Terrorism-affected Biographies within Us.
"Terrorist Learning" as Pilgrimage towards Death.

by

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Dedicated with much love
to my wife, Dana, and
daughters, Maria and Emma.

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ABSTRACT

This research is important as it relates to an emergent research field of 'terrorist learning', which is defined as "the acquisition of knowledge to inform terrorist-related activities in the future" (Kettle and Mumford, 2016, p. 8). There is a need to go beyond a legal/ criminalistic, sociological, or political take on this topic and, in effect, attempt to provide a critical perspective on this composite concept from an educational perspective. In addition to this, I have a personal and professional concern (Goodley *et al.*, 2004), which is rooted in my biography. 'Terrorist learning' has a 'narrative life' and affects our biographies, even across generations.

I will approach this research field in an auto/ biographical manner, as this would 'place people in context'. The point is not to generalise any longer, but to realise the importance of the interplay between micro, meso and macro processes (Merrill and West, 2009, p. 40). I conducted a series of interviews with an ex-Al Qaeda as well as an active Hizb-ut Tahrir member.

This research brings contributions to the existing theoretical approaches and knowledge on 'terrorist learning'; in addition, contributions are being made towards developing an appropriate methodological and ethical approach to difficult, but important topics such as 'terrorist learning'. Finally, my thesis also contributes to the development of a relevant and 'narratively imaginative' writing style that does allow -through a process of 'cracking up'- for important educational aspects to emerge, not least for the readers, from within such an emotionally-charged and challenging topic.

PREFACE

We are storied as well as storytellers. Stories may constrain as well as liberate [...]

(West, 2016a, p. 35)

This research does not want to redefine or challenge the meaning of the term 'terrorism' - as there is no agreed definition for it- but to work within its vagueness, contradictions and existing operational boundaries. I set to investigate the impact of "terrorism" within us, that is to say, its narrative life within biographies and also at the level of framing other people biographies so that these could reside -transgenerationally- within us. There is learning going on in this context, but of a different conception from overly linear and rational models; this learning is essentially transformational inasmuch it reflects individual struggling journeys, conceived as pilgrimages, with their pre-determining hidden sediments from the past, with their deep secrets and masks, with doubts as well as certainties, with torments, nostalgia and pain, physical as well as mental.

Pilgrimages can lead towards life or death, including for those biographies residing within us. "Narrative imagination" (Andrews, 2014) is needed to approach other people's biographies, as well as those biographies 'residing' within us; the dialogue between these biographies can only be imagined, however -without any claim of holding "the truth"- this imaginative inquiry could at least assure that one walks towards some good-enough depth of understanding. Individual biographies will be explored through everyday stories that people say. Whether we like it or not, whether we know what it means or not, terrorism -its actions as well as conceptually- can and sometimes does frame people's everyday stories. I have started to ask questions related to 'terrorism' when -as a trained teacher in London- I begun to see worrying signs of radicalisation in the case of 'someone-known-to-me', e.g. extremely secretive behaviour, changed outlook and thinking processes. I was very afraid, even scared, mortified at the prospect that 'someone-known-to-me' can become a person who can hate and wish the destruction of others and change

radically over a short period of time. For the good or for the worse, I asked myself: *What if all these are related to terrorism? and, How can one learn to become a terrorist?* (for the meaning of using different fonts, please read the subchapter "My own writing style? From a space 'on the border'). Over time, this question instinctively led to other questions about my friends and family context (mine as well as that of participants), about the past with its buried realities; all these questions led me to my own family's distant past of "torment, melancholy and pain", or rather their 'comfortable' absence that illuminates our understanding all the way from the inscribed stone on my Great Grandmother's grave.

"We are not haunted by dead people, but by the gaps that are left within us by the secrets of others" (Abraham and Rand, 1987) and so, the secrets of that 'someone-known-to-me' lead me to ask further questions like the ones above as well as to inquire into what really happened or could have happened; this journey became an assumed pilgrimage where the secrets of others have been explored, from that 'someone-known-to-me' to the research participants, from the participants to my own family past and especially a road led to my Grandmother from my mother's side. With the help of 'narrative imagination', it seems that secrets can form an unexpected web of interactions, which could be very telling for the way learning and terrorism happen. A central argument of this research is that 'secrets' are important, perhaps the most important, at uncovering the process of terrorism and "terrorist learning"; this is the case as 'secrets' can hide trauma or can pave the way, or even push towards new traumatic development.

For confidentiality purposes, I have agonised on how to represent the case of that 'someone-known-to-me' so that the identity and data will be kept safe-enough from a direct identification. I have therefore conceived that 'someone-known-to-me' as an androgynous, a 'he-she', as well as an amalgamation of real-life people, events close to me and other characters and places from relevant books I have read. More details are included in the relevant part of this thesis, i.e. Overture and Theory Part 1.

This research is set to bring across a virtually unsolicited perspective at present -i.e. an educator's point of view- to understanding how learning happens in uncommon but ordinary life contexts such as fundamentalism and terrorism. The present research has set to critically appraise the concept and definition of "terrorist learning", about which I initially felt unease with, and in effect to also develop a teacher-relevant perspective on fundamentalism, terrorism and learning, which can also attract some policy as well as practical recommendations. Having said these and going back to the question *How can one learn to become a terrorist?*, this research does not understand "terrorist learning" as an extraordinary event or series of events, but as an ordinary one inasmuch it extracts its meanings from within the everyday life, from a past, a present and a future as well as from outer and inner elements of one's biography.

Furthermore, it is my contention that "terrorist learning" does not only rely on knowledge -being it acquired or transferred-, but it essentially relies on imaginatively engaging the unsayable, hidden, buried narratives of individual people, of communities, which are also activated transgenerationally. I have therefore aimed to auto/ biographically understand -by remembering that I was born and raised in a "borderland country"- why I felt unease about the above expression and discovered that for me -as an educator- learning has to have a life before, after and beyond the mere linear sense of knowledge "acquisition", which seems to be a byproduct of the Enlightenment's rational discourse. I have interviewed an ex-Al Qaeda member and another London-based Muslim activist who is a long-standing member of the Hizb Ut-Tahrir, a non-proscribed organisation in the UK, which is however proscribed in many countries outside of the UK.

In this journey and pilgrimage of mine, I have discovered the value of being -what I named- 'on the border' also through the eyes of a co-national who was born in the same city but forty years before me, the internationally acclaimed writer, Norman Manea; being 'on the border' has also become my research positioning. Moreover, being 'on the border' -conceptually, but also at the level of my being and becoming-

also meant that fiction was a natural choice, as it provided a "house for the narrative imagination" and an approach to inquiry.

This research uncovered an unsayable and hidden side of learning, not just rational, but also emotional and spiritual, one that welcomes the existence of opposites. I have started to look at this learning as being opposed to the Enlightenment's linear stories; in effect, a new image gradually emerged, i.e. an Ancient wheel of life that represents an endless cycle. The emergent learning rhythms and stories are either related to a "wheel of life" and the production of myths (mythopoesis), or are connected to an abnormal interpretation and acting on such myths -which I named mythopathy- which relates to a "wheel of death". These learning stories of life and of death warrant an endlessly cyclic movement, a pilgrimage, as some authors argued for. I conceptualised Pilgrimage 1 (life-driven) as happening towards and with the Other and Pilgrimage 2 (death-driven) as working against the Other and in "harmony" with death; according to the present research, fundamentalism and terrorism emerge as pilgrimages - with their implied learning- towards death.

At a micro level, these stories of pilgrimage uncovered a perpetual dealing with one own's "masks"; at a meso level, these stories were represented through transgressive movements and journeys either towards life or death; finally, at a macro level, we see a transcendent inclination that concludes itself with the acceptance and then micro-level enactment of different types of sacrifice, i.e. in line with Freud's and Klein's perspectives on death drives (covered at some length in the subchapter "On Pilgrimage: losing and regaining one's "Homeland"), sacrificing own views to see the world through Other's eyes (life-driven), or sacrificing oneself against the Other, or just sacrificing the Other (death-driven). On an optimistic note, even with the prospect of sacrificing oneself against or just the Other, there is hope until the final act/ 'pull-of-the-trigger' as essentially every pilgrimage sits on the border between life and death and learning and dialogue is possible up until the moment when death occurs. The challenge for educators is to inspire a learning

pattern that will set us on/ or bring us back on a pilgrimage towards life, love, wisdom and dialogue.

Stefan Alexa (*Arke Schley*)

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INTRODUCTION: "Follow the band"

The circus-infused structure of the thesis

The idea of a circus-like structure for this thesis emerged when I was reading the essay "On Clowns", written in 1989 by Norman Manea and reprinted in 2012 as a part of his book "The Fifth Impossibility. Essays on Exile and Language"; references were made to two fundamental types of a clown, a 'Whiteface Clown' who is deceitful, dictatorial and evil and another who is often its victim, 'Augustus the Fool', but who also stands for the role of the artist, writer and teacher in the society.

Figure 1: Two fundamental types of Clown (*Auguste Babusio and Whiteface Clown Manolo*, no date)

Norman Manea is a very important author for me also because he was born and was formed forty years before me in the same small city, Suceava, in the historical region of Bukovina, which is in the North-East part of Romania. This region as many other parts of Eastern Europe has been the site of a successful confluence of cultures for many centuries, but also the place where horror was created by and within the same very communities. Manea is now an internationally acclaimed writer -especially after he left Romania in 1986- and faced the "circus of history" throughout his life, from being targeted by a Nazi-inspired *Iron Guard*, based on a "Christian Orthodox fundamentalism with a terrorist structure" (Manea, 2012, p.106) to its post-war opposite pole represented by the Stalinist communism, which presented another desire to unify through instilling fear of being different in a thriving and enduring -one thought- multi-cultural place of peaceful cohabitation that managed to perpetuate its multifaceted existence for centuries.

Since he was five -when he and his family were deported by the Romanian Iron Guard regime- to when he -at fifty- finally took the road of physical exile and out of a (self-) destructive communist regime, Norman Manea seems to look at these opposites with disarming blinkless eyes and recognises that his "nomadism" was the result of a period of forty-five years of "formation through deformation" (2012, p. 37). To survive the horrors, Manea appears to have had developed a desire (inspired also by his literary friends) to firmly stand in the middle and not jump on the left or right, East or West, and to acknowledge that he had to resist the known 'incompatibilities', as recognised by another great yet unacknowledged Romanian writer, Mihail Sebastian, when referring to relationships between Nazis and Communists or between people killing others whilst singing religious hymns in Romania between the wars. This also applies to the paradoxical and seemingly "natural" adoption of communism by many ex-Nazi supporters, a height of incompatibility in its own right, nonetheless another disturbing reality from that space and time.

The "incompatibilities" of a "Borderland of Europe" - as Romania was called by Lucian Boia (Boia, 2001) amongst other historians - have to be acknowledged, but resisted at the same time. It seemed surreal and absurd, yet real, very much similar to the "binaries inherent in the nature of circus: In culture, yet out of culture; It excites, yet it disturbs society; Its performances are sublime, yet untrustworthy; it is deceitful, yet true; respectable, yet dangerous; Populist, yet deemed unpopular; the experience is intense, yet evanescent." (Bolton, 2004, p. 126).

Figure 2: "Come Follow the Band" - example (Barnum, no date)

In this introduction, the reader will be invited to 'come (along) and follow the band', with its drums and trumpets, with various clowns and acrobats; this provides a necessary preview into the world of the upcoming 'circus show', as well as attempts to strongly entice everyone to hopefully 'buy tickets' and participate in it. The expression "come follow the band" was made popular by the song with the same title, which was written by the British actor, narrator, singer-songwriter, director and composer, Jim Dale, for the Barnum Ensemble show on Broadway; the musical

show was depicting the circus life and the performance experience. I chose the circus-related expression "come follow the band" as I am hoping that it will also work to introduce this thesis, with its upcoming show.

The First Stage of this thesis will be dedicated to round one of "Theory and Methodology" and it will contain three chapters. The first chapter would work as an Overture that would firstly invite the reader to enter the space and rhythms of the thesis; besides this present narrative exposition of the structure of the thesis, a research summary will also be presented. This will be followed by an invitation to courageously "stand in the centre ring", which will constitute the first theoretical part of the thesis; matters such as the motivation for the research, my positioning as a researcher within auto/ biographical field, ethical matters as well as using auto/ biographical inquiry as a method and as a methodology will be touched upon.

My personal and professional motivations in undertaking this research will be considered, as well as how I have found and chose the auto/ biographical methodology and method as the most relevant for exploring such intensely felt and discussed topics of societal interest, around learning and terrorism.

My (de)formation due to a partial exposure to the "circus of history" in the "borderland of Europe" lead retrospectively -it seems- to an unconscious curation of my potential for 'nomadism' that then emerged into a fully-fledged 'pilgrimage'. My pilgrimage is not just intellectual and emotional but also includes real physical and geographical coordinates. Developing an appropriate, respectful and relevant theoretical lens in relation to other people's stories has become one of my main preoccupations and in my case, this has depended largely on retrospective realisations about the importance of each auto/ biographical emergent space. Ethical matters and tensions will also be discussed as well as how I will try to make sense of the stories presented. My (de)formative years taught me that the truth is to be found and accessed elsewhere and away from the factual reality; this inner pilgrimage required one's informed disposition towards a courageous introspection. I have only come to realise this when I read one of Norman Manea's citations from another

well-known Romanian writer, considered to be the father of the literary genre of "absurd drama". Eugene Ionesco's assertion was that "the truth is to be found in the imaginary" (Manea, 2012b, p. 170), especially in a world where people have started to transform themselves into Rhinoceros and then create horror and terror for the Other and even eliminate the Other. This will be followed by a section containing a first round of notes towards the development of the two case studies, more specifically I will outline the different interview contexts as well as justify the choice of participant names so that these are relevant for the inquiry whilst confidentiality is also maintained.

The (use)fulness of fiction has become apparent very early in my intro- and retro-spections, as finding a path to some truth can only be found through the power of "narrative imagination". The other side of fiction's role is to bring one to "face the lions", one's own fears, horror scenarios and terror creation potential. The imaginary it seems that it can only be allowed to work if one does not cross borders, as otherwise, one can transform into a Rhino, and also does not wait at the border, as otherwise becomes the Other for the Rhinos and therefore their legitimised target and victim. The work of the imaginary allows one to escape "the horn of rhinoceritis [which] can be recognised today in the party membership card or badge, in the fundamentalists' cross, star or crescent, but also in the extreme ideologization of difference" (Manea, 2012, p.170). On the contrary however, "touching the world" (Eakin, 1992) means to be in touch with some form of truth -to uncover some aspects of the 'narrative life' of terrorism- however terrifying and unsettling that might be; this seems to happen in a timeless space 'on the border', which can be engaged and enabled through the power of the "narrative imaginary" and fiction. Therefore, I am planning to "face the lions" and use fiction - the power of the imaginary- to make sense of interview materials. At this point in the thesis, a second round of notes towards the case studies' development will be introduced, i.e. around the contribution of fiction to their development.

The second chapter will be constituted by a second theoretical part, by a review of different learning concepts, from their philosophical grounds to the recognition of different "rational metaphors" which are meant to aid our understanding of the learning process and experience. The convolutedly rational maze of learning will be explored from an assumed 'on the border' space and with the intention "not to jump on the same bandwagon"; it will be recognised the need to go and see beyond this rational and linear space -a byproduct of Enlightenment, perhaps. Ultimately, some questions will be asked about a learning domain and space that exists beyond a presumably 'endless column' of progress and reason, which by default targets, objectifies and aims to eliminate any elements that are not fitting in a presumed harmony and harmonious order.

Chapter three will introduce some theoretical considerations towards a method or a way to analyse the interviews; this will describe in some detail the first phase of analysis. The first phase of "how to deal with the lions" will be outlined along the lines of looking at the participants' masks as "balancing acts".

Stage Two of the thesis will include phase one of the analysis. The chapter titled "balancing acts" will constitute the first round of analysis of participant interviews. The interviews were conducted with an Ex-Al Qaeda member, renamed Alkhayria which means The Charitable in Arabic- and with Mubashir, a given name in Arabic meaning The Missionary- a London based Muslim activist who is a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir, a proscribed organisation in many countries outside of the UK. The intention behind the given names to the participants was to recognise the intended characteristics for their actions and reactions, which were recognised from their stories. This will be a first-round of analysis with the use of a Pro-forma (West, 2107), and will look at identifying the main themes from the material, then patterns and an overall form (Gestalt) of the stories presented.

On Stage Three, I will introduce round two of theory and methodology, which will include two chapters. The first chapter will constitute the third theoretical part of the thesis and will pose the question around what sort of learning and terrorism can one

talk or write about; answers will be provided by considering some cyclical metaphors of learning as well as developing an epistemology and ontology of the "unsayable", which would in essence counterbalance a purely "sayable" nature as expressed through the rational and linear metaphors of learning. One will be on a search for a "sideshow" instead and attempt to find an 'endless wheel', which spins continuously either towards life or towards death. At that point, one will reintroduce with renewed educational energy the very important idea of "nomadism" and, crucially, also looking to distinguish between different essential types of "pilgrimage". Naturally, the value and importance of 'sacred myths' will be interrogated, also from the perspective of different pilgrimages. Some texts from before the Second World War will be unveiled from within one of Norman Manea's texts (2012), which will aid me to have a deeper understanding of the role of 'sacrifice' with its different articulations. This is also linked to some dynamics like the creation of myths and an abnormal activation of such myths; being 'on the border' will have the role of mediation between some emerging concepts such as "masks", "phantoms" (Abraham and Rand, 1987, pp. 289, 290) "others within us" (Bar-On, 2008, p. 195) and the definitional vagueness of the term "terrorism" (Richards, 2014; Qurashi, 2018).

In the second chapter of Stage Three, some methodological considerations will be added, more specifically on the second and third phase of the analysis, i.e. firstly engaging with masks to then attempting to find "loopholes" as transgressive movements behind the masks to finally "flying high" as enacting "phantoms" in transcendental movements of the "narrative imagination" (Andrews, 2014). I will be using fiction to be able to see the materials from different perspectives as well as to uncover possible patterns and relationships between different "masks", which were constructed by participants to represent various stances from the past, the present as well as serving the role of justifying their diverse reactions to events with their consequent action pattern. The term "mask" will not be used to necessarily designate anything that is hidden or untrue, but the construction of various persona - like The Charitable and The Missionary- which allow oneself to make sense of reality

and essentially to drive one to "keep on keeping on" (West, 2012, p. 97; Finnegan, Merrill and Thunborg, 2014, p. 39; Formenti and West, 2018, p. 21).

On Stage Four, the interview material will be consulted again at other levels of analysis, this time from the perspectives uncovered in the previous stages and chapters; this stage will contain the second and third phase of analysis. Potential "loopholes" within participant stories will be explored by looking at how Alkhayria and Mubashir understand their respective worlds. One will also try to "touch their worlds" (Eakin, 1992) by entering a fictive dialogue with their worlds as well as by 'inviting' their 'worlds' to be in a dialogue between themselves. One will look at any transgressive events or movements within these stories and also imagine a dialogue between Alkhayria and Mubashir about their presumably necessary or assumed transgressions, as well as reflect on the purpose and function of such transgressions. The analysis will be then taken to a third/ macro level where one will endeavour to be "flying high" over the whole circus so that an opening can exist towards analysing the interviews at a level where one would attempt to get even closer to the participant stories, perhaps to also get to the story behind the stories. The overt attempt will be to enter participants' imaginary world with the help of a fictional 'dream' (daydream or otherwise), which will set the possibility towards a 'transcendental dialogue' between the participant stories as well as attempting to set my 'on the border' self within this land beyond the mundane for the purpose of ultimately be able to explore my own transcendental potential, being it for the good, the bad, or beyond these binaries.

The last stage of the thesis - the Conclusion- will introduce a summary and some post-analysis emergent theoretical avenues; an Auto/ Biographical Web of meaning will also be introduced, which will conceptualise and frame emergent textual dynamics and interdependencies between biographical stories. Some levels of "keeping on" will also emerge as being mapped to different moments in the life of a mask or of a particular type of pilgrimage, either towards life or towards death. These will only indicate a partial and provisional "good enough" (Reid and West,

2016, p. 565) understanding of the 'narrative life' of terrorism within us as well as conceiving 'terrorist learning" as a pilgrimage towards death.

Research intentions and context

This research has sought to understand how learning happens in non-mainstream, outside school and uncommon but ordinary life contexts, where nowadays one does not expect learning to happen, more specifically in contexts where human beings' struggle is apparent in their quest of becoming in the world. One such contexts is fundamentalism and terrorism in which I had a personal and professional concern (Goodley *et al.*, 2004) that was rooted in my biography, personal and professional. I have also taken into account my present context of life -living and teaching in London- and also considered a significant event -in my view- in relation to 'someone-known-to-me'.

My interest is in what and how people joining proscribed organisations learn, and in what motivates them, as well as how this can best be understood. My aim was to explore and illuminate some of these processes in-depth, drawing on the stories of those who have been attracted to join proscribed organisations.

This research relates to an emergent research field of 'terrorist learning', which was defined by Kettle and Mumford as "the acquisition of knowledge to inform terrorist-related activities in the future" (2016, p.8). On the other hand, fundamentalism and terrorism were conceptualised as "ordinary" (West, 2016, Considered Blog) and I agree with this view as it looks deep inside each and everyone's human potential for 'horror creation'- it interrogates the potential fundamentalist and terrorist inside each one of us. At the same time, I consider that learning concerns every human endeavour within the domain of everyday life. However, at the beginning of my research, I felt unease about the simple presence of

these two words beside each other, i.e. "terrorism" beside "learning", as well as I have recognised a sense of inadequacy in regards to this definition.

I have therefore set to understand - auto/ biographically- why I felt that way and discovered that for me -as an educator- learning has to have a life before, after and beyond the mere linear sense of knowledge "acquisition", which seems to be a byproduct of the Enlightenment's rational discourse. However, if one operates within the democratic and rational paradigm of the Enlightenment, one would agree with some authors who conceive fundamentalism, and also terrorism in effect, as being "deeply defensive as well as anti-educational" (West, 2016, Considered Blog). Conversely, one would agree that "we are storied as well as storytellers [and that] stories may constrain as well as liberate [...] (West, 2016, p.35).

I attempted to go before, after and beyond the Enlightenment's position, whose story I felt that it narrowly frames -at a macro level- our micro and meso understandings of such "ordinary" events. There was also a need to go beyond a legal/ criminalistic, sociological, or political take on the topic of "terrorist learning" and, in effect, I have provided a critical perspective on this composite concept from an educational perspective.

My auto/ biography is deeply rooted in my beginnings in Romania -a "borderland country" (Boia, 2001), as it was named by historians- and then after leaving it; also, "it may be argued that the past is a country from which we have all emigrated, that its loss is part of our common humanity. [...], but I suggest that the writer who is out-of-country and even out-of-language may experience this loss in an intensified form [...] This may enable him to speak properly and concretely on a subject of universal significance and appeal" (Rushdie, 2012, p. 12). Therefore, I was presumably in a good position to realise something of importance, more precisely that being 'on the border' (in my opinion, not the same as being "at the border" or "crossing the border") has become a personal and professional realisation of one's space and then it provided me with a necessary research positioning, especially

when attempting to understand such intense and difficult subjects as learning and terrorism.

Moreover, being 'on the border' also meant that using fiction as an approach to inquiry -to make sense of data as well as of my own struggles at a personal as well as professional level- has been a natural human and choice, at a human as well as academic levels.

My own writing style? From a space 'on the border'

I feel it is only sensible and right to let readers know at this stage that I have agonised for a while to pin down a clearly evident personal writing style for this project; I felt uncomfortable to position myself, to choose one author's style over another. I can only say that I feel closer towards some authors, but I feel that all those whose work I have read have influenced me somehow, every letter, word, expression, has life and gives life, I believe. Amongst many authors, I have strong affinities towards the writings of Eugen Ionesco, Max Blecher, Franz Kafka, Aharon Applefeld, of Mihail Sebastian, Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Olga Tokarczuk, of Paul Celan and -definitely not last- Norman Manea. I feel privileged to have read from these authors, and others; my sense of belonging to these authors' writing applies with a fair degree of certainty, directness and subtility.

Norman Manea's words, in particular, have resonated with my being and journey of becoming, they have awoken memories, instincts, connections, images, feelings which were initially unknown to me, perhaps buried, forgotten and hidden. I have discovered a space 'on the border' from which I originate as well as from where -I came to realise- I extract my writing essence and sensibilities. It happens that Norman Manea and I -as well as Celan and Applefeld- come from the same 'border space', from the historical region of Bukovina, in the north of Romania.

Any personal journey -and even more so a pilgrimage- can only be towards something -a truth perhaps, an existence, a being and becoming- and writing from a space 'on the border' can only contribute to this, a space from where one can witness the 'circus of life' and engage with it; however, this space is not always a very welcoming one, it introduces harshly its 'absurd' (Ionesco) as well as 'magic realism' (Rushdie), its 'immediate irreality' (Blecher and Applefeld), its "clowns" (Manea) as well as too much and never enough from the gaps left within us by the secrets of 'people and books' (Celan, 2001) who once inhabited that very space. Hence, my writing is non-linear and will not always present upfront the solution to any of the found problems, but it aims to mirror my own and others' journeys and pilgrimages - with their contained stories- through which I aim to be conscious about and assume my 'Exile' and to re-present my 'Homeland' -real and fictional, in real stone and at a symbolic level- so that I could understand more so that I can be and become.

My writing style is from an unravelling space 'on the border' -present in many geographies around the world; spaces like this elude established conventions of turning right or left, of moving upwards or downwards, but to temporarily suspend these binaries so that respectfulness can emerge towards real and fictional characters, towards other important writers' work, towards me and definitely towards you, the readers. Whilst I have not decided from the beginning to write in a particular style, I came to realise as the writing got on its way and also through my consequent readings that, fundamentally, the writing for this project operates in a space beyond binaries, a space beyond the opposition between real and fictional, between myself and others, between personal and public, between life and death, between light and darkness, and the list can continue. This emerged as a necessity when dealing with puzzling, difficult, troubling, yet important and very relevant topics like terrorism and 'terrorist learning'.

In the same spirit, perhaps, with other authors who addressed difficult topics in their writings -some examples being Arundhati Roy's 'The Ministry of Utmost

Happiness' (Roy, 2017) or the work of another fellow Eastern European, Olga Tokarczuk's 'Flights' (Tokarczuk, 2018), and who both made deliberate choices to reflect through their writing style the difficult nature of their chosen topics to create in the end "a bright mosaic out of [...] fragmented stories" (Walter, 2017)- you, the reader, will perhaps feel lost-within-the-text at times and then something will catch your attention, you will maybe want at times to put the pages away, but then something will keep you on, page after page, you could feel like your personal struggle in life has also joined in with a writer's pilgrimage, you will have a feeling of incompleteness and irresolution and, maybe, so it should be as otherwise it will not be a writing from a space 'on the border' and even more so when approaching a difficult but important phenomenon called 'terrorist learning'. Retrospectively, I realised that the endeavour itself to finding a space from where I can approach this difficult field has also helped for this writing style to emerge; I was happy to see that I am not alone in this agonising journey as other authors have also been there to perhaps also understand that "nobody is at peace, everyone is restless with unsaid memories and unattained dreams" (ob.cit).

I sense and hope that you will find that there is much to be gained from inhabiting -as readers, through the act of reading- this liminal space 'on the border'; I trust that you will be seduced by this space and find some illuminating aspects on the topic of 'terrorist learning', not least to reflect on your world for a bit to explore, remember, imagine and re-create a world in relation to and not away from Others.

I would also like to mention at this stage some of the writing conventions that I have adopted for this project, more specifically the use of the handwritten-looking font to signal the start of fictional parts, or when using my assumed voice from a space 'on the border'. I have used single inverted commas when I referred to a concept behind the word or simply when I wanted to emphasise a word or idea; double inverted commas were used for direct quotations. At times, Italics were used alongside double inverted commas to indicate direct quotations from the interview

material. Also, a slightly smaller and single-spaced font was used when large quotations were included.

Whilst I have used closed brackets for when I wanted to qualify further and clarify a statement, the hyphen was used either to join words to indicate combined meaning or to emphasise an enhanced meaning -in feeling or thought- given by linking a series of words. The hyphen was also used to further qualify a thought within a sentence.

STAGE 1: THEORY AND METHODOLOGY - ROUND ONE

OVERTURE:

Theory Part 1: 'Standing in the Central Ring'
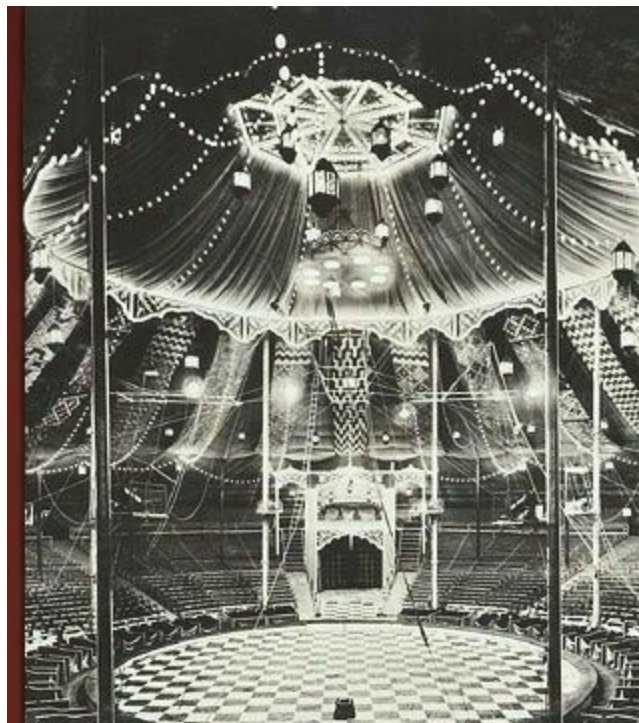
Figure 3: 'The Central Ring' (*Pinterest Photo - The Central Ring*, no date)

A 'central ring' is a space of high visibility, performativity and exposure in a circus; it is equally a place of wonder, display of high skills and performance, story-telling and joy, as well as a space filled with fear, sadness buried deep in a clown's laughter, display of potential danger, struggling and uncertain emotions in the audience, testing the limits of human and animal endurance and condition. Therefore, 'standing in the central ring' has become -for this thesis- another important circus-related metaphor, which symbolises the importance of crafting an author-conceived space -with its rules and time dimensions-, where various theoretical and methodological debates are being invited to 'perform' their part in front of the readers.

Why do this research? From theoretical to personal considerations. 'I am a 'Border-Man'...

This research is important as it relates to an emergent research field of 'terrorist learning'. This subchapter will put forward some initial arguments and starting points; I will endeavour to lay before us the importance of an auto/ biographical understanding of key concepts around the chosen topic; to that effect, one important perspective will be that of 'someone-known-to-me' whose story will enable me to attempt to understand and verify some recent theoretical constructs, like a new definition, framework and process of 'terrorist learning'. To that effect and for the purpose of developing a deeper understanding, it will be shown why is important to equally take into account the learning experience and stories of an ex-Al Qaeda member and also of a Muslim activist belonging to a non-proscribed organisation in the UK, though this being proscribed in many other countries around the world -most notably in the Middle East and Central Europe. In addition, the importance of 'places' towards developing a more relevant understanding will be explored in relation to my native region, which is connected -as a border space- to other places in the world.

My research wrestles with a new definition of terrorist learning -"the acquisition of knowledge to inform terrorist-related activities in the future" (Kettle and Mumford, 2016, p. 8). It was suggested that the newly proposed Analytical Framework (Kettle and Mumford, 2016, p. 8) for understanding terrorist learning needs to be firstly used in research practice and then also refined as a consequence.

It is Mumford's contention (ob.cit) that -in order to understand this unusual type of learning, which operates efficiently despite all odds against it- one needs to go beyond mere desk-based research. It has been recognised that the research into terrorist learning has been mainly focused on organisational structures and individual learning and also performed 'from a distance'. My research will attempt to understand the process of terrorist learning also from the experience of it, with its stories and perhaps its hidden stories behind the seen 'masks'.

I have used an auto/ biographical approach; I had conducted dialogical interviews with an ex-Al Qaeda member and with a member of Hizb-ut Tahrir and therefore "thinking about my place in relation to others in the study [has] become an interpretative and epistemological necessity" (West, 2016a, p. 36).

Many researchers do not feel that there is a need to explain how and why a certain topic is chosen. Only a few authors have been preoccupied with the question of why bother undertaking a certain research topic (Corrigan, 1979). I do not have a particular insider experience that pointed me towards choosing this topic of research, however upon reflection, I can say that there was a personal puzzle that needed solving, something that originates in my (de)formative years in Eastern Europe (Manea, 2012b, p. 37), i.e. from birth to finishing university.

I only have a personal and professional concern (Goodley *et al.*, 2004), which is rooted in my biography. There is no direct and apparent connection between my own history and violent extremism -or any extremism-, however, I had a very real interest in non-traditional forms of learning since my university years when I was supposedly training to become a philosopher and then later when I finished my master's degree (Alexa, 2004). My present context of life, i.e. living in London since

2005 and being trained as a teacher since 2007, made me wonder about a more specific aspect and form of non-traditional learning; since terrorism is an ongoing presence in our contemporary lives, I have become increasingly interested in this topic, as a teacher 'trained' in the intricacies of the Prevent Agenda and supposedly ready to act as a '007 Agent'.

Another aspect which has brought a lot of the pieces in the puzzle on the same table was an event from my own close-circle-of-life, real as well as fictional. 'Someone-known-to-me' had converted to Islam in secrecy, however, certain worrying signs have emerged and -as a trained teacher- I have seen them in the past number of years. The conversion to Islam was not the worrying matter for me, but the secrecy and the change in the outlook on life as well as gradually the change in behaviour and appearance, e.g. withdrawing from interaction with Others, apparently having some-Other "Online buddies" instead.

