles writing, by its very formal-structural characteristics, the thriller genre is marked by the adoption of a viewpoint, an ideology, which is constructed in opposition to the evil force epitomised by the villain. By contrast to Troubles writing, *Without Warning* does not feature a terrorist villain, but focuses on the women's killer instead. Oberon Forrester, the pale, androgynous, deaf and neglected son of a famous couple of West End actors, seeks to relive the pleasure of watching his mother die through a series of killings of women. The plot is driven by his sister Celeste's attempt to cover up for him, and Brewster's efforts to get to the bottom of the crime, which is fueled by his attraction for Celeste. 7/7 here merely functions as a plot device to link the narrative strand of Ellie and Wilbur, two American tourists who get caught in these events during their trip to London to the main plot. However, the terrorists being described as "four young fools seeking paradise"²⁰³⁴ are barely mentioned in the novel. Moreover, the hazard they represent is depicted as being the lesser of two evils:

But suicide bombers hunted in packs. The Circle Line killer was a solo act who had claimed three lives in less than two weeks, at intervals of a few days. In his way, he was even more lethal than those who had at least their crazy beliefs to support them. No one could tell when he'd strike again.²⁰³⁵

²⁰³³ Mitchell, Kaye. "Gender and Sexuality in Popular Fiction." In: Glover, David; McCracken, Scott, eds. 2012. *The Cambridge Companion to Popular Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 122-140. p. 123.

²⁰³⁴ Smith. 2006. p. 124.

²⁰³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 125.

In a similar vein, the failed attempt to cause mass casualties through explosions happening a few weeks after 7/7 is merely mentioned in passing:

Suicide bombers had struck again, this time with no casualties since none of the bombs went off. The police put it down to incompetence. Somebody somewhere had royally boomed which meant they now had a number of leads and were rapidly closing in. The gang had been caught on CCTV, easily recognised and now under siege. [...] Brewster whose area of expertise it was, was in overall charge of the operation.²⁰³⁶

Hence, as in *How the Dice Fell*, the attacks of 7/7 are reduced to the function of a minor barrier to police work. The terrorist attacks impede the hero from solving the case of the psychopathic serial killer who takes the lives of female Londoners. The terrorists are, on the other hand, represented as a gang of incompetent lunatics. The thriller therefore reflects the sentiment in the wake of the attacks which sought to make the attacks appear harmless in the light of London's history facing the *Blitz* as well as IRA terrorism.

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The following analysis of the formal-aesthetic features of the texts tackling 7/7 will mainly discuss Tearne's *Brixton Beach*, which is more complex and multi-dimensional than the other two popular works. The formal-aesthetic characteristics of *Without Warning* and *How the Dice Fell* will therefore only be briefly discussed at the end of this section.

Initially, it springs to the reader's eye that Tearne's four-partite novel borrows most of its titles from Dante's epic poem *Divine Comedy* and locates them in reversed order compared to the original text: *Bel Canto* – *Paradiso* – *Inferno* – *Purgatorio*. *Bel Canto*, insinuating both the cantos of *Divine Comedy* and the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century style of *bel canto* singing,²⁰³⁷ forms the narrative's framework. The first part of the *Bel Canto* chapter at the beginning of the novel depicts Simon in the middle of the chaos and confusion of 7/7, and the second part describes the unfolding romantic relationship between Simon and Alice and ends with the protagonist's tragic death in the 7/7 terrorist attacks. *Paradiso* describes the situation in Sri Lanka from Alice's ninth birthday to the point of their escape, while *Inferno* centres on the family's struggle during their first years in London until the point when Sita and Alice learn that Bee and Kamala have been slaughtered for helping Tamil refugees. *Purgatorio* depicts how Alice attempts to cope with the tragic loss of her beloved grandparents, her unhappy marriage to Timothy West as well as Sita's demise and death.

The reference to Dante's masterpiece highlights its preoccupation with memory and forgetting. According to Harald Weinrich, "in Dante's *Divine Comedy* we have a precise literary imitation of the

²⁰³⁶ Ibid. p. 241.

²⁰³⁷ Stark, James. 1999. *Bel Canto: A History of Vocal Pedagogy*. London/Toronto: University of Toronto Press. p. xix.

ancient art of memory (*ars memoriae*),²⁰³⁸ which is based on the principle of conceiving memory contents as ‘images’ which the orator deposits in different places, which he can recall by following his particular path. This artificial memory makes the absorption and retention of an extraordinary amount of knowledge possible.²⁰³⁹ After his return to the world of the living, Dante can then call up from memory his encounters with the dead in the order they occurred. For this reason, Weinrich regards the poem as a memory artwork.²⁰⁴⁰ The mythical and poetical river Lethe with the power to erase the earthly memory of the dying when entering the realm of the dead, which belongs to the topology of the underworld, also emerges in *Divine Comedy*. Lethe’s water frees people’s memory from sin,²⁰⁴¹ and “the spirits go to wash themselves/When they have repented and their sin is remitted.”²⁰⁴² As Lethe erases all the memories of mortal sins, the river Eunoë strengthens the memory of the good deeds on earth in preparation for the rise to paradise.²⁰⁴³ In addition, throughout his journey in the afterlife, Dante serves as a memory-man who receives the messages of the penitents to convey to the realm of the living to avert forgetfulness. As Weinrich points out, the condemnation of their memory on earth leading to their complete oblivion makes their hopeless fate even more painful.²⁰⁴⁴ For example, in the Third Circle of Hell, Dante and his mentor Virgil meet Dante’s acquaintance Ciaccio Florence, who has been damned for gluttony. He begs Dante to “recall me to the memory of men”²⁰⁴⁵ once he returns to earth. Thus, memory and forgetting are important in the *Divine Comedy* in two ways: in the afterlife memory and forgetting are described as complementary processes embodied by Lethe and Eunoë representing the erasure of sinful memories, on the one hand, and the strengthening of good memories on the other. On earth, however, memory is the power to avert oblivion among the living. Memory is thus a powerful force that links realms of the dead and the living.

Brixton Beach takes up some of the themes of Dante’s memory artwork. The novel, like Dante’s poem, is deeply concerned with the dynamics of remembering and forgetting. Tearne’s text reiterates the significance of retaining the memory of the past in the present. This is also reflected in the novel’s formal-aesthetic structure. On the textual level, *Brixton Beach* features processes of remembering and forgetting, focusing on the characters’ strategies for coping with the horrors of the past: after emigrating to Britain, Sita gradually loses her memory. The tragic loss of her baby caused by the denial of assistance from a Tamil doctor leaves her emotionally numb and unresponsive to her daughter’s or her husband’s emotional needs. In Britain, she grows into an isolated ghostly creature who refuses to face up to the past and who is unable to communicate with Alice. Yet, after years of suppressing the memory of the loss

²⁰³⁸ Weinrich, Harald. 2004. *Lethe: The Art and Critique of Forgetting*. Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press. p. 26.

²⁰³⁹ Ibid. p. 33. Assmann. 2011. p. 15.

²⁰⁴⁰ Weinrich. 2004. pp. 26-27.

²⁰⁴¹ Ibid. p. 27.

²⁰⁴² Alighieri, Dante. 2008. *The Divine Comedy, translated by C.H. Cisson*. 3rd ed. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press. p. 106.

²⁰⁴³ Ibid. p. 347.

²⁰⁴⁴ Weinrich. 2004. pp. 26-28.

²⁰⁴⁵ Alighieri. 2008. p.

of her own child, Alice's pregnancy unlocks the traumatic memory. Sita begins to collect dolls which she dresses up in the dead baby's clothes and places in self-made coffin boxes.²⁰⁴⁶ In addition, Sita begins to disintegrate. She leaves the iron on, forgets to turn off the TV, and eventually completely loses her memory.²⁰⁴⁷ Later in the novel, when she moves in with Alice and her family, she already lives fully in the present.²⁰⁴⁸ In another instance, Sita's personal disintegration is mirrored by the Western neglect of the civil war in Sri Lanka:

By 1984 Sri Lanka, as it was now called, was in the throes of a long and senseless war, the brutality of which was hardly noticed in the West. Other wars, more important ones, in larger, richer countries, hit the headlines. Occasionally, if something was mentioned on the Six O'clock News, Sita turned the television off. If she closed her eyes she knew she could blot the country out.²⁰⁴⁹

The wish to indulge in forgetfulness which can be found in Dante's dead washing themselves with the water of Lethe is mirrored in Sita's desire to "blot the country out." Instead of cleansing the soul of sins, Sita seeks to forget the traumatic past. Consequently, her amnesia of the traumatic past turns into dementia. Moreover, in *Brixton Beach* the workings of memory and forgetting are linked on both individual and collective levels. It not only illustrates how individual processes of remembering are affected by trauma and migration, but also shows the selectivity with respect to memory in Western societies. A whole hemisphere has chosen to forget the war in Sri Lanka. Hence, the text also reflects of the ways in which the media may construct collective memory, or rather contribute to individual and collective forgetting.

The temporal structure of the text further underpins its concern for trauma and memory in the context of violent conflict. The novel begins and ends with the London bombings, in which the central character loses her life. Similar to *Incendiary*'s circular structure framed by the words of the inscription in the monument of the Great Fire of London, Tearne frames her narrative with the history of carnage afflicting the capital. The initial scene depicting the confusion and shock of the then unknown character Simon at the entrance of the underground where "a man, or is it a woman, head swathed in a makeshift bandage cut from a shirt, is being helped across to the emergency post."²⁰⁵⁰ The last chapter describes the attacks as Alice experiences them. Her last memories of "green scent of oranges, wet with the rain"²⁰⁵¹ and her sensation of swimming in the sea mark the very last return to her native Sri Lanka before her death. Framing the narrative centring on the Fonseka family and their escape from terrorism and war in Sri Lanka with the bombings in London highlights – like *Incendiary* – the cyclical nature of trauma and suggests its non-resolution. However, *Brixton Beach* ends on a hopeful note, reiterating the power of memory to retain the past and thus shape the present. Like the dead in Dante's epic poem, where oblivion

²⁰⁴⁶ Tearne.2010. p. 328.

²⁰⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 314.

²⁰⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 345-346.

²⁰⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 314.

²⁰⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 7.

²⁰⁵¹ Ibid. p. 405.

of the dead on earth is avoided through Dante, Alice and her mystical place Brixton Beach have become an integral part in the lives of others and are still alive in the memories of those close to her. Returning to her house in Brixton, Simon states that it “is clearly and irreversibly part of his internal landscape now. Nothing and no one will erase it.”²⁰⁵² Thus, the power of memory is cast as triumphing over terrorism. Alice and her world on earth cannot be obliterated by it. In this vein, Bee Fonseka’s imaginary voice appearing in Alice’s dreams carries childhood memories as well as her grandfather’s wisdom which becomes a source of advice in her daily life. The past and the present are thus depicted as inseparable, mutually nurturing forces shaping reality.

The letters from the Sri Lankan part of the Fonseka family, however, are received by Sita and Alice as unwelcome missives from their previous life. Often only answered after weeks, months and years have gone by, these letters conveying the horrors of the civil war intrude into Alice’s memory worlds which preserve a dreamy and mystical image of the sea house and her childhood rather than the carnage and bloodshed. Sita, numbed and traumatised by her stillbirth, also seeks to suppress the memory of the horrors they escaped, and reacts coldly to them. Hence, while keeping the central character and her mother as well as the audience informed about the affairs in Sri Lanka, they are an undesirable reminder of the horrific war waging on the island. Furthermore, Alice’s new life in England appears to be too alien to her to describe it to those she left behind.

To accommodate herself to her new life the protagonist relies on her own memory repertoire replenished with the colours, textures and smells of Sri Lanka’s seaside. They overwhelm her like “a squall of monsoon rain,”²⁰⁵³ evoking her grandmother’s “Yardley apple-blossom powder”²⁰⁵⁴ or even the smell of Bee’s pipe.²⁰⁵⁵ Capturing “the emotional meaning of home, which can be carried anywhere,”²⁰⁵⁶ these crafted metaphors conjure up the visual aesthetics of paintings, the olfactory characteristics of Bee and Kamala as well as the feeling on her skin “tired and stretched as though she had been swimming in the sea.”²⁰⁵⁷ *Brixton Beach* hence enables an imaginary delving into the sensory experience of Alice’s homeland, thus illustrating the potency of memory to store and recall sensory experiences.