'Someone-known-to-me' had travelled to a high-risk Middle-Eastern location at some point whilst also expressing strong sympathies towards a narrow form of Islam and being quite overtly critical of other denominations and ethnic groups, from Jews to Christians to other Muslims, as well as homosexuals. I started to wonder why 'someone-known-to-me' has decided to withdraw so very sharply from the 'normal life' and live instead a double life surrounded in secrecy. People around become gradually worried, though it must be said that for many it took a while to notice and internalise these subtle but obvious changes. For the good or for the worse, I asked myself: *What if all these are related to terrorism? and, How can one learn to become a terrorist?* At that moment in time, I realised the validity of the following statement: "the questions we ask of ourselves, of which we may at first be unclear, can be integral to choosing a research topic and to shaping our engagement with the other" (Merrill and West, 2009, p. 101). It is important to mention from the very beginning that what refers to as 'someone-known-to-me' is -for confidentiality purposes- an amalgamation of a few people I know personally with some personality traits of a few characters from books I have read, from novels to memoirs, from

written documentaries to theatre plays. 'Someone-known-to-me' is also androgynous, is a "he-she", and was given the gender-neutral name of Dawanur; a more detailed description of the imaginary world that surrounds this 'someone-known-to-me' can be found in a dedicated subchapter a few pages later, which is referring to a "personal agonising exercise".

I am a 'border man', an in-betweener, a marginal perhaps, dominated by a perpetual transition. My native Romania is a borderland, the "border of Europe" as some historians have named it (Boia, 2001); this 'border-thing' has also been for me a feeling as well as an intellectual intuition, as well as a confusing reality during my childhood in my native Bukovina (North-East part of Romania), during the teenage years (dominated by the transition from communism to capitalism), and all the way to my early adulthood (University years in one of the oldest University cities in Eastern Europe, studying philosophy) and then my journey to 'the West'. Bukovina was a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and it was set up under the monarch (Emperor of Austria) Franz Iosef's rule as a place where many ethnicities were encouraged to immigrate to and settle; one can say that it was a social experiment where freedom, democracy and equality were practised (Hirsch and Spitzer, 2011) before the idea of common "European values" were to emerge almost a century later and as a result of the Second World War destruction, human tragedy and trauma. That was a deliberate project, an Emperor's choice, to create a border space where those values had brought together many people and it continued to exist successfully until the First World War; its values remained and continued to guide people's lives even after its disintegration. However, it is my contention that it is not the deliberate nature of its inception and the endorsement of an Emperor that made things work, but the very creation of a border space where people were coming in from many parts of Europe and the world.

As other authors have suggested in regard to the ad-hoc contemporary creation of refugee camps -like the notorious so-called "Jungle", which was located on the outskirts of Calais, France-, where refugees were firstly "bordered" not by an

Emperor's permission, but by not so benevolent mass-media reports, which repeatedly silenced and de-contextualised them (Hall T., Lounasmaa A., Squire C., 2019, p. 104). Despite all these, however, the refugee camp had experienced a natural emergence and everyday practice of a similar set of values, e.g. "deliberative democracy, freedom, equality, and human rights [... which seemed to emerge from the formation of freely] associative spaces within the camp" (ob.cit, p.104).

After the destruction of the refugee camp and similar to the case of my own native Bukovina, the forms of political process that emerged in those "bordered" places have continued to exist beyond their physical and temporal existence and, one hopes, act as an inspiration for similar "new political 'centres' of thought and action" (ob.cit. p.105). There are indeed stark difference between my native historical region of Bukovina and a refugee camp -like the "Jungle"- and I am not suggesting a similarity in their formation as one was an Emperor's choice and setup and the other an ad-hoc gathering of people in grave need of fleeing war zones; however, these very different spaces do have their liminality in common, these are border spaces - formed by choice or otherwise- that emerge because of and propagate their critical stance and spirit beyond their immediate existence and reality. The "Jungle" had books which were placed with care in an ad-hoc library, built solely by and for the refugees (Calais Writers, 2017, p. 12), my native Bukovina had libraries built by an Emperor, yet what matters I argue is the simplicity of a striking border common reality - perhaps beyond even its geographical and temporal dimensions- that was "inhabited by people and books" (Manea, 1993, p. 23).

My country of origin is a space where many stories have been allowed to come in and then collide, a physical border as well as a mental one, a mindset and a way to see reality; it is a space in-between the West and the Orient, neither fully Western, nor fully Oriental, bearing some important traits of both the West and the Far and Middle Eastern traditions. Many Romanian authors felt the same and have written or created art about this some more extensively than others, amongst them also some key authors who made an impact on me: Norman Manea, Mihail Sebastian, Paul

Celan, Eugene Ionesco, Stefan Afloroaei, Lucian Boia, Constantin Brancusi and Mircea Eliade.

The frequent preoccupations of these Romanian authors were the place of the sacred and the profane in our everyday dealings (Eliade, 1959), the paradoxical and the absurd (Ionesco, 1960), as well as to realise that it is less important to create meaning that is precise and impersonal than to look at the effect of the word, its work and presence in human acts; the conceptual language of the West tends to only look at a methodological and systematic attainment of the exact and the impersonal (Afloroaei, 1997; Noica, 1997).

Instead of the neutrality of the conceptual language that eventually leads to the objectivity of its pursuit, what is more in line with the 'border mindset' is the pursuit of an experience, which is real rather than objective. This border space has real dualities at work, which also made an impact on my own view of the world. I am the 'product' -not objective, but real- of certain dualities and opposites, which present certain tensions; having a past that was approved by the communist regime (the 'healthy origin' - the country-side connection, however even there problems existed as my family had been in possession of large areas of farmland, not exactly in line with the communist expectations), as well as not having a fully traceable past as the personal history and memory were forbidden. Despite all these, I still know that my family was not-just-Romanian, but also Austrian (my grandma's first language was German, being told that it was actually an unevolved form of 17th Century Austrian German; I was told that a big part of my family came as Austrian settlers in Bukovina - a North-East historical region of Romania), Polish, Jewish (unconfirmed, still my Grandmother spoke fluent Yiddish), as well as a Romany (undocumented) connection. Both the Romany and Jewish identities were fiercely denied and repressed by my family; actually these were denied as jokes and silly presumptions. This was not uncommon during the communist era when everyone had to just be nothing else but "pure Romanian", speaking only one language and feeling only in one approved way; all other identities had to be repressed, some as not being any

longer relevant to the 'new-man' of the communist regime, others as being too shameful and dangerous to possess. A striking similarity can be easily found between these communist realities and the pre and during the Second World War Romania's own Nazi-inspired 'ideals' (Manea, 2012b), which worked as tragic webs of trauma-inducing and unifying 'requirements' of a fierce regime of terror.

Moreover, my family was not entirely a working-class and not entirely middle class, patches of each existed, however, the non-working class aspects were again repressed as non-desirable and belonging to a remote past. The spiritual inclinations were also repressed, however after the fall of communism and especially during my university years there was within the Romanian society at large a bizarre blend between pragmatic Marxist materialism and a newly rediscovered sort of spirituality, very often in line with and akin to a pre-communist Nazi Romania where a kind of Christian spirituality and mysticism served the regime to wipe off entire parts of Romania's ethnic landscape. I was taught during my university years on a Philosophy degree that the philosophy in "our part of the world" (Afloroaei, 1997) was not concerned with the method or technique, but rather was seen and conceived as a reflection on the development, edification and salvation of man, morally as well as intellectually (ob.cit.).

I was formed as a philosopher who would be 'on the border' or a "border philosopher" who would happily reject positivism and statistical reasoning, on the one hand, and would be inclined to combat postmodernism with its tendencies at denying the presence and permanence of our thinking and feelings within the reality as opposed to these creating realities. Moreover, I have been trained to be concerned with the study of 'being in the world' (or the ontology) and less with measuring and method that would presumably generate our knowledge about the world. As a "border philosopher" I was interested more in how beings are in the world -and therefore very interested in their stories- as opposed to developing a methodical understanding of the world. Logic had occupied an important place in my development as a philosopher, especially when logic became a real tool for judging

reality in ways which were supposed to be valid, i.e. avoiding errors of judgement, which we were taught that Western-type of Philosophy did most of the time, like mixing up statements about the knowledge of the world (epistemology) with statements about the world (ontology).

Where am I within the field of contemporary Auto/ Biographical Research? ...

This subchapter will move through four broad areas of interest, more specifically from understanding the essence of auto/biographical inquiry -with the importance of stories in context, my position within this field and my relationship with others- to the discussion around various learning possibilities, especially when the background is formed by some preconceived ideas straight from my Eastern European upbringing. Questions of voice and whose story is being heard will be considered alongside the importance of dialogue for understanding lives, hence developing a 'radical auto/ biographical' outlook that will eventually impact on how interviews will be set up and how I will make sense of the interview material within a given life-context.

"Biographical research places people in context" (Merrill and West, 2009, p. 40), more specifically there is to be recognised that what shapes people's experiences and the stories they tell is their life contexts and locations. The point is not to generalise any longer, but to realise the important interplay between details of the micro and macro processes (ob.cit.). Eastern Europe has seen -not in an uncommon way as history tends to indicate from time to time- political turmoil at the end of the last century and biographical research has been used to look at the nature and function of the memory in a sense that, for the construction of a new and relevant identity, people had to remember a certain past and forget another (Chamberlayne, Bornat and Wengraf, 2000).

Similar lenses can be applied to the more recent Arab Spring events and the consequent way in which these had a rolling impact on the consciousness and memory of people in those regions as well as around the world. Biographical

researchers can take into account some relevant answers to questions like 'which past to remember and what story to tell?' that could come up in contexts when "triumphalist account of liberation from oppression can be disturbingly partial as well as ideologically driven" (Andrews, 2007).

My self-awareness as a human being and as a multidisciplinary professional formed in Eastern Europe and also as someone who has immigrated, worked, studied and lived in the West - mostly in London- for the past eighteen plus years would be key -I sense- to allow me to find a position within this research field as well as perhaps and hopefully give me the right edge when it comes to developing important research relationships as well as allowing my critical and analytical lens to develop and take its action on and with the interview material. One of the aims of my own research was to give voice to participants, but also to go a step further and give a voice to my own and participants' reflections.

From the place I am originally from, my perspective on how learning occurs was more along the lines of one learns when there is the 'right time' for it, i.e. when young and almost exclusively in schools or Universities. The logic was: once learning has taken place, then the experience can happen, but not the other way around or by combining them. However, leaving Eastern Europe in the early 2000 also meant that I realised, by looking around me and also through personal experience, that there were no clear boundaries between people's learning and their experiences, that there was something in reality called 'lifelong learning' that is taking place in a variety of settings from domestic to social and work-based learning, but also which includes a variety of ways of learning from informal to formal, and non-formal (West, 2007).

As researchers are being reminded, biographical researchers face "complicated questions of voice and whose story is being heard" (Merrill and West, 2009). However, there is a well-documented appetite to engage with the most diverse and radical voices, and in doing so in engaging with a variety of matters from women's

voices, to working-class, to the holocaust survivor, to lesbian and gay coming-out stories, to stories of indigenous people, and many more.

In this sense, I am a 'radical' auto/biographical researcher who will try to work with the research participants in a dialogical manner, the dialogue itself being a key ingredient in understanding lives. The 'egalitarian dialogue and consensus' (Crossan, Gallacher and Osborne, 2004) in the work with Gitanos (Romany people) in Spain is of great interest to the present research as it describes a clear process through which a 'common space' is created between the researchers and the marginal (-ised) subject of/ in research. In the context of this research, life stories have been developed on a day by day basis and also participants were encouraged to share their interpretations either in small or larger discussion groups. Trust and listening were also used for the purpose of Crossan, Gallacher and Osborne's work (ob.cit.).

In order to make sense of the stories emerging from the interviews with the two research participants, I have used the Auto/ Biographical Narrative Proforma (West, 2016a), which has been developed to aid the finding of key themes from data, to comment on the nature of interactions as well as participants' context and life circumstances; the Proforma has also been used to assist with finding patterns of meaning within the material.

Auto/ Biography as a Methodology, Method and writing oneself through inquiry

I would now like to outline some thought parameters around seeing auto/ biographical inquiry both as a methodology and as a method, which will be regarded as a strength. However, some criticisms towards the auto/ biographical enterprise will also be introduced. This subchapter will then look at how the adoption of this methodology and method can facilitate the intertwining of peoples' stories so that meaning can emerge imaginatively to illuminate 'hidden' parts of our common reality.

Three levels of meaning -referential, transgressive and transcendental- will attempt to engage 'unsayables' in creative and imaginative ways. Finally, this subchapter will also recognise and put forward a case for the importance of fiction for the development of a "narrative imagination", which will blur -amongst others- the usual binary between the researcher and the researched.

Auto/ biographical approach to the inquiry has seen criticism over the years, especially from academic traditionalists. However, these points of criticism could also be seen and turned into an epistemological strength as space and time seem to open possibilities for dialogue, within as well as beyond a supposedly academically cogent position between objectivity and subjectivity.

Criticism directed at auto/ biography contained reported "accusations of narcissism, self-indulgence or simply of woolly-minded and flabby prose masquerading as academic 'proof' and practice" (Fraser, 2013, p. 48); however, despite these potential and presumed shortcomings, I tend to agree with the point stating that "the process of doing autoethnography remains wedded to the pursuit of uncovering underlying epistemologies whilst staying open to the potential for unknowingness" (ob.cit. 48). I do not intend to dwell on the presumed clear movements from 'outer' to 'inner', from the 'other' to 'self', from the 'objective' to 'subjective', but I endeavour to start off and pursue an imaginative dialogue between these apparently opposing glances at biography-affecting terms such as 'terrorism' and 'terrorist learning', as well as between the past, present and a moderately optimistic future.

I consider and opt for a subjective and self-reflective auto/ biographical approach (Bochner and Ellis, 2002), which I think it is necessary to evocatively engage with hidden, even secretive terrorism-affected thoughts and emotions, from the past or present. My auto/ biographically uncovered epistemological stance is a relational one, which is akin to the "participatory paradigm" as described by (Heron and Reason, 1997) who offered a necessary critique of the other four research paradigms, i.e. "positivist and postpositivist, constructivist-interpretive, critical

(Marxist, emancipatory), and feminist-poststructural" (as cited in Fraser, 2013, p. 140). Whether auto/ biographical inquiry has methodological as well as methodical value is something to be established and assumed and also in reference to other researchers who 'walked' before me within this entangled and contested land of stories, essentially rooted in data, but existentially beyond its affective-void. As such, I endeavour presently to adopt a methodology and method that 'looks at the unsayable' and conceives it imaginatively and creatively; hence, with its intention to 'walk towards a truth' one would perhaps situate the auto/ biographical inquiry within the realm of a "cultural and psycho-social imagination" (ob.cit., p 92), which is used to "name the 'sayable', whilst pointing to the 'unsayable'" [...that] might then elucidate the shades of connection between aspects of these 'lifeworlds' and my own" (ob.cit. p.92).

Therefore, I agree with Wilma Fraser's reasoning that points towards auto/ biography as being both a methodology - as "an investigation of the concepts, theories and basic principles of reasoning on a subject" (Fraser, 2013, p. 3) - as well as a method, conceived as "techniques or technical procedures of a discipline" (ibid.). Hence, the secrets, the hidden, the unsayable can - I sense- be better approached and hopefully partially and temporarily illuminated by an auto/ biographical discipline, which includes an integrated methodology and method. My auto/ biographical methodology will be underpinned by an assumed necessity to work on stories with the help of an essentially "imaginative-creative" method and writing (Chang, 2016, p. 147). This is not to say that some parts will be purely descriptive, some other emotive and other interpretative in feel and style, which will be encompassed by an overarching "cultural and psycho-social imagination" (Fraser, 2013, p. 236), itself a specific kind of "narrative imagination" that works at its very best by connecting various worlds, characters and storylines.

Under an auto/ biographical inquiry, the interview material can and will transform itself into story(-ies) and eventually into case studies, where oneself -being it the participants, myself, that 'someone-known-to-me', or significant members of my

family, real or fictional - will have a chance through employing a creative fictional approach to write and thereby continuously uncover themselves from within an entangled web of (un)expected relations between beings, becomings and their associated secrets and necessary unsayables. It is therefore important to remember that:

> the stories people tell are always a reconstruction of events, afterthoughts, rather than the events themselves, while the powerful discourses of a culture and unconscious processes of wanting to please or appease circulate in stories (West, 2016, p.35).

I will develop two case studies, which will be conceived as the intertwining between various stories, of the participants as well as mine, my family's and of 'someone-known-to-me'; the purpose of this mixture is to imaginatively show and 'illuminate' a web of meaning on various levels (referential, transgressive and transcendental) in line with the following view: "one good case study can, in its luminosity, reveal the self-reflection, decision and action, and/ or the ambivalence, pain, loss, messiness and satisfaction in life that has resonance and meaning for us all" (Merrill and West, 2009, p. 167).

In building these two case studies, fiction will offer that very necessary opportunity to activate a "narrative imagination" (Andrews, 2014) that will "blur distinctions not only between form and content, but also between researcher and researched, between data and imagination; to insist, that is, that language itself, by itself, does the work of inquiry, without recourse to the meta-languages of methodology (Clough, 2002, p. 3). In consequence, stories help us to get close to "what it means to be human":

> Stories offer complex material that encompasses a dynamic of here and now, there and then, self and other, psyche and society, power and powerlessness. Such material can offer a nuanced representation of what it means to be human, in conditions of distress, as well as the potential place of democratic education in transforming lives; or of how Islamic radicalization works (West, 2016, p.36).

Attempting to develop an appropriate, respectful and relevant theoretical lens

I would like to adopt an appropriate theoretical lens in dealing with the chosen topic; this is particularly important to find, use and also to further test out, probe for appropriateness throughout the research process. According to Merrill and West (2007),

> theory and method are intertwined and inter-related: we cannot make sense of the world without having ideas of how the world works or what it is to be human. We cannot interpret the details generated in our research without having some framework to piece together, however provisionally, the fragments of the stories to enable them to find a place in the world. Although many social researchers are using biographical methods, they are not homogeneous in their choice of theory (or methodology) and draw on a wide range of ideas under the diverse if often overlapping labels of psychoanalysis, feminism, interpretivism, hermeneutics, symbolic interactionism, critical theory, post-structuralism and postmodernism (p. 57).

I acknowledge the complexity that is created when multiple theoretical lenses are being used, however I am also aware that it is beneficial to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach that will appropriately open up different streams of understanding on the chosen research topic as well as be consistent with my own personal and professional biography.

It is quite important to recognise that what we know about the reality (epistemology) is fundamentally different from what reality is (ontology) and, therefore, my own attempt to develop an understanding of the field of 'terrorist learning' will attempt to keep this important distinction in mind, when developing my own theoretical stance through a critical engagement with the existing literature as well as, on the other hand, when making sense of interview material. Above all, this distinction will guide my endeavours at building respectful relationships with the participants, the past, present and future and not last, with you, the readers.

Following on from this outlook on ontology and epistemology, I would like to take a critical theoretical perspective in the sense that the role of discourse and power relations will be taken into account when looking at how personal realities and stories are being shaped and reshaped as well as how I as a researcher can imagine a few different reality(-ies), which might be more or less desirable than the one we presently inhabit.

A 'critical humanistic' perspective will only provide a starting point for my inquiry that will allow for future theoretical developments and consequent work on people's stories. Kenneth Plummer (2001b) coined the term "critical humanism" as a way to reject the modernist notion of a "unitary and self-actualising individual" and put forward a concept of an "embedded, dialogic, contingent, embodied, universal self with a moral and political character" (Plummer, 2001a, p. 262). This -I feel- is a starting point, which is important enough to sustain an ongoing critical spirit throughout this project, but will remain as such as I would like to work on these developments in free-enough narrative imaginative ways, without any inherent imperatives of being locked-in a particular theoretical frame of conceiving the world.

I have used the previously mentioned Proforma to make sense of the interview material and I will also engage with psychoanalytic concepts like 'life and death drives' which underlie the active role of the 'unconscious'; after undertaking this research, I can confidently say that the Proforma -as a tool- worked very well as if from within the "critical humanist" and psychoanalytic frameworks; it has uncovered different relational layers of reality as well as an overall form of the narrative. A "Gestalt formation" -or the overall form of the stories- was one particular aspect of the Proforma that helped me to work across the interview material, as well as it has opened the possibility of imaginatively engaging with it at cultural, psychological as well as social levels. I have followed a "triadic process" to unravel stories and make sense of human experience, more specifically I have looked at a movement from equilibrium to disequilibrium and then to modified equilibrium (Mortola, 1999, p. 310).

I pursued these having a conscious and slightly fearful sense of the unknown as well as have had an active hope that other theoretical lenses would have to emerge as I progressed through the research journey and the concomitant own 'pilgrimage', moving from micro to macro dimensions, gradually from a referential layer to a transgressive and then a transcendental one.

Ethical matters and tensions

I looked at questions of validity of my own research through the lens of context of the stories represented as well as the humanity of these stories and contexts. In this sense, I have continuously and diversely asked myself and reflected on whose voice and story is being heard in the light of the game of inter-connection between the micro, meso and macro processes at work (Merrill and West, 2009) as well as to filter data and reflections on it through the perspective of an earlier important question: "which past to remember and what story to tell?" (Andrews, 2007).

In line with my own theoretical positioning, partly due to using 'critical humanism' as a starting point in conjunction with some psychoanalytic lenses, the past was seen as a provisional construct and the present has an important role in how the past is re-constructed, repressed, forgotten, hidden and remembered. Therefore, I agree that the "validity from this perspective, partly derives from generating some account of the past, of what it was like from inside" (Merrill and West, 2009, p. 163).

Hence, I also concur with the view that what matters in terms of validity is how the story itself manages to engage the reader in the complex context of the teller, or "to see the world from her or his point of view, even if this world does not match reality" (Plummer, 2001b, p. 401). Validity in this sense refers more to a believable, coherent and perhaps also critical account of reality, or of what one remembers or forgets from past reality through the lenses of the present, whilst recognising that

"humans [researchers and their participants alike] are also reflexive, dialogical, inter-subjective, learning creatures" (Merrill and West, 2009, p. 167).

My view on how to apply various ethical guidelines and principles to my own research is twofold. On one hand, I have a duty to protect the individuals participating in the research and also to maintain general levels of confidence in the research procedures. I aimed to maintain confidentiality, to protect the identity of the subjects (in this case, I have anonymised accounts, however, full protection was not promised), to use various literary styles to best represent participants stories in the text, to share transcripts and research findings with participants prior publication as well as to avoid promising more than I can do, for example getting extra funding or changing a policy.

On the other hand, I thought pro-actively about what sort of values I bring to my research:

> concerning what is just and right in a research relationship rather than simply avoiding harm. This can include being respectful and thinking of what we can do in our behaviour and responses to empower the other. Fundamentally, being ethical stems from treating people as full human beings; knowing, creative subjects in their own right, rather than repositories of "data" to be extracted and understood by us alone (Merrill and West, 2009, p. 168).

There are certain ongoing lines of questioning and reflection that were suggested in the auto/ biographical literature (Merrill and West, 2009, p. 169), which I have pursued throughout my research, like how can I think about, maintain and enhance an equal relationship between participants and me as a researcher. More specifically, I did not propose to keep distance or be objective during and after the interviewing process; I have attempted not to judge participants for their views and also have tried to enter their world at thought and feeling levels and also, if possible, practical levels (day to day activities). I proposed to pause when needed to reflect on certain events that might generate some sort of inner discomfort for me, as I have

also welcomed those moments to further enhance my "narrative imagination".

I also had to decide what to ask and, perhaps more importantly, what not to ask during the interview; the Appendices contains a copy of the Participant Information Sheet, which provides some details, however I planned to keep an open mind during the interview process and asked questions as the dialogue progressed and as I have judged as appropriate. My judgement was honed and further enhanced through undergoing an initial Pilot Interview, after which feedback from the pilot participant and the supervisors had formed the basis for an open discussion.

In regard to confidentiality, privacy and anonymity, there were certain difficulties to overcome as the identity of one the participants might be easier to recognise, as their autobiographical account was made public over the past years in the media. In any case, I have represented participant stories by using fictional names so that the likelihood of identification will be minimised.

Minimising the chance of recognition was done by changing the names (creating pseudonyms, fictional names) of the places where the interviews have taken place. I could however not promise an absolute anonymity as this might not be possible now or in the near or, more likely, in the distant future, either due to the fact that some elements in the participants' stories might be recognised by readers in retrospect, or due to the duty of care and safeguarding that I have towards the general safety of the wider public.

In other words, Data Protection legislation was respected, however, I have accounted for cases when I -as a researcher- would have a duty to report should I recognise an element that might lead to public safety being put at risk. I have made this once again clear to the participants at the beginning of the interview. I used the consent form (in the Appendices) developed by Professor Linden West at Canterbury Christ Church University in connection to his earlier work with doctors (Merrill and West, 2009, pp. 171–172).

I have tried to minimise any side effects of the possible 'power relations' that might be associated with my research relationship with the participants. These were informed about the possibility of withdrawing from the research at any point in time should they like to. In addition, I was not in a position to pay for research participation. I have indicated to participants about the possibility of the interview material being placed on a data set called Qualidata, as this might be a requirement of the Economic Social Research Council (ESRC).

An Agonising Exercise: maintaining the confidentiality of 'someone-known-to-me'

In order to maintain confidentiality and protect the identity of participants and interlocutors in this project, I agonised over a particular case of 'someone-known-to-me' who has played a crucial role in my topic choice for this particular project. After considering various possibilities, I came to realise that the only way in which I can protect the confidentiality of this identity is by referring to it as though it is androgynous, a 'he-she', as well as re-create it as an amalgamation of real-life people, events close to me and other characters and places from books I have read.

I have therefore devised 'him-her' as an 'unfulfilled-midnight-child' in direct reference to Salman Rushdie's acclaimed novel (Rushdie, 2010) and especially to 'his-her' presumed 'powers', which in this instance were prevented to manifest as these were hidden away by the "untold secrets of some unknown ancestors", hence the name chosen was Dawanur, or the 'hidden light' in Arabic.

One reads that a midnight-child is a special child, possessing telepathic powers, with unusual gifts that connect 'him-her' to other children born at midnight around the world; these gifts are both a blessing and a curse, bringing salvation as well as destruction (ob.cit. 2010).

Dawanur is a 'midnight-child', but an unfulfilled one, a true hidden light, a midnight-child educated in the UK and someone whose unexpected life trajectory deeply impacted me and my choice of this research topic.

The place where I first met Dawanur was in 2009 in a friends' house situated not far from the main park of a wonderfully transitional city called Baden-Heimlich, named in reference to Aharon Applefeld's novel Badenheim 1939, as a transitional and eeri leisure place; the name can be translated as 'the swim (to) home' where mostly Jews spent their last holiday before being taken to Poland, to concentration camps (Apelfeld, 1980).

The name Baden-Heimlich does rather refer to a 'secret swim (to) home' and does also relate to the Freudian use of the binary 'heimlich - unheimlich' when articulating the concept of death instinct as contrary to life instinct; more references can be found in the later subchapter entitled 'On Pilgrimage: losing and regaining one's "Homeland", the "Exile", encountering the "Uncanny", the "Life and Death drives" and the "perverted and destructive play"'.

My dear friends' house, not far from the central park of Baden-Heimlich, is situated in an area, which many refer to as the "The plain called Unease", as does indeed feel unsafe, unpredictable, where people can have strange and negative thoughts about themselves and others, an 'Unheimlich' and uncanny place where frightening and repressed things 'return'.

'The Plain called Unease' it is a direct reference and in conceptual opposition to 'The Plain called Ease' in John Bunyan's 'The Pilgrim's Progress' (1996), which symbolises a space where the usual everyday struggle is suspended only for a very short period of time to offer a very welcomed, however not entirely acknowledged respite during a long and treacherous journey of a pilgrim. On the contrary, 'The

Plain called Unease' can be imagined to only provide the impression of a break from struggle where the respite is an illusory and a painful agony instead.

How will I make sense of interview materials and represent the stories? The use(fulness) of fiction

In regard to representing the stories in such a way that these are made more accessible as well as stimulating enough for the readers, I would like to acknowledge the need that my writing should go beyond certain boundaries of academic and analytic work and, in effect, I have attempted to also represent difficult topics such as "terrorism" and "terrorist learning" by adopting a more creative and imaginative type of writing, including using fiction as a way of conceiving and representing stories as well as analysing them (Goodley *et al.*, 2004).

As I felt for some time whilst writing for academic purposes, there was and perhaps there still is an intrinsic desire to blur, to diminish and eradicate any emotion from writing, what some authors have called an "emotionally dehydrated writing process" (Dorman, 2008 as cited in Merrill and West, 2009). I see the task of representing the 'narrative life' of terrorism as an opportunity to also learn something about myself, as in the end the representation process is an intimate process of identity work where there are processes at work like "reflecting upon and rewriting the self into the texts of the field" (Coffey, 1999, p. 116).

To understand the process of "terrorist learning" would also mean that there are meaningful representations and re-representations of the important individual and group stories as well as the interconnections between these so that in the end, perhaps we can agree that "fundamentalism is really ordinary" (West, 2016b) and that being ordinary -like culture- can and should perhaps be changed from within ourselves as opposed to looking outside for a magic and emotionally dehydrated 'pill' that would work its wonders against it.

Fictional accounts were used to represent some aspects of the "terrorist learning" process, more specifically those which are connected to the realm of the "absurd drama" imaginary (*Theatre of the Absurd*, no date; Esslin, 1965; Penhall, 2007) proper to the work of Eugene Ionesco, a famous Romanian writer. Ionesco's 'absurdist fiction' depicted the "workings of an absurd universe to which all human responses (our own moral code, our philosophy, our irreplaceable system of values, humanism, even love) are inadequate. (The story is commonly interpreted as having to do with the acceptance of Nazi fascism)" (Gardner, 1991, p. 138).

However, these fictional accounts do not only exist in the realm of imaginary, but are representing different perspectives on reality and sometimes can create reality, like it happened through the fictional work of Salman Rushdie when he became equally popular and unpopular at the same time (Rushdie, 2000, 2015) and then through his 2015 novel - "Two Years, Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Hours"- that did not only imagine barely human worlds at odds with one another, with possibilities and impossibilities for existence, but also at the same time preempted the existence of terrorist groups (Esslin, 1965; Talks at Google, 2015; FRANCE 24 English, 2016). The saying that "only fear will make man move towards God" is a millennium old line of reasoning from an Islamic philosophical tradition, which was enacted through this fictional novel (Rushdie, 2015), but also has become a platform for some contemporary infamous terrorist groups, like the so-called Islamic State (IS).

Another important view that stems from these novels is that some stories are actually moving around the world and influence cultures as opposed to just being the products of those 'ordinary cultures'. Furthermore, it seems that keeping an audience engaged in reading has also to do with how the imaginary representations happen in the text, which is not to be done in a serial and consequential way, but rather by running parallel stories, imaginary tales, which -in the end- will become powerful enough to actually create reality. This thought was equally represented in the Eastern traditions of storytelling -to be also found in Romania- as well as in the surrealists' work, like Eugene Ionesco, Norman Manea and others (Esslin, 1965;

Talks at Google, 2015; FRANCE 24 English, 2016), who also exposed the fragility, irrationality and absurdity of human relationships.

The first round of notes towards Case Studies: interview contexts and the chosen participant names

The interviews were conducted with an Ex-Al Qaeda member, renamed Alkhayria which means The Charitable in Arabic- and with Mubashir, a given name in Arabic meaning The Missionary- a London based Muslim activist who is a member of Hizb-ut Tahrir, a proscribed organisation in many countries outside of the UK. The intention behind the given names to the participants was to recognise the intended characteristics for their actions and reactions, which have emerged from their stories.

I have started the analysis of participants' "balancing acts" by engaging firstly with the interview material from the second participant, Mubashir; I have made this decision as this reflects my chronological engagement with the interview material. I felt initially unable to fully engage with the material from the first participant's interview; I felt that the reason for this was that the initial material unravelled itself as a 'perfect story', which has given an impression of a 'rehearsed' story that was filtered and polished especially for the ears of specific audiences. I generally work on the premise that however 'perfect', each story has its own purpose and function for its teller and, therefore, the sense of its truthfulness as a correspondence to the factual reality it aims to express is less important to me than its apparent or underlying purpose.

To that effect, I was not entirely sure about the underlying 'purpose' emerging from the first participant's stories; more specifically, I was uncertain about the role the stories played for the participant. The only strong sense that was coming through was one of someone who used those stories as a 'defensive mechanism' towards a

not-so-clear (to me) past involvement with a terrorist organisation; therefore, I felt initially unable to progress with the development of a case study for the first participant and decided to try to interview another participant. As a consequence of this, I had to apply for an amendment to my initial ethical application and eventually have obtained the permission to interview another participant, who -this time- was a long-standing and still very active member of an Islamist organisation that is proscribed in many parts of the world.

I have therefore started my analytic engagement with the interview material coming from conversations with the second participant as this has provided me with an immediate sense of present currency, from where participant's stories of being and becoming could be grasped. Having said this, I soon discovered that my engagement with the second participant's interview material provides me with a platform from where I could also engage with the stories from the first participant's interviews.

Generally, the circumstances of any interview are seen as very important as these can provide indirect avenues towards illuminating various aspects of the story (-ies) being told. Therefore, looking at where the story 'lands' could be as important as the story itself as this can indicate possible ways where the self is presented and manifested. A manifested story is one where words meet to create a space of interaction and sense-making. Interruptions, general impressions of the place (chosen by participants) where the interview was held as well as what was happening around are forming a context and a 'space' for the interview and also for the selves (of participant's and mine) to tell their story (-ies) in interaction.

I have conducted two interviews with the second participant, one interview in December 2018 and the other around mid-February 2019. I have expressed my willingness to let the participant choose the place for the interview and, in effect, both interviews were held in public places, more specifically in Cafes around the Walthamstow area. Both places were similarly busy despite the evening time of our meetings, i.e. around 8 pm each time; also, our dialogues lasted in both occasions

for more than two hours and would have lasted longer if the places would have not had to close their premises.

For instance, the first interview was split in two as we had to move to another Cafe that was open until a later time. We have decided to meet in the same place for the second interview as we agreed that there should be no time pressure added to our conversation as well as no 'wasted time' in-between whilst walking between locations. Despite the fact that both Cafes were quite busy with a lot of people talking, these were also animated enough so that we were somehow assured that our conversation could not be listened to by others. The participant was at times looking around, almost like he wanted to see if there is someone known to him around; he was however very relaxed being in these Cafes and, therefore, this could indicate that he has been there before, perhaps also for the purpose of discussing similar topics with others, possibly even with Hizb-ut Tahrir co-members.

On each occasion, I have arrived around ten to fifteen minutes before 8 pm so that I can observe the place and sense its atmosphere; the clientele had -in my view- a young London feel, very cosmopolitan, trendy, speaking many different languages mixed with English. However, people around us were mainly conversing in English, generally with a strong East London tonality, which gave me a sense of familiarity. The Cafes were very casual, with welcoming background music as well as a trendy overall feel given by dark-yellow interiors, with comfortable chairs, sofas, warm-feel wallpapers and lighting. Hovering the place, I could not help but notice a very artsy wall picture with its slightly faded message; it read "a bru will see you through.", which was auditorily complemented by a "there she goes…" song line; overall, a very relaxing and conversation-conducive place. A sign on the entrance door indicated that the wifi is free, indeed another sign of hyper-connectivity, an expectation that was fully matched inside by people's display of mobile devices on tabletops, as well as by their very fervent conversations. A busy, yet a relaxed place, with people clearly being there to meet others and discuss. Majority of customers were drinking tea and coffee, some had fruit smoothies, some others with

milkshakes; the menu was generous, and the variety of loose-leaf teas was almost overwhelming. We had 'regular' English tea on both occasions; the participant insisted on buying the tea on the first occasion and I did the same the second time we met.

On the other hand, in the case of the first interviewee -Alkhayria-, it took a while to arrange for an interview, firstly because I did not have for a while the ethical approval from the University and then because the participant was away from UK or being very busy with his work. We finally managed to meet for an hour at the beginning of April 2018; I travelled to the main office of the participant's organisation in Walthamstow, London.

The interview started about 40 minutes late from the scheduled time; I was luckily on time, the participant arrived late due to traffic conditions. I have been welcomed by his colleagues whom I knew already from a few previous interactions I had with the organisation. After 10 minutes from the start of the interview, the participant was made aware by an office colleague that he will need to move his car to a different spot on the street; this has taken about 10 minutes after which we have restarted the interview from where we left it off. The interview was held in an open area, just outside the main office of the organisation.

The open area is a known space to me as I have been in the past waiting there or meeting the participant; that space is used as a waiting area as well as for various meetings. There are four chairs and a low table. The walls are full of pictures of awards and events held by the organisation; on the low table, there were some magazines and flyers relevant for the type of community work undertaken by the organisation. The open space is also public and a transitional one for all employees and volunteers; people have been going up and down before and during the interview. It is a space which is equally public as well as being recognised as a space where meetings happen with various members of the public. Also, this space is a flexible and relaxed space in the sense that it is transparent and very open for others to interact freely should the need arise; it gives a strong feeling of openness

for discussion as well as for micro-interactions with the passers-by, who on a few occasions have waved their hands, nodded their heads to acknowledge our presence there.

The conversation was also free-going; I have only given a few prompts and the participant was happy to tell his story. Participant's mobile phone rang and received text messages a few times and, once, the participant answered a call towards the end of the interview. I have used a voice recorder as well as a timer, which I placed on the low table between me and the participant; the timer's screen was also visible to the participant. I was made aware of some financial difficulties of the organisation and the busy schedule of the team to secure funding.

It must be noted that there was a slight sense of a quiet, but conscious and controlled anxiety around, which seemed to dominate the working environment for the past couple of years since the government funding has been gradually cut for the organisation. On that day in early April, the anxiety seemed a bit more obvious than usual. The participant also mentioned that there are a lot of things going on and that a lot of effort has gone into securing new funding, which is essential for the running of the organisation. A window was opened towards a backyard, where there seemed to be a lot of construction or mechanical work going on.

Theory Application Part 1: "Facing the Lions"

'Narrative Life' of Terrorism and the need for "narrative imagination"

Figure 4: A mighty lion...(*Pinterest - Facing and dealing with the Lions*, no date)

'Standing in the central ring' does also mean that one could be faced with 'mighty appearances'; from a safe distance, the audience looks at the show and fears for the performers' life as they face and engage imaginatively with the possibility of their own annihilation, or survival. I will enter the 'central ring' myself and, as an author, attempt to imaginatively face theoretical 'mighty lions'; this intention to make oneself

uncomfortable in the face of difficult and fearsome topics could equally bring struggle, as well as offer a glimpse of hope for a well-lived, balanced life amongst others.

In very recent years, various researchers on terrorism as well as politicians have been increasingly interested in 'terrorist narratives' and 'counter-narratives', however without really looking into what a 'narrative' might be and what exactly are they really studying. It has been suggested that this is just a recent trendy move in looking at terrorism from a narrative perspective and, as such, this whole angle misses an essential point in understanding terrorism. The importance of an informed narrative approach to understanding terrorism is constituted by recognising the essential role of 'self-accounts', which are to be seen as narrative texts from a literal perspective (Copeland, 2018). Therefore, as suggested recently,

> autobiography gives a unique window into the multitude of smaller stories that individuals encounter over the course of their lives, as well as the larger accounts they aim to give or their own experiences [...] Here the author may cross between and be both storyteller and the recipient of the same or different stories. [...] Terrorists are both interested and influenced by stories, and are storytellers themselves (ibid, p. 16).

I agree with the view that auto/ biographical inquiry - as a methodology as well as method, as mentioned in a previous chapter- provides a unique opportunity to "[...] interrogate terrorists' self-accounts [...] to help better comprehend how individuals involved in militancy understand the world, draw upon existing narrative resources and give meaning to their actions" (ibib., pp. 1, 2).

Starting from the premise that a narrative is more than a simple message, or belief, a worldview or ideology, I consider that -in the case of terrorism- not only those self-accounts are narratives with literary value in themselves, but I argue that one can conceive a 'narrative life' of terrorism - factual and conceptual- within our or other's biographies that reside inside our own autobiography. These narrative movements have the particularity of having become textually independent from their

authors, having had acquired a life of their own, hence my expression related to a 'narrative life of terrorism', as an act as well as a term used by people in the contemporary society. This 'narrative life' is indeed trans-historical, trans-generational and trans-cultural as well as it generates meanings (ibid.), or -I would say- a web of meaning which could emerge from an imaginative auto/ biographical engagement with all the stories available (referential to reality or not) and not only just from those individuals who could be labelled as 'terrorists'.

My view attempts to open a fourth possibility of engagement, adding to the three suggested narrative models (Graef, da Silva and Lemay-Hebert, 2018), more specifically more than a lens towards a social reality, more than data when attempting to find stories and more than a tool for analysis of stories of political violence. I agree with Brockmeier's view (2009) that narrative meanings are equally relational, societal and historical as well as they indicate a range of possibilities for action. However, I would add that in order to uncover and create a web of meanings related to the term and the reality of terrorism, "narrative imagination" is necessary for the creation of new meanings and relations between past, present and future as well as between the various stories which seem to be drawn into the 'narrative life' of terrorism. This 'life' intertwines participants' stories with my own, those of "someone-known-to-me" as well as some of my own family's stories, all of these being impacted or, perhaps a better term, affected by terrorism:

> Without imagination, the meaning we attach to any given experience is by definition limited to what we already know. It is the narrative imagination which gives us the possibility of extending the boundaries of our worlds, as we have lived them and as they will hold us in the future. [...] Even while we want to learn about worlds which extend beyond our own, those explorations in turn teach us something about ourselves (Andrews, 2014, pp. 109–111).

"My Kitchen" - An Autobiographical Fiction, Learning and Terrorism

My self-awareness as a human being and as a multidisciplinary professional formed in Eastern Europe has been curated by my place of origin, a "border country", Romania (Boia, 2001); on the other hand, my self-awareness was enhanced by the fact that I have immigrated, worked, studied and lived in the West - mostly in London- for the past eighteen plus years. As a professional, I have been formed as a "border thinker" within the Eastern European tradition of doing philosophy, which was and still is in between the "Geek school", Platonism and Neo-Platonism, and the Western philosophical tradition. To make sense of various stories and conceptual struggles, I think that there is a necessity to sit 'on the border'; not to be "at the border" as this is a transitory state, which very often is short-lived and artificially created to serve a purpose of passing from a "place" to another, action which in itself demands a decisive decision, i.e either-or (Szakolczai, 2009). I would rather stay 'on the border' for a bit longer.

For some, the definition of reality is essentially a limited one, being limited to a linguistic and co-operative activity that can never fully describe its objects. Therefore, fiction or the 'messy text' -and I would also argue the absurd captured in fiction, or the 'absurd fiction'- is perhaps one of the more adequate modalities in which we can study how reality appears to us, its different possibilities and human story behind the narrative (Clough, 1999). Fiction is meant to be "more real than the stuff that we normally deliver" (Fraser and Hyland-Russell, 2011), and this is because it also allows the imagination to conceive otherwise unimaginable and risky possibilities.

I have therefore chosen a mixture of absurdist and realist fiction. The basic assumption emerging from this mixture of fictional genres is that our sense of actuality is coherent with the expression of it; hence, the reality is not copied but imitated in various fine details, however, this reality is more akin to our dreams. The emotional and thoughtful possibilities give coherence to this reality (Gardner, 1991).

The presentation of this part will be that of the absurdist fiction with some elements of conventional realistic fiction. I will try to inhabit the character, and then

'look inside' it as opposed to just look at the outside world, so that potential internal phantasms can be uncovered and then project them outward so that the outside world would start to look, by comparison, surprisingly similar. This means in effect to hold a mirror up to the outside world by simply looking inside the worlds of fictional characters.

I will explore my thoughts in relation to "someone-known-to-me", as well as in regard to other more fictional characters, who will join in from other novels to discuss topics of learning, terrorism and the traditional family values. Some of the expressions and descriptions will not necessarily follow the logic of the 'known' reality, hence I will 'treat' the dynamic as absurd, like Eugene Ionesco's perspective on the transformations that have been taking place in his Rhinoceros (Ionesco, 1960), more specifically some have transformed and retained their own characteristics whilst others have seen their personality become more rhinoceros-like: stubborn, ferocious, incapable of reasoning. A similar 'atmosphere' was created in some of Norman Manea's novels, which describe life -and also the life happening during my childhood years- in the very bleak communist era; to name just a few, a web of absurd but meaningful codes as described in novels like "The Black Envelope" (Manea, 2012a) or powerful metaphors such as the Whiteface Clown as the "Supreme leader"/ the dictator was introduced within a collection of essays "On Clowns: The Dictator and the Artist" (Manea, 1993).

Therefore, I have followed closely this -for me- light-bearing work and have created a fictional reality that will be useful for exploration, where a few other characters will be 'invited' also to join in for the discussion on different topics from Salman Rushdie's novel "Two Years, eight months and twenty eight nights" (2015), especially those characters which are either some important ancient philosophers, or rather their 'voids' (absence), as well as non-humans like the Jinns, who have extraordinary qualities, which will be used to illustrate some points about the present times' dynamics surrounding terrorism and the "wishes of men'" (ob.cit), which they

sometimes grant. In the opening paragraph of his novel with the title that actually means 'one thousand and one Nights', Rushdie says that:

> very little is known, though much has been written, about the true nature of the jinn, the creatures made of smokeless fire. Whether they are good or evil, devilish or benign, such questions are hotly disputed. These qualities are broadly accepted: they are whimsical, capricious, wanton; that they can move at high speed, alter their size and form, and grant many of the wishes of mortal men and women should they so choose, or if by coercion they are obliged to do so; and that their sense of time differs radically from that of human beings They are not to be confused with angels… [...] the jinn live in their own world, separated from ours by a veil, and that this upper world, sometimes called Peristan or Fairyland, is very extensive, though its nature is concealed from us. [...] In the matter of faith, for example, there are adherents among the jinn of every belief system on earth, and there are jinn who do not believe… [...] And though many jinn are amoral, at least some of these powerful beings do know the difference between good and evil, between right-hand and the left-hand path. (Rushdie, 2015, pp. 3, 4).

Retroduction and abduction are thought to be responsible for the generation of new ideas and concepts. It is known that abduction means analysing data that falls outside of a presupposed theoretical construction in order to 'see something else', whilst retroduction is a method of developing concepts that "require the researcher to identify the circumstances without which something (the concept) cannot exist" (Meyer and Belinda, 2013, p. 2). More specifically, I have attempted to develop an initial round of autobiographical absurd fiction within which fictional characters will attempt to undergo and perform abductive reasoning in order to recognise my assumptions and also attempt to go beyond these by forming hypotheses and, on the other hand, to use retroductive thinking to explore important concepts, like terrorism, learning, terrorist learning etc.

On the other hand, whilst Fraser (2011) discussed different ways in which 'wisdom' can be imagined and used in educational settings, I believe that 'the absurd' is an equally important concept that we can be used to firstly acknowledge and then describe much of what is happening nowadays in regard to the creation of

mass fear and its readings -individual or generated by mass media- to ultimately discuss about 'terrorism' and 'terrorism learning'. Furthermore, I trust that the 'absurd' could also serve as a metaphorical springboard towards reverse-thinking, counter-intuitive solutions for today's crises.

Some key characters (described in the Glossary): Dawanur ('someone-known-to-me'), Arke Schley (the author's reflective voice and presence/ participative self in fictional events), Qabbani (a writer - an Arab voice), a few characters from Salman Rushdie's "Two Years, eight months and twenty eight nights", Dunia (as the representation of the apparently human, but essentially non-human creature, she is the Jinn who loved and married Philosopher Ibn Rushd), Ghazali (another philosopher and theologian), and Ibn Rushd, and a few characters from Ionesco's "The Lesson" and from "Rhinoceros".

Setting the Scene: A Fictional Reflective Monologue about Dawanur, by Arke Schlei

Arke enters the kitchen, it's 4:32 o'clock in the morning… Arke had a long and very tense discussion with his wife the previous evening and after losing their temper over some small details they both decided to have an early night, after all they both had to rest for the next day of work. The exchange between the two had certainly some effect on Arke's ability to sleep and, despite being very tired, he hadn't fell asleep easily and then started to dream just the things you would think of after such a discussion. In one of the dreams the Duke of Edinburgh was chasing him around his tiny kitchen table, which is very small indeed, making room-wide loops on his daughter's pink scooter. The Duke wanted to catch Arke to

have a 'friendly' chat about another Act of Parliament regarding the Physical Well Being of people; Arke was more interested to talk about another subject to do with fear, being afraid and the lack of care in society to keep people's morale up despite the daily pressures to succumb to fear. Boris Johnson appeared in one of the small kitchen's corners, sitting on one of the worktops with his legs crossed reading a book upside down, blond hair covering his eyes, apparently unaware of the struggle between Arke and the Duke. Anthony Hopkins then entered and asked if Arke was OK. Arke told him to convince the Duke to stop the pointless chase, which he did so admirably well. The Duke vanished through the back garden door and started to jump over the neighbours' fences screaming amazingly clear to be heard for a while "He's an ignorant, he's an ignorant self-indulgent smarty, he never appears to talk to others, but with himself...No fear, no fear". Arke then asked Anthony about the possibility of influencing Boris's desire to start a debate in the Commons and to start a consultation about his Act of Parliament, something to do with Reading and Fear, perhaps to be called The Reading and Fear Act of 2001, all to do with employees' rights to have at least an hour of reading time whilst at work as well as recognising fear as the most dangerous disease of our times and so making sure that all employees are allowed to claim at least 5 statutory (paid) fear-off-days. Arke got really excited when even Boris seemed to wake up for his... 'ideas', when suddenly he felt a sharp push in his ribs and heard the very annoyed voice of his wife: "You are snoring really badly, again... and talking gibberish whilst asleep... nonsense, wake up, wake up I cannot sleep because of you; go, go, go, allow me to

fall asleep first and then you can come back.... OK? Please! By the way, who's the Duke?... Are you really afraid of a Duke?..." Arke raised his head reluctantly and muttered something indistinctly and then headed toward the door 'I am really sorry. Have a good sleep darling, love you...' Then he reluctantly started to walk down the stairs, some of them squeakier than others, leaning on the wall rail heavily as if that was more important than his own tired legs... 24 stairs to go, he thought... Finally, on the landing and then right into the living room, pitch dark, a smell of nail polish, he then stumbled over his daughter's scooter and nearly fell on the floor... Luckily, Arke managed to readjust his body position and then saw the vague contours of the kitchen's door which became clear in the moonlight; a cloud just cleared off a very bright 'crescent moon'. He entered the kitchen, the window was left open, the wind was coming through gently but blowing in quite a bit of cold air which suddenly had woken him up.... He stood there, looking around the kitchen for a few good minutes as if he wanted to make sure that the table is still there, that no one is sitting on the worktop... 'Oh, just a dream, just a dream...', he muttered. But the fear and the reading? How interesting he thought as his mind started to remember the conversation he had about 'someone-very-dear-to-him', Dawanur, about whose wellbeing and safety he was afraid of and also was trying to read more into, to understand more... 'I must speak with 'his-her' friends from Baden-Heimlich, we must do something to find out the truth', that was how the conversation ended the night before. Now, looking at the kitchen floor, a fake stone type of cheap plastic cover, Arke started to see some patterns emerging in

the moonlight whilst clouds were passing quite calmly over the thinly shaped, but very bright moon. An overwhelming feeling of light and clarity came to his mind, he needed to write everything on a piece of paper, the main points of course, or perhaps the whole story as it unfolded so then he can talk with Dawanur's friends in a more structured way. He grabbed a piece of paper, but could not find a good pen around and also he wanted to keep the lights off as he strongly sensed that the moonlight brought him the necessary clarity of thought, the light in the dark, without essentially changing the darkness, which he felt that was also necessary... 'Too much light makes people not see important details, as if you are too close to an object to actually see it, as if friends are blinded by the proximity and fail to see the reality for what it is, he said half of the words for himself, the other half-spoken from a very sleepy mouth, surely no one could understand him if were to hear what he said... Arke decided to record his own voice on his phone, actually using Voice Typing from Tools dropdown menu from Google Docs... He loves it...

<u>A Five-Part Absurd and Autobiographical Fictional Drama</u>

(also with other characters from Eugene Ionesco's 'The Lesson' and 'Rhinoceros' coming in to agree and disagree, imagine, challenge, construct, destroy. The details are a true reflection of my experience, however, the names (in bold italics) are either changed or identical with those of the characters from Ionesco's drama.)

Characters (described in the Glossary): *Dawanur* discusses with *Arke,* with characters coming in from 'The Lesson' *The Maid*, *The Pupil*, *The Professor,* and

then characters from 'Rhinoceros' *Mr Boeuf, Jean.* This event and the conversation happen before Arke's monologue.

Dawanur's arrival was much expected by Arke and when 'he-she' finally did, 'he-she' walked in gracefully and quietly through the doors and greeted, projecting from 'his-her' face a sense of being in control whilst, through different gestures from looking at 'his-her' hands, being a bit uncomfortable; 'he-she' went straight to the Kitchen where Arke offered a cup of strong black tea, which was accepted with great enthusiasm. No words were spoken for about 2 minutes when the silence started to become uncomfortable for Dawanur who started to flip 'his-her' left foot -almost crossed over the right one- in a repetitive and mildly rapid swinging motion until accidentally hitting a table leg with some of the toes... 'Auchhhh! Not again, this table... sorry!' The black tea was finally brewed and ready to be served. We sat around the table and started to talk about the weather to start with, then moved on to matters to do with some local disturbances in the neighborhood to then... straight into what Arke really wanted to talk about: 'Sooo, how are you my dearest, Dawanur? How have you been lately? I heard that your best friend was quite upset when she heard the news?... Are you OK?'

DAWANUR replied swiftly 'I am fine thanks!!' and tried to pose as if nothing had happened within 'his-her' group of friends whilst probably thinking for how long will this conversation last. 'She doesn't know much and even if she knows more she will still not understand...'. Dawanur was visibly upset at the realisation of how 'his-her' words might have sounded.... Bitter disappointment mixed with cynicism

and a desire to say something more. 'My best friend is a declared socio-communist who very strongly sympathises with the Palestinian cause, yet she is against my sympathies towards Islam... we had a big row over this...', Dawanur said, being increasingly willing to speak, however looking around quite reluctantly for reassurance and support...

ARKE: 'So, you say that you sympathise Islam, it sounds quite interesting... I studied Islam at Uni - as a part of the history of philosophy and religions - and I remember being quite drawn to some of its concepts...'.

DAWANUR: 'Like what concept? Did you read about Islam at Uni... I did not know this...'

ARKE: 'Like the Oneness of God; "there is no God, but God", and the whole history of Islamic philosophy, arithmetic, and other sciences, which have been in constant dialogue and actually influenced much of the European philosophical thinking and science, starting with Eastern European thought... so, back to my question: How do you sympathise Islam? What is the starting point, the base of this sympathy, purely theoretical or something more ... practical...?'

DAWANUR: Arhhh... both I presume.

ARKE: Since when do you have this 'sympathy'? I feel that you have already made a big step towards Islam?

DAWANUR: What do you mean a "big step"?, asking laughingly.

ARKE: You have changed, you are not the same, still Dawanur, yet not the same...

Mr. Boeuf then stormed into the Kitchen and suddenly the air changed as his voice sounded rugged and thundery, which took everyone by surprise as no one else was supposed to have the keys from the main door except Arke and his wife; what happened there then... all the more shocking was his nervous state, everyone was paralyzed with fear that something bad might happen.

MR. BOEUF: Ohiii, what is this, a discussion, are you out of your mind? Have you not seen the state of the country, is there time for this, we must fight, fight, you hear!? And you, who 'is' you?, pointing his thick finger towards -Arke felt- a reserved Dawanur.

ARKE: 'Mr. Boeuf, this is 'someone-known-to-me'!...

He did not smile, but looked away like there was another target coming our way from behind... Mr Boeuf's English did sound quite... basic, limited vocabulary, with a very strong Cockney accent, hard to believe that he was a teacher, like many others.... and he wasn't! Mr Boeuf, Arke's colleagues told him later, was an 'obsessive picketer' whose life was dedicated to participating in any strike, march, big or small manifestation of public anger or angst he could find around. The more violent the better for him... Arke suddenly realised that Mr Boeuf started to look more like a rhinoceros, his head from behind, his legs and then he had no fingers... 'A cup of tea Mr Boeuf?'

MR.BOEUF: 'Mmmrrrrr...immmmigranttttttrrrrr', he turned around heavily looking entirely like a rhinoceros. He wasn't able to speak, looked very agitated and

then when Arke tried to say something, he was pushed violently to the ground...
Mr.Boeuf smashed both garden doors wide open with his 'new body'...

DAWANUR: I am so scared, who was that? A neighbour of yours? This kind of pachydermous is very dangerous and even more harmful to humans than pigs...

ARKE: He is an old neighbour, yeap; do not really have a lot in common with him, barely spoken with him around; he always seemed a very calm, gentleman-like, smiling always, being reserved when it came to expressing his opinion about social matters... Honestly, I did not know that he is bothered with social equality and immigration and the latest attacks in France and Belgium... All I knew was that he participated in all possible sorts of rallies, marches, protests... Sorry that he scared you, can we come back to our bit of conversation?

DAWANUR: I understand, you shouldn't worry about this, as long as he is not coming back like this then it's fine; I can deal with socialists, communists, freedom fighters, or so I thought, but with this kind of behaviour it's very hard to deal with... it's based on pure rejection of reason and unreasonable fear and stereotyping, typical of English society, I am sick of it even from my days in primary school when I used to be bullied for not being English, and even more for being in transit, and even more because I was from Baden-Heimlich, and even more and then... Dawanur was visibly upset at these memories resurfacing.

The doorbell rang impatiently; Arke opened to find their reliable plumber, Jean standing at the door.

Jean, who was a 'true' socialist, actually a Trotskyist, has started to speak about the importance of 'crashing the whole system' as the only way to change society. He came by to invite me to come to The-Only-True-Socialist-Party that ever existed in Britain and he promised that we will change this society.

JEAN: I was next door doing some work for your neighbour when I overheard some big noises and bangs, also some racist comments, who was speaking so badly of immigrants and, and...?

ARKE: Well, it's Mr Boeuf, he's in the back garden, now a lot quieter, he is not able to speak as he is now... a Rhinoceros. I recommend that you refrain yourself from even trying to approach it.

DAWANUR: Mr Jean, I heard of you from Arke, I heard that you are a supporter of people who try to change the system, to fight it, you are a supporter of Palestinians as well... Well done!

JEAN: Yes, nice to meet you too, you should join our Party one day, we need people like you who can change the system from inside, unfortunately neither you, nor Arke seem to be insiders in the strict sense, but rather there and here at the same time, a kind of 'Border People'...

DAWANUR: I am not a border anything..., I know exactly what I am, what I want and I have a plan to get there... and not joining any Party of yours as I have joined a bigger cause...., 'he-she' seemed to take a step back, realising that 'he-she' just said something that might-would-could regret saying...

ARKE: What did you join our dearest? And when?

DAWANUR: I joined the fold of Islam... I said the Shahada already and I found the absolute truth in life and I am so happy.

ARKE: That's good, I am really happy for you, truly happy, when did you say your Shahada and who was there to witness it?

DAWANUR: There is no need to witness...

ARKE: Who says this? I know that one usually goes to a Mosque or community centre where some people witness your conversion... Where did yours happen then?

JEAN: I mean, you are more than welcome to come to our party and say your Shahada..., somehow feeling that what he said is not entirely on the topic, but still also feeling that this rite of passage is significant enough to be honoured in its social significance as well, why not, maybe also gain a political member to his own party. 'We will look after you know and also we will fight the system together'...

DAWANUR: There is no need for anything, no need for the venue, no need to say it again, no need for another political party and another social justice movement, no need to join another fight in changing any system, no need for witnesses... no need, no need... I have found all of these in an open place and a lot more, I found the Truth. I guided myself after the reliable teaching of a Shaikh, I said my Shahada Online... I follow the Salafi teaching as by doing so I am sure that I will not go wrong...

Then, through the garden entrance from the neighbour's side, the Pupil - in bad physical shape- came and joined in the conversation who was swiftly followed

by the Maid and the Professor, whose eyes were as big as a quarter of his face and his hands shaking heavily.

THE PUPIL (with a pronounced bleeding cut and a few deep wounds in the upper part of her body, bruises on her left cheek...): I am afraid you are wrong to jump to any conclusion so soon... That was exactly what I thought when I started My Lesson; I thought that the teacher was a real teacher, who would give me real knowledge and access to the truth, I respected him so much and trusted him beyond any glimpse of doubt; there was 'no-teacher-but-the-teacher' and I honestly felt overwhelmed by his immense kindness, love of wisdom and truth... However, over time this has changed and started not to allow me to question his illogical arguments and shaky knowledge; when I wanted to ask a few questions, he reprimanded me for doing so and started to speak badly with me and in the end...

THE MAID (behind her, the Professor was trying to make himself really small as if he wanted to hide): Please stop here, there is no need to say it all, we get the picture... No teacher is perfect you know, they are happiest when you do not question them and also when you are afraid of them... It becomes more like a 'religion', their religion in which you are supposed to enter in a total way...

DAWANUR: You are all wrong, I am in good hands and I am in control; I know where I want to get to, I have a plan to get there and I will get there...

ARKE: Have you told all of your friends, except you know who...?

DAWANUR: Please keep it secret!!!

THE PUPIL: You do what you want, I warned you; I had my life, now I do not anymore, I speak -literally- from my own grave... I was too young for this; why was I not more inquisitive? I should have asked questions right from the beginning... Silly girl, I was, thinking that the journey to the truth and knowledge was assured by a 'great teacher' who I trusted entirely; do not entrust blindly, ask questions, ask...

The Pupil was then stabbed again with the same kitchen knife receiving what was thought to be a 'final blow'...

THE PROFESSOR: Silence, silence ... there is a reason for all these, for all these deaths...

ARKE: What's the reason? Please stop this, can't you see, you killed someone the second time?...

ARKE had then received a hard slap from Dawanur that threw him straight to the ground and then The Professor was invited to continue his 'teaching-under-the-knife'... The Professor tries to stab Arke, but with no success. Arke was quick-enough and escaped...

THE PROFESSOR: Come here, you little pig! I am the wise Sheikh and I know what I am doing; there is a fatwa against Mickey Mouse and other creatures like you... This fatwa will be accomplished, you wait and see until everyone will see the Truth. Killing is just one teaching tool... Come, Come, I have an ancient philosopher as my master, it's Ghazali, have you heard of him, you Ignorant...? Come here...

Characters, introducing different perspectives on terrorism, academic as well as from poetry, literature (described in the Glossary): Dawanur, Arke, The Pupil, The Professor, Jean, Mr.Beouf, and from Salman Rushdie's novel 'Two Years, Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights', we are inviting new characters, Dunia (the mother of all human Jinns), Ghazali, Ibn Rushd, The Grand Ifrit Zumurrud Shah, and Qabbani (the Syrian born, London based Poet and Writer).

[continuing from Act 1: all are still present and, except Jean who went out in the back garden to try to convince Mr.Beouf to revert to a human]

ARKE: Are you out of your mind? I studied a bit of Islamic philosophy, how dare you use Ghazali's name to do such horrific things? Get out of my house, now! And you, Dawanur, on which side are you, what was that slap for? I only tried to protect…

THE PROFESSOR: I do not have to justify myself in any way, I will call for master Ghazali's spirit to defend his approach, quite famously outlined in his "The Ignorance of Philosophers". Master, Master please help me with your advice!…

What the Professor did not know was that Ghazali was rather a Big Void now, the dust of his immortal spirit, there was no voice left to advise… Instead, one of his Jinns could represent his point and approach; it wasn't really his Jinn as this one was the biggest Jinn of all, the darkest, most dangerous, evil of all Jinns, it was The Grand Ifrit Zumurrud Shah, who once was helped by Ghazali to escape from a bottle where it was tricked and locked in by a clever sorcerer. This Jinn was not a servant, he just executed one of Ghazali's wishes in exchange for his release. It

happened that now he was free, just finished a Latte Macchiato, after a long fought campaign in the hearts of men... It heard The Professor and said to himself 'Why not?', will represent that silly philosopher 'itself', after all, it always said that all philosophers are children and that he never liked children; he thought that he could represent the philosopher's point in a more mature way. The Grand Ifrit made his overwhelming presence felt as a thunder outside and then entered as a pale of wind and mist, a silhouette of a gigantic man could be distinguished outside and inside the kitchen there was just a big and bearded mouth that started to talk in an ancient tone, very heavy sounding and then, when realising that no one can understand, it switched to a Stephen Hawking type of computer-mediated voice...

THE GRAND IFRIT ZUMURRUD SHAH: Oh, mortal ones... you are lucky that I was on my lunch break and heard the silly voice of the Professor. I will try to say the words of Ghazali as close as possible to the original, in fact I will copy and paste his words from a book about us... Ha, great idea! Ghazali gave me a mission to accomplish for him and I have started my work diligently as one would and, despite the enormousness of the task, I shall oblige and fulfil my contract. Professor, Arke, everyone here, remember that this is the biggest project of my existence and you can perhaps already see some of these effects today and yesterday and certainly you will see more of it in the future until the end... Ghazali said:

Instill fear [...] Only fear will move sinful Man towards God. Fear is a part of God, in the sense that it is that feeble creature Man's appropriate response to the infinite power and punitive nature of the Almighty. One may say that fear us the echo of God, and wherever that echo is heard men fall to their knees and cry mercy. In some parts of the earth, God is already feared. Don't bother about those regions. Go where Man's pride is swollen, where Man believes himself to be godlike, lay waste his arsenals and fleshpots, his temples of technology, knowledge and wealth. Go also to those sentimental locations where it is said that God is Love. Go and show them the truth. (Rushdie, 2015, p. 126).

Dunia, a much smaller type of Jinn, actually the only one who married a mortal man and procreated lots in the world, was actually feeling these words as an attack to herself and her wonderful marriage with her husband, Ghazali's adversary in philosophy, Ibn Rushd. As he was dead himself and just a void was left of him, Dunia the good but smaller Jinni wanted to add to the conversation...

DUNIA: You are all fools, Ghazali was my husband's enemy in thought and doctrine and he was so very wrong but made right by your evil power, The Grand Ifrit... I kneel before you and your destructive powers, but I will never agree with terror... My husband, Ibn Rushd, strongly believed and demonstrated that with the passage of time human beings will turn from faith to reason, despite all the issues and shortcomings of the rational mind...

ARKE (interrupted Dunia): As suggested by some researchers, also consistent with the perspective of The Policy Working Group on the United Nations and Terrorism, terrorism might be better to be described instead of just defined. This is

suggested as broad characteristics of the phenomenon can be seen and easily described, however, a comprehensive definition of the phenomenon might be more difficult to achieve, if not almost impossible, and as some researchers suggested even a waste of time. However, I consider that one particular definition of terrorism is in line with my own personal as well as academic positioning in regard to this topic as it refers more to a central concept 'fear', with its inherent memories and projections into the future. The definition I would like to follow is that of Andrew Richards, which states that "terrorism is the use of violence or the threat of violence with the primary purpose of generating a psychological impact beyond the immediate victims or object of attack for a political motive" (Richards, 2014, p. 230).