In addition, as Hickling notes, *Brixton Beach* harnesses “more often than not”²⁰⁵⁸ musical metaphors to represent, for example, the conflict in Sri Lanka in terms of a “discordant tone”²⁰⁵⁹: “That January the war began drumming again. After months of silence it marched in two/four time. Soon an orchestra would be playing; a two-conductor orchestra without direction. Playing to several different tunes.

²⁰⁵² Tearne. 2010. 408.

²⁰⁵³ Ibid. p. 324.

²⁰⁵⁴ Tearne. p. 320.

²⁰⁵⁵ Ibid. 321.

²⁰⁵⁶ Wood, Liana. “Brixton Beach.” In: *New Statesman*. 04.06.2009.

<http://www.newstatesman.com/2009/06/sri-lanka-alice-beach-mother> (last accessed 10th January 2017)

²⁰⁵⁷ Tearne. 2010. p. 405.

²⁰⁵⁸ Hickling. 2009.

²⁰⁵⁹ Ibid.

Ceylon was no more. In its place was a monster that destroyed anyone in its path.”²⁰⁶⁰ Moreover, the chapter *Bel Canto*, whose title refers to a musical tradition, describes the bloodshed and carnage of 7/7. The clamour of terrorist violence causing death and destruction is evoked through these musical metaphors.

By contrast, *How the Dice Fell* and *Without Warning* are not characterised by such meaningful formal-aesthetic strategies. Yet, it must be noticed that both texts attempt to incorporate a variety of viewpoints. *Without Warning* features many different, and in some cases, even irrelevant characters. Not only Brewster and his nemesis, the serial killer, are focalised through the authorial narrator, but also Celeste, the sister of the psychopath, Beth, the shop keeper, Alice, who works in a book shop, the *Daily Mail* journalist Julie, and the American tourists Wilbur and Ellie, Margaret, the widow, Imogen, the ballet dancer. While some of these characters only play a minor role in the plot or, in fact, could have been entirely left out, the narrative excludes the perspectives of the 7/7 bombers, who are merely mentioned in passing.

How the Dice Fell, on the other hand, includes not only the narratives from the perspective of Amjad the terrorist and his family, but also narratives centring on the perspectives of the victim, Mike, his fiancé Helen and Mike’s saviour Lee, which may be seen as an attempt to represent a cross section of British society. Particularly the voices of outsiders such as the ex-prisoner Lee and the family of the terrorist are represented. Remarkably, the plight of Amjad’s parents, who are “lost and drifting”,²⁰⁶¹ is represented. The family is described in positive terms as moderate Muslims adopting Western clothing and values²⁰⁶² who suffer tremendously for their son’s deed. The text also plays on the ambivalent new divide between the liberal and secular multicultural mainstream Britain and a fundamentalist and un-British version of Islam. It strives to differentiate the bomber from the values of his more secular family, and from the wider community of British Muslims. Mike’s friendship with Ali, the volunteer NHS driver, also reflects this intention. He not only volunteers for the NHS, which is the organisation that has emerged as a symbol of modern Britishness in post-9/11 literature, but he is also represented as an “ordinary bloke” with a house and a family. His wife works in a supermarket. He thus the epitome of an ordinary British citizen, rather than the “enemy within.”²⁰⁶³

This interest in a cross section of British society is rendered by the omniscient narrator who delves into the minds of the main characters Lee, Mike, Sue, Amjad and individual family members. Roberts’ text also harnesses the epistolary form in Sue’s neglected emails to Mike, in which she describes her bereavement after their split. These rather clichéd emails may be regarded as the only way for Helen to give voice to her sadness about their split and to uphold the romantic tension of the plot after their separation. Yet, they are not to be viewed in terms of the traditional literary device to control the

²⁰⁶⁰ Tearne. 2010. p. 254.

²⁰⁶¹ Roberts. 2012.p. 168.

²⁰⁶² Ibid. p. 20.

²⁰⁶³ Ibid. p. 197.

discourse, but rather as a device to highlight the pain incurred by the barrier of Mike's refusal to continue the relationship after the amputation caused by 7/7.

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As illustrated above, these three takes on 7/7 diverge fundamentally in their approach to the attacks on 7 July 2005. Yet, each of them take up at least one of the two main post-7/7 discourses cultivating British resilience on the one hand, and centring on the terrorists' un-Britishness or otherness on the other. While *How the Dice Fell* and *Without Warning* are infused with positive representations of Britishness and mirror the public invocation of resilience as a fundamental British character trait, *Brixton Beach* locates its narrative of the events of 7/7 within the wider framework of Britain's postcolonial history, epitomised by the war in Sri Lanka.

In terms of mimesis I, the examples of popular fiction on 7/7 is infused with notions of Britishness which locate resilience, that is, the protagonists' ability to recover after a terrorist attack, and stoicism at the heart of its narratives. *Without Warning* goes even further with its univocal representation of British resilience embodied by its protagonist Brewster. He is described as extraordinarily stern. He shrugs off the loss of his close colleague and his own injury in a bomb attack in Iraq, and Mike's recovery from the life-threatening injuries sustained in the terrorist attacks epitomise this spirit of resistance in times of hardships that has been invoked in the aftermath of the attacks. These texts leave no doubt that resilience is a very British answer to crises. *Brixton Beach*, on the other hand, does not celebrate triumph in the face of adversity, but relates the events to the history of terrorism and civil war in Sri Lanka. Thus, these two episodes of carnage, the 7/7 attacks and the civil war in Sri Lanka, which are historically unrelated, are linked in a narrative which does not emphasize the importance of resilience, but focuses on the vulnerabilities of the victims of terrorism, war and persecution instead. At the stage of mimesis II, the events of 7/7 assume a different role within each fictional plot. While they remain in the background of the action of the thriller *Without Warning*, thus abnegating their status of a traumatic event, they take the center stage in Roberts' romance, where they function as a barrier to the romantic relationship of Sue and Mike, which can only continue once Mike has mentally and physically recovered from the attacks. Unlike *How the Dice Fell* and *Without Warning*, Tearne's novel of female *Bildung* centres on the power of memories, including the memories of carnage and disaster, of shaping our present and future. The development of the protagonist as an artist is portrayed as being inseparably linked to her memories of Sri Lanka and her sense of uprootedness. The temporal structure of the text beginning and ending with the atrocities in London show that the events of the past do not simply fade away, but still lurk in the present and shape the future. This framing of Alice's story also enacts the cyclical nature of trauma and suggests that the events in London as much as the conflict in Sri Lanka may have passed, but they have not been forgotten, nor is there a prospect of this cycle of violence being resolved. Hence, *Brixton Beach* is characterised by a high degree of memory reflexivity. Already the

very beginning of the chapter *Paradiso*, which traces the central character's story from her ninth birthday, indicates this reflexive approach to memories:

Only the young can feel this way. Unaware of time's passage only they can be so trusting. It is their good fortune to live without question, storing up memories for the later day when middle age allows them to re-visit the past. Time of course will change things; time will mould and distort, lie and trick them with all its inconsistencies. But in the brief interlude, suspended between dreaming and waking, before the low door of childhood swings shut behind them forever, the young, with luck, can experience complete happiness.²⁰⁶⁴

Alice's story is hence introduced with a statement on the malleability and selectivity of individual memory. But it also highlights the significance of childhood memories for the creation of an identity in adult life. There is no life in the present after childhood, and memories shape the ways in which we construct ourselves. There is no escape from the past.

Considering the above elucidation of mimesis I and II, on the level of mimesis III and the interaction with the audience, these three novels may fulfil different cultural functions. The popular works corroborate the existing extra-literary discourse fashioning Britishness as essentially resilient. There is little ambivalence or doubt in this plain endorsement of the discourse of resilience, making these works the fictional equivalent to the tabloid, online and public discourse in the aftermath of 7/7. *Brixton Beach*, however, may potentially function as an imaginary counter-discourse that steers away from an Anglo-centric celebration of resilience. Instead, it narrates 7/7 as part of the story of an immigrant to Britain who left her war-torn home in Sri Lanka. Tearne's novel not only shows an alternative perspective to the white British self-image perpetuated in the popular novels, but instead of denying the anxiety and trauma 7/7 caused in many citizens, it delves into an analysis of the workings of memories, as a means to process or even overcome trauma. In this sense, as Sita's case illustrates, any attempt to suppress the memories of the past will result in disintegration. Hence, *Brixton Beach* may potentially fulfil an important mnemonic function. That is, through the staging of the processes of memory on the textual level, illustrating the importance of an individual processing of traumatic events, and the amelioratory power of art in this process, the text may challenge the assumption of resilience, in the post-7/7 sense of brushing over or denying trauma and anxieties, as the ultimate response to terrorism. It thence gives a voice not only to those who feel anxious after 7/7, but may feel unable to diverge from the patriotic duty of resilience constructed in post-7/7 discourses.

In contrast to British 9/11-novels, the terrorists of 7/7 are not excluded from the representation of events. Particularly *How the Dice Fell* strives to portray the perspective of the terrorist and his family. In the first chapter "Departures and Arrivals" the perspectives of Lee, Mike and Amjad alternate. Amjad's religious fervour and sense of thrill are depicted while he carries the explosives on his back.²⁰⁶⁵ One of the explanations for his willingness to commit the act of terrorism in the name of Allah is the

²⁰⁶⁴ Tearne. 2010. p. 13.

²⁰⁶⁵ Roberts. 2012.. p. 15.

pride he takes in his mission. “The swelling of his heart,”²⁰⁶⁶ and the thrill he feels for having “power of life and death”²⁰⁶⁷ are the motivating forces of his mission. Amjad’s hubris is juxtaposed to the embodiment of Britishness, Mike who, for example, disdains business jargon and champions “simple, common sense” approaches instead. His down-to-earthness would never allow him to give in to Amjad’s enjoyment of floating above it all.²⁰⁶⁸ Moreover, the veteran and ex-prisoner Lee, who is the most ambivalent character of the novel, is described in terms of attributes linked to Britishness such as a calmness when confronted with disaster allowing an instinctive reaction to save Mike’s life. However, although Lee is described as a simple bloke with a good nature, he is led astray by his friend Barry. While their kidnapping of Hussein, which is motivated by the desire to take revenge for the attacks, is condemned, Lee’s eventual realisation of his friend’s sadistic treatment of Hussein and his own wrongdoing locates him on the side of the upholders of supposedly “British” values. Hence, the novel negotiates the values of Britishness which have been shaken by the attacks by enemies from within society on 7 July. It divides characters into the categories of “self” and “other”, not on the basis of their faith or ethnic background, but on the basis of the values they represent and their moral conduct. Hence, the torturer Barry as well as Amjad are placed outside the confines of what are deemed to be British values, while the rest of the characters represent culturally sanctioned notions of Britishness. Smith’s novel takes a similar approach in its brief description of the bombers as “four young fools seeking paradise,”²⁰⁶⁹ thus juxtaposing them to Brewster’s hyperbolic bravery risking his life to preserve democracy, and stamp out tyrants in Iraq as well as terrorists.²⁰⁷⁰ The novel stresses that soon after the attacks life in London went back to normal: “We Are Not Afraid, the posters proclaimed, and Londoners came out in droves to emphasize the message to al-Qaeda.”²⁰⁷¹ Hence, Smith’s and Roberts’ novels unanimously perpetuate the values which have been brought to the fore in the public discourses of the aftermath of 7/7. However, literature’s ethical function is contingent not only on its moral content, but also on its ability to self-consciously reflect on the construction of this content. Due to the respective generic patterns of the popular romance novel, on the one hand, and the thriller on the other, *Without Warning* and *How the Dice Fell* fail to shape the ethical discourse post-7/7 in a meaningful way. Instead, these texts contribute to the Manichean division and a rather one-dimensional celebration of British values.

Brixton Beach, on the other hand, echoes the post-9/11 literary discourse invoking the ethical power of art as a viable means to culturally process violence and terrorism. Unlike the other two works tackling 7/7, *Brixton Beach* does not engage in a normative discussion about terrorism and terrorists, nor does it champion British resilience or promote the supposed values associated with the British self-image.

²⁰⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 21.

²⁰⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 15.

²⁰⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 15.

²⁰⁶⁹ Smith.2006. p. 124.

²⁰⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 124.

²⁰⁷¹ Ibid. p. 134.

Instead, the approach of her novel of female *Bildung* is much more victim-centric and imbued with self-reflexive musings about the role art may play in channelling memories of the trauma of both terrorism and the loss of one's homeland. The work may further fulfil an ethical function, because it is giving voice to the suffering of the anonymous victims of a civil war that has largely been forgotten by the West. It retrieves the memory of the atrocities of Sri Lanka and locates them alongside the attacks of 7/7, thus reminding the audience not of British grandeur, but of Britain's colonial history and the country's role in forgotten wars like the one in Sri Lanka.