DUNIA: I completely agree with you and even the void of my husband would support these thoughts...

THE GRAND IFRIT: I always despised philosophers and their thinking, discussions and lack of action... I have a job to finish, my aim is psychological in nature, I agree, and this is what I promised to do, to instill fear and chaos by means of violence... Whether or not man would come back to God following this, that I do not care as this was Ghazali's contention... And, by the way Dunia, you are not a human, a mortal, you are one of us, what are you doing here defending these earthly matters, come and join us? [The Grand Ifri knew that, as a Jinni, Dunia could not succumb to fear or any other psychological impact and wanted her

separated from the world of man… What if she could teach men how not to be afraid?]

ARKE (apparently undisturbed by this last statement, turned to Dunia and addressed her husband's void): Ohh, great Ibn Rushd, I would say that God, faith and reason are all important when mixed in a sincere way. Fear is what I have a problem with. And so, instead of readily admitting, as the above author appears to do- that the major issue with his definition of terrorism is that it is too subjective and not really scientific in the sense of its desired purpose so that it can be useful in ordering facts as it does not lends itself at the scrutiny of observable facts (Roche, as cited in Richards, 2014, p.230), I consider that this is in fact the real strength of this definition as it conceives the truth of this field less in terms of correspondence to reality and its quantitative expectations to validate reality. It recognises instead the coherent messiness surrounding such an effort to define a term like this. I also like the fact that it opens up more creative, human ways to understand the topic, to uncover its different layers, to imagine different possibilities in terms of both solutions as well as realities. This definition is also consistent with the literature around this topic as well as it opens up the possibility of exploring in depth the meanings of this topic as opposed to just stay at the surface of counting observable facts (like in the so-called objective social sciences), which very often are only possible as a postmortem and less to able to help anyone at engaging with the topic in more imaginative ways and hence, hopefully, to find innovative solutions. It is a non-orthodox definition of terrorism

and also closer to the "critical terrorism studies (CTS)" (Patterson, 2009).
Richard Jackson goes as far as to argue that "CTS is at heart an anti-hegemonic
project; [...] and that most of what is accepted and well-founded 'knowledge' in
terrorism studies is, in fact, highly debatable and unstable" (R.Jackson as cited in
(Schmid, 2010).

Instead of Ibd Rushd who was just a void now and being unable to respond,
Qabbani's spirit - who wasn't yet a void- heard the whole conversation and wanted
to reply to all from a place of an ex-Syrian born, ex-poet in London and famous
writer. He appeared to give a different perspective on fear and terrorism, but is he
a product of Ghazali's intentions and Grand Ifrit's actions? one wonders...

QABANNI:

> We are accused of terrorism if we defended land and the honour if
> dust if we revolted against the rape of people and our rape if we
> defended the last palm trees in our desert the last stars in our sky
> the last syllabi of our names the last milk in our mother's bossoms
> if this was our sin how beautiful is terrorism. I am with terrorism
> if it is able to save me from the immigrants from Russia, Romania,
> Hungaria, and Poland They settled in Palestine set foot on our
> shoulders to steal the minarets of al-Quds and the door of Aqsa to
> steal the arabesques and the domes. [...] We are accused of
> terrorism if we refuse to die with Israel's bulldozers tearing our
> land tearing our history tearing our Evangelium tearing our Koran
> tearing the graves of our prophets if this was our sin, then lo, how
> beautiful terrorism is? We are accused of terrorism of we refused to
> be effaced by the hands of the Mogul, Jews and Barbarians if we
> throw a stone at the glass of the Security Council after the
> Caesar of Caasars got hold of it. We are accused of terrorism if we
> refuse to negotiate with the wolf and shake the hand with a
> whore... (Qabbani, no date)

[the curtain falls suddenly, without warning, all the characters seem to somehow agree (body language) with Qabbani] (the same characters are in the Kitchen, and it is getting a bit crowded...)

DAWANUR: Oh, beautiful words Mr Qabanni, I shall write an essay about this too; you are a true inspiration for all women and men in these lands and, as Ghazali once said to The Grand Ifrit, fear is already there. Now, Oh Master Qabbani, Jihad is a must... We need to learn from the best and be ready.

ARKE: Dawanur, I hope that you are not equating Jihad with terrorism, if though sometimes people want this to happen as well as really Jihad also works on the principles of fear, doesn't it? Very dangerous principle this is... instilling fear and chaos... it is so anti-learning really.

QABBANI: I disagree, it is learning and fear combined, it is learning out of fear and for generating fear, fear is its object as well as subject... We must look at how "terrorists learn" instead of whether they learn at all...

DUNIA: The most relevant question is how terrorists learn as there is ample evidence that indicates that this is a necessity along the lines of survival, keeping currency, adaptation and constant improvement to assure desired success.

ARKE: Agree with you, it's a messy subject, but what's certain is that we need to work at uncovering how Terrorists learn as this is a significant gap, which needs to be addressed by looking also into some "difficult conceptual issues regarding the actual meaning of notions like "learning", "transformation", "terrorists", and

"terrorism" have to be tackled" (Max Planck Research Group - How 'Terrorists' Learn, no date). [UNFINISHED, and should never be finished...]

The second round of notes towards Case Studies: the contribution of Fiction.

Fictional characters have enabled me to develop further the two case studies beyond the merely obvious; Arke, Dawanur and other fictional characters have come to the rescue and helped me to find cracks in an otherwise opaque reality, and so I aimed to reach beyond the presented masks as well as managed to move between different levels of analysis, i.e. from "balancing acts" and masks, to transgressively find "loopholes" and "phantoms" to proceeding -in the third part of the analysis- to some transcending "high flights" above and beyond the material reality, yet able to imagine and create new realities.

All these meant that I could bring together various readings of history, literature and philosophy for the purpose of illuminating how historical memory could work -towards life or death- in situations when repressed memories, trauma and their consequences stretch over generations. Hence, in the third part of the analysis, I have attempted to weave-in a tale where stories are allowed to collide, change one another and re-morph around memory and trauma points; fictional characters -and in this way my family as well- have met the real interview participants and their stories to explore together -like on a common pilgrimage- various subjects related to their memory and trauma spanning across generations.

In the midst of this exploration, learning has emerged as a topic of interest; many questions are asked around the value of various conceptions of learning, from Antiquity to the present times, and especially in the context of "terrorist learning". It is worth to acknowledge at this point the non-linear arrangement of arguments presented across the third part of the case study analysis; this is an emergent feature from the critical literature review on the concept of learning, as much as it

became a conscious choice when allowing, in the end, various stories to interact and form a bigger and complex tale.

'NOT JUMPING ON THE BANDWAGON' - The Learning concept

Theory Part 2

Figure 5: A Bandwagon (*Jumping on a Bandwagon - Fallacy Examples*, no date)

The circus invites the audience to 'jump on their bandwagon', to be carried away by the show itself; it is an almost irresistible temptation, like a fashion that is hard to avoid from seeing or even from adopting. I do however like to adopt a position of resistance and therefore attempt not to jump on fashionable 'bandwagons' related to some of the currently influential theoretical developments related to the concept of learning and its role in today's world.

Philosophical Groundings of (and for) Learning

As it was pointed out by some authors, a vast majority of articles and books are written within the field of philosophy of education. However, only very few have been published on the philosophy of learning, despite the fact that people increasingly

discuss - either privately or within professional settings- about a learning society, about life-long learning and so on (Jarvis and Parker, 2006). The separation between education and learning seems to originate in an ingrained Western practice and drive to distinguish clearly between things, words and matters. The Cartesian Western philosophical tradition has developed a way of seeing the human being as formed out of separate entities, with the mind being distinct from the body and, as a consequence, either of them will need to be educated differently. Dividing so clearly between mind and body is proper to the Western philosophical tradition, which argued that human "existence is objective, (as) proven by thought" (Jarvis and Parker, 2006, p. 2) or as Descartes put it 'Cogito ergo sum' (I think, therefore I exist). In the expanded formulation of the Cartesian line of reasoning, i.e. 'Dubito ergo cogito, cogito ergo sum', one can see that knowledge is conceived as objective, "a finished product, out there to be acquired and, therefore, something that can be transmitted (even sold) to others" (Jarvis and Parker, 2006, p. 2).

As a teacher and, perhaps more importantly, as a philosopher-by-training, I would like in this chapter on the 'Learning Concept' to think and reflect on learning also in terms of truth and its references, as well as in terms of the possibility and meaning of the learning situations. I would like to use some elementary elements of logic (Hodges, 2001) to aid my reflection on different concepts of learning, with various possible avenues of thought and considerations about learning. In his 2001 book titled "Logic", Wilfrid Hodges provides an introduction to some elementary elements of logic; I will attempt to use some of the links uncovered between words, things and situations about which logicians have reflected: "the first link is that declarative sentences are *true in certain situations,* and *not true in other situations*. The second link is that certain phrases *refer* to things in certain situations" (Hodges, 2001, p. 13).

Cratylus, a Heraclitean philosopher in Ancient Greece, argued that it is impossible to state anything true about things and situations which change. Some

say that learning is about changing and transforming, and it is about a process rather than only about a final product; in this context, according to Heraclitean philosophy, saying something true about learning might not be possible, which appears to be the position unless, of course, learning is seen and conceived like a 'product'. However, I would like to 'play' with some possibilities around so then perhaps I could say something about the truth and its references in regard to some concepts of learning. This could become particularly relevant in the context of critically inquiring about the truth of some concepts of learning, including the notion of "terrorist learning"; the following sentence might help towards this understanding:

> the truth or untruth of a sentence commonly depends on the references of its parts; these references may change from one situation to another, and this is why the sentence may be true in one situation but not in another (Hodges, 2001, p. 15).

Conversely, when considering the possibility of the existence of certain situations, there is a 'common sense' approach as well as there is a logical way to developing one's understanding. From a commonsensical perspective or in accordance with what people might think and say in the 'street' -in the domain of the 'everyday life'- a thing or situation can only be possible if it is consistent with some known facts; in other words, given what we know at a particular point in time, a thing or situation is possible if it could be so. On the other hand, in the world of logic, "a situation is described as possible if it *could have been* the actual situation, forgetting what we know about the world" (ob. cit. , p. 24). According to everyday and common-sense usage, the word learning generally means a purposeful accumulation of information, knowledge and skills, like driving a car, playing a musical instrument, learning to paint. These forms of learning are conceived as deliberate, however, some of the learning is more spontaneous, as a part of life as it happens and perhaps very often not easily recognised as such (Ireson, 2008, p. 5).

In logic and philosophy, the way in which subtle differences are described in relation to a possible situation could also be used in the present paper in regards to making a judgement in connection to how possible and true is a learning concept and situation. The logical methodology refers to describing a possible situation in which one sentence would be true whilst another very similar sentence would be untrue.

Describing what good learning 'looks and feels like' involves a 'profound critique of educational principles or practices', where concepts of inequality, domination and empowerment are looked at from a critical perspective, which "implies a conscious radical intent to change society through enabling learners to become politically aware in order to give them the power to act to transform society" (Collins, Harkin and Nind, 2010, p. 3). There are forms of learning that point towards the development and the consequent changes in the understanding of a subject, which conversely would lead to seeing the world in a different way: "individuals also notice personal changes in themselves as they learn, some of which might be quite fundamental, leading to changes in their identity or seeing themselves in a different way" (Ireson, 2008, p. 5).

Whilst in the past, learning seemed to mean a more secure and better guided understanding and in consequence a more effective negotiation of the world around us, nowadays the purpose of learning is to fuel the self-formation as a reaction to an unpredictable, competing and challenging world. The previous attitudes to learning of the metaphysicals, empiricists and the performativists are not entirely gone, but they seem to be still very much alive within contemporary competing narratives within society.

The metaphysical view constructs a perspective on learning that would enable people to depart from one world and enter another, a meta-reality. Plato's ancient perspective paints an image where one escapes the cave of illusions and, by doing so, sees the world in a renewed way. Moving on from this view of learning was

marked by the emergence of science and the Enlightenment, which introduced a view of learning as the pursuit towards an efficacious, better position in the world and in life. This better position in the world was based on gaining unprecedented levels of (empirical) knowledge in relation to either the natural or the human world, which also meant that the world entered a fast-paced changing mode and transformation. From that point on, learning only meant that we are equipped to be attuned to a changing world, or be ready to move on with the times.

So that 'moving on with the times' could be accomplished, terms like the 'reflective learner', 'action learning' and 'work-based learning' came to the fore to, on the one hand, fence off learner's anxieties in relation to a fast-changing world and, on the other hand, prepare learners for self-performativity. Whilst previous learning epochs were in a better position to answer questions around what counts as effective learning, the last epoch does not offer a clear perspective as there are no current clear and agreed criteria for what learning constitutes.

One particular learning conundrum is connected to a contemporary reality which relates to us that whilst there is an expansion of our knowledge about the world, there is also an explosion of our ignorance about the world; there is a realisation that "our knowledge of the world is always behind the game" (ob.cit., p.8). As we are a part of the world, learning about the world also becomes learning about ourselves and about learning itself; the more one learns, the more difficult it seems learning becomes.

Another learning conundrum is related to the state of the present affairs where the value of learning is no longer clear, as the previous aim of learning to obtain for someone a better life is no longer entirely relevant. The opposite seems to be more obvious as "learning too often leads to a more troubled state of existence or to a more fractious world" (ob.cit., p.8); there seems to be an epistemological and ontological troublesome reality as one does not know any longer why and how to

learn.

The very foundations of this present 'place' of learning in today's world could potentially be traced back to Rousseau's contributions to philosophical thinking about learning. At the core of his perspective, human beings are embodied intelligences who are a part of the natural world; these 'learning beings' are whole human beings, more than intellects, but also are organic bodies as a part of the natural world. As a part of this perspective, a 'learning being' is somehow destined to grow, mature and then decay and the motivation to learn is somehow to be found within itself alone and in separation from the social surroundings (Winch, 1996, pp. 415–416).

Rousseau agrees with Locke and Hume in that learning is started by mere sensations and that knowledge directly derives from these sensations. However, Rousseau disagreed with both Locke and Hume when he conceived a higher and essentially active role for our mind - all in accordance with our character- in judging the received sensations so that knowledge can be deducted and learning can take place. This perspective seems to have a strong referential in reality and therefore was deemed to be a true depiction of how humans learn; also, Rousseau's theory of learning seems to be a gateway towards the advent of empiricist learning. However, his theory does not consider that the human mind is fully formed from birth by either the possession of innate ideas or through being ready to receive ideas, from a place of absence of knowledge, or tabula rasa. The way in which we think nowadays about learning is due -it appears- to Rousseau's conceptualisations around the malignant outlook of relationships in society, as well as his emphasis on the active nature of our judgements.

Throughout the history of the notion of learning, with its different conceptualisations, the learner has been at times seen as a collector and absorber of knowledge and information, at some other times she was seen as a problem solver and a deep thinker, as well as a strategist who looks at learning from a variety

of perspectives in order to regulate its uses, and also as a participant in information (Ireson, 2008). Rousseau's theory of learning has also equally disagreed with Plato - which recognised the importance of innate knowledge- as well as with Aristotle, who argued against Plato to say that experience and perception is the source of knowledge instead. However, some of Plato's initial thinking around the rational contemplation of ideals -through rational discourse and logical thinking- as being a basis for learning is to be echoed even in some contemporary theories of learning, which look at the contribution to learning of innate, genetic factors. On the other hand, associationism and the contemporary theory of behaviourism seems to be based on Aristotle's theory, which understands the development of abstract concepts by looking at how consistent patterns are recognised through sensorial experience (Richardson, 1988).

Kantian perspective does deal with this divisive perspective on human subjects by introducing the concepts of *a priori* and *a posteriori* and, in effect, recognises the equal importance of our experience for the human existence and becoming as well as of the way in which the very human experience is made possible by the experiencing being herself. Being and becoming are functioning in an interdependent way to give a chance for meaning to be created and human existence to be possible. Jarvis (2006) develops further this Kantian perspective by arguing that being and becoming are intimately intertwined to make learning possible, and in effect concluding that learning is equally existential and experiential.

Winch's book (2002) - *The Philosophy of the Human Learning* - resonates with the Kantian perspective on education and learning and adds some contemporary points in regard to the need to keep a critical perspective in regard to what he calls "dominant ideas about learning", which have sprang out of a Cartesian way of seeing the world, as well as to rediscover perspectives on learning which are closer to philosophy as opposed to just the social sciences. In addition, Winch (2002) argues that there are aspects of learning which are not explored - like religion and

aesthetics - and in effect this situation does contribute to depriving and devaluing our inquiries on how learning happens and for what purposes, which would have to include the social, the practical as well as the affective nature of human beings.

Somehow consistent with Rousseau's theory of learning, "the unconscious is often at work in the relationships that constitute education, or, for that matter, research, given that our engagement with a body of knowledge is always and inevitably mediated through other human beings" (Merrill and West, 2009). There are certain social and psychological dimensions of learning (Bainbridge and West, 2012), which are partly unconscious forces, one might say that this is the a priori dimension that makes our experience of the world possible, our capacity to learn and be open to new experiences, yet is independent of experience. However, other dimensions of learning are social, experimental and synthetic in their engagement with different social networks and ways of seeing the world. These learning experiences can

> lead to questioning of who we are and might want to be, and whether we are able to embrace change. [...] Not everyone in similar "objective" situations responds in the same way to oppressive experiences. Some, more than others, remain open and creative in the face of difficulties, while others might retreat into defensiveness, paranoia, and even fundamentalism (ob.cit., p. 137).

In chapter ten, written by Celia Hunt and Linden West, from the edited collection of texts of Psychoanalysis and Education, an important concept is introduced, the "border country", which "refers to adult learning, which means that learners are straddled between emotion and cognition, between the social and psychological, self and other, education and therapy" (Bainbridge and West, 2012, p. 138). It is a necessary 'space' - I say- that can explain and prevent some potential "epistemic fallacies"; this is a 'place' -one might say- from where the Other and the world can be deeply understood and seriously listen to at an ontological level, which can in itself

generate a sense of empowerment and identity towards reaching a state of "cracking-up" (Bollas, 2017).

> [...] There can be, in consequence, a cracking up of a hard, defensive edge, and movement into creativity and transformative learning. Or, to put it in other terms, movement from resistance and acting out to risk-taking, great spontaneity, and a stronger sense of self (Bainbridge and West, 2012, p. 138).

There is indeed a duty to take learners -and ourselves as well- into a journey to and through a "border country"(-ies), which can significantly enhance their/ our understanding of how they learn and be aware of the different dimensions of learning, from the cognitive and analytic to the emotional, imaginative, social and experimental, and even unconscious and a priori in nature. This "border country" can indeed function like a 'promised land' - an unassuming one though- where errors of judgements are avoided and clarity of distinctions maintained, from realising how a learner and ourselves are in the world to then enable us to know the world.

Different (rational) Metaphors for Learning and Pedagogy - A Learning Maze.

Using metaphors seems to have been very important for educators and theorists when thinking about the concept and process of learning. There is a variety of perspectives on learning and metaphors do perhaps have the role to simplify the multitude of different ways in which learning is represented; metaphors also aid a simpler and somehow clear visual representation of learning, i.e. transmission, construction, transfer, situated cognition, transformation, lifelong, resentment or transgression. Having said this, this is to also point out that the simplicity is somehow only apparent as the majority of these metaphors are conceived through an oppositional stance towards one another, one metaphor of learning exists inasmuch it contradicts another and so forth.

One particular group of such contrasting metaphors is between transmission and construction. The transmission model does use the visual metaphor of an "empty rucksack to be filled with knowledge, or even an empty vessel into which knowledge is to be poured" (Bailey *et al.*, 2010, p. 323). This perspective on learning has also been described through other complementary metaphors, like the Freire's "banking model" whereby knowledge is being -oppressively- inserted into a learner's head like money is being deposited in a bank (Freire, 2014). Learners are controlled by teachers and educational institutions to passively wait for and accept the transmission of knowledge.

On the other hand, the construction perspective of learning has been developed in recent decades in direct opposition to the transmission models; according to this way of seeing learning, knowledge cannot be inserted into pupils' minds, but this is being constructed by learners themselves. There are two ways in which constructivism is conceived, either a Piagetian way in which learners are individually learning by themselves, or a Vygotskyan perspective according to whom social interactions with other learners or adults are necessary. In both types of constructivism, the role of the teacher is more to moderate these learner-centric processes of construction as opposed to taking a leading role (Bailey *et al.*, 2010).

Another metaphor for learning is that of transfer, which refers to a view of learning that "affects what I know and can do in situations other than the one in which I learned it. If not, there is no such a thing as learning" (ob. cit. 2010, p.324). However, what is being transferred are facts - i.e. knowledge, skills, abilities, capabilities- which are treated in the same way as they were physical objects, similarly to transferring a book or any other physical object from one place to another. This approach to learning considers that, despite their abstract nature, facts -like physical objects- can still be separated from one another and also from the environment of the person who possesses them.

This is indeed a significant difficulty with the transfer metaphor, as knowledge, skills and capabilities are not as 'discrete' from the environment where they emerge.

The second difficulty occurs when the idea of the degree of similarity between different transferable facts does only seem to try to assume generality from aparatently simple/ object-like facts, as in for example learning that two bricks plus three bricks makes five, which is similar to adding the same amounts of cakes. Whilst in this situation, there is a reasonable degree of similarity involved, in other situations, like voting during elections or joining a 'cause', it is more difficult to see how this metaphor does work, unless one assumes that the "similarity in the context of human activity were independent of human thinking and decisions" (ob. Cit., p. 328).

   The transfer metaphor and perspective on learning seems to be -despite its significant shortcomings- an overall appropriate way to describe how (some) learning takes place. However, the transfer metaphor of learning is being contrasted by another metaphor, the situated perspective on learning. More specifically, this view on learning considers that separating knowledge from the human environment-like the transfer model does- is a major issue as learning cannot take place only by the action of individual people, but - on the contrary- learning is something that it is distributed and situated across many participants; one can therefore point towards a 'situated cognition' that makes sense as learners belong to 'communities of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991). These ideas are underpinned by a theoretical perspective that conceives the environmental reality- that it is inhabited by individuals- as being governed by meaning-making rules which legitimise behaviour and the use of language (Winch 2012).

   Another metaphor of learning is that of transformation - or "transformative learning"-, which gains its significance from the attempt to go beyond these oppositions between transmission and construction and between transfer and situated cognition. In Chapter fourteen, 'Transformative Learning: a passage through the liminal zone', Larry Green considers carefully that -according to Freire's theory- in some epochs learning has been conceived on a "banking" or transmission model, whereby the role of the teacher was to make deposits of knowledge in a passive

learner's mind, which was thought to operate more like a container. Transformative learning, on the other hand, acknowledges that the container changes shape or that the learner undergoes a series of changes over a lifetime of learning. Moreover, it seems that the imaginary boundary between a me (self) and not-me (The Other, or others) is being re-negotiated over time (Bainbridge and West, 2012, p. 199). This has been named 'libertarian education', which is meant to reconcile the roles of the teacher and student by acknowledging that these have to be both active in the process of learning "by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students. [...] Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (Freire, 2014, p. 45).

These are the basic elements of transformative learning, which is simultaneously a cognitive as well as an affective process, which also involves anxiety and depression that also contribute to one's development through the necessary stages of dis-integration, re-constitution and re-integration (Bainbridge and West, 2012, p. 203). An ideal speech community is the opposite to the "banking model of education" with its instrumental learning platform; the transformative learning community operates on some communicative learning processes, which also have to do with what other people mean when they communicate to us, i.e. feelings, intentions, values, moral matters (West, 2016c).

The feelings of being understood play a very important role in transformative learning and these can work for the good or for the worst, which means that the processes of re-constitution and re-integration can follow an unusual and less than beneficial path:

> radicalisation transformed the lives of particular individuals, providing meaning, purpose and self-recognition. [...] This could be interpreted as a form of 'transformative learning' but of an ultimately perverse and anti-developmental kind. The pedagogy of radicalization seems to work by emotional, imaginative appeals to the past constructed in the

light of the present. It involves stories and appeals to action, rather than textual hermeneutics (ob.cit, p. 5).

This seems to be the other side, the darker side, of the Winnicottian concept of 'play', which feeds on a 'dark' playfulness of defensive ideas and imaginative narrative closures, where only one truth and nothing but that truth can have space to exist. One can use the reverse metaphor of "non-waiting on" to describe this darker transformative experience, which seems to be opposite to Wilma Fraser's "wisdom seeking" spaces where learning is infused by wisdom that is oriented towards a "common good and that fosters citizen virtues, an active and full responsibility to family and the public sphere" (Fraser and Hyland-Russell, 2011, p. 30). One can rhetorically intervene and ask: *can one talk about a 'darker wisdom' at play here?*

It seems that all these metaphors of learning - apart from the transformational learning- are mainly referring to the context of institutional education, schooling etc. Some other 'outside' fields of learning have not been researched as closely, i.e. the learning field of everyday life or of learning from the experience of everyday life, which is directly significant to our understanding of lifelong learning. Peter Jarvis (2009) writes about two possible positionings, either in harmony with the world, or in 'disjuncture'. Jarvis goes on to support the view that learning does not happen from a place of harmony, but from a state of disjuncture:

> [...] the world is not a constant and unchanging place and so there are times when we cannot take it for granted and we are forced to ask questions: Why? How? What does it mean? and so forth. This is disjuncture - we have to find new explanations, new knowledge, new ways of doing things - in other words, we must learn. [...] so much of our learning is not only incidental, it is unrecognised. In this sense, learning is both experiential and existential - the philosophical and human basis of learning is often missed in the theoretical discussion about learning. [...] non-learning can also be a major strength when we are committed to a cause and do not want to change, but the inflexibility of fundamentalism -both religious and political- can be extremely dangerous in a world that demands degrees of tolerance and a level of deliberative politics (Jarvis, 2009, pp. 2–3).

The desire not to change is not always a given and a consequence of a harmonious relationship with the world, but one can say that sometimes this desire not to change or 'not-to-learn' is a result of a particular way of dealing with the disjuncture; perhaps, this state of 'non-learning' occurs when coping with disjuncture is done by suppressing and denying the existence of disjuncture itself. My contention is that this type of non-learning -which has not sprung from harmony, but from a repressed disjuncture- is still a form of learning. The disjuncture -seen as an acknowledged disconnection and separation, an 'assumed exile' one could say- occurs naturally within the interactions with the everyday life environment, for example when one becomes amazed by beauty as an aesthetic and/ or religious experience.

Jarvis (2009) recognises two conditions of learning, the social interaction and the disjuncture. More importantly, for Jarvis learning is necessarily existential -related to a sense of self and subjectivity- and it is about the whole human being, i.e. body, mind, experiences of social situations, emotive, and integrated in one's biography. Therefore, a disjuncture will necessarily mean some sort of dissonance in any or all aspects of this 'whole human being', in the knowledge, skills, emotions or beliefs. There are some degrees of disjuncture, from slight to larger gaps between "our biographies and our perceptions of the situation to which we can respond" (Jarvis, 2009, p. 11) - which demand slight or significant adjustments. High degrees of emotion can be involved when we encounter what is being perceived and "we might call 'magic moments' for which we look forward in hope to repeat in some way or another" (ob. cit., p.12).

When such 'magic moments' do not go to plan, resentment can surface still as a part of some learning process as it relates to the development of a sense of self. However, this time the self can exist only by opposing, contradicting, negating the rightful existence of the social Other as well as emptying its significance and meaning. Through resentment, the identity, the merits and the existence of the Other are being displaced and negated (Nietzsche, 2010). A few questions though: *what*

could fuel such a desire to annihilate the Other? Is there a hidden part and role for learning? What could be the role of emotions, repression and the unconscious in this learning endeavour to resent?

I would argue that desiring to negate and annihilate the Other does not necessarily mean the end of any educational and learning activity, but these stop to be possible only when the Other is made to actually disappear or is deliberately excluded or 'terminated' in purpose and even existence. I see the experience of resentment as one side of the coin that has the experience of beauty and the sacred (God, Love) as the other side. 'Magic moments' can be experienced on both sides of this coin, which still represents some valuable currency for the learning process. The only moment when it loses its value is when there is no one, no Other to use it.

One can call this a 'transgressive learning coin' as it refers, on both sides, to a type of learning which is very different from any formal educational set up in that the human subject comes forth to engage the Other in a vibrant and relentlessly critical way. As long as it retains its value, this coin can put forward a vision for a transgressive learning (Hooks, 1994) that aims to develop -in line with Freire's ideals- a transformational educational platform for the progressive enhancement and freedom- through the interaction with the Other- of the human subjectivity and self.

The potential for resentment and transgression lies rather away from view, this -one can say- is a hidden side of learning, which is therefore overlooked and more often misunderstood in terms of un-learning, non-learning or even anti-learning.

I will endeavour to explore this hidden part of learning, which seems to be misrepresented and repressed perhaps due to its emotional charge. This unseen part of learning is closer to a taboo where the 'magic moments' are not to be explored at all if cannot be understood by a presumably all encompassing Cartesian mind, so dislocated itself from anything to do with the human body and the human emotions. These are rather to be conceived as object (-ive) realities as opposed to having to do with how human subjectivity and self gain meaning and existence. *For*

sure, the hidden part of learning cannot be represented through rational and linear metaphors..., a voice seems to say from afar, yet very close and familiar.

Beyond the Learning (metaphorical) Maze - developing a perspective on learning that goes beyond the need for (rational and linear) metaphors.

Using metaphors to define learning appears to have been the dominant paradigm; it is a useful exercise that allows us to capture and describe some aspects of the learning process. However, when these metaphorical ways of approaching learning are considered to be the only ways in which we can understand learning -in other words, when we are confusing surface descriptions for the essence of things and start as a consequence to infer from this our value judgements- then our understanding of learning and education could be seriously compromised.

My argument is that the rational metaphors are useful to develop a partial understanding of learning, however these metaphors cannot provide either a full picture or a deep understanding of the essence of learning. Therefore, rational metaphors of learning are partially useful as they aid our knowledge about learning (epistemology); however, we do not need to confuse them to having access to the existential -ontological- side of learning, with its associated being and becoming. As a consequence, I would invite caution in placing equal signs between what we know about how learning works to why learning exists. I would therefore like to argue that learning is more than a process or a final product and has an existential purpose in itself.

The transformational metaphor of learning is somehow the closest to the existential side of learning- and not just the experiential one- and this is only if the transformation is conceived as a cognitive as well as affective process. However, the metaphor of transformation helps us to see that there are some necessary stages in this learning process, more specifically: dis-integration, re-constitution and re-integration (Bainbridge & West 2012, p.203). These are important stages of a transformational process, but -I sense- somehow these also leave one on the surface of matters; in fact, we still know very little about the existential -connected to self- reasons that are behind these stages as well as why do these stages really exist; perhaps, these stages are linked to the formation of self, to our subjectivity.

At this point, I strongly feel the need to 'Stop' and reflect on my conceptual journey in, out and beyond the Learning Maze.

I consider as important to adopt a positioning that would, one the one hand, recognise my own conceptual struggles, but also - on the other hand- that would place me in a good 'space' -perhaps a neutral one- to critical appraise different rational and linear metaphors of learning -from transmission to construction, to transfer to transformation, resentment and transgression- and, consequently, to enable me to elevate the discussion on learning.

This in itself could mean that I will go beyond the rational and linear metaphors as a way to define learning and suggest that there might be another way in which we can look at learning, which will ideally allow us to also transcend the historical view of learning in distinct epochs that -as we will see- has led to an attempt to separate learning from education. There were indeed some voices suggesting that we have to abandon learning altogether as this is somehow a 'dirty' word and reality that led to the "learnification of education" (Biesta, 2015). I would also go as far as to argue that presently "Learning is (nearly) Dead" -similar to Nietsche's (2010) "God is Dead" ("Gott ist Tot")- and that there is a need for a rethink of the relationship between

education and learning as well as a re-evaluation of learning beyond metaphorical and historical ways.

The urge to 'stop' and reflect is justified -I feel- as this would allow me to think again about the different ways in which learning has been approached, perceived, conceived, constructed, deconstructed and perhaps also reconstructed. I refer to a feeling as this is the way in which I can best describe my struggles in finding an appropriate and "illuminated" way to approach this learning conceptual maze. My conceptual struggles have pulled and pushed me in different directions; at some point, I even had the intention to deny the existence of my difficulties with the complexity of the learning concept, struggles which took me in and out of the learning maze.

To make sense of these struggles I think that there is a necessity to sit 'on the border'; not to be "at the border" as this is a transitory state, which very often is short-lived and artificially created to serve a purpose of passing from a "place" to another, action which in itself demands a decisive stance, i.e either-or (Szakolczai, 2009). I would rather stay 'on the border' for a bit longer, a bit like in the movie 'The Terminal' where Tom Hanks plays the role of someone who is not permitted to pass through in either direction and is forced to live in an airport terminal for some time. *I aim to look at the concept of learning from inside a Terminal, from a place 'on the border', without the need to cross anything...*

My positioning as a researcher is connected to my biography, to my past -personal, educational, professional-, rather than being defined by deciding 'where I am' from a theoretical and writing perspective. My interest in the first phases of this conceptual inquiry on learning and education will not be to decide to take right or left, up or down, forward or backward, but to firstly explore, wait and think, and feel, learn from other authors from the same originar 'place-and-space' as me, then reflect and attempt to craft another perspective on learning and education.

As I am also interested in the emotions, struggles and depth of personal stories, I would like to use my conversations with a trusted friend, Arke, who has been a good interlocutor. We have been growing up together in the same space. Arke will lend me his voice, close and distant at the same time; Arke is firmly 'on-the-border', in fact he has never departed from that 'place'. This can be both a curse as well as a blessing when it comes to looking at the concept of learning. In fact, as well as in fiction, *I am Arke, (Je suis Arke)...*

Staying 'on the border' has the advantage that I can look at both sides of the border as well as having the chance to develop a perspective on learning that is neither-nor, or -one can say- a view that also takes into account the conceptual struggles of someone (Arke) who is "stuck" and becomes aware that escaping the conceptual struggle will not be possible if there is a departure from the 'border'. Once the border is left in either direction, the illusion of clarity and new beginnings can and does cloud perspectives and necessarily only offers one side to the learning story.

Not being in the rush or being pushed to make a decision to pass over in one or another direction can have the effect of suspending the demands of time and space as well as of particular academic desires to define, to use reason, to develop explanations when what is needed is participation and encountering different possibilities of being, interacting and illuminating paths.

Remaining 'on the border' for a bit - being deliberately liminal- does provide a privileged perspective -I strongly sense- from which different viewpoints can be 'observed' and contemplated. Being 'on the border' is not a given and it should not be taken for granted especially as for many it is not a natural position; however, I would like to try to see the world of learning and education from this 'place' and hope that it will offer some sort of necessary 'illumination' of different paths towards understanding the educational and learning experiences.

In the following pages, one can read some of the 'exchanges' (in handwritten like font) -and I will be in and out of these- that I had with Arke. In fact and in-fiction, Arke

is still me, my projections, thoughts and feelings; another name for Arke is 'light' (in Yiddish), who was an engaging interlocutor and meant that I had a chance to really move somewhere with my understanding and theorisation of the concept of learning and education, and look with more confidence to develop an alternative pedagogical view. For me, Arke's role is very similar to Wilson's role for Tom Hanks' character from the movie Cast Away; it provides the necessary inner dialogue, some reassurance and confidence in moments of inner struggles, doubting thoughts, indecisiveness, repeated trials and failures, clouded reflections. Succeeding to "light a fire" against all odds - like in Cast Away, under Wilson's 'eyes' and supportive presence- is quite similar to having Arke during my journey of 'learning-about-learning' and, hopefully, emerging at the other end of the learning maze. *So, here we go...*

Many authors have been reflecting on the difference between traditional and contemporary teaching practices. Traditional teaching was heavily criticised for its controlling stance towards the student, who was supposed to passively listen and absorb information. On the other hand, there is a contemporary perspective on teaching that is being opposed to the traditional stancen -dominated by the metaphor of transmission- and which is seen as authoritarian and controlling. The contemporary teacher is defined as someone who does not control, but only facilitates students' learning. However, arguably neither of these perspectives is appropriate as both treat the student as an object, more specifically according to the traditional perspective the student is the object of teacher's interventions, and in the contemporary approach still the student is seen as an object, mainly due to the fact that the teacher is the facilitator of learning as a process of interpretation and comprehension (Biesta, 2016). I tend to agree with this view point as there is a recognised need to go beyond these two metaphors of learning -transmission in the traditional sense and, on the other hand, constructivism as the contemporary perspective- as these ultimately only lead at seeing the student as an object.

However, I struggled for a while with this view and I was not sure why was so, as I agreed that it is imperative to move beyond these two metaphors of learning.

Going through some of the arguments made, I came to increasingly hold my personal opinion that -as a very important and influential contemporary pedagogue- Professor Gert Biesta attempts to deal with this difficulty in a less than persuading manner as it follows a line of reasoning, which -in my opinion- stems from some potential errors of argumentation. The core of Biesta's argument is that education has been reduced to learning, or that contemporary education has been "learnified" (ob.cit).

There are significant consequences of this line of reasoning, more specifically learning is then seen as something not only completely separate from education, but also something that damages education, something that has negative connotations and, in consequence, that brings about significant damage by even the simplest association with it. The given reason for conceiving learning in such a negative way is that it does not assure that the student is treated as a subject as - by reference to Levinas- "subjectness is not generated through our own acts of signification, but is rather constituted from outside, that is, through the address of the other" (Biesta, 2016, p. 374).

Arke looks intensely to the wall of words and metaphors, which offers some sense of safety and simplicity, but also he sees me in some serious discomfort; there are no words to express feelings of being caught up in a beautiful place, but which it is not welcoming. Would you help me light this fire, Arke?, I said in a hopeful way, but not really believing what I said. How can I help? Arke seemed to reply... Well, just be here for me... it will be enough if I have you beside me as a presence and an interlocutor; I cannot make it on my own even when I will have 'the fire', there is still the maze to get out of... be here for me, please. I promise that I will be good

with you, remember that you have a special space in my heart, besides being a part of my mind and also inside my body... Look, Arke said, these metaphors are very important, but only give us partial clues on what you are interested in, it is learning isn't it? Yes, it is... so, what can I do, shall I abandon them? I thought that I had everything so clear, well differentiated and distinctly placed in my head and now you came and have taken all that away... Look, Arke seemed to point towards the floor, look there on the sand... do you see the shadows moving on the sand, it's a windy day and the fine sand particles are also on the move... What *is* a shadow? Just think about this for a bit... I guess that you want to say that shadows are metaphors of something real, an object or something. A shadow *is*, a shadow *is*... good, I can see that you think and feel. However, defining what a shadow *is* will not help us as its purpose is beyond reflection... Stop trying to define, stop trying to move right, or left, or above, or below... stay with me for a while and just be taken by the movement of these shadows, but their shapes, musicality of movement and... just stay here for a bit and contemplate, breathe in and out and again, and again... good, good.... Now stop breathing and say something! I said: this is real, look this is me when I was a child when was trying to get out of that thick and dark forest and then found a path, this is what I was and what I am, this is that being that help me out and through it I became what I am, these are all the people I ever met and spoke with, they pushed me, disagreed with me and then made me possible... thanks Arke, now I can see that a shadow **is not** what it seems, there is the <u>unsayable</u> quality of a shadow, something that cannot be

defined and therefore that it is beyond __is__, our simplistic, metaphorical and rational way of thinking when we want to know something about reality. To say something means to ignore the __unsayable__ and its existence, with its being and becoming. Correct, said Arke, stay with me, I am listening to what you say, continue with the fire, it will lighten up soon, just believe and get on with it, I am here for you... OK, thanks. I have a few matters to go through with you then... Later, the past will happen again before our eyes...

I agree with the need for recognising the student as a subject, but I tend to be sincerely skeptical at the proposal that learning would currently be separate from education. The accomplishment of the noble mission of recognising the subjectness of students -with which I agree as a rightful mission and purpose- is diminished as a real possibility when one conceives education and learning as being nowadays completely separated and also when seeing learning as something fundamentally degraded and degrading for the educational endeavours.

I agree that we need to go beyond the two metaphors - the transmission and constructivism-, but I would soon like to extend this argument by saying that in order to conceive and talk about student's subjectness, one would need to find a place from where the learning and educational reality(-ies) can be seen beyond their metaphors, beyond the **_is_**, that is, beyond the desire to stay of the surface, describe, and having a live appetite to distinguish and very categorically and with a good degree of certainty separate matters of reality. On the contrary, this approach leads to seeing both the education and learning in the domain of objectification as they treat the reality around as objects of reason, more specifically through rational acts of interpretation and signification; this leads to a situation where we can proclaim that education and learning are 'dead', as these are mechanical, robotic acts, being emptied of humanity. However, I agree with Levinas and Biesta (2016) in that there

is a "mystery of human subjectness" - as Levinas names it- that is rather formed from the outside of reason and from a place of transcendence, beyond individual egos, reason or rational metaphor.

My contention is that whilst the distinction between object and subject is for now a useful one towards framing appropriately the discussion on subjectness, the separation and the clear distinction between education and learning needs to receive a critical appraisal.

On the first level and according to my own reading of Biesta's work, the argument put forward seems to develop a so-called "distinction without a difference", which is a form of logical fallacy that occurs when an assertion is made about the difference between two conceptual positions based entirely on language (word-based) differences. Education and learning are two different words, whilst both 'positions' are the same from a practical standpoint (Bennett, 2012), more specifically, both the education and learning designate the same practical activities.

On the second level, it is again my own reading that the argument starts off with an epistemic fallacy, which is built on the apparently clear distinction between education and learning. An epistemic fallacy refers to the situation according to which there is a view:

> that statements about being can be reduced to statements about knowledge [...] and, more specifically, the question whether A is identical to B gets reduced to the question whether our way of knowing A is identical to our way of knowing B (Shipway, 2010, p. 63).

It is therefore my own opinion that the distinction between education and learning avoids to take into account the "intransitive dimension" of reality, which is the reality in itself (the ontology) as being independent of human conceptualisation, and completely focuses on the "transitive dimension" that refers to human knowledge and theories (epistemology). It appears to me that the argument in question follows the following 'line', more specifically, as one's way of knowing educational realities -through teaching for example- is different from one's ways of knowing what learning

means, then the assumption is that A is not identical with B or that education is very different and distinct from learning (Biesta, 2016). It is my contention that by accepting this as a starting point, the reader can do nothing but agree that learning needs to be somehow dissipated and eventually eliminated so that teaching and education can be safely re-discovered and recovered.

This solution seems to solve the conceptual conundrum, however it actually creates -I feel- a third level of logical incompatibility, which can be recognised as an 'ontic fallacy'. This is the opposite of the 'epistemic fallacy', as

> the ontic fallacy views knowledge as an unproblematic, direct mapping between subject and being. Just as the epistemic fallacy ignores the intransitive dimension, the ontic fallacy ignores the social aspects of knowledge, and thus does not account for the fact that knowledge is socially produced by pre-existing social products (Shipway, 2010, p. 64).

It is my own opinion that this argument -as it was developed by Biesta (2016)- does indicate a complete focus on education as a departure from any form of interpretivism and signification, in other words away from any forms of knowledge and only for the purpose of re-discovering subjectness, which is conceived only through the rapport with the Other and separated clearly from any "pre-existing social products", which seem to be seen as the result of the process of signification.

As a consequence of these realisations, I would like to propose a four-folded approach towards recovering equally from the over reliance on rational and linear metaphors when approaching important concepts like education and learning, and also, on the other hand, towards avoiding 'logical fallacies' when attempting to go beyond these metaphors.

I would firstly like to propose that education is and should be interconnected with learning as these serve the same purpose even though they are accomplished from different ontological levels of reality. Secondly, I would argue that reclaiming teaching and education is a legitimate project, however this cannot be done in the absence of learning (especially lifelong and everyday life learning), as attempting to

do so might create more problems than solutions. Thirdly, learning should be re-appraised as being close to the being and becoming of the subject, more specifically, learning as being existential and experiential (Jarvis, 2009); only by accepting this premise, education can then be recovered. Fourthly, and as a consequence of the previous three points, I would like to recommend -as a project of paramount importance- the development of a perspective on a so-called "educational learning", which will encompass a wide-enough and relevant conceptual area, between a priori and a posteriori lens.

I looked at Arke who had an unchanged posture, he looked calm and thoughtful and almost like he wanted to say something, not sure what... Are you OK? Yes, I am, but wondering what you will do now that you got to this point, how would you move forward with all these four points you have put across? I agree that we need to redefine learning and education together, but I wonder how... Arke continued by saying: I feel that there is something more than just this debate about 'what can be seen' versus what can not be seen'... Is there something unsaid and also something unsayable about learning and education? Perhaps, there is a space of silence and deep reverence, a place from where matters are yet to become and by doing so to form out the being itself, a necessary suspension of reason, something magical and therefore not to be said, an unsayable, the non-definable inner space that unifies education and learning, sometimes defined as wisdom, some other times forgotten, denied or repressed, but nonetheless something that cannot stop to exist as otherwise life itself would stop its course. It refers to life, it refers to an 'educational learning', yet something that cannot be said, an unsayable yet very

valuable part of learning and education. I do remember clearly when you first learned about the history of religions and you read Eliade's Sacred and Profane and then Heidegger and Nietzsche and about Dionysius Pseudo-Aeropagitus' method of thinking about God; it is 'apophatism' that had such a big impact on your thinking; it was also something that came from the border space, perpetually 'on the border'...

My argument is that there is a story behind the learning story, something that is necessarily unsayable so that learning would be made possible and also dependable on it. It is my point of view that it is perhaps more important to discover the unsayable part of learning than to be led into it by rational and linear metaphors. Historically, apophatic thinking - which is a way of seeing the world by refusing to define it, even by negating certain aspects from it- started with the neo-platonics who argued that language (Logos) is ineffective in articulating the 'One', which is the ultimate principle of reality.

In his *A Philosophy of the Unsayable*, William Franke argues that beside a theology of unsayable, there is:

> a perennial philosophy of the unsayable [...] in which discourse becomes acutely conscious of its intrinsic limits and is dominated by what it cannot say [as one of Charles Simic poems testify] [...] a feeling granted everyone/ Of living in two worlds/ One of which is unsayable (Franke, 2014, p. 1).

The apophaticism, seen by Franke as a philosophy of the unsayable, looks at the world from the perspective of the 'theoria', which is conceived as contemplation by Plato and Aristotle. Kant's Noumenon -or the Thing-in-Itself or *Das Ding and Sich*- is an important concept in the philosophical apophaticism as it refers to a reality beyond the one of the phenomena, which appear to the observers. On the contrary,

the Noumenon as an absolute reality cannot be conceived and talked about -or said about- by 'speculative reason', but in itself makes our 'practical (or moral) reason' and reality possible.

Other two important concepts for the apophatic way of knowing the world are - as mentioned by Franke (2014) - those coined by Jean Wahl, namely the trans-ascendant and trans-descendant, which in turn evoke contemplation and, respectively, fascination:

> the person kneeling before an icon contemplates Christ, while [...] the philosopher who notes the play of *le supplement* or the teenager who, strolling through a mall, witnesses the transfiguration of world into image, is fascinated (Brown and Aaron Simmons, 2017, p. 20).

It will be particularly relevant and I hope also revealing to look at 'educational learning' through the lenses of contemplation and fascination as well as through the eyes of different degrees of silence as once Samuel Beckett suggested in his 1953 *The Unnamable*, "for it is all very fine to keep silence, but one has also to consider the kind of silence one keeps" (Nojoumian, 2004, p. 28).

There is a contemporary discourse of negation, of the unnamed, of the unnamed and of the unsayable, where language negates itself; however, one would need to look back at Ancient Greece to identify some systematic developments of apophatic thinking, more specifically one can look at the neoplatonic philosophy. Plato's *Parmenides* is the key text that offers an entry point into this way - *via negativa* - of knowing the world and beyond it:

> this logical unsayability of the One is interpreted in an ontological sense and developed into a full-fledged metaphysics by Plotinus. Plotinus's metaphysical transmogrification of Plato's aporetic logic (meaning, inclined to doubt and raising objections) of the One becomes the search for a mystical experience of the One, that is, of oneness and of union with the supreme principle in silence (Franke, 2007, p. 10).

I can now 'hear' Arke asking me: Is then learning connected to "the One", to the sacred?

Some authors have looked at education and learning as being one and the same and also that is connected to Wisdom, or the pursuit of Wisdom or Sophia (Fraser, 2013). However, Sophia has been half-repressed throughout the history of Western thought, despite its important role in connecting humanity to the experience of sacred:

> [...] (Sophia's) role as the feminine personification of wisdom in certain Judeo-Christian writings, as the supreme aim of Aristotelian philosophy, and as the representation of the repressed 'other' in many feminist discourses. (Fraser, 2013, p. 7). She is, in fact, the learning process itself. She calls us to a life of seeking understanding of the world in which we live (Cole, Ronan and Taussig, 1996, p. 23).

Wilma Fraser argues that one needs to adopt a definition of Wisdom (Sophia) that attempts an integration between the philosophical and theological perspectives with the more recent ethical and cultural approaches of it; this will lead to an integration between 'being' and 'becoming' under the banner of a non-vertical transcendence, which challenges the supposed primacy of cartesian reason and rationality. Ultimately, I cannot agree more with the following sentence that also sums up one of the starting points of my journey and 'pilgrimage' in and especially out of the learning maze:

> [...] I am appealing for a re-framing of our educational endeavours which allows for far greater integration between mythos and logos, and one for which Sophia might stand (Fraser, 2013, p. 228).

Also, there seems to be a link between spirituality and learning, which is assured through the intermediary of the myth and mythmaking (mythopoesis); these links highlight the possibility and value of human imagining as a way of knowing as opposed to just the use of rational descriptions and explanations (ob. Cit., p. 234).

I can see Arke's lips moving as if he asks me: If the "One" is the ultimate principle of our reality, could learning then be seen as the ultimate principle of ourselves or our-self-reality? There could be a 'relationship' - I say- between Learning and the One; the One being the ultimate principle of reality, learning in itself could have a noumenal function -from a Kantian perspective- to make reality possible, and more specifically the reality of our own own selves possible. I feel that I should say that at times even learning becomes one with the One, becomes sacred in itself and also being experienced accordingly. I have explored some dictionaries of religions and found that Saraswati is the only Goddess of learning, education, knowledge from all religions in the whole wide world (Bowker, 1999; Jordan, 2014). Also, this deity refers to other ideas, i.e. of water and river, fertility and healing (Kalyanaraman, 2008). Why is there only one goddess of learning in the world?, Arke asked. Saraswati is not repressed and we might have it as an opportunity to see 'educational learning' yet through different lenses, perhaps more connected to the sacred than we might expect nowadays in the West. It does potentially provide some ideas on how one can approach the unsayable of learning and education.

The sacred, which is conceived as opposed to the profane, has a connection to the foundations of reality, to its power and the 'being' itself and, therefore, potentially having a relation to learning and education:

> [...] for the man of the pre-modern societies, [...] the sacred is saturated with being. Sacred power means reality and at the same time enduringness and efficacy. The polarity sacred-profane is often expressed as an opposition between real and unreal or pseudoreal. [...] Thus it is easy to understand that religious man deeply desires to

be, to participate in reality, to be saturated with power (Eliade, 1959, p. 13).

Eliade, who was born and formed as a thinker in the same country of origin as I was, Romania, goes on to discuss -as a philosopher and historian of religions- many aspects of the religious experience. I am particularly interested in his views on the importance of the 'experience of the sacred' through his analyses of important concepts like the 'rites of passage', of 'initiation', of the 'second birth' and of 'coincidentia oppositorum'; my argument would be that their importance is also related to learning and education and more specifically to those aspects, elements and practices that are unsayable, yet important for the development of a new way of looking at learning and education. I however like to be mindful that my once 'hero', Eliade, has also profoundly disappointed me when I discovered another and less known to many side from his past; Eliade was born -like me and others- in a "border country", but he did not managed to stay 'on the border', as he crossed the borders towards embracing and calling for the value of a death cult, the terrorist mythology of the Iron Guard, and then living in exile with a "happy guilt"; nonetheless his academic work is of great interest to me and also it is his inability to stay 'on the border', which means that this space is not a given to anyone, but it is both a choice as well as a courageous resistance, rejection of the uniformity of death.

'Rites of passage' are important moments in the life of the religious man as these refer to important moments of being and becoming like the transition from childhood to puberty and then to adulthood, the birth, marriage, death. Eliade says that all 'rites of passage' involve some form of initiation as these involve "a radical change in ontological and social status" (ob.cit., p.184); the community formed by families and other groups of people have to participate in these rites for the purpose of accepting and recognising a newborn as a 'true living person', or to come to terms with someone's death so that the dead person can enter and be accepted by another community, this time a community of the dead. The modern world of the profane and

cartesian rationality has secularised the death, birth, marriage and so forth. However, patterns of initiation rituals still exist in disguised forms.

However, when Eliade looked at the experience of initiation across cultures and religions, there was recognised and argued that this process involves a 'revelation' on three levels, i.e. a revelation of the sacred, one of death and another of sexuality:

> The child knows nothing of these experiences (of sacred, death and sexuality); the initiate knows and assumes them, and incorporates them into his new personality. We must add that, if the novice dies to his infantile, profane, non-regenerate life to be reborn to a new, sanctified existence, he is also reborn to a mode of being that makes learning, knowledge, possible. The initiate is not only one newborn or resuscitated; he is a man who knows, who has learned the mysteries [...] (Eliade, 1959, p. 188).

The initiation dimensions of learning have always been at play in a direct or indirect manner and when initiation is not overtly perceived as such then perhaps the human is objectified and lost in various metaphors of learning. Knowing about learning is difficult when metaphors are used as the only medium of knowing; this is not to say that metaphors do not play a role in the process of learning itself as can be seen through the process of initiation and of the 'rites of passage'. The ceremonies of initiation are living metaphors that enact the sacred through meaningful stories or myths, which do not have the purpose to define or explain, but to inspire and draw the initiate into the sacred and unsayable part of the learning and educational experience; this ceremonial learning is essentially existential and begins, as Eliade points out (1959, p.189), with a separation between the student and the family followed by a period of ritualic isolation and hardship. Here, 'being born again' comes to signify the end of hardship, isolation as well as to express the unsayable side of the sacred, i.e. the death being closely connected to birth to reveal the mysteries (the unsayable) of the sacred. The suffering, death and resurrection (or rebirth) form the initiatory schema, which is to found in all mysteries:

> Sacred knowledge and, by extension, wisdom are conceived as the fruit of an initiation, and it is significant that obstetric symbolism is found connected with the awakening of consciousness both in ancient India and in Greece. Socrates had good reasons to compare himself to a midwife, for in fact he helped men to be born to consciousness of self; he delivered the 'new man' [...] This initiatory birth implied death to profane existence [...] (there is also) a 'new body' that the novice obtains through initiation (ob.cit. 198-199).

Myths have a significant role for the experience of the sacred as well as for that of the profane, even though the profane world of the modern man has camouflaged these myths and has degenerated rituals. The modern man desires to acquire a world of his own, which seems to be a new existential and ontic position in the world. However, even though one encounters the process of desacralisation and demystification of the modern man -who is a claimed non-religious man- a religious entity is still at work, whether the same man is aware of it or not.

Rituals are disguised but are important; however, from a contemporary perspective the man is seen more as an object rather than as a subject of its actions. In consequence, I would like to point out that the realisation that 'God is Dead' (Nietzsche, 2010) -as being opposed as a proposition to the initiation understood as a death and rebirth of men into the sacred- seem to lead necessarily to a statement about the death of the possibility of education and learning. Once learners are conceived -through the cartesian rationality and metaphorical explanations- as objects of learning and education, one cannot but depart the possibility of accessing the unsayable part of our existence and therefore stopping to cater for humans as whole subjects and selves.

Therefore, one would need to move beyond these rational and linear metaphors and also attempt to think again about some taken for granted dualities, oppositions, like the one between subject and object and also to redirect some attention to the very notion of self. It is appropriate at this point in time to critically appraise the very duality between subject and object and, more specifically, both of its two perspectives, i.e. the external and the immanent causality.

The external causality looks at a firm separation between the cause and effect as though these are in themselves distinct entities that are separated by a 'boundary'. The immanent causality seems to describe a mutual conditioning between causes and effects, which make it difficult to clearly distinguish between cause and effect, between subject and object.

"HOW TO DEAL WITH THE LIONS"

The Method: theoretical considerations towards a way to analyse the interviews

First Phase of Analysis - 'Balancing Acts' and Masks

Figure 6: Balancing Acts… (*Image: Tipping Point*, no date)

'Balancing acts' is another circus performance that brings to the audience the important realisation of the limits, risks, struggles, fears and performances

surrounding the human condition and its related capabilities, being them physical, psychological or societal. I use the metaphor of 'balancing acts' to illustrate how -at this level- I made sense of the interview material, attempting to imaginatively balance various masks emerging from the participants' performances and from my own positioning as a researcher.

The analysis of interviews -towards a better understanding of 'terrorist learning'- was undertaken so that, on the one hand, this looked at some of the 'resources' that the participants are drawing upon. On the other hand, the analysis looked to provide some answers to the questions: "who is the participant for me and who am I for the participant?"; these questions provided an opportunity for a dialectical reflection between participant's biography and my autobiography. For this purpose, I have once again 'kindly asked' Arke and Dawanur to step in at certain times and attempt to illuminate matters (Arke as the 'light-bringer' and Dawanur as the 'hidden light'); this has helped me to make sense of the different underlying dynamics within the narrative (story-ies) of the interview.

There was a first round (level) of analysis with the use of a Pro-forma (West, 2107), and have looked at identifying the main themes from the material, then patterns and an overall form of the stories presented. I used fiction to be able to see the materials from different perspectives as well as to uncover possible patterns and relationships between different 'masks', which were constructed by participants to represent various stances from the past, the present as well as serving the role of justifying their diverse reactions to events within their consequent action pattern. The term 'mask' was not used to necessarily designate anything that is deliberately hidden or untrue, but refers to the construction of various persona - like The Charitable and The Missionary- which allow themselves to make sense of reality and essentially to drive one to 'keep on keeping on'.

There are four relationships that motivate these analyses. These relationships are between:

a) the educator and the subject of learning, as a being and as a concept, e.g. the journey through one's life;

b) Individual learning journeys and the subject of 'terrorism';

c) me as an educator (identity) and my 'on the border' entity, with border-related vulnerabilities, uncertainties and un-uniformities;

d) One's identity and entity and the Other.

Following on from these four guiding relationships, I have looked at interview stories as layered at three particular levels of "keep on keeping on". At the first level of the analysis, some micro dynamics have been looked at and various 'masks' will emerge from the stories presented. These will come out -like fine "balancing acts"- from identifying main themes and patterns within the stories as well as from recognising an overall form of the story(-ies). These "balancing acts" of the emerging 'masks' -between dialogue and discontent, between play and resentment- bear the reference points of one's surrounding reality with its "disjunctures", be it factual or imaginary, or fusional between these.

At the first level of the analysis, there are synergies between narrative formation of stories that people tell and the so-called "Gestalt Closure" (Mortola, 1999). There is a recognised "disequilibrium" in our experiences, which we are constantly attempting to address and make sense of; it also happens that "disequilibrium" is an important concept for both narrative theory and Gestalt theory as both recognise the value of the stories that are told by people, more specifically how people work to reinstate a state or a sense of equilibrium through the stories they tell (ob.cit., p. 308).

However, the story or stories of any given self - with its "disequilibrium" and potential desires to reestablish a "equilibrium"- are not at all homogenous and stable, but depend on the history of the concept of self, i.e. from its non-existence in Antiquity, to its 'appearance' as a private, intrinsic and therefore rational but 'hidden' phenomenon, to something that it is 'hidden' even behind its private nature.

Therefore, the very history of the self could become to some extent the history of how people have and still try to illuminate their 'disequilibrium(s)', by creating stories that attempt to re-create a sense of 'equilibrium'.

> [...] in the beginning, in antiquity, there was no sense of the self as individual. Paul Veyne, for example, in the first volume of *A History of Private Life, from Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, asserts categorically that 'no ancient, not even the poets, is capable of talking about himself.' [...] Then, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, along with Protestantism came the idea of man as an individual, private rooms, autobiography, and a new sense of the word *self* as a noun referring to "that… in a person [which] is really and intrinsically *he* (in contradiction to what is adventitious). [...] we may credit Descartes with the discovery of the "inner" or "hidden" or "private self", whose story came to be told in autobiography. Then we could reasonably expect Freud's work on the unconscious (the momentous second step in the history of consciousness), which involves a radical expansion of the received model of personality and postulates a 'hidden' part of the 'hidden' self, to have had revolutionary implications for our understanding of the self and its story (Eakin, 1992, pp. 83–84).

Building on these thoughts, it seems that -in the story (-ies) of selves and their lives- there is an issue of false autonomy or an "illusion of autonomy," especially in relation to the Descartian perspective "I felt, therefore I was" and, therefore, one needs to recognise that there is a separation and a necessary incongruence between what the interview participant has said and what he lived; similarly, my own written account about myself -through the involvement of Arke and to some extent of Dawanur- is not the same as my lived experiences.

Following Roland Barthes perspective, "the one who writes is not the one who is" and according to John Updike's perspective on the 'rift' from his 'true, deep self' in the representation of his own name: "the signature of the one who writes [...] is displaced by the signature of the one who is". The hand that holds the pen does so imperfectly [...]" (Eakin, 1992, p. 183).

It is therefore an "existential imperative" (ob.cit. p.71) to create a space where others -the participant(s)- and I can co-exist through a dialogue between our stories,

which attempt to make sense of 'disequilibrium(s)' and move towards a state or at least a sense of a (new) 'equilibrium'.

According to Gestalt theory, the movement from equilibrium to disequilibrium and then modified equilibrium is central to the ongoing process of Gestalt Formation and Closure; similarly to Gestalt theory, this "triadic process" and movement is considered to be central to the process of "telling a story and 'making sense' of human experience" (Mortola 1999, p.310). Gestalt therapy also considers that the very fact of being alive attracts in itself a movement through these three phases, with the key to a healthy life being the very existence and the role of an assumed "disequilibrium":

> The organism is striving for a maintenance of an equilibrium which is continuously disturbed by its needs and regained through their gratification" and "an individual in need of water [is] an example of the creation of a need -or Gestalt formation- and the destruction of a partial equilibria. When the individual finds water, there is Gestalt closure - the fulfilling of a need and the organismic assimilation of something new (Perls, 1947 and Latner, 1973, as cited in Mortola, 1999, p.311).

The need for water and its fulfilment could also be used as a metaphor to illustrate and hopefully bring some light on the story (-ies) introduced during the interview as well as my own story; hopefully, Arke and Dawanur will be able to illuminate from the "outside" and from the "inside" and to contribute at finding some possible answers to two questions: 'Who the participant is for me and who am I for the participant?'.

On the other hand, the narrative theorists seem to agree on a general makeup of a narrative, being it a stage story, or a children's tale, or a confession, either a real or a made-up account of one's experiences, more specifically:

> [...] stories contain the same elements of triadic structure as described by Gestalt theorists [...]. That is, stories tend to include a "scene setting" description of some kind of normative reality (i.e. equilibrium), a description of a "troubling" breach of those norms (i.e. disequilibrium), and some effort at "sense-making," wherein a new

understanding of reality is constructed (i.e. modified equilibrium) (Mortola, 1999, p. 312).

The self and its experiences is represented in these stories, which have a role in expressing a troubling and sometimes even traumatic reality so that after its unravelling some sense of renewed equilibrium can be regained (ob.cit.); it is therefore important to approach "the self as a discursive entity unfolding in the text" (Eakin, 1992, p. 79).

According to Mortola (1999), one would need to look closely at the importance and the role of the words and expressions; here are some examples:

1) Equilibrium, signaled at the narrative level through:
   - repetitions , i.e. "he was a lot of me", "he was a really big part of me", "he was a part of me", "my life depended on him"
   - Emphatic stress, i.e. "really…", "definitely" ("he was a really big part of me") (Ob.cit.)

2) Disequilibrium, seen through:
   - Repetition of something missing, i.e. "there's this really big, dark… tunnel", "there's a big chunk missing", "when he'd leave I'd kinds fall down"
   - Intensifying adverbs and adjectives, i.e. "really" as in "really big tunnel" etc
   - Graphic images to describe the pain or a troubling state of mind or being, e.g. through verbal portraits and image-laden words, which express the 'trouble' in a story. (Ob.cit.)

3) Modified Equilibrium, as follows:
   - Present and future oriented progressive verbs, i.e. "I'm staying down", "he's going up", "I'm still down here… trying"
   - Directional adverbs, i.e. "going up…", "staying down…"
   - Evaluative conjunction, i.e. "so…", "for that reason, therefore" (Ob.cit.)

STAGE 2: ANALYSIS - PHASE ONE

"BALANCING ACTS"

The Actionary (The Missionary - Mubashir)

Background: personal beliefs and allegiances

The development of this case study has meant, in the first phase, to uncover some main themes from the interview material as well as looking at an overall form of the story with its potential patterns and relationships that could emerge from the text. This first level of analysis has looked at how equilibrium, disequilibrium and renewed equilibrium play out as referential narratives throughout the participant's story and how these contribute to "balancing (the) acts" that create a relatively unitary "mask" for the participant's story; these have roots and points of reference within participant's own biography.

The 'acts' that are balanced within the participant's 'mask' are either touching on dialogue or discontent, playfulness or resentments, all 'acts' originating in a

disjuncture, a defining moment in one's biography. I named the emerging mask Mubashir, which means The Missionary, one might also say the Actionary, in the Arabic language. The emerging themes are organised in seven parts: from participant's personal beliefs and allegiances to inconsistencies and contradictions in today's world due to Western politics interventions, to understanding the world differently and then to Mubashir's placed value on engaging the Other and his membership to an Islamist Political Party, Hizb-ut-Tahrir. These are followed by parts regarding the establishment of the 'Khilafah' to contradictions of the Muslim world, to finally touch upon the very possibility of 'hope'.

Mubashir had characterised himself as a "stereotypical British kid" who was born and grew up in a Muslim family who immigrated from Mauritius in the 60s. He completed his education in the east part of London and then went on to study Computer Engineering at university to then work his way up and get a job in the City with a large multinational company. The description "a stereotypical British kid" also meant that he loved and played football and even been offered to play for Tottenham Hotspur. All these seem to characterise a relative equilibrium in his early life, with the full support of his family that provided for and nurtured his professional success.