5. Conclusion

From the late Victorian dynamite novels to the works tackling contemporary terrorist attacks – in the pursuit of staging and processing terrorism, writers have deployed different literary strategies and harnessed a variety of genre conventions. The choice of formal-aesthetic strategies and the ways in which the phenomenon of terrorism has been accommodated by a variety of genres have revealed the myriad of cultural, ethical and mnemonic functions the British novel on terrorism may serve. The present study has also shown how literary representations of terrorism may only be fully grasped when related to cultural context. Novels on terrorism never solely deal with the mere phenomenon, but reference the whole cultural background which felt its repercussions. Terrorism, as has been shown, functions as a trope representing socio-cultural faultlines, conflicts and anxieties. The novels tackling the phenomenon therefore process the pressing cultural questions of a time. Just as terrorism has been perceived and interpreted in different ways throughout its history – literary responses have been both formal-aesthetically and thematically diverse. Dealing with the diverse phenomenon of terrorism as it occurred in different periods of time, the history of the changing functions of the British novel tackling terrorism reads like an heterogenous canon of literary works that might seem at first glance to exhibit no more than tangential relations. Analysing the history of the changing functions of literary takes on terrorism is to look at the influence of time and place on interpretations of the phenomenon.

To encapsulate the changing functions of the British novel on terrorism, late Victorian anarchism and the Fenian bombing campaigns have been widely perceived as a symptom of the depravity of modern society; they were associated with the fear of a social revolution and seen as a symbol of the dangers of scientific progress – all of which have been processed and expressed in dynamite fiction. Fenians, however, have been widely replaced by anarchist characters, which is due to the perceived cultural inferiority associated with Irishness at the time. In a similar vein, the cultural meaning of IRA terrorism and the prolonged Anglo-Irish conflict is deeply entrenched in notions of British Imperial domination, resulting in the absence of serious literary works tackling this prominent long-lasting conflict. The Angry Brigade's elusiveness and revolutionary spirit has, on the other hand, been reflected in the innovative, experimental literature they inspired. 9/11 may be regarded as the watershed moment when

it comes to the epistemological outlook of the novels tackling terrorism. Literary responses to the event tend to focus on the terrorist agent rather than the victim and, more prominently in British fiction, to the bystander/witness. These texts explore the relationship between media representation, perception and art rather than the mindset of the terrorist agents and/or the moral depravity of the society in which they operate.

This change may be explained with the historical development of the notion of 'trauma'. That is, its etymological evolution gives some indication of the historical changes of the cultural function of British novels on terrorism. It has been shown that 'trauma' initially designated shock precipitated by the unprecedented velocity of modernity, a meaning that slowly changed with Freud's observations on the shell-shocked soldiers after World War I towards a concept aligning itself with the assumption of uncertainty and instability of meaning underpinned by postmodern discourse. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the notion of 'trauma' has become a pervasive hermeneutical tool that shifts the focus towards the frailty of our cognitive systems and locates human vulnerability at its centre. This change in focus towards the perceiver is reflected in the body of literary works analysed in this study. Late-Victorian and 20th-century literary texts display a certain degree of both fascination and horror at the terrorist agents. Whether terrorists are depicted as purely vicious instigators or are themselves depicted as victims of contemporary society as, for example, in the modernist novels and the experimental texts on the Angry Brigade, the terrorists take the center stage in these texts. After 9/11, 'trauma' became an ubiquitous catchword that was applied to give meaning to these apparently incommensurable events. As a consequence of this "traumatological paradigm", the post-9/11 literary discourse changed its emphasis from focusing on the perpetrator to exploring the perceptions and cultural repercussions in the targeted society.

Thus, the extent to which fictional representations incorporate both real and imaginary material may also afford insights into their functionality. The present study has shown that the extent to which actual terrorist attacks have been depicted varies. There is narrative fiction that describes actual terrorist attacks which are embedded in fictional scenarios (*The Secret Agent*, the vast majority of novels dealing with 9/11 and 7/7) and fictive attacks committed by actual terrorist groups dominating public discourse at the time of the novel's creation (most of the dynamite novels, the novels tackling the Angry Brigade and the IRA, and Chris Cleave's *Incendiary*). Others merely mention a terrorist attack in passing, as for example Zadie Smith's opaque hints at 9/11 in *On Beauty*. Yet, it may be argued that the connection between aesthetics and the ethical that is so prominent in Smith's novel may only be fully grasped against the backdrop of the 11 September attacks.

Moreover, literary approaches in the shadow of 9/11 are characterised by a high degree of realism. With the exception of *Incendiary*, which depicts the dystopian scenario of a post-9/11 fictive terrorist attack in London, all of these texts deal with the atrocity in New York and with the ways in which it has been perceived by a global audience. It seems that the monstrosity of the events themselves and their perceived fictitiousness obviated the need for writers to imagine scenarios of terrorism. An invented

terrorist attack may have looked pale in comparison to a “hyperreal” event like 9/11. More crucially, literary discourse after 9/11 centres on the private lives of the victim/bystander and the ways in which they become entrenched with the socio-cultural processes initiated by 9/11. The shift in the perspective, away from the terrorist agent towards the targeted society, shows how the public perceive mediated terrorism in the all-pervasive media culture of the 21st century. Therefore, instead of creating imaginary terrorist scenarios, many of these texts deal with the pressing cultural questions that arose in the aftermath of the catastrophe, including the framing of 9/11 as a traumatic rupture and ethical questions associated with the representation of violence. Consequently, the role of art and more specifically of literature in the face of such a boundary-straddling disaster assumes the centre stage in many of these texts. Taking their cues from the poststructuralist discourse in the wake of 9/11, British literary discourse tackling 9/11 and the related events on 7/7 is characterised by a meta-commentary on the role of fiction and the arts.

This marks the major shift in the history of the functions of the British terrorism novel, from encapsulating, processing, alleviating or stabilising existing anxieties and stereotypes that have come to be associated with terrorism as a cultural trope to the adoption of a predominantly critical approach centring on the media of representation and the construction of the phenomenon that focuses on the one who perceives rather than the perpetrator. Such a perspective chimes well with the focus on uncertainty and vulnerability that characterises the wound culture of our current “age of trauma”. Therefore, ‘trauma’ and its debilitating impact on individuals and societies is a recurrent theme in the British novel after 9/11. Yet, as the present analysis has shown, rather than echoing moral absolutes and trauma *kitsch*, these texts scrutinise the post-9/11 trauma discourse and link it to a wider context of political and social issues such as culture and race (*On Beauty*), class (*Incendiary, Saturday*), or Britain’s colonial legacy (*Brixton Beach*).