Mubashir was brought up in a Muslim household; he was introduced to the practices of Islam and also was instilled with an early strong sense of identity -"you are a Muslim"- which essentially meant that "you only eat Halal food, you pray five times a day, no alcohol, you fast, you go to Madrasas to learn the Quran from an young age". At the same time, this given equilibrium around one's religious identity proved relative, being unexplained and not understood enough. It is not surprising that this early equilibrium had morphed in time and especially during the teenage years into an increasing inquisitiveness and search for answers:

> *"I felt that these are just a set of ritualised actions and that Islam is more... In my mind there was always the question why, why are we doing this. During teenage years, the questions started to manifest more overtly and only when I got to college at the age of seventeen, eighteen, I was able to ask questions; there was an Islamic society at college; topics, discussions like "Can you prove that God exists? were*

*presented with arguments and evidence. It was definitely a journey
into Islam, which is more that a religion…".*

Personal questions around the religious practices that were introduced to him by his family have 'bubbled under the surface' throughout his childhood and have only received extrinsic, rational and positivist answers during teenage years:

> *"My journey is a relatively stereotypical journey of a teenager living in London, living his life, riding his bike, but at the same time having an identity and not quite understanding what that identify is… I realised the difference between belief and proof that God exists. Learned at college and university that this is the case when I have joined a Muslim organisation, the Islamic Society. How do I know that God exists? How do I know… for the first time I was given answers… that I can tangibly accept; it was a rational discussion, we can prove rationally that God exists. You have all these things around you, none of these things had the ability to create themselves, surely it requires someone to create them…".*

The early inquisitiveness has then been met with comprehensive, definitive and satisfying answers from the Islamic Society that Mubashir joined when he was in college. The bubbling and playful early inquisitiveness in regard to his own religious identity has now started to be mapped out for Mubashir to receive a trajectory of discontent, from "I grew up as a stereotypical British kid" to "there is an issue with British identity", to "Me as a Brit… what is a Brit?".

Mubashir openly declared that at a surface level he might be seen "as a Brit" as he wears western clothes, prefers fish and chips, supports Manchester United and speaks English at home with his parents, however this is only a superficial equilibrium that, in fact, has created what appeared to be an identity disequilibrium to be only resolved by him having joined the Islamic Society.

These answers were received very timely as well as they provided a renewed equilibrium during the teenage years, which meant a new and enhanced sense of identity, not just based on his and his parents' religious practices, but also connected to a different interpretation of the surrounding reality(-ies):

> *"you get taught a version of history in school. History can be viewed from different perspectives; you put your goggles on… the British view of World War I is what a fantastic victory for freedom symbolised by the "poppy" (flower). WWI for me meant a sad thing as it meant the end of the Ottoman Empire, which meant fourteen hundred years of Islamic rule that traces its roots all the way to an Islamic government that was established by our Prophet".*

Also, this new and enhanced identity seems to be based on a discontent towards past history and resentment towards "Western powers" whose political agenda was -at the beginning of the 20th Century- to terminate an uninterrupted Islamic rule. The realisation of belonging to a bigger 'entity' does lead to a newly found equilibrium and identity, which is however built in direct opposition to a superficial sense of being "a Brit". The oppositional construction -out of resentment- of the newly found equilibrium comes also with the promise of a new allegiance, which is much deeper and therefore more meaningful as it relates to a fusion between one's religion and past history of Islamic rule:

> *"Will I go and fight for Britain? Absolutely no way… where do my political allegiances lie? They do not lie with Queen and country, my political allegiances lie with the Ummah, or the Islamic nation…* (and the hand went instantly to his heart) *yes it is a personal thing, what connects me to all Muslims? We share a belief, share a set of ideas, we believe in this concept of brotherhood, we belief in one God, the same Prophet, the same Quran; this is what makes me connected to my Brothers and Sisters".*

"My Ummah..." was pronounced very slowly, with some degree of silence in it and with a heavy tone, as if a mythical presence is finally confirmed, is here, and -through its permanence and presence- puts forward in a clear and decisive manner the most important point of one's existence. Mubashir mentioned that the allegiance towards Ummah is however wrongly thought and portrayed sometimes - and also by the British government- as an automatic hate towards others - "into a Kafir Vs Muslim argument, where non-Muslims must be eliminated or converted", whilst this allegiance only means "to uphold the best of values".

Mubashir talked about being "discriminated against in my own country, Britain", which is manifested for example every time he travels by being "randomly" searched at the airports. There seems to also be a climate of fear to openly disagree with the government:

> *"There is a climate created nowadays where one cannot even say I do not like it because they will be labelled as terrorists, as extremists. Muslims are afraid to say that they do not like Christmas, of fear of being labelled as extremists or terrorists, because in their definition extremists do not like Christmas".*

Inconsistencies and contradictions in the world - the plan of the Western powers

A set of questions are introduced by Mubashir:

> *"Why there are so many political inconsistencies in the world? Why was there a medical embargo on Iraq prior to the invasion and also on Iran, but is nothing on Israel? These contradictions are now in the open, but no one discusses these, why?"*

These indicate a sense of profound disequilibrium in the world. The answer to these questions is that the Western politics -with their inconsistent application of political narratives- are the main driver of political inconsistencies and then of extremism, radicalisation and terrorism:

> *"Colonel Gaddafi and Saddam were monsters, but they had very cordial relationships with the British government when it came to the export of gas and arms. [...] The example of Saudi Arabia and the Khashoggi murder, but at the same time the British Government has very cordial relationship with the Saudis. [...] Western governments are complicit in allowing these things to happen; throughout history, you've seen how governments have allowed political situation to manifest in order to capitalise politically… I am sure that in the years to come we'll start to see the secret dossiers. A sense of double standard… why is it that*

governments treat one with the language of evil and the other with helping hands".

The global Muslim community sees these inconsistencies and contradictions and looks at them as profoundly disturbing; there is resentment at how even United Nations' advice is disregarded:

> *"there is no consistency like is in the case with the relationship of Western governments with the state of Israel which illegally occupied West Bank and Palestinian land, and building on it, even by UN definitions is illegal but there are no sanctions against Israel because they violate UN resolutions".*

"Our times are dark times, the darkest in a long time" said Mubashir and then a short silence fell quite heavily; this has emphasised the sense of disequilibrium as well as the need for a new solution to emerge as "from darkness to light" and then continued to say that

> *"our times are similar to the times the Prophet lived in, the times of slavery, of people burying their daughters alive, of corruption, of many vices, of oppression. Similar realities today; similar times we leave today".*

The Prophet's example is given as an example of moving from darkness to light as the first Islamic government was established in Medina. Nowadays, the Western political games are to subdue the Muslim world by installing "puppet leaders and governments", however the ordinary citizen wants this to change:

> *"The Muslim rulers of today are only puppets of the Western governments. The British were more than happy to turn a blind eye to what these governments were doing as long as they were able to subdue the people and get what they wanted from these lands, Iraq, Syria. When the West achieved its political objectives was more than happy to pull the rug under these governments and individuals and accuse them of extremism and dictatorship and replace them with another form of dictator. People want change from the present situation; the proof is the Arab spring".*

"I like to engage…", the membership of Hizb-ut-Tahrir and "terrorism"

Mubashir expressed eloquently the need for discussion and interaction to move forward and understand each other's perspective, with the same being applicable in work environments. However, Prevent Agenda is a worrying point as it manages to criminalise discussions and interactions and, as a consequence, the "Muslim community feels criminalised for what it believes in and then it closes itself off".

There is a strong sense of discontent with the government's Prevent Agenda and what it creates in society, more specifically a 'regime of fear'. Resentment is also present as it relates to people's feeling of being unfairly treated as a Muslim community within the wider society:

> "I should not feel ashamed of my views; on the contrary, I am very proud of my views, I am very proud of what I believe in and we should be able to discuss and engage in… and be free and open and frank. We need to be aware of boundaries that we do not need to cross, given by the law, but within those boundaries why not have these discussions? Why is there no discussion on TV or on the Radio etc, which will lead to a wider learning in society about each others' views and beliefs: understanding other perspectives…".

In college, Mubashir became a member of Hizb-ut-Tahrir, which is a global Islamic Political Party that is proscribed in the Muslim world and many other countries, including in the West, but non-proscribed in the UK despite some discussions in 2006 with the 'Blair government'.

Hizb-ut-Tahrir works towards the reinstatement of the "Islamic way of life" and the implementation of Islam in the political form of the Khilafah or the Caliphate. One learns also that the organisation is non-violent and works since 1952 to establish the Khilafah in the Muslim world:

> "It is banned in the Muslim world, not because it is a violent political organisation. [...] We are a non-violent political organisation that just calls

for the resumption of the Islamic way of life/ Khilafah in the Muslim world without undertaking any 'material actions'. We are an intellectual, political organisation that calls for ideas and not material actions in terms of fighting."

Hence, the work Mubashir and other members of the organisation undertake seems to mainly engage people in intellectual and political ideas in seminars, Cafes, through leaflets, conferences, books and public debates. His own journey into and within the organisation does not follow anything else but his own curiosity in regard to what is happening in the world: "my natural inquisitiveness about the world and my identity as a Muslim". Hibz-ut-Tahrir has provided him with a very practical understanding and following of his religion, e.g. rational proof for the existence of God through a purely rational discussion, as well as constituted a safe place where he can ask questions, to explore and discuss with people he knew from college days, all speaking English and being very comfortable with everybody.

It seems that this was the first opportunity Mubashir had to ask questions about what it means to be a Muslim and had discovered a lot more than what he expected:

"Earlier in life I was taught what Islam is, but I did not enjoy the Quran school. [...] This was the first real opportunity to use my reason to discover, the first opportunity to explore, you are at that stage in your life [teenage years] when you can question matters for yourself. [...] What does it mean to be a Muslim? It is a lot more than the usual sense, the five-pillars… discovering Islam, having the first opportunity to learn this and be taught this… they explained to me and provided meaning, what does Islam as a way of life really means".

Mubashir talked about the importance of feelings to start off a journey of discovery, for example the "feeling of incompleteness" that comes from one's beliefs when the mind is not used, but just the emotions:

"believing in your heart is only a small part, the ability to reason is more important. [...] I knew about conflicts in Bosnia and Beirut, but never understood [before then] what was happening there…".

A new understanding of Islam appeared then to Mubashir as more than a religion, as a way of life and an ideology and political system. Hizb-ut-Tahrir taught him rationally the difference between a religion as a mere set of ritual values that in Islam are to pray, to fast etc, and what a way of life is, which seems to refer to governing the social and individual life:

> *"Islam as a way of life is a set of beliefs, it give you rules and laws that govern your life, your community life, your government and your society perspective. It is an ideology, from the belief emanates a political system and it is a political system that regulates life affairs, from a ruling system to an economic system to a punishment system to a judiciary system, all the things that you will have in a government. [...] Islam is a political system; how a ruler is elected, what constitutes evidence, different types of companies, ownership etc. its political manifestation is in a form of a state, a Khilafah".*

The work of Hizb-ut-Tahrir appears initially not to be related to Jihad, but to the reinstatement of the Khilafah; this is how this work is introduced by Mubashir who makes a direct reference to a book titled "How the Khilafah was destroyed?" that was written by one of the previous leaders of the organisation. The work Mubashir has embarked on as a member since he was eighteen is to reverse the decline and the dissolution of the fourteen hundred year long stream of Khilafahs, which according to Hizb-ut-Tahrir's perspective was due to a lack of political and intellectual understanding of Islam, which amounted to being complacent about the real role of the Islamic teachings. This disequilibrium seemed to have been exploited as an opportunity by the Western powers, which still have today the interest to perpetuate this state of affairs.

Mubashir learned that there are 'hidden forces' at play and that the resentments towards a current state of matters have to be addressed through:

> *"the highest form of action, which is the political action, that means speaking and engaging with people, discussing ideas… we would not take up arms and violence [...] Political action is something that I believe*

in: this is what motivated me to speak with you… [...] there is no need to take more direct action, this is proscribed by Islam and we need to follow Prophet's example in taking actions, which is limited to political and intellectual".

However, according to Mubashir, the British government wants to stop these type of actions and so discussions around the subject of Syria, its future and the involvement of the Western powers" are stopped. Mubashir seems to be genuinely interested in having a society-wide dialogue around his and others' discontent and resentments; these discussions being stopped in their tracks without a rational explanation seems to create a ground for these resentments to further develop into mistrust, confirmation of a 'we-them' narrative and possibly even the development of anger and hate:

"Why is this detabe stifled? Why we cannot have these discussions on university campuses? [...] we are not proscribed, but banned to organise discussions… what is the opposition to intellectual debate and discussion?".

There seems to be another emerging explanation for this state of affairs, which seems to be connected to some or another way to define certain terms. Mubashir mentions that there is problem with the term "terrorism", or rather with the government adopted definitions; he says that 'terrorism', or 'extremism', or 'radicalisation' are politically loaded terms, which are used to describe individual people or communities so that these can fit into a favoured political narrative at a particular point in time.

Having been asked if ISIS/ Daesh can be considered terrorists, Mubashir has not provided a direct answer deciding rather to indirectly say that naming or labelling ISIS/ Daesh as terrorists, or extremists, or radicals would not mean anything as these terms belong to a political narrative that does not belong to the political ideas of Islam:

"the problem I have with the term terrorism is that the word never represents what people are doing; it is a political description that people associate with a particular set of actions. [...] What definition of terrorism one wants to use? According to some definition of terrorism, I might be considered as a terrorist, because I reject democracy in the sense that I do not believe that secular man-made law should rule… [...] The British government definition of extremism seen in Prevent, despite of one seeing me as quite reasonable and normal, the definition would look at me as an extremist… [...] Everybody has a prejudice in regard to terrorism, and this is the difficulty".

Mubashir then offers an Islamic perspective on 'terrorism' and 'extremism' by giving examples of those who leave Islam and do not follow the teachings of Islam:

"someone who goes outside of the fold of Islam and does not follow what God says, we can also call them as extremists because they went outside the boundaries of Islam. [...] Islam does not allow the killing of innocent men, women and children, absolutely not. Allows indiscriminately killing? Not. So by this definition… they [ISIS/ Daesh, presumably] are absolutely extremists".

However, more interesting is the offered perspective on extremism and terrorism, which refers to "crossing of given boundaries", and implicitly from the overall argument are especially those boundaries that are given by God and less concerning those boundaries which are given through man-made laws:

"I do not believe that secular man-made law should rule [...] I do not believe that we are completely free to do whatever we want; we have limits that God has placed. [...] Extremism is often defined as someone who goes beyond the boundaries… so whatever the limits, wherever you draw the line, whoever goes beyond that line is an extremist…".

Understanding the world, differently…

Images of poverty around the world resonate with Mubashir's sensibilities, as a human being, as a religious man as well as someone for whom Islam is also a

God-given ideology and political system. Very graphic images of people, whole families living in cardboard boxes in the Indian slums are presented and these indicate a profound disequilibrium that these might have created for Mubashir. These are contrasted with images of a privileged self who was driven to and from a workplace in an airconditioned limuzine, the very place of work from where only hours later the packaging from new IT equipment had become 'home' for few families. These are very powerful contrasting images that indicate that the experience had profoundly impacted him, as well as other travels he has been on since.

Even a recent work-related trip to New York revealed the extent of wealth disparities with homeless people having to sleep near the warmth irradiated from the subway air vents and scrap for food in the bins. The situation is similar in his native Walthamstow, where there is an increase in homelessness and night crime. All these images are presented in contrasting strikes, between the very poor and the very rich, and all presenting a communality of human poverty, suffering and indignity in todays global world. 'The West' is seen as the root cause of all these:

> *"[whilst] the Western world keeps us like in a bubble, being worried about objects we own rather than people, [...] inequality is the communality of our world today, from India to London, to New York. Is this normal, is this acceptable? These drove me to want to change something; the emotion of seeing people suffering pushed me into asking questions...".*

Mubashir seems to consider that asking questions, perhaps in this way reducing reality to its bare essence and purpose, belongs to a rational approach at understanding the world, one's identity and belief system, her ideology, religion or political system. Poverty amongst other vices of modern society seem to be rationally and logically attributed to the Western powers' political influence around the world. "Rational discussions" with, within and outside of Hizb-ut-Tahrir around, for example, what has happened with Bosnian Muslims, with the Golf War, the importance of facts on the ground in Palestine, made Mubashir ask:

> *"What is going on in these conflicts? There was a common denominator in these conflicts, i.e. Muslim, Muslim, Muslim. Hold on a second, we are not bad people? My parents are not violent, people I live around are not violent…".*

The argument reveals sedimented layers of discontent with one's place in society and also a growing resentment that is expressed in oppositions like "us Vs them". The internal logical validity of these arguments is provided also by the simplicity of reaching the argumentative conclusion, which presents one with a revealing binary choice: "Are you being British or are you Muslim? [...] it depends on the context".

On a superficial contextual level, in seems that Mubashir is "a Brit", however at a more deeper level:

> *"the connection to other Muslims is direct… and there is a heavy burden on your shoulders. Belonging to a Ummah is a powerful concept that unites us and binds us together and that started me to think that there are problems in this world and that my fellow Muslims have problems and I belong to this Ummah, to this great nation, that we have children starving, malnourished in Iraq because of the Western governments sanctions on medications for children, systematic rape of women in Yugoslavia…".*

The surface seems to contradict the inner content, and the deep-seated stories about oneself and his belonging negate the externally-given representations of oneself; it seems to be the conflict between one's identity and entity, disequilibrium which is apparently resolved by a political party membership with its associated simple solutions to all seen problems of today's world:

> *"What attracted me were the answers to questions around religion, but also around how can we address these global issues and essentially by linking the Quranic text and the sayings of the Prophet with a global view of how the world should be. The meeting at HT provided me with a solution to these problems, global solutions emanating from the belief I believe in… We believe that the absence of Islam from this world is the reason for these issues in the world; when we let humans to rule by only using their own rules, man-made rules, is where the problems start to arise, the chaos we see in this life. God gave us the rules of living this life*

in the Quran; how to bring this ideology back into mainstream? God grants victory…”.

The Solution - Rebuilding the Khilafah first, Jihad later

> *"The reality in the Muslim world is, we tried communism, socialism and democracy and all failed…”.*

The solution for the world's present as well as past problems, Mubashir points out, is contained within God's plan for humanity, something for which God has provided guidance to mankind, something that was then established by Prophet Muhammad in his lifetime in Medina and followed within the Muslim world for fourteen hundred years, until the Western powers managed to terminate through World War I. The solution -one discovers- almost stares at us from the past, from a distant past of ancestral and mythical beginnings of Islamic faith and political system. The solution is to rebuild the Khilafah, the Islamic State, the enactment of a God-given political system. I am reminded by Mubashir that this needs to happen at first only in the Muslim world, within present Muslim lands, because

> *"people are Muslim, the society is Islamic and people want to see Islam in their lives. Islam came as a guidance for mankind, it is applicable for everyone everywhere; it has guidance for people to live under and there is a great history of accepting non-Muslims who thrived in there, which is opposed to the realities of ISIS/ Daesh”.*

Mubashir speaks passionately against ISIS/ Daesh, which he says that has largely contributed to developing the negative perception people nowadays have about the potential reinstatement of Khilafah (Islamic State). Mubashir learned from

Hizb-ut-Tahrir's "rational and practical perspective on Islam" that there are certain conditions that have to be met to establish an Islamic State and that all the necessary teachings are in the early days of Islam when the Prophet established the first Islamic government and state in Medina. Going back to the origins of Islam to look for the conditions and the models -human and organisational- of the Khilafah is a must and doing so will assure that this solution will be implemented without violence, but only through political and ideological engagement, just like the Prophet Muhammad has done fourteen hundred years ago:

> *"ISIS, I never considered them to be an Islamic State as they have not met the conditions to be an Islamic State; just because they had a piece of land and they elected an Emir or a leader, does not automatically means that you are legitimate. There are laws around theft, or how women cover, but this is not what an Islamic State is about. ISIS went beyond the boundaries and limits that are set/ prescribed by Islam; so, I disagree with their actions because these do not sit within the limits prescribed by Islam".*

The establishment of the new-equilibrium that is to come through the reinstatement of an originary Khilafah is the main aim, solution and teaching of Hizb-ut-Tahrir, and the correct implementation of it will assure its adoption and political success. Mubashir argues that organisations like Al Qaeda and ISIS have rather emerged as effects of the present set of political circumstances and context where the Western powers are complicit to their actions:

> *"The likes of Al Qaeda or ISIS... they come within a set of political contexts, and you can't divorce the political set of circumstances and context from the reality of their actions. I disagree with their actions, but they are born within a context and as a consequence of events, there is a reality behind that needs to be understood; these things do not happen in a vacuum, with no reason. There is a lot of politics behind it… governments are complicit in allowing these things to happen; throughout history, you've seen how governments have allowed political situations to manifest in order to capitalise politically…".*

One example of the Western powers interference was World War I, which was an opportunity to destroy a long and uninterrupted chain of Khilafahs and divide the last Ottoman Khilafah between Western winning states:

> *"that was the political vision, to destroy the Ottoman Empire and for the European nations to divide and conquer that region. These lands were carved out of the remnants of the Ottoman Empire and given to different nations and friendly puppet governments of the Western rulers".*

Mubashir looks at the Ottoman Empire with a mixture of realism and nostalgia, recognising on the one hand their faults in regard to their hereditary system and the persecution of ethnic and religious minorities and, on the other hand, seeing their disappearance as a loss of the "natural manifestation of Islam, beyond its religious manifestations", which is felt even at a personal level.

Mubashir presents an example of pluralism and freedoms of past Khalifas by illustrating the remnants of these past realities, as these were experienced by him and his wife who were on a holiday in Damascus around Easter time in 2007. He expressed his surprise when, during an after-lunch walk, him and his wife noticed a big gathering of people singing in Arabic and moving slowly as a part of a street procession behind one of the most famous mosques in Islam, the Old Ummayad Mosque. These were Syrian Christians celebrating their Easter Sunday and most likely their chants were in a mixture of Arabic and Syriac, a literal form of Aramaic. An old woman saw them and, realising that they are not from 'there', greeted and invited them for some mint tea at her house. Mubashir and his wife happily went to the Christian woman's house where they had a basic conversation in Arabic when Mubashir expressed his surprise to see such a big gathering of Christian worshipers; the old woman replied that she is Syrian, her ancestors are all Syrian and they always lived there for many hundreds and thousands of years. The conversation gave Mubashir the opportunity to learn -through first-hand experience- that Christians were historically protected in Muslim lands and they were and still are happily living there:

> *"look at the diversity that was created under the Islamic rule, especially in what was for many hundred of years the city capital of the Muslim world, Damascus".*

This personal experience of learning through an encounter of the Other had reinforced it seems the idea of a "golden past"/ a "perfect time of the origins" defined by the pluralistic and diverse environment created by the presence of the Khilafah in the Muslim lands. However, the realities of the reinstatement of the Khilafah will have to be introduced in opposition to other political perspectives; this in the end argued Mubashir

> *"is the human life, human beings have to hate something to support something else like in supporting Manchester United means hating Liverpool. It would be unrealistic not to oppose anything, it is natural".*

The work of Hizb-ut-Tahrir seem to be quite clearly laid out, "not to do Jihad, but to re-establish the Khilafah". The concept of Jihad, Mubashir sustains, is directly connected to fighting of an army, it is connected to the foreign policy of a state and therefore cannot exist before the establishment of Khilafah. Moreover, Jihad cannot be fought at a personal or individual level, but only as a part of an army that has the role of protecting or propagating an Islamic State:

> *"There are many organisations that want to re-establish the Khilafah, but the way of implementation varies from missionary, educational and charitable way, to a more direct way to implement it. It is not about slow or fast, but it is about how Islam has mandated that you bring about this state. The Prophet brought into existence the first Islamic State, he lived in the days of ignorance of misguidance… and he worked to establish the first Islamic state in Medina. We follow our Prophet in the way he established the first Islamic State, through intellectual and political struggle… raising issues and empowering leaders. HT method is the Prophet's way…".*

On the subject of Jihad, Mubashir continues to say that there are a set of rules around it as they were given by God through Prophet Muhammad and it cannot take place unless there is an Islamic State to be defended. This is Hizb-ut-Tahrir's interpretation around how Jihad can happen:

> "it is not a personal struggle, but constitute the rules around fighting of an army, an army under an Islamic State. It has nothing to do with political action, calling for political ideas which is called Dawa or the propagation of the message. [...] Jihad has to do with the existence of an army which protects as well as propagates".

On the other hand, Mubashir feels that the debate and conception of Jihad nowadays does obstruct the open discussion and understanding of it; on the contrary, fear of persecution has been created within Muslim communities:

> "I personally believe in Jihad, but if I say the "J" word I am going to be arrested… Nowadays it is used to label people and describe people; it has become a politicised term to pass a view of people. The Prevent stifles all the good discussion around various topics; the community has become very fearful; closing the options in the community will mean that people will seek other options, including more extreme and material actions".

The Reactionary (The Charitable - Alkhayria)

The "house": the all important beginnings

The participant described the beginnings of his life in the '50s, living up north of England in a "white neighborhood", with himself belonging to a small Asian community at that time. There is a sense of a relative equilibrium where people's ethnicity and not their religion was talked about; this state of equilibrium is signaled by the introduction of simple repetitions "well I grew up, I was born and raised in the UK, my father came in the early 50s", followed by a brief description of the family "his brother was here in the mid 40', adventurous people, they were merchants,

seamen… ahmmm… in the north of England" and then of his life-context that was signalling some areas of equilibrium as well as introducing some elements of potential disequilibrium:

> "I grew up in there in a very white British neighborhood… ahmmm… and I had no issues, we had friends, uncles, aunties, all white people… arhmmm… there wasn't many many Asian people at that time. At that time, we weren't referred to as Muslims and Christians and… There were Asians and whites and … so, I grew up in a very predominantly white neighbourhood".

Whilst there is a strong sense of equilibrium coming through from these descriptions, there is also a sense of a constant and underlying disequilibrium given by statements like "I could not really speak my own language, my mother tongue…, we spoke English at home you know, so I never really got to learn my own language properly, my mother tongue properly, until I was about 18,19, 20", which contains a repetition of something missing. Directional expressions like "until I moved" signal a sense of looking at the past from the perspective of a potentially modified equilibrium

> "I could not really speak my own language, my mother tongue… arhmmm, until I moved to London properly actually."

From "Inside the house" however, a strong sense of equilibrium is coming through, but this is mainly related to learning own religion from his own family, which had actually been teaching Islam to the community and own house had become like a "mini mosque":

> "I started to study my my religion Islam from an young age; my mother started to teach us that, arhmmm... Our house was the only house in the area that when we were growing up to a few people coming from abroad from the same part of the world as my parents, arhmmm… so whoever wanted to learn Islam or the Quran would come to my mother and my sister, they will teach them. So it kind of became a Mini mosque let's say… We were taught how to read our Religion and the basic fundamentals of our faith."

"Outside the house" seemed to be an integration and harmony between one's own culture and the majority 'white neighbourhood', however this past equilibrium -signalled by an empathic stress- is being looked at from the place of the future, from the perspective of a modified equilibrium which is introduced by an evaluative conjunction

> *"so, I never had any issues, I never had any racist attacks, I never had any religiously motivated attacks, or anything…".*

However, even at the later stages when disequilibrium was established followed by the events of 9/11, the religion seems to be a "constant equilibrium", a guide of behaviour in public space. There is a sense of repetition of the changing nature of people's perceptions and attitudes towards one another following the trauma of 9/11; the story is completed also by the sense of equilibrium given by an understanding of one's own religion, i.e. the emphatic stress on "pretty good [...]" is evocative of this:

> *"What I was learning at that time was you know that erhmmm… the attitudes of people and the behaviours of people started to change, ahmmm… what I knew of my religion was that this is wrong, what if these guys were Muslims then this is wrong what they did you know my my learning was quite clear on that prior to that I also had an experience of my sister passing away and I looked more into my faith about you know what happens after death do we meet each other brothers and sisters you know… and I had a pretty good understanding of my religion and I knew now that what the terrorists did was wrong arhmmm, but also you know I was… arhmmm… exposed to these issues that I was feeling now experiencing a lot of them looking back now were just my perceptions that there was there was a change in attitude but not as great as I'd imagined it or felt it to be."*

Brothers

The participant's brothers represent the strongest family ties and, alongside religion, provide a constant reassurance and sense of equilibrium during changing times as well as during times of personal disequilibrium, which can be read even by

the way the story is told, repetitions, moving swiftly from one thought to another, half-finishing sentences and being slightly hesitant in expressing thoughts:

> *"… the people that actually knew about what I was gonna do what … were my brothers. They were, one was younger than me [mobile ringing again] and… one was older than me, sorry… (speaking on the phone: I am in a meeting, I am in the office, can you come? OK, bye.) arhmmm, one was older than me, eight years older than me and one was younger than me, but we were best of friends, the best of friends I mean… arhmmm,... we've done everything together, the work, business, we lived together then we separated in different houses but we would have dinner together almost every single day, we missed each other… so, they knew exactly what I was going through and who I was meeting so I like although I was in the meetings mainly they were as well this was discussed, so they knew what was going… and, my wife found out let's say few days before I was going to go… you know arhmmm, but my brothers knew everything and they were with it, they were with me and when I told them that this is what happened so like I almost you know became… I was got killed and meant that my children will be orphans, but also meant my brothers will lose the brother so it's like if one of us it's threatened you threaten all of us so we were all on a revenge mission, we were all on a mission, three of us to address this issue. And that's why when we've started the organisation we've started it together, you know… ya. I put all my money into the organisation and when I lost all my money my brother said don't worry I have money and I found out many years later that he sold his property…"*

The move to London

The move to London is significant on a few levels as it connects to an earlier 'slow-burning', underlying disequilibrium related to not knowing parents' language as well as it connects to an emergent disequilibrium due to his brothers deciding to leave the family home for London. The disequilibrium is signalled in the story by the repetition of something missing, i.e. father's presence and the threat of his brother leaving as well as the lack of education:

> *"my brother decided to move to London, arhhmmm... so , I wanted to move with him… School wasn't really for me at that time, was like I*

wanted to go cause my father passed away when I was young… arhmmm… and he started working when he was about fifteen-sixteen… Arhmmm… so he started a sort of… arhmmm, he made a move to London and I wanted to come with him to be also a breadwinner in the family…".

The participant indicated a state of disequilibrium at around 13-14 years old, in relation to own studies, and signalled by intensifying adverb "really" in "wasn't really for me":

"I left school when I was fourteen and I moved to London and here I was trashed into an environment where I think you could say that it was very unfamiliar for me because although London is a very diverse city I was exposed many hours..., I was introduced to people from the Asian background, from the Pakistani-Karmiri background who all spoke Punjabi and Urdu and I couldn't speak that; but, I was more interesting in getting to work, in the… making friends with people who I could understand and really get along with; there was no business that we did not".

There seems to be a bit of reflection and nostalgic view on a past equilibrium by emphatically stressing on the fact that his own upbringing "wasn't really… conservative" to somehow justify the transition to a new/ modified equilibrium:

"it wasn't really a conservative upbringing I would say even though I was taught my religion from a young age, arhmmm you know… OK, so, with the way things were going in London, with the way things were going in London, in and out of business, but arhmmm... I think towards... when I got married in what I was in my Mid 20s I started…, cause I was involved in gangs as well, as growing up here in London my friends were.. and others were involved in that kind of stuff... it wasn't anything serious, but [clearing his voice] just silly things you know…".

London can be a dangerous place, especially when you are young and, as I mentioned to you years ago just after you left home yourself, you just need to be in a good company so that you are not dragged into something bad, added Arke; it is

not a small, nor a familiar place, it is not like on the street you grew up on, with mainly one language being spoken and various cultures having almost become one after many years of communism... there are many languages and cultures which inhabit large Metropoli, but these do inhabit them partially as the dust of history has to settle before people would fully feel the spirit of a commonplace they can call 'home'... Arke started to be slightly impatient with my lack of reaction; you need to remember your origins and place, it does not matter much that you learned to ignore your old self, that still exists and will be there for you should you needed it, actually I feel that you need me now... just to remind you that I am speaking to you 'from the border' that I have not left, I could have, but have decided to stay on-it, 'on-the-border'. You were upset with me and tried to forget me and the street you grew on and other things like your university studies regarding them as insufficient in comparison with the greatness of London..., but I have been your ally and saviour many times and I hope that you can count on me again. I feel that your connection with the participant is deeper that you think, but you feel this and the participant feels that too. I can see how different you are and your journeys have been, but you are both adopted by London in different ways it is true, but being welcomed to dream of personal success and the future whilst being swallowed by the overwhelming matchings that happen everyday, I mean the strange feeling of being finally at home, whilst being so far from home. Your experiences surprisingly converge with those of the participant, but that is because you have both been adventurers, explored yourselves and left for different reasons a place of equilibrium

to sail towards a big unknown, so different from what you experienced and so strangely all encompassing at the same time; I feel you both lost yourselves to then discover new selves in that place you both live in now, London. However, something else also connected you I guess, he is perhaps attracted by the very different self you are from him as you came to London to study, unlike him who came to work, and then when you asked him for help to understand Dawanur's difficult context and life developments, which were strangely similar to his own journey into extremism, he perhaps felt so right when you asked him for help.

The Grand Ifrit heard Arke's inner talk and replied ... I am extremely busy these days and feel that you are wasting your time as Dawanur has already made a conscious decision to hate the disbelievers and -together with the Professor- help my project and have already task them with some minor chores... 'he-she' is great a true "hidden light" which I will make sure that stays that way. Arke dared to invite Dawanur to express 'his-her' opinion which was that no one should have asked for anyone's help and that 'he-she' finally found out the truth. I had to shut all doors around myself, Dawanur said, I started to slowly get comfort from being by myself and rarely opened up towards anyone, not even towards my friends or family.

Some graphic images are being presented as a sign of obvious disequilibrium in the newly found equilibrium -signalled by evaluative conjunctions-, which was then disrupted by 9/11 events, expressed through image-laden expressions:

"I was a young man growing up, but then I think it was an almost a near-death experience when I, when I was involved in a massive gang fight with swords and everything that I decided that is not for me and then I got married and settled down so I was asked if we should… So I was saying me and my brothers we were involved in business most of the time arhhhmm… towards the early 30s, mid 30s I would say we were, we established a secure business at ahmm… I was doing very well as an MOT tester, we were all in the motor trade arhmmm... At that time when you know we had 9/11 happened; it was an unfortunate incident that in the beginning I thought was just playing on the radio in my workshop…".

Nonetheless, with his departure to London the participant finds a new sense of equilibrium given by starting a business, which seems to be similar to the one from childhood:

"and in my workshop most of the staff were white white guys, arhmmm… one Jamaican guy, one Hungarian … arhmm, the rest of them were white British guys with tatoos… we'd look at them, you would think "these are far right extremists", but they you know were cool guys arhmmm, I spoke their kind of language, they spoke my kind of language and we got on really well".

9/11

9/11 events came suddenly and the trauma of those events brought over a heightened sense of anxiety and profound disequilibrium at personal as well as community level. Participant's stories employ repetitions to describe a state of confusion and shock, as well as some anxieties related to their own religious community.

People's reactions to the shocking news -as outlined in the participant's story- are expressed through repetition "this is … this is…" as well as by the use of intensifying adverbs "really", "this is really bad". People experience of the 9/11 news - which indicates a troubling worry that had apparently taken over communities- is shown through the introduction of some graphic images of "white guys attacking Muslim females and males" combined with 'intensifying expressions', i.e. "it's kicking off"...

and 'intensifying circumstances' like "I was with my youngest child in hospital one night and that's the night when George Bush launched the war on terror" and also by the use of intensifying and repeated combination of words, like "this is"...

> *"This is not gonna be good"... "this is really bad"... "this is a Crusade, this is a war against evil ideologies"..."We all suddenly realised that this is something that is really happened and it hit us really badly… I mean, the first thing that went through my mind "I hope this is not Muslim terrorists" you know arhmmm… "nothing to do with Islam", but then as it unfolded it had to do with Al-Qaida, there was a couple of guys that were in the workshop that were like "this is not gonna be good" you know…"this is really bad"... my thought was saying arhmmm… "bad hand"... the evening, Gavin was a young guy that was an apprentice in the workshop, he was getting phone calls from his friends you know ... "It's kicking off"... arhmmm, "white guys are attacking Muslim females and males"... arhmmm…, and I was getting calls from various calls from different people you know… "something is happening here"... I lot of it was just hype, a lot of it just nonsense, but there were incidents…the days that followed after that were when I was with my youngest child in hospital one night and that's the night when George Bush launched the war on terror. It was actually that's when the allied forces started to attack Afghanistan my concern was the language that we've been used by leaders like George Bush and Tony Blair, "this is a Crusade, this is a war against evil ideologies…" and this that kind of stuff…"*

The sense of social disequilibrium had become quite quickly a personal state of disequilibrium for the participant, who has started to introduce relatively graphical illustrations of the context in which one's own perception of others as well as how others perceive him has suddenly changed. This has also coincided with a traumatic event from his own family, i.e. the surgery of his son… and the realisation that all are looking at him because of his beard… "it came 10 o'clock news and I entered the emergency room [...] with my child [...] everybody turning around and started looking at me and I had a beard and my child was in there [...]" and then the intensifying expression indicating the ultimate disequilibrium, i.e. "I certainly started to feel…", but also indicating perhaps the beginning of a modified state of future personal equilibrium.

"It was a bit uncomfortable but you know we can understand you know that there were a lot of people that've been killed in 9/11. When the "War on Terror" was launched in Afghanistan I was in hospital at that time, it came on 10 o'clock news I entered the emergency room from the doctors with my child [others voices of colleagues leaving the office]... and as I entered the door swiftly everybody turning around and started looking at me and I had a beard and my child was in there and I was just like… everybody was looking at me I am like feeling very uncomfortable there… , and you know in my workshop most of my customers at 99.9% were white British customers and I got on really well with them you know I have a lot of loyal regular customers and … I certainly started to feel that their perception changed towards me."

The story seemed to take a more acute turn when this sense of disequilibrium had deepened as well as was mixed with an "old equilibrium"; these meant a gradual but rapid intensification of matters as well as repeating of the loss of balance within and between communities, from perceptions to firm beliefs which then lead to grievances, which turned into anger and frustration.

"I started to go through this kind of situation where my perceptions were beginning to become beliefs and then because of those (great) beliefs were being internalised I started to have grievances; my grievances turned into anger and frustration and then I was looking back at you know the TV screens…[...] one discussion leads to another and then you're going home in the evening and you look at the TV and all is all about bombs being dropped on villages and then it was like, for me it was like OK yes I know that that was completely wrong…"

There are graphical images -of attack on small villages, innocent people, and of labeled weapons- which describe the loss of balance, but also which fuel the rapid deepening of the state of disequilibrium.

The graphical images are to some extent also created by an indirect sense of modified equilibrium on the part of the Americans, i.e. by employing a sense of a distorted evaluation through "this is revenge for…" and then through future oriented verbs/ expressions "we are going to get…":

"missiles that we've been painted by kids or by American soldiers you know ragheads, this that and the other you know, "this is revenge for

9/11", "we are going to get ..." arhmmm... you know language that didn't need to be used by these by soldiers and by leaders that was also playing on my mind".

A sense of old self emerges and it is intertwined with events denoting a deepening state of disequilibrium:

"then you know what I had people coming to see me to... you know... to try to raise some funds for the orphans and the victims in Afghanistan and I have always been charitable, I was financially very very stable and so I offered my help you know, I said of course why not; and then we had conversations I would go upstairs in my office, we would sit down".

Very graphic images of fellow Muslims being brutalised, dead bodies of children... all contribute to deepening of disequilibrium:

"As these conversations started to happen, I was given images then it was an Internet website and then the Internet was very slow, to dial up and the ring tone and when you get to see you know all these images of the war in Chechnya and Palestine and the Afghanistan and the way that Muslims have to be brutalised but some of the imagery was quite brutal you know. And I understand that people will manipulate images to suit their own objectives, but a lot of this was coming from soldiers posting their images, soldiers taking photographs over the dead bodies of kids and then you dead Afghan people, arhmmmm... [...] one of the images that I saw was an American soldier standing over the body of a young kid and saying that he kicked his ass or that he kicked the ass....".

However, there is another dynamic emerging, more specifically a swift movement, from a state of disequilibrium to a modified reality, which contains some elements from an earlier stable, established reality (i.e. the charitable self) and takes these to the level of a modified equilibrium where actions are taking place for an apparently charitable cause, the motivation for these originating this time in a deep state of disequilibrium, which is signalled by graphic images:

"one thing led to another I was involved in sending you know money to the orphans, to the to the widows arhmmm... support in you know..., to

protect them".

STAGE 3: THEORY AND METHODOLOGY - ROUND TWO

"A SIDESHOW"
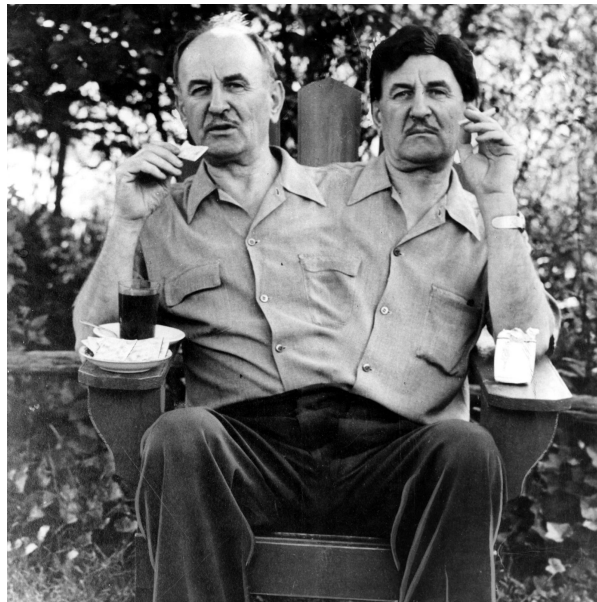
Figure 7: a 'Freak Show ', 'a Sideshow' (*Real People From a Story Freak Show*, no date)

'Sideshows' are less known circus performances, which are not necessarily a part of the usual performance flow; however, these do capture the imagination of many members of the audience so that they feel compelled to even pay extra to take a part in them. Some regard them as 'freak shows' as these relate to the "exhibition of exotic or deformed animals as well as humans considered to be in some way abnormal or outside broadly accepted norms" (Chemers, no date). What is considered abnormal, or outside of the ordinary, is equally an attraction for the

audience, as well as it is -for many- a difficult to accept, a struggling transgressive reality that challenges established ways of seeing or doing. Whilst the masks of normality maintain a sense of familiarity, 'making oneself vulnerable' does also mean to go beyond and away from what one knows; facing the 'unsayable' and the 'uncanny', whether from within or from without, is a daunting, but -one hopes- a potentially illuminating encounter. I would not claim that a 'freak show' is what is needed to surpass existing conventions around the concept and theories of learning, but an accepted invitation to a 'sideshow' could unlock our "narrative imagination"; this is what this 'Theory Part 3' subchapter proposes.

Theory Part 3

The Apophatic Way (anti and post-Enlightenment) to understand "Learning" - an epistemology and ontology of the 'unsayable', cyclical metaphors of learning

As the lines of inquiry have been gradually progressing, I was taken to different conceptual 'spaces and places' in regards to learning and education. What was an initial intuition for me, it then later became apparent that learning and education are interdependent and not separate, as well as the domain of 'everyday life' reveals before us an opportunity to see this 'educational learning' from new perspectives, more specifically from existential and experiential perspectives. Learning and education in everyday life, or what I have gradually started to refer to as 'educational learning', is thought about in terms of being as well as becoming and necessarily contains some in-built elements, which cannot be wholly described through cartesian metaphors.

On the contrary, when there is a belief, expectation and practice to consider this surface metaphorical exercise as the only way to conceptualise learning and education and hence presumably having the potency to enunciate not just epistemic but also ontological statements about learning and education, then one could end up

in a situation where learning and education are disentangled from each other and, even more worryingly when 'learning is or becomes dead'.

To recover learning as well as education from the 'land of cartesian metaphors', one perhaps will need to look at 'everyday life' experiences, where the ontological domains of being and becoming are shaping and framing the sometimes hidden processes of learning and education. There is something more to learning and education, especially in the sphere of the 'everyday life', something which is paradoxically and equally defined in existential and experiential terms, yet it is unsayable and hidden away from a cartesian projects of description and explanation; learning is essentially underlined by cultural, psychological and social aspects of our being and becoming in the world.

The paradoxical nature of 'educational learning' -which is directly connected to 'everyday life'- revolves around, as Peter Jarvis suggested, a 'disjuncture', an inner unhappiness with the world, self, or society. One's understanding of the 'educational learning' is that its role is to fill in a void, but at the same time it cannot exist without the void. This is linked first and foremost to an existential and ontological paradox, which has potentially significant side effects on how we are able to know, on our epistemological activity. The desire to know is and should be, in the case of 'educational learning', framed by these existential paradoxes, which are connected -as Eliade suggested- to our relationship with 'perfection' in terms of being, unity and primordial totality (Valk, 1992).

Therefore, to approach this paradoxical nature of 'educational learning', which seems to encompass a 'unity of opposites' - a 'coincidentia oppositorum', as discussed by Eliade and other authors like Herraclitus, Nicholas of Cusa-, one must not come to this task only from what can be seen, talked about and comprehended -connected to an isolated cartesian epistemological effort-, but also one needs to carefully consider other scenarios, which are equally linked to being as well as becoming.

I would like to put forward a dual premise that 'educational learning' is, on the one hand, more than what can be talked about -also about silence and the 'unsayable'- and, on the other hand, has a built-in paradox, a 'coincidentia oppositorum', which refers to realities that are simultaneously mutually exclusive and logically contradictory, but also which are mutually complementary (ob.cit. 1992). I conceive 'terrorist learning' along the same lines. What follows on from accepting this dual premise - also applicable in the case of 'terrorist learning'- is the development of an intellectual attitude and emotional disposition -set in motion on a pilgrimage, with its occuring life or death wishes- that will equally take into account the being, its becoming and a unique perspective on subjectivity and self (ontology) and also consider how one can know through an interest towards myths and myth development (epistemology).

I therefore propose another perspective that would -one hopes- be more able to unravel the nature of education and learning from within the domain of 'everyday life'. 'Educational learning' can only be known and engaged with through an apophatic approach, so that both its paradoxical nature as well as its hidden and unsayable side can be accessed.

The Apophatic Approach to Educational Learning relates to everyday life and will take appropriately in consideration the dimensions of disjuncture, resentment and transgression as well as the following elements: the silence, one's secrets, the 'absurd' and the value of myths.

"Making yourself vulnerable", nomadism and pilgrimage

Grasping or at least walking towards an 'unsayable', a hidden and secretive part of one's reality and existence is an un-usual, an uncanny enterprise that can bring about unexpected findings about others as well as about oneself as a researcher. Being open to possibilities and other people's realities is, arguably, what good research is about (Andrews, 2014).

Some researchers would perhaps hide behind the simplifying seductions of objectivity and an affect-less writing, which would offer a degree of perceived stability, hence providing oneself with a comfortable outlook at the research process. My contention is that one cannot unveil or walk towards 'unsayables and the hidden' unless one is:

> willing to make herself vulnerable. Suspending disbelief, we might learn something about another way of viewing life. In the process, we might learn something about ourselves as well. [...] But maybe it is precisely being lost, or rather in Keats' words being capable of 'being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts' which we require. The experience of being lost can simply mean that … the world has become larger than your knowledge of it… it is not afterall, really a question about whether you can know the unknown, arrive in it, but how to go about looking for it, how to travel… Never to get lost is not to live (ibid, p.112-113).

My formative years were spent in the Eastern European communist and post-communist times where "formation through deformation" (Manea, 2012b, p. 37) was a lived reality, but not necessarily a consciously assumed position. It took me a while to assume my formative 'deformations' and that only happened after I 'got lost' by leaving my country of origin; however, it was not enough to just leave, but it was necessary to also assume my new condition, as if I were preparing for it throughout those 'de-formative' years. In time, I realised that I am a 'nomad' and that my 'pilgrimage' in this world had formally started.

As so, without knowing, I lost a part of me only to gain the opportunity to reveal myself through a real journey -external as well as internal- that I started in August 2001, only twelve years after the fall of communism in Romania. Alike Norman Manea, who is a very important writer and interlocutor for me, I have discovered that my 'nomadism' is the result of my twenty four years of "formation through deformation"; unlike Norman, I have only discovered and assumed this recently, after seventeen years since I left 'the borderland of Europe'.

Until recently for me, being a 'nomad' just meant a growing reality of the world today -as other authors have suggested-, reality that is allegedly not to be desired as it propagates fragmentation, consumerist superficiality and an ongoing fleeting movement between states of being without ever settling for one. Now, I do not just agree but also engage affect-ively with the following lines, which retrospectively illuminate the meaning of my journey(s) so far, but also show me a way to "keep on keeping on" going forward:

> We tread on the uncertain terrain of what is just, good, true and beautiful; of the need for recognition of others as well as self; of strengths alongside fragility and weakness. And of the benefits of being nomads, open to diverse experiences and cultures. Nomadism might be a problem -citizen of the world and of nowhere, rootless, without grounding. Or it might just be the prerequisite for knowing ourselves better, because we learn to see ourselves through the eyes of the other. We engage with an existential imperative to wrench meaning from the darkest moments, while being able to let go and give space to others, and otherness, as we get older (Formenti and West, 2018, pp. 3, 4).
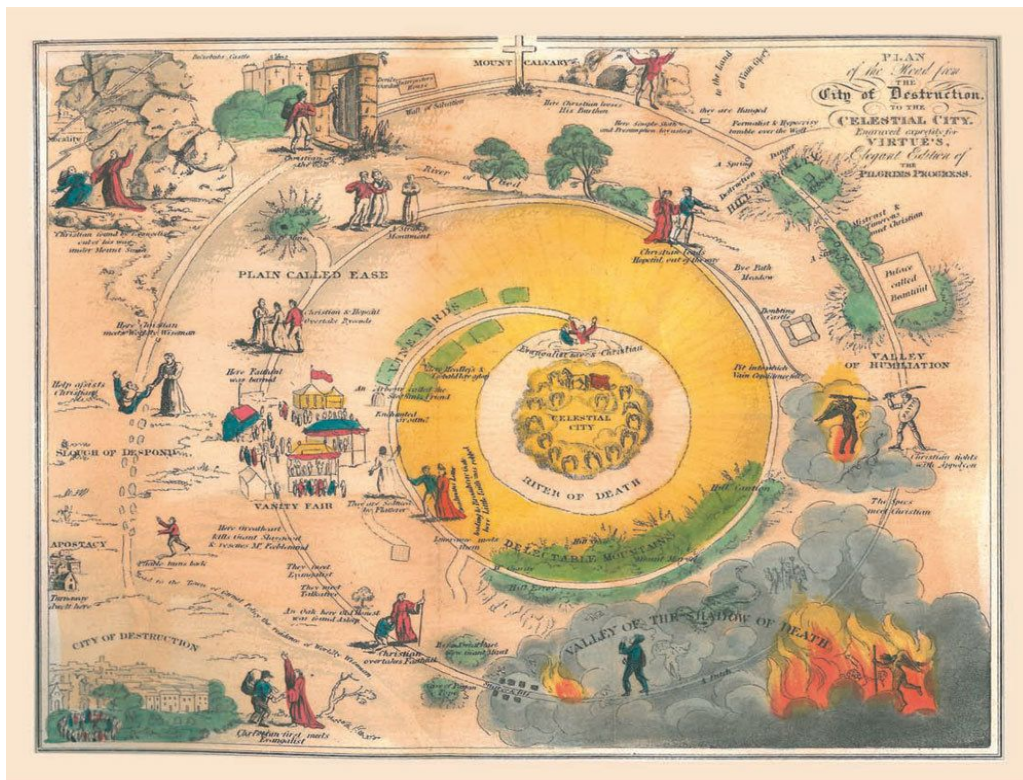
Figure 8: "Plan of the Road from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City",
engraved expressly for Williams' Elegant Edition of The Pilgrim's Progress, 19th
Century, courtesy of Bridgeman Art Library, London
(Bunyan, 1996, p. front and back covers).

Above is a 19th century illustration of a pilgrim's journey, from a "City of
Destruction to the Celestial City", which is one possible visual metaphor for one's
nomadic wander from "destruction" to the "hill(s) of difficulty" to the "valley of
humiliation", hopefully through and out of the "valley of the shadow of death", then
through "vanity fair"; some will then stop by and even stay at the "Plains called
ease", but others will proceed further through the "vineyards" and towards the
"celestial city", which is surrounded by the "river of death". The pilgrimage as an
all-rounded metaphor for human transformation does also illuminate various
movements of one's self across, in and out various spaces and times; it is meant to
encapsulate a life's struggles and limitations, a space and time where one can walk
back to unearth hidden, secretive paths of her auto/ biography as well as of other
biographies that might enhabit one's own autobiographical territory, ultimately
pertaining itself to the rigours of unassumed yet and narrow openings towards the
'crypts' (Abraham and Rand, 1987) of one's unconscious.

> A pilgrimage is about having a goal, dealing with a life crisis, and
> having sufficient faith that something can be resolved, in it's own time.
> [...however] It is in writing that we can compose more of a whole: a
> pilgrimage becomes a fragment of a larger, lifelong, liberating if never
> complete process; a quest for meaning, truth, beauty, integration,
> individuation, critical wisdom, healing, openness as well as generosity
> of spirit (Formenti and West, 2018, pp. 257, 258).

Whilst I agree with the above point, I also consider that not always one can
experience a pilgrimage towards beautiful and truth-illuminated-spaces within a
'Celestial City', but there are also other kinds of pilgrimages that fall-short or take a
different direction, towards Death perhaps or just being consumed by the 'shadow of

death' or indeed in the very 'river of Death'. The journey towards terrorism can encompass a pilgrimage that eventually closes perspectives and opportunities to exist, where the Other is constructed and objectified as an enemy (ibid. p5). Therefore, I would like to "stay on the border" and look at these possible journeys that a pilgrim might take; hence, I conceptualise the pilgrimage that happens towards and with the Other as a life-driven Pilgrimage and another kind that happens against the Other and in "harmony" with death, where personal or societal sacrifice is not conceived for, but against the Other.

On Pilgrimage: losing and regaining one's "Homeland", the "Exile", encountering the "Uncanny", the "Life and Death drives" and the "perverted and destructive play"

In the chapter *Martyrdom and Mortality* from his recent book on "Radical Sacrifice", Terry Eagleton regards all human acts as possessing "an aura of deathliness about them, since for the good or ill they cannot be undone" (Eagleton, 2018, p. 75). Human actions are therefore conceived as though they bring an echo of the absoluteness of death in everyday life.

On the other hand, our contemporary age of "all possibilities", seen by many authors as an impossibility in itself and by Norman Manea (Manea, 2012b) as perhaps being the "fifth impossibility", does in my opinion also provide a basis for a split at the level of one's experience of pilgrimage, becoming something no longer only about the pursuit of peace, illumination, optimism, liberation and hope.

As pilgrimage itself can be mysterious, unsettling, even strange, in other words being an "uncanny" experience - existing as a consequence of an "uncanny" something (in reality or fiction), as well as being a lived experience of the "uncanny"(-ness)- one can perhaps conceptually distinguish between the experiences of a pilgrimage towards life and of another that would be towards death, both containing the uncanniness of life and death, as separated as well as

intertwined. There seems to be death in life and life in death, hence the pilgrimage tells a story of both departure and arrival, of acceptance and rejection, of imagination and fixation, of internal and external struggle, of being and becoming, of home and exile.

Some authors have described the "uncanny" as being connected to the making of uncertainty as "it has to do with the sense that things are not as they have come to appear through habit and familiarity, that they may challenge all rationality and logic" (Bennett and Royle, 2004, p. 36). In his essay on the "uncanny" (1919), Freud defines this term with the help of a dichotomy between two German terms, *heimlich* and *unheimlich.*

Heimlich refers, on the one hand, to something that is homey, or home-like, something familiar, intimate, comfortable and domestic as well as, on the other hand, something that is secret, hidden, concealed and out of sight. On the opposite side, the term *unheimlich* refers to something un-homey and unfamiliar, something eerie and strange, as well as, on the other hand, unhidden and revealed. The "uncanny" is *unheimlich* inasmuch it refers to some frightening matters that could lead one to desire to go back to what one knows, is familiar with, going back to feeling homey; in this sense, for Freud the "uncanny" is the return of the repressed.

The Freudian conceptual breakthrough through the notion of 'death drive' has made possible to explain "why a subject unconsciously and repeatedly places him or herself in painful, extreme or traumatic situations that revive previously lived experiences" (Roudinesco, 2004, p. 103); these experiences are either in the open and conscious to all, or are buried deep away from the facile grasp of reason and common-sense.

These rejections of the realness of departing from a 'Homeland' or of acknowledging one's 'Exile' do work together to create 'unifying fantasies' - whether being out in the open or hidden from view - of what soon can and has become in the past a cult of death, destruction, criminality, bestiality towards individuals and ultimately genocide, which paradoxically are also proper to civilisation itself

(Roudinesco, 2004, p. 104); there seems to be indeed "a relationship between violence and civilisation" (Eagleton, 2018, p. 14).

According to Freud, the causes of death reside still within the living and are connected to the inorganic and so "the goal of life is death, and, casting back, the inanimate was there before the animate" (Freud, 1922, p. 30); the argument leads to an "far from adequate" -in Freud's words- opposition, "antithesis between the 'ego-instincts' and the sexual instincts, the former impelling towards death and the latter towards the preservation of life" (ob. Cit., p. 35). Freud follows a line of argumentation developed around various biological viewpoints to then withdraw from the involvement of the ego and then argue for another, even sharper duality:

> We were prepared indeed to reckon even the alleged self-preservation instincts of the ego among death-instincts, a position which we have since corrected and withdrawn from. Our standpoint was a dualistic one from the beginning, and is so today more sharply than before, since we no longer call the contrasting tendencies egoistic and sexual instincts, but life-instincts and death-instincts (ob.cit., p. 43).

There seem to be a few different perspectives on what a "death drive" is, from Spielrein to Freud, to Klein. In a study related to the differences between these psychoanalysts, Danielle Star (2018) mentions that for Spielrein "the death drive is the drive to sacrifice, or destroy, the ego to join the collective" whilst for Freud "the death drive is the drive to die and to destroy outer stimuli in order to reduce stimulation and achieve nirvana [...] and being a drive to an actual physical death", and lastly for Klein "the death drive is the drive to destroy the good object (and consequently the self) when the good object strikes in us the fear of losing it" (Star, 2018, p. 89).

One can clearly see very different perspectives on the apparently common problem: 'why human beings are driven to destroy themselves'. Despite their different approaches to understanding this reality, a common point seems to be that all recognise the importance of the biological basis. However, Spielrein and Klein

emphasise the role of the relationship with others, while Freud seems to consider that the manifestation of the death drive to be a more individualistic enterprise.

Freud is the only one to talk about a physical death as the purpose of the death drive, while Spielrein and Klein use death in a more symbolic way, i.e. from the "death of the ego" for Spielrein to the "death of internal phantasies" for Klein. Nonetheless, all three consider destruction and self-destruction as the aim of the death drive. It is therefore worth remembering that "like its partner Eros, Thanatos is no respecter of persons. [...] it shows up the inherent impersonality of desire, which, like the death drive, one carries at the core of one's being yet is implacably indifferent towards" (Eagleton, 2018, p.80). Eagleton furthermore mentions Lacan's position according to which it seems that "the death drive, striving to defeat the flow of temporality with its compulsive repetitions, represents a way of being undead, and so lies in the side of living." (Eagleton, 2018, p.95).

The notions of 'Homeland' and 'Exile' can be useful when attempting to work with Freud's perspective on the "uncanny" and its associated concept of "death drive" as these terms recognise through their interplay a fragile state:

> the Homeland as the place of birth, not only a linguistic locus but a geographical, historical, and national locus, and, by extension, a family of nations; [yet...] the simplicity and the force of the notion of "Homeland" is reaffirmed at the very moment it is abolished (Manea, 2012b, pp. 343, 344).

The 'Homeland' has 'Exile' built-in itself, it is both *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, and it seems to always pertain to the potentiality for uncanniness. One's 'Homeland' -with its contradictions between the individual and the relational- it is situated at the (even biological) tension between life and death drives; it can be both homey and un-homey, intimate, but also hidden and eerie. The pilgrimage -away or towards a 'Homeland'- offers a chance to face the uncanny, to accept the loss and re-enact the Homeland, but one's position towards this experience can either lead towards life or

death; there is a very fine balance, as from the "Plains called Ease" one can plunge into the very "River of Death" (Bunyan, 1996).

Building on one of Norman Manea's arguments around the value of 'Homeland' and 'Exile' (2012, pp.343-344), a conceptualised experience of pilgrimage towards life could reveal itself as the acceptance of the reality of an 'Exile' -internal or external, or both- and a re-enactment of a 'Homeland', be it real or imagined.

On the other hand, a pilgrimage towards death can manifest through a non-acceptance of the reality of one's departure - be it real or imagined- from a 'Homeland', which is then necessarily followed by a rejection of the very possibility of one's 'Exile' as a meaningful event in one's life. This seems to be the springboard that makes possible the beginning of the journey towards enacting the 'very purpose of life' - which is death itself, through destruction, through sacrifice to join a 'collective' and ultimately obtaining the desired physical death, at either or both individual and relational levels.

But, what could make one to start that journey, that pilgrimage away or towards a 'Homeland', be it real or imagined? It might be something regarded as a "universal activity" (Green, 2018), it might be the 'play' itself, which can be towards life, towards a healthy mother-child relationship as suggested by the famous British psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, David Winnicott (Winnicott, 2012). Winnicott does only seem to locate the play within the realm of health. I am however inspired by Andre Green's (2018) critical appraisal of the Winnicottian conception of play; according to Green's definition:

> playing belongs to a group as well as psychic phenomena - including dreaming, fantasising, forging fictions, and myths. [...] I believe that play, apart from its emotional value, is a form of thought (like the dream) or of knowledge that, according to some patients, is a form of not knowing (ob.cit, p.12).

Within this realm of connected psychic phenomena, there seem to be firm links between reality and horror, hence the need to consider play as part of sickness and not merely restricted to healthy conditions:

> The least we can say about external reality is that there is too much horror in it: wars, delinquency, natural catastrophes, epidemics, unemployment, terrorism. [...] During these last few years we have witnessed many examples of perverted playing, of dirty playing. Such play is not based on interchange, but on the will to dominate; it is a way of imposing one's will, and the will to submit. It is a kind of play that is impregnated with destructiveness. (ob.cit. p.12).

I would like to build on Green' argument (2018) that conceives a strong connection and participation of the drives -both towards life and death- in the makeup of the play. Therefore, I consider that playfulness is necessarily involved in the pilgrimage towards life as representing one's "Homeland" by creatively accepting the "Exile" as a necessary rupture and 'disjuncture'; on the other hand, there is a perverted creativity, yet no less creative -"impregnated with destructiveness", the uncanny and the Unheimlich- which stands as engine for a pilgrimage towards death, in effect being itself characterised by a "perverted playfulness", yet still a powerful kind of playfulness. It is indeed of importance to realise a connective note towards Norman Manea's reflections on the terror-filled events of the twentieth century and say that playfulness' necessity exists in both, the destructive and dictatorial actions of a White Clown, and in the artistic and poetic endeavors of an Augustus the Fool (Manea, 1993).

There are different sides of playfulness, beginning a pilgrimage, the departure and re-representation of a "Homeland", the necessary realisation of the "Exile" in the midst of the uncanny, the Unheimlich and the transgenerational propagation of the past horror and perhaps even of a collective trauma; a "social unconscious" could therefore govern the motivation for starting a pilgrimage. "Social unconscious" does seem to be:

> constructed by members of the same community, society or culture and contains the shared fantasies, myths, anxieties, defenses and memories. [...] 'chosen traumas' are embedded in "social unconscious", assembling its shared myths and national memories. [...] the 'chosen trauma' is a shared mental representation of a massive trauma that the group's ancestors suffered. When a large group regresses, its chosen trauma is reactivated in order to support the group's threatened identity (Weinberg, 2007, pp. 319–320).

Ultimately, a 'chosen trauma' and its playful use can bring about a pilgrimage towards life or death.

Masks, "Phantoms" and the "Others within us"

Along and across journeys and pilgrimages, one constructs 'masks' as well as finds own or other people's "masks" within their biographies. In recent studies on masking and masquerading in Europe, masks were recognised to serve the role of hiding as well as representing "the other within", to equally transform, even transgress, but also fix identities, being related to "witchcraft, the persecution of Jews and lepers, spirit possession and shamanism, the dead and the other world. [...] The mask has the capacity not only to mirror the existing world but, more importantly, to reflect "another form of reality" (Mack, 2013, p. 191).

'Masks' are a part of a semiotic of identity, where signs are invested with meanings by which identity is displayed or hidden, transformed or transgressed. This is why whether normally one would regard a mask as a transformation of identity, a mask can also designate a "temporary extinction of identity"; indeed, being it one's own or that of another, a discovered mask within one's biography does more than just represent a reality as "masks are not simply pictures of the spirits, animals or other beings they represent [...] masks are also and simultaneously icons and indexes of identity" (Pollock, 1995, pp. 582, 594).

According to Levi-Strauss (Lévi-Strauss, 1999, p. 14), there is a connection between myths and masks, the latter's role being to describe and explain

"supernatural origins" of rituals, whether related to the working of a society or its economy. According to Eliade (Myers, 1959, pp. 520–525), "all masks are ritual in origin" (p. 521) and they have five meanings, i.e. to evoke certain reactions of the beholder, to cure disease, to impersonate and identify with certain supernatural beings, to enhance the self and to criticise social wrongs by "terrorising wrongdoers" (p.521).

Perhaps a more encompassing perspective on masks is that of Ronald L. Grimes (1975) who conceptualises a difference between a ritual and a biographical mask, as the latter would have a very different performative outlook than the ritual mask across different phases of a mask's 'life': from making to wearing, from encountering to removing, from exchanging to displaying and finally destroying it. In agreement with Grime's multi-faceted usage of the masks, I also acknowledge that a mask has more than a ritual value and that one needs to engage with its biographical potentialities, more specifically those that relate to the making a 'second face' through four moments in the life of a mask:

> concretion gives substance to power, concealment is the hiding in order to maximise power, embodiment is the semblance of spontaneous power, and expression is the making transparent of power (ibid, p. 515).

Following on from these points, Arke Schley is my-fictional-self who is still firmly 'on the border' and whose mask and 'actions' help me 'illuminate' by starting a 'light behind veils'; the choice of these names has multiple meanings, not last for me as well, as Arke means 'light' in Yiddish and Schley means 'veil', as well as it was my Great Grandmother's maiden name. Arke was an unexpected 'encounter' from within my own biography; Arke's mask is a biographical one and it is purely meant to access hidden and 'dark' corners, to create and recreate realities that appear from behind secrets and unsayables.
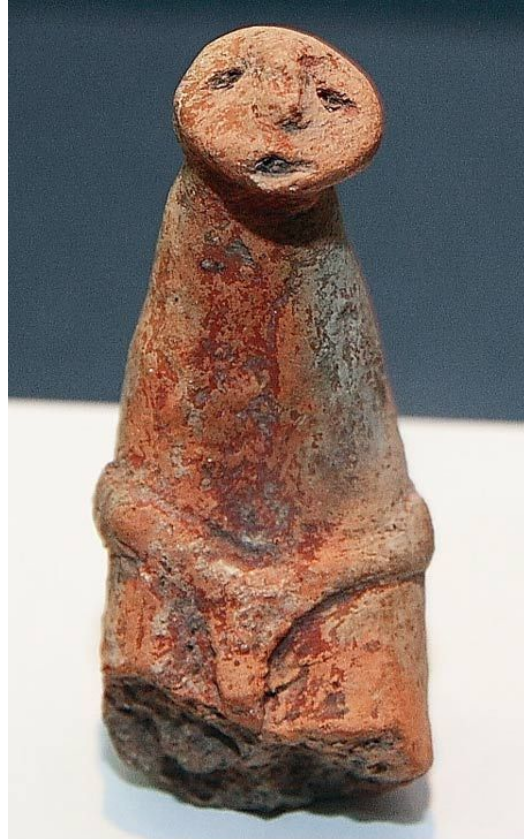
Figure 9: the chosen mask for Arke Schley; the image representing an Ancient Anthropomorphic Cucuteni-Trypillian clay figure from Bukovina region.