Despite this major shift, there are fundamental continuities in the ways in which terrorism has been portrayed. As we have seen, literary discourse may scrutinise dominant terrorism narratives and thus uncover and express cultural blind spots, but it can also fix and perpetuate popular views of terrorism. That is to say, British novels on terrorism may essentially be categorised as those stabilising prevalent notions of terrorism and those questioning and subverting popular perceptions. It may come as no surprise that, in particular, popular novels function as ideological vehicles affirming mainstream discourses. This becomes apparent in the analysis of the dynamite novels as the first wave of British novels dealing with terrorism. The pulp Sci-Fi novel *Hartmann the Anarchist*, for example, condenses the most acute anxieties into a sensationalist spectacle. The modern forces of scientific progress, socialism and anarchism combine in the most nihilist and destructive endeavour of harnessing modern technology to the end of annihilation. The German anarchist Hartman is the epitome of the foreign anarchists residing in London, functioning as the ultimate symbol of the potential destructiveness brought about by science, progressive political ideas and modern urban life.

As outlined before, fiction mediates between the imaginary and the real and creates its own world models, which reference reality, but are never identical to the pre-existing world. Therefore, literary fiction, as in the example of Fawcett's text, functions as a lens that both mirrors and magnifies existing ideas and apprehensions. It may be argued that the popular novel with its tendency to contain simplified Manichean scenarios and unambiguous characters is a particularly apt medium in which to amplify prevailing discourses. In this vein, the ways in which Fenians and their successor organisation the IRA are being dealt with in popular fiction provides insights into the dialectic of British Imperial domination and Irish subordination that has influenced public discourse for centuries. The fictional mode allows for an unrestrained perpetuation of pre-existing discourses that construct Irishness as the inferior "other" to the British "self". Hence, most of the representations of Irishness in the British novels, from the late Victorian *The Dynamiter* to the 20th-century Troubles thrillers, confirm the stereotypical portrayal of Irish characters as vile, imbecilic and ill-mannered.

As has been shown in the introduction to this study, both the quality and the quantity of works dealing with terrorism may hint at their functional potential. This is particularly relevant when looking at fiction dealing with Irish terrorism, or, more crucially, the dearth thereof. Discounting *The Good Terrorist* and *The Watchman*, which omit or even subvert popular notions of Irishness, there are no "serious" literary attempts in the British canon at dealing with the Anglo-Irish conflict, which has had such a profound impact on British politics for over a century. As the present study has shown, the striking absence of Irish characters in British fiction is already notable in dynamite fiction. This silence is at odds with the actual historical relevance of the Fenians. Some historians regard them as the first terrorist organisation in the modern sense,²⁰⁷² and they were certainly responsible for the first modern terrorist campaign in Britain. Fenians embraced new technologies and dynamite to wreak the greatest havoc on the capital and beyond, while the much-dreaded anarchists mainly resided peacefully in Britain. Notwithstanding, Fenians barely feature in dynamite fiction, and one of the few texts actually depicting them, *The Dynamiter*, resorts to common stereotypes portraying buffoonish and barbaric Irish characters.

Moreover, the general absence of "serious" literature dealing with the Anglo-Irish conflict and the Fenians and their successors, the IRA, may be regarded as continuity in the history of the British novel on terrorism. Not only the actual portrayals of Fenians and the IRA in British literature, but most pertinently, the very dearth of serious literary attempts at dealing with Irish terrorism and thus the absence of any imaginary counter-discourse to the mainstream notion of British superiority creates a "negative memory". The myriad of popular 20th-century Troubles fiction, on the other hand, serves as an amplifier constructing palatable images of Britishness that hinge on the perpetuation of notions of Irish inferiority. It may be due to the yearning for easily digestible entertainment in the face of a prolonged terrorist campaign or the culture of censorship that characterised British politics during the

²⁰⁷² Freyne, Patrick. "'O'Dynamite' Rossa: Was Fenian leader the first terrorist?" In: *The Irish Times*. 01.08. 2015. <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/o-dynamite-rossa-was-fenian-leader-the-first-terrorist-1.2303447> (last accessed 23rd January 2018)

Troubles – the function of the majority of popular fiction on the conflict catering to the official British self-image is reinforced by the notable neglect of the conflict in Britain’s “high” literature.

This lack of serious representations in British fiction may also be explained by means of a thematic continuity of British literary fiction tackling terrorism – the discourse of resilience. The idea of British resilience, as has been shown, has its origins in the Victorian age, when sobriety and the “stiff upper lip” mentality emerged as aspirational national characteristics. These assumed traits were central to narratives making a myth of the *Blitz* spirit and were nourished as popular qualities by experiences of terrorism. As indicated before, resilience and vulnerability are dialectical concepts. In this sense, the evocation of resilience presupposes a pre-existing vulnerability. To return to the representation of Irishness in British fiction – it may be argued that the lack of serious representations of Irish terrorism in British fiction not only serves the function of stabilising a favourable self-image, but it also shuns confrontation with the anxieties induced by the prolonged and destructive Fenian and IRA campaigns. To write serious literature about Irish terrorists is to face up to one’s vulnerabilities. The absence of literary works that go beyond popular works thus chimes well with the British self-image of sobriety and resilience. In other words, to ridicule one’s opponent is also a way of glossing over one’s weaknesses.

Other examples of popular novels perpetuating a notion of resilience as a national characteristic include the post-7/7 works *How the Dice Fell* and *Without Warning*, both of which perpetuate traditional notions of Britishness associated with perseverance and unflappability. As such, these popular texts evoke the myth of the *Blitz* mentality to help subscribers to this ideal of Britishness to process and cope with the new challenges presented by terrorism from within contemporary multicultural society. These works hence embrace the discourse of resilience gaining currency after 7/7. It is also touched upon in *Incendiary*, which reflects it through the prism of a working-class Londoner. However, behind the front of defiance, the narrator is deeply traumatised, showing symptoms of PTSD. Being intimately tied to London, the protagonist’s emotional state is mirrored by the fate of the capital. London – despite its invocation of defiance – is deeply affected by the events and transformed into a city of surveillance rejecting its cosmopolitan, liberal ethos for the sake of the illusion of total security. The London of *Incendiary* is consumed by the logic of anticipated repetition, by the future-oriented anxieties that shape the effects of terrorism, and that give terrorism an air of the fictive. *Incendiary*, one may argue, is emblematic of the aptitude of literary fiction to deal with terrorism. In the mode of fiction, the phenomenon that often resembles fiction itself and its cultural repercussions may be explored in uninhibited, imaginary scenarios. Thus, the starkly dystopian setting of *Incendiary* lays bare the repressed anxieties and vulnerabilities lurking beneath the cultural imperative of resilience. Moreover, the text not only reflects the ways in which terrorism-inspired and premonitory anxieties transform liberal societies into security states, but also how overlaid and almost fictional these threats may become.

Furthermore, literary discourse may also constitute an imaginary counter-discourse focusing on culturally suppressed aspects. *Brixton Beach*, for instance, centres on vulnerability rather than resilience, and by delving into the protagonist's memory worlds, linking Britain's colonial legacy to the present and connecting the trauma of civil war in Sri Lanka to the contemporary attack in London, the novel portrays 7/7 from a very different angle, one that looks at the historical continuities of traumatic experiences of violence rather than the World War II myth of resilience and defiance which has been cultivated in the wake of 7/7. Both *Incendiary* and *Brixton Beach* are hence diverting from the mainstream discourse celebrating the *Blitz* spirit. While *Incendiary* reflects on popular narratives of resilience and reveals the trauma and pain that lie underneath the ostensible perseverance, *Brixton Beach* proceeds from the dialectical opposite to resilience – vulnerability.

Notwithstanding the obvious difference between popular fiction perpetuating mainstream discourses with little to no scrutiny and the aptitude of “high” literature to critically reflect on the cultural repercussions of terrorism, it would be premature to formulate this as a rule of thumb applying to all literature tackling this subject. Equating high literature with critical counter-discourse while associating popular fiction with thinly disguised mainstream ideology would ignore the different shades in which literary takes on terrorism may occur. For example, as has been shown in the present study, popular fiction like, for instance, *Harry's Game* attempts to destabilise clear-cut notions of “self” and “other” by drawing parallels between Harry and his IRA nemesis. The post-7/7 novel *How the Dice Fell* – despite its rather trivial combination of the stereotypes of British greatness in the face of adversity and the love story of the injured protagonist and his fiancée – makes the effort to depict the viewpoints of one of the terrorists and the despair of his family alongside the victims' struggle for recovery. In a similar vein, canonical literature may affirm mainstream discourses and exhibit and nurture common stereotypes. Henry James' *The Princess Casamassima*, for instance, depicts an apprehensive atmosphere of imminent social revolt and terrorist outrages. Brimming with stereotypes such as the equation of the Frenchness of Hyacinth's mother with an unchecked revolutionary spirit and the flatness of the anarchist characters, James' take on dynamite terrorism expresses and reinforces Victorian mainstream discourse.

The Secret Agent and *The Man Who Was Thursday*, on the other hand, constitute a cultural counter-discourse that cannot be read as a critique of anarchism but as one of contemporary society. Inextricably linking terrorists and members of the establishment, both texts convey feelings of alienation from contemporary society and a sense of fragmentation. Like other modernist works, Conrad's and Chesterton's texts undermine stable identities and moral absolutes. Anarchists and police officers are alike; there is no “good” or “bad”, but a ubiquitous sense of strangeness and ambiguity. Rather than confirming the moral superiority of establishment or insurgents, these texts undermine any fixed notions of “right” or “wrong”.

Johnson's *Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry*, which is also indebted to modernism, takes a similar approach to terrorism. Superficially, these novels deal with completely different terrorist movements as well as cultural and historical backgrounds. While Conrad's and Chesterton's works are early modernist

takes on anarchist movements and convey the sense of fragility and insecurity fermented by the shock of modernity, Johnson's tale may be read against the backdrop of the Situationists and the counter-culture of the 1970s, as a critique of modern capitalism and consumerism. However, not only do these three works embrace a grotesque aesthetic in their description of the respective culture in which terrorists operate, but they also reject moral absolutism and subvert any clear-cut identity construction of terrorists and policeman, villain and hero, or evil and good. Thus, Christie is the victim of late capitalism who uses a key method of capitalism – double-entry accounting to explain and justify his retaliation. Similarly, Chesterton's novel is brimming with double-writing and elusive identities undermining the dichotomy of terrorist and policeman. Likewise, the characters of *The Secret Agent* (with the exception of Stevie) are driven by double-standards, hypocrisy, disloyalty. Their moral depravity allows them to be double agents, traitors, and hypocrites. They appear to spring from a Lombrosian textbook on the criminal and exemplify his theories. Any oppositions and moral absolutes are corroded. *Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry* echoes much of the bleak sentiment with no prospect of redemption that characterises the *Secret Agent*. Underneath their cartoonish and grotesque aesthetic, these novels portray dark and disturbing worlds in which terrorism appears to be a natural consequence. It becomes clear from the above that the perspective and approach to terrorism in the British novel may vary substantially, depending on whether these works corroborate threat narratives, Manichean divides and anxieties or if they offer alternative and reflective world models.

Diachronically, the potential cultural-ethical function(s) of the British novel on terrorism have evolved substantially. The ethical value of the modernist and experimental works of the 20th century (*The Secret Agent*, *The Man Who Was Thursday*, *Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry* and *The Angry Brigade*) lies in the dissolution of binaries, opposing dominant discourse. Rather than centring on the immorality of terrorism, these texts highlight the moral depravity of society as a whole. The ethical value of the counter-discursive works post-9/11, on the other hand, not only lies in the dissolution of stereotypical binaries of “self” and Muslim “other” as in *Saturday*, *Brick Lane*, *On Beauty* or *Incendiary*, but also in the meta-ethical commentary on the ways in which terrorism is represented. Equally, the mnemonic function of these works has changed. The modernist and experimental works may enrich cultural memory by diverging from the mainstream discourse pinpointing the socio-cultural issues of their time and constituting a narrative of counter-memory. Post-9/11 texts, on the other hand, tend to reflect on the mechanisms of memory and identity and scrutinise the ways in which these processes are subject to construction or even manipulation. They thus also make a valuable contribution to the mnemonic culture of 9/11 by reflecting on processes of individual and cultural memory.

Accordingly, the present study has illustrated that the cultural functions and formal-aesthetic strategies of the British novel on terrorism have evolved and are in a permanent flux. Yet, is “the British terrorism novel” a valid genre category to describe these texts? There are surely works which share particular features that may indicate their generic identity. For example, *Brick Lane* and *Brixton Beach* not only point to a particular area in London through their titles, but both also feature female protagonists who

narrate London life through the lenses of an immigrant from the Commonwealth, and both touch upon issues of female autonomy, violent conflicts in the protagonists' home countries which continue to have a grip on their present lives and terrorism afflicting their new homes. Genre, as we have seen, is a rather arbitrary category which may be defined by different formal-aesthetic or thematic characteristics. It may therefore be argued that the common thematic concern for terrorism is just one characteristic among other, more prevalent themes and motifs of these two texts. The genre label of "Black British" literature, as has been explained, more aptly describes their major thematic concern with issues of identity and cultural heritage in post-colonial Britain. In addition, genre categories might determine how texts are being produced and received. It may therefore be argued that defining *Brick Lane* and *Brixton Beach* as terrorism novels would not only be reductive, it would also tamper with their functional potential, for such a category would fall short of encompassing their socio-cultural meaning and complexity.

Therefore, the functional potential of all the novels that have been subject to this study is best described by more specific genre categories. A teleological construction of the genre of the "terrorism novel" that solely hinges on the common denominator of terrorism does not seem to be feasible. Instead, it should be recognised that writers have deployed existing genres to react to specific cultural-historical challenges. Traditional genre conventions have been used as vessels to accommodate terrorism and the socio-cultural issues associated with it. Even if the different taxonomies may appear to be arbitrary and based on categories that privilege to varying degrees either formal or thematic aspects, the genre conventions of the Sci-Fi novel, the modernist novel, the social novel, the thriller genre, experimental novel, Condition-of-England novel, political novel, Black British and romance novel – all of them may accommodate literary responses to terrorism. Furthermore, the resort to traditional literary forms inspires a sense of continuity rather than innovation. Even after 9/11, when some commentators called for formal innovation and unprecedented literary responses to the catastrophe, authors took refuge in tradition. They did not invent a new aesthetic, but embedded the pressing ethical and cultural issues into inherited genres. Terrorism, as has been shown, may be motivated by different causes and has appeared in different shapes and guises. But most importantly, it is the meaning ascribed to it that determines how it is absorbed into the collective consciousness. Any interpretation of the phenomenon is thus never only about terrorism itself, but mainly about the perceptions of the culture and society it targets. This present study has shown that the meaning attributed to the notion of terrorism may, however, vary substantially according to the *Zeitgeist* and the ways in which terrorism discourses have aligned themselves with broader socio-political discourses – ranging from late-Victorian and early modern anxieties about progress to the construction of a favourable self-image by the perpetuation of Irish stereotypes, to criticising capitalist consumer society and the self-reflective media critique after 9/11. For example, the Angry Brigade and IRA were contemporary organisations which even shared some political and ideological common ground. However, the ways in which they have been perceived by the British public differed fundamentally. Consequently, literary responses to these groups could not have been more different. While the Irish quest for independence, the IRA and Irishness are disparaged in the vast

number of thrillers and other popular works, the radicalisation of the left, on the other hand, is portrayed as a logical consequence of the social ills in post-war Britain in the couple of novels that dealt with this. Not only that, already the sheer discrepancy in the quantity of texts that tackle both the IRA and the Angry Brigade suggests that these two movements have been ascribed with different cultural meanings.

To subsume all of these texts under a “terrorism genre” would be too reductive and would not do justice to their diverse formal-aesthetic and cultural, ethical and mnemonic functions. It may thus be argued that terrorism does not demand new genre conventions, nor would the *a posteriori* construction of such a genre do justice to the multi-faceted phenomenon and the literary responses to it. Instead, they may be best accommodated within existent frameworks. The myriad of literary genres that have been applied to the phenomenon are indicative of a phenomenon that has acquired a variety of meanings throughout history.

The British novel on terrorism shows how literary responses have drawn from and fed into public terrorism discourses throughout the modern history of the phenomenon. While the actual effects of these works on their audience are a matter of hermeneutic deduction, it has been shown that these texts may be of great cultural, mnemonic and ethical value. Depending on their approach – whether they stabilise or question dominant terrorism discourses – they may serve diverse function(s). Freed from any claims on truth or objectivity, British fiction may counter threat narratives, evoke empathy in the reader and address the cultural and ethical questions of a time. Those novels perpetuating common assumptions and stereotypical representations of the terrorist such as the Troubles and other popular works may still grant unfiltered insights into desirable versions of Britishness and pre-dominant apprehensions.

It remains to be seen how the current terrorist outrages perpetrated in the name of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria will be portrayed in literary discourse. One may, with justification, posit that the meta-reflective discourse that characterised the British post-9/11 novel may be continued and adapted to the smartphone era. The crucial role digital technologies play in the terrorist group’s propaganda and the unprecedented access to technology that allows for both the quick production and global dissemination of ISIS footage showing the most gruelling and barbaric acts of violence intensifies previous ethical and cultural questions. As Burke points out, ISIS is the first terrorist organisation to fully exploit the potential of social media as a means to inspire, disgust and intimidate people.²⁰⁷³ As a further development of the post-9/11 discourse, literary responses to this unfiltered dissemination of violent imagery could reflect on the impact of this tech-savvy terrorism on societies and individuals, while also posing meta-ethical questions about literature’s approach to these new forms of mediated violence. While this is speculative, it may be asserted that literary treatments make invaluable contributions to the cultural processing of terrorism. Fictional narratives may uncover pressing issues and ethical questions that have no place in mainstream media and discourses. Even those narratives, such as the Troubles books, that are at the service of official state propaganda can furnish immediate

²⁰⁷³ Burke. 2016.

and comprehensive insights into the notions of identity underpinning conflict. British novels on terrorism are fulfilling vital functions as vehicles of cultural communication that create spaces of cultural self-reflexion and media of cultural memory that construct versions of the past, perceptions of identities, and shared norms and values.

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