Arke does also help me to relate to the 'masks' and the hidden worlds behind my participants stories, in the case of my own family stories as well as in relation to that 'someone-known-to-me". I have decided to only show the chosen 'mask' for Arke as for others who participate in this research -either in person or through the use of "narrative imagination"- I have reserved the right to keep them 'secret', hidden from view; nonetheless, the reader will be invited to infer and use own imagination to create their 'second faces' out of the descriptions from the case study chapters. Presumably, Arke's long neck is particularly useful to see on either sides of the border and otherwise looks very much like someone who is equally stranded and nomadic, who is willing to illuminate from a stranded place, close but also away from any "torment, melancholy and pain". This is perhaps the case as

behind the 'masks' there are secrets, unsayables that could potentially 'touch-upon' the world of the unconscious. I have 'asked' Arke to help me gain some access to the territory from behind the masks, and 'touch' some "phantoms" as these are:

> formations of the unconscious that have never been conscious- for good reason. [what's more is that one] can be possessed by someone else's unconscious [...] it works like a ventriloquist, like a stranger within the subject's own mental topography. [...] In no way can the subject relate to it as his own repressed experience, not even as an experience by incorporation. *The phantom which returns to haunt bears witness to the existence of the dead buried within the other* (Abraham and Rand, 1987, pp. 289, 290).

It has been noted that "representations of Other and self play a central role in the personal and collective biographical process, with all its changes. [...] as otherwise there are Others within us" (Bar-On, 2008, p. 6). Furthermore, as shown above by the well-known psychoanalyst, Nicolas Abraham, it is quite possible that our present selves and masks are inhabited -at an unconscious level- by other people's buried biographies, or by others' "tombs or crypts"; this could be the case for all those participating in this research, the two interview participants (Alkayiria and Mubashir), for myself as a researcher, for 'someone-known-to-me' (Dawanur), and also myself as a "being on the border" (Arke), identity that comes with some secrets, unsayables, from my mother's side of the family.

Arke will try to help me to imaginatively access these secretive worlds - or 'crypts' - as these are "territories in the space between fantasy and trauma, fiction and reality" (Abraham and Torok, 2005, p. lvi) - and also find relations between these to form a web of meanings and perhaps articulate a new and "good enough" world of understanding. Arke and I will explore all these from the assumed premise that "what haunts are not the dead, but the gaps left within us by the secrets of others. [...] what comes back to haunt are the tombs of others" (ibib., pp. 287, 288), or the absence of real-life crypts about which no one really talks about:

[...] repressed traumatic events do not disappear on the social level any more than on the individual level. On the contrary, they continue to broil under the surface, as silenced facts that might burst out uncontrolled, when a political or economic opportunity is created. [...] Neighbours and even family members suddenly turned against each other, but not fully understanding the source of this "evil" energy in them (Bar-On, 2008, p. 195).

Sacred Myths, Sacrifice and "Terrorism"

A pilgrim's motivation to 'make herself vulnerable' is related to the creation of learning opportunities to imaginatively or in-reality navigate towards, through, in-between 'masks' and then behind them to encounter unsayables, unexpected secrets shaped as "phantoms", as others' biographies residing within ourselves. This endeavour of pilgrims to encounter the uncanniness relates to a potential relationship with a mythological background, more specifically to either create myths (mythopoesis), or to develop an unusual interpretation of myths, which I called mytho-pathology.

Mircea Eliade, a well-known scholar of Romanian origin and regarded as the founder of the academic discipline of 'history of religions', has provided the following extended definition:

> Myth narrates a sacred history ; it relates an event that took place in primordial Time, the fabled time of the "beginnings". [...] Myth, then, is always an account of a "creation", it relates how something was produced, began to *be*. Myth tells only of that which *really* happened, which manifested itself completely. The actors in myths are Supernatural Beings. They are known primarily by what they did in the transcendent times of the "beginnings". [...] the myth is regarded as a sacred story, and hence a "true story"because it always deals with *realities* (Eliade, 1963, pp. 5, 6).

Therefore, in order to fully align one with the sacred times of the 'beginnings', death is at times prescribed by myths as "the return to a primordial and perfect state" (ibid. 124).

Eliade wrote on human sacrifice throughout his long and prodigious academic life; the subjects of sacrifice, religion and violence were particularly central to his work in the thirties when he became a very active sympathiser of the violent, Nazi-inspired anti-Semitic Legion of the Archangel Michael (*Legiunea Arhanghelului Mihail)*, or the Iron Guard; this involvement has remained key to him throughout his life. In one of his articles from 1937, he praised as martyrdom the death of three members of the Iron Guard who have joined Franco's army in Spain. According to Eliade's biographer, Florin Turcanu, one of these deaths was full of "profound meaning" as these were enacting two key Romanian Myths- *Mesterul Manole* (Master Manole) and *Miorita* (Ewe Lamb):

> a sacrifice destined to bear fruit, to strengthen Christianity, to energise the youth , [... as he] was impatient to sacrifice himself to teach his generation a way of life made up of heroism and self-denial (Grottanelli, 2005, p. 118).

The following extract from Norman Manea is more than evocative for the type of pilgrimage that was favoured by Mircea Eliade who in his own words openly glorified death and violence in the name of enacting "sacred (national) myths"; it points towards a pilgrimage towards death, of a personal sacrifice against the Other:

> To me, then it is a matter of complete indifference whether Mussolini is or not a tyrant… it is entirely immaterial what will happen to Romania after the liquidation of democracy. If, by leaving democracy behind, Romania becomes a strong state, armed, conscious of its power and destiny- history will take account of its deed. [...] The Legion member is a new man, who has discovered his own will, his own destiny. Discipline and obedience have given him a new dignity, and unlimited confidence in himself, the Chief, and the greater destiny of the nation. [...] There are a great many revolutionary impulses that have been waiting for thousands of years to be put into practice. That is why the Son of Man descended: to teach us permanent revolution.

[...] In the name of this Romania that began many thousands of years ago and will not end until the apocalypse, social reforms will be enacted with considerable brutality, every corner of the provinces new overrun with foreigners will be recolonised, all traitors will be punished, the myth of our State will extend all across the country, and the news of our strength will stretch beyond its borders (Eliade from 1934-1938, as cited in (Manea, 1993, pp. 108, 109).

Not surprising after the horrors of the twentieth century, sacrifice and self-sacrifice as enactment of "sacred myths" have lost their glamour as acceptable notions for the wider public and are rather seen through the conceptually foggy lenses of the modern 'terrorism'. In this way, the "tyranny of self-sacrifice" has extended its historical reign from the "call of the fascist Fatherland" to mythopathic calls of the contemporary terrorism, being it Islamist, Hindu, Christian, Buddhist or extreme right wing. The calls are loud and clear for the enactment of a "perfect primordial time" through necrophiliac rites and acts of so-called oblation, which still entice the youth to start their pilgrimage towards death and destruction of the Other. Past trauma seems to relate to more trauma creation in our contemporary everyday life; I propose to use "narrative imagination" to unravel and illuminate potential relations of interrelation between past, present and future.

I was tempted at the beginning of this project to move towards and adopt one defition of terrorism or another; I have very soon discovered within the literature that there are some serious "challenges of conceptualising terrorism"; some authors threw their hands in disbelief acknowledging simply that "few terms or concepts in contemporary political discourse have proved as hard to define as terrorism" (Weinberg, Pedahzur and Hirsch-Hoefler, 2004, p. 777). It seems that terrorism is something that cannot be defined, but described, something that one would know when one saw it.

Any attempt at defining this term becomes even more difficult in an age of "war on terror" that has brought about certain unhelpful ways of thinking and prevention practices. As a teacher in the UK, I was trained like many other of my colleagues to

apply the Prevent Strategy, which is one methodology of the UK counter-terrorism efforts. These practices were introduced in the UK in 2003 and received legal legitimacy and enforcement as from 2015 throught the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act.

Whilst there is no currently agreed definition of terrorism, legislation that enforces counter-terrorism exists; this begs a question or two about the legitimacy and basis of such legal frameworks as well as around their effects at individual and community levels. Therefore, I do not aim to challenge existing practices and does not attempt to define terrorism, but I like to rather work within its conceptual vagueness and uncertainty as this could illuminate -with the help of "narrative imagination"- some unexpected pockets of memory and humanity.

On the other hand, I have to honestly say that as a teacher in the UK, I have been seduced by the aims of Prevent Strategy without asking questions about its underlying function and potential outcomes. Prevent Strategy's three-folded aims are to respond to ideological challenges of terrorism by preventing people from being drawn to terrorism and working within those sectors where there is a risk of radicalisation and future terrorism (HM Government, 2015). These aims do appear to express some good intentions; however, the lack of an agreed definition of 'terrorism' allowed perhaps for these good aims to be reinterpreted under the banner of a post 9/11 "war on terror", which framed the terror threat as an Islamic threat, which meant that:

> the infrastructue and focus of counter-terrorism practices, such as survveillance, are overwhelmingly directed at Muslims. [...] Furthermore, its emphasis on teaching 'British values' suggests its focus in on those who do not authentically (know how to) practice Britishness. [...] The strategy's focus on prevention leads it to conceive of radicalisation as a process driven by an ideology. Prevent awareness training (such as the Home Office Workshop to raise Awareness about Prevent) theorises that a terrorist attack is the end point of a process, or the tip of the iceberg. In order to monitor the process, and identify individuals on the path to radicalisation, the job of Prevent work is to encourage vigilance and to look for signs, such as behavioural changes, that would indicate that a person is on a

conveyor belt of radicalisation to terorrism. Since the vast majority of
the iceberg is not easily visible is has to be made visible by strategies
of surveillance and monitoring, to allow interventions in the process
(Qurashi, 2018, p. 4).

The process through which one becomes a terrorist seems to be looked at, and few can argue with this intent, perhaps assuming that there is an agreed definition of 'terrorism' and a well-intended outlook at these current troubleing realities. Instead, academics and practitioners alike currently struggle to find consensus when defining 'terrorism' and also few seem to acknowledge that the counter-terrorism practice is heavilly influenced by the post 9/11 "war on terror".

After a considerable effort from various authors to review different conceptualisations of this term, it has been suggested recently that if one was to agree on one that would have to be a purpose-based definition of 'terrorism',

that the essence of terrorism lies in the intent or purpose behind the
act of violence rather than in the act itself, namely to generate a wider
psychological impact beyond the immediate victims (Richards, 2014,
p. 221).

Whilst I agree with this definition inasmuch it recognises the importance of the psychological effects -of fear- beyond the immediate victims, I consider that equally important is the journey -conceptualised as pilgrimage towards death- that one embarks on to impact such psychological damage.

In other words, I recognise the value in this definition, but consider that it misses yet again some aspects that would make it universally agreeable amongst academics as well as practitioners. One missing aspect is related to the reasons for which one has to embark on such a different pilgrimage, as well as its approach towards the Other so that fear can be instilled. Another missing aspect of this definition seems to be its presumption of exceptionality of a terrorist act, one that can only be committed by a few.

Learning and unlearning to become a terrorist therefore relates less to preventing one to embark on their journey and stopping them from imparting fear on others, but rather is -in my opinion- a matter of changing the course of their pilgrimage, from destruction to dialogue and understanding of the other. Whilst "terrorism" is a legal term -however unclear its definition might be-, "terrorist learning" happens in the realm of education, of being and becoming, hence ordinarily open to each and every one of us.

Furthermore, I consider that the everyday reality and the hidden world of terrorism have more in common than one would expect to find; these worlds are not separate, but complementary. "Narrative imagination" can and should be used to search, to find and describe these complementarities.

It is not a comfortable search as one might discover one's own traumatic past as well as the very ordinary potentiality for death-creation. Illuminating paths in the darkness can address one's fearfulness induced by "terrorism" -as a term and as a reality; one hopes that this can liberate, or at least provide a haunting respite as a "good enough" temporary understanding of the "gaps left within us by the secrets of others".

"HOW TO DEAL WITH THE LIONS"

The Method: theoretical considerations towards a way to analyse the interviews

Second Phase of Analysis - "Loopholes", transgressive movements and "phantoms"

The "loopholes" in or behind the participants 'masks' were explored as inevitable, unavoidable voids in their respective realities or as necessary "immediate irrealities" (Blecher, 2015), which are meant to hone their sensibilities and motivate their actions. These loopholes provide also a sense of discovery of the tentative nature of the world as we know it -one would say at a 'mask' level-, and could unravel a potential instability of the reality -with its objects and supportive structures- and ultimately could point towards and equip us to sense the catastrophe that is trapped within the very fabric of the world.

In the search for these loopholes, one has attempted to understand the participants as well as a part of my world by looking at various structural units: "every story is built of number of such units: a passage of description, a passage of dialogue, an action, another passage of description, more dialogue, and so forth" (Gardner, 1991, p. 127).

I looked at these structural units as well as how, in the process of developing these, the participants and I have been moving beyond the mere referential to the immediate reality in order to be understood as characters perhaps, as well as develop a language that would be revealing of "loopholes" and transgressive movements in the midst of how they conceive the nature of their realities in terms of truth and realism (Wood, 2010):

> Chekhov and Tolstoy could say with great confidence that the business of fiction was "to tell the truth". [...] Telling the truth in fiction can mean one of three things: saying that which is factually correct, a trivial kind of truth, though a kind central to works of verisimilitude; saying that which, by virtue of tone and coherence, does not feel like lying, a more important kind of truth; and discovering and affirming moral truth about human existence - the highest truth of art. [...] art does not imitate reality (hold the mirror up to nature), but creates a new reality (Gardner, 1991, pp. 129, 131).

Creating a new reality is what I seek to accomplish here, a space and appropriate time to consider and illuminate some relationships between, on the one hand, me as an educator and the subject of learning as a journey through life and, on the other hand, between my on-the-border entity and identity and the subjects (participants) of fundamentalism and terrorism.

The question "who am I?" seems to me as being as important as the question "Who are my research participants?" and also "who am I for them and who are they for me?". Living on the border, once upon a time at one's beginnings and thereafter in perpetuity through the mediation of imagination and a desire to remember -but not necessarily and automatically a desire to know-, comes with its associated meniu of effects, e.g. vulnerabilities, uncertainties, fragmentation, resistance, reluctance, non-conformity, anxieties and a fair dose of darkness. My pilgrimage as well as that of my participants can be towards life by embracing and sacrificing oneself for the Other, but it can also be towards death by objectifying and sacrificing the Other.

Understanding our world and that of participants is one of the tasks at hand, which would not necessarily precede the work of our imaginations, but which would go in tandem with these as understanding is not only bound to a reality that needs to be understood, but also -in the move beyond the referential- to a reality that is created, or that needs to be created.

Therefore, understanding our world depends on grasping our characters, language and notions of truth and realism. It is only then that our respective pilgrimages would start to take shape in our understanding. It could be plausible to assert that "all of us are fictional characters parented by life and written by ourselves" (Wood, 2010, p.

86). One will be invited to perform acts of "fictional self-consciousness", being it the author/ educator, the participants or the reader(s). A metafictional question: "Does one exist?" will be opposed to a metaphysical query: "How and for what does one exist?"; these questions will make an indirect "appearance" at certain times, perhaps when our understanding will intertwine the work of our imagination.

Building on from this, I also looked at some particularities of the imaginative language where "one word can take over [...]" and be embodied by a character (a mask) or will set the tone and rhythms -sometimes contradictory- for the overall narrative, where the metaphor is "speeding us, imaginatively, towards new meanings" (ob.cit., p.88). It seems that transgressions do not happen beyond the reality or irreality of our experiences, but within them, where imitations and metaphors can either produce pleasure or pain -like in Kafka's "life like an insect", or Hamsun's "young madman who eats himself", or Ionesco's "Rhinoceros"- and this is not because these are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind; hence, imaginative consistency and plausibility became more important than "referential rectitude" (Wood, 2010, p. 179).

We transgress in our pilgrimages and one seems to be asking without a clear voice: *but... when is inquiring about the past transgressive?"*

Third Phase of Analysis - "Flying High", transcendental movements and enacting "phantoms"

Figure 10: 'Flying High' (*Bite-sized Wisdom: Ruhl*, 2012)

   Another breath-taking circus performance is one in which performers literally 'fly very high' above the audience in acts that attempt to push the boundaries of human nature. From defying the rules and impact of the gravitational force to stretching the mobility and versatility of the human body and mind, acts are also performed high up above the central ring of the circus. All of these equally push the audience in an uncomfortable, but imaginative position, constantly contemplating the fragile separation between facts and beliefs, reality and imagination, reason and emotion,

between fantasy and trauma, between life and death. In its purpose and essence, this position contemplates both the transgressive and the transcendental nature of the human reality. The benefits of 'flying high' are to be outlined in the following subchapter and in the context of my own explorations and 'performances' as a researcher.

At the second level of analysis, some meso planes of reality and "immediate irreality" - as once Max Blecher (2015) referred to transgressive spaces created by human suffering- would have been uncovered. One would have looked at "loopholes" in the stories and attempt to uncover some "transgressive movements" within these, in between the reality and the immediate irrealities of humor and metaphor, or anger and hate. The following elements have been looked at:

a) How participants understand their world?

b) Moving beyond the referential within their respective worlds (with the help of fictive dialogues with their worlds);

c) Transgressive events and movements within their worlds, at the core of their "masks";

d) Imaginary dialogue between participants' stories about their presumably necessary and assumed transgressions;

e) Reflect on and imagine the purpose of such transgressions.

At the third level of the analysis, I have attempted to "fly high" (macro level) to look at possible "transcendental movements" within auto/ biographies presented. The understanding and the mere development of myths were contrasted to an un-usual interpretation of myths, as well as the notion of "sacrifice" was explored from the perspective of its justifications when it is done either "for the Other" or "against the Other". I will explore "territories in the space between fantasy and trauma, fiction and reality" (Abraham and Torok, 2005, p. lvi). The following elements were aimed at:

a) Create a "dreamspace" (day-dream or "proper dream) to enter into participants' imaginary worlds: to contradict, to empathise with?

b) A (transcendental) dialogue between my 'on the border' space and participants' stories;

c) Reflect on my own potential (identity and entity) for good, for bad or beyond.

STAGE 4: ANALYSIS - SECOND AND THIRD PHASES

"LOOPHOLES" and "FLYING HIGH"

The circus-related metaphors which were gradually introduced in the previous pages have framed and provided a rhythm to this thesis; the 'sideshows' of the circus world do also point towards how our own masks of normality are susceptible to the action of the 'unsayable' and at the mercy of the 'uncanny' and the 'secrets of others'. Transgressive movements beyond the normality's masks are proper to the very domain of the circus performance, but can also open up an imaginative engagement with our own worlds; 'making oneself vulnerable' is equally a circus invitation, as much as it is a necessary way to engage with daunting realities. Transgressive movements can then be coupled with a transcendental 'high fly' -above the central ring of life- that attempts to imaginatively push the boundaries of engagement with stories about a fragile balance between past, present and future, between facts and beliefs, reason and emotion, reality and imagination, between fantasy and trauma, one's own family and the world, between life and death.

In the next subchapter, I have used these circus dynamics to stage a 'fictional family gathering' in a meaningful for me place called 'Grandma's Kitchen', so that I can illuminate not just the stage, with its masks of normality, but also to generate some cracks through which I can look -together with you, the reader- behind the

stage and also maybe off stage, perhaps where 'the secrets of others' lie quietly, like bodies in lost tombs, still filled by 'pain, torment and melancholy'.

My 'Grandma's Kitchen' was a place 'on-the-border'; I literally grew up in it and witnessed its magic, people coming in waves to share their stories, to interact, to cry, to laugh, to dream, to remember or forget a past, to re-imagine a future. My 'Grandma's Kitchen' was a remarkable space and now, that it only exists in my memory, it will become once again a 'place' for, this time, the 'narrative imagination' to emerge from.

I have aimed in the following pages to re-create a family scene in my 'Grandma's Kitchen' -which rolls over a three day period, but also across and beyond generational, geographical and logical boundaries- and that, this time, invites in more than my own family stories. I am inviting stories from significant others to participate and interact with each other: from my dear Arke (myself in fact, still 'on-the-border'), to Dawanur as 'someone-known-to-me', to my Grandmother and Grandfather and their good friends and family -Tante Zelig, Tante Zefi to name a few-, to also include fictional characters from a Salman Rushdie book (Rushdie, 2015) -with a title referring to 'one thousand and one nights' of stories-, the two prominent Jinni (beings 'on-the-border' between humanity and divinity), one evil, the Grand Ifrit, and one on the side of humanity, Dunia. I have also invited the stories of the two research participants, Mubashir and Alkayria, as well as three medieval Muslim philosophers, theologians and legislators -Mawardi, Juwayni and Ghazali- whose views, stories and theories have influenced and still influence the world of today, for the good or for the worse. Mircea Eliade -as once important for me Romanian philosopher and historian of religions- was also invited to provide us an opportunity to realise -through the dialogue between the different stories- that the 'uncanny' and even the evil does not avoid those who we have once admired and trusted as intellectuals, but then got profoundly disillusioned and upset by their thinking and actions.

The pilgrimage towards death is not restricted to a profile of names and characters; anyone and everyone can start a pilgrimage and many often do, but what one discovers on their way can either lead towards life or death. What seems to be certain is that along the way -and especially 'on-the-border' places- stories collide to create illusion and magic, interchange to even create collective pretense, intercalate across geographies, temporal dimensions and generations to reveal equally an illuminating human interconnectedness - and "common humanity" (Rushdie, 2012, p. 12) coupled with a striking fragility of our journey and also to reveal a necessary uncertainty of arrival point.

Grandma's Kitchen - a journey into an "immediate irreality" [reflective dialogues by and with Arke Schley]

I went to see my parents recently and inquired about some family photos... photos that would hint back towards something missing, a personal void that has haunted me since childhood and early teenage years. During those years of secondary schooling, I have seen a particular photo whilst speaking with my grandmother; I asked her who were the people from the picture and she reluctantly and laconically said that it is us, our family... She continued to speak with her friends I remember, it was a strong smell of coffee, warm homemade cookies, and of the jovial chatter and laughter... Since that time I felt that something is not there in the open, or that something is camouflaged behind the mere "masks" of the given normality of the everyday life of a child growing up in a totalitarian, dictatorial and communist space and time, Eastern Europe of the second part of the 20th Century.

The first day of my visit to my parents' was marked by an early visit "on the hill"; my wife and I drove down the meandering street from my parents' house (and grandparents' and great grandparents' etc) and then at the junction we turned right and then up the road on a bend to the left through the forest of pine and beech trees -in the land of beech trees as it was called by the Habsburgs, Buchenland or Bukovina-, on the right it was the restaurant I remember from my childhood where weddings, baptisms and funeral receptions were held and then slowly up and then slightly right and then straight up where one is presented with the choice of either turning right or left; left of the hill, the sign indicates the way to the medieval fortress which still sits proudly to have never been conquered by the Ottomans, on the right on the hill being the place where the leaders of the communist party -the conquerors- and "the one beloved leader" (The Whiteface Clown) were entertained at the highest level in the middle of an apple orchard. The hill presents yet another choice of reality (or irreality) to people, between the Christian Orthodox cemetery on the left, "conveniently" one would say being not far from the medial fortress and, on the other hill, on the right, the Jewish cemetery, at the bottom of the communist party leaders' orchard. It is the first time since my birth in this town when I learned about the existence of this Jewish cemetery (apart from the ancient one from my street, and a few houses up from my parents' house), and this did not come from my parents or anyone else but from a novel-memoir written by my co-national, Norman Manea (Manea, 2013); I was born in the same city as him, but forty years later and, unlike him, I am only now

discovering the new-old realities and irrealities of a place that is so familiar to me. The land geography separates one hill from the other, but with this the human geography and history of this once vibrant Habsburgic Shtetl - word choice not being arbitrary- reveals itself before us; a strong feeling of unease overwhelms me and I try to hold it inside -for my wife... an inner voice says with clarity "it seems that there is a difference even in death, one dead one one hill another on another hill, finally face to face but too far to hear one another; there is a very narrow lane that could be easily missed, being covered in snow and mud to the Jewish cemetery and a two-way paved road to the Orthodox Christian cemetery. Can't you see who is busier to die?"...

We went then to my ancestors graves, have lit some candles, thought of them, prayed and then walked back to the car park where we have left our car by the cemetery main entrance, very civilised and efficient. One can easily see that this is a big cemetery, which despite its popular name as a Christian Orthodox cemetery "houses" a good number of Evangelicals and Catholics; the names of graves reflect the diversity of the town, with many German, Polish, beside a only slight majority Romanian. This presence of people's voids "sleeping in their graves" reveals also a troubling reality... the voice is Arke, he says clearly once again "ethnic minorities have not been dying for a while on this town's hills; this ain't Habsburg or ain't a Shtetl no longer... a bitter history of ethnic cleansing over the past 100 years of big Romania. I prefer to stay in the middle of the road and watch people passing by towards life or towards death, people who still have their names, the ones who

changed them to conceal an unwanted identity. But, these do not matter any longer, there must be peace and quiet finally: 'HIER IST KEINE QUAL, KEINE SEHNSUCHT, UND AUCH KEIN SCHMERZ' ('Here is no torment, no nostalgia, and also no pain'), as I have (seen) written on great grandmother's grave, Rosa Ciobanu (born Schley)... No torment, no nostalgia, no pain... ". My head was exploding, my mind was flooded with fragments of past conversations and visual snippets of reality or irreality, my struggles have restarted, I felt a pain in my chest and couldn't breathe for a few minutes... 'Must go home I thought', perhaps I am hungry; we had a good lunch at my parents', my girls were happy playing with their grandparents. The house was warm and alive with children noises, smell of chicken soup, roast meat, cookies and coffee... Have you had a good time? Have you found all the graves?, my father asked whilst cutting a sizable piece of meat and a salted-water pickled cucumber... No, I said, no... I would like to have a coffee and some sweets, need to get ready for a walk with the girls.

The second day at my parents' house seemed very quiet and peaceful, have slept a lot and woke up with a cold sweet, felt a bit feverish... I just had a fixed thought, I was very determined to search through family photos to find that missing element that would fill the void; I set to do other things throughout the day and mentioned to my mother that I would like to have a look later at some family photos, some of those I have seen in the past and wasn't able to see since; she nodded, said nothing and went to the kitchen and came back with a bread, meat and vegetable plateau for our late breakfast. I asked her again and she became visibly irritated

by my insistence and briskly pointed towards library cupboard just behind me: "all are there"... I asked her if she had time to look for those I asked her specifically a while ago and she replied vaguely with the same answer: "are there, should be there". Of course, should be there is not the same with I looked for them and found them, or the same with they are there... I was taken aback by this vagueness, however this was something that I have seen before and it was not new to me; it wasn't a good sign as it lead to arguments in the past and I desperately wanted to avoid any this time, so I gave up... and turned my attention to breakfast and to planning the day: we had to go and see the other part the family, my wife's family who are leaving further south in another city, about two hours drive away.

   We have returned in the late afternoon of the third day and, being a bit tired, all I wanted was to have a quiet and early evening. We were met by talkative parents who asked many questions and wanted to have a chat with us; we've eaten together and then over a glass of wine the discussion lead once again to the past. I was told that there are some photos for me to look at, right behind me; these were taken out of the library cupboard and were 'ready' for me to look at... My tiredness disappeared instantly and have happily turned around, taken a few piles and placed them in front of me, between the dishes and glasses, no one seemed to be bothered by this apparent carelessness of mine, I was careful though. I went through most of the photos whilst my parents kept on talking and asking questions, my dad playing with the girls, my mum going from time to time between the living room and the kitchen.

I got up and wanted to open the library cupboard to look for more photos, but I felt compelled to ask my mum if I am allowed to do it, she replied on a heavy note: "yeah, dear, search whatever you want..."and so I did open the double doors of the cabinet. These opened with a sharp and long squick, one of the doors had dropped a tiny bit and open to the end and the other just came back in half way in dangling slightly. There were two shelves full of photos and fabrics, scarfs, handkerchiefs, pieces of paper, old, dated yellowed paper, envelopes with my grandma's writing on and lots of dust, a mighty dust; a dusty and squeaky cupboard. My head started to spin, hands were unsure where to start, fingers went on the fabrics and the silky dust that started already to tingle my face, nostrils, eyes and then was the first strong sneeze and then the second and then a full blown crisis emerged, snizzes, coughs, watery eyes, itchy skin on my chest and back and face and... I felt the pain of the past coming back, the small particles of dust were tormenting my senses, but my nostalgia for the "not yet found" but remembered was driving me forward, gasping for air I was happy to be alive and reacted flimsily to the assault on my desire to know. The particles of dust have reminded me of the resistance, of my mum' resistance to go back in the past, to know the past..."Are you OK my dear?" I hear mum from behind, "I brought some chicken soup, your favourite, fresh from today; leave that for a bit and eat..." I refused, but then regretted it and turned around, sat and took a few spoons from the 'clear-oup-of-childhood'. I felt that I am close to something, so close to it as always and yet again close to miss it, miss the chance to find it... My allergic crisis

to dust sparked in my parents, it seems, a similar crisis and allergia for memory, for the past. The squeaking doors to the past felt so heavy; Arke's voice, I heard his voice during my increasingly frequent gasps for air:

"this is the language of the past and memory, we are tormented by dust, we are squeaking from birth, oh my dear, don't you know that here on the border the past can only squick into present? Between six to and six past at midnight, you have about twelve minutes when memories squick back in to torment, to bring unhealed pain back in the present, this is when the midnight voids squeak back in, this is a capsule of time here on the border when dust happens, when dust comes back to life, when the voids of people and their actions and reactions reemerge into reality"...

I heard my mum saying "it's almost midnight, do you want a cookie, it is homemade, it is a recipe you know from your great grandmother, Rosa". Rosa and Arke added in choir: "Here is no torment, no nostalgia, and also no pain".
         ****

The phone rang... I remember that my grandma responded naturally in one of the unofficial languages, ancient and proper to the lands once inhabited by "people and books" as Paul Celan once described the part of the world he-I-we are from, Bukovina. I remember that her face was transformed by a deep sense of joy and worry, her eyes going down on the table in front of her, her right hand would fiddle with a folded piece of napkin that had some fresh lipstick and coffee marks on, the eyes would then go up to look outside towards the street and then left to look at me... a timid smile followed and grandma responded by blowing me a kiss saying "it's tante Zefi on the phone... do you want to speak with her? She will speak slowly for you..." My heart stopped for a second, I heard my grandmother switching to a

more formal and clearer German and passed me the phone, smiled and turned to her other two friends who did not understand what was happening... I froze, I heard the voice from the other end, a very kind, warm voice asking me how I am and that she hopes to see me soon... I do not remember ever meeting her, she saw me when I was only 2 years old when she came back with her family to visit "home". I could not say much, but thank you and that I was glad to hear her, and bye... my grandma took the phone quickly and switched back to what sounded as German, however a very different sound from what I heard from Zefi... it was a mumbbled yet very mellow and melodious speech, one would not normally regard as German. Perhaps Austrian-German, perhaps something else, perhaps a mixture from an isolated place, a language of a lost and now hidden ghetto combined with some other linguistic manners of an equally foreign, increasingly-repressed past...; it was the same language that my grandmother used with a handful of people, her very close ones, when she spoke with Tante Zelig, Mitzi, uncle Iuziu and her brothers... I was born in an "official language" and so my grandmother had to "respect" this and follow the orders of the Whiteface Clown who was creating another, better, multilateral, communist society... my grandma wasn't to be fully 'converted' herself, but could and should follow orders; her first language was a combination of a few very different ones -German, Yiddish, Polish, Romanian- that reflected the street she grew up on; until she went to school, he could not speak the new "official language", which did not exist as an official one at that time, all other languages being equally official or unofficial. [Arke sighted...] Grandma's

friends - the two elderly ladies- who were present that day were somehow delighted to hear again the sounds of a language that once they have came across themselves, but which they never practiced and maintained, or ever have been interested to know if it was "pure German", or a bit of Austrian-German or Yiddish, or from another planet. Their origins were from outside of the city, from the more homogenous communities where Romanian was the only language being spoken and from time to time a bit of Austrian-German when they or their parents or grandparents had to deal with the Habsburgic authorities. It was a multitude, a plenitude of different communities, which were prospering and happily leaving together under and because of the system created in Bukovina by the Habsburgs. However, the end of that came in their youth, at a time of great success for Romanians who succeeded in 1918 to have their own unified country for the first time is their history. Their historic success brought with it a lot of national pride and optimism, but also was the occasion when the creation of a nation state meant that some unexpected turns were about to happen; if 1878 meant the independence from the Ottoman Empire, 1918 should have meant only a moment of proud and optimistic constitution of a nation state; however, this was hijacked by a ferocious ethnic cleansing, which started firstly as a subtle propagation of "unifying and totalising narratives" to a gradual increase in intolerance towards the Other, towards the difference, which culminated with the deportation and extermination of Bukovina Jewish population in 1941. This actually preceded the German Nazi Holocaust and was entirely the initiative of the Romanian

authorities, which were legitimised in their actions by the strong support from the national Christian Orthodox Church; this much needed legitimacy has contributed to the creation of a fanatical following and of a religious fundamentalist state apparatus, which one could have regarded as 'institutionalised terrorism'. But no one did at that time, not even me who have seen in spirit so much before and would have seen so much henceforth... But, hey... I could at least now say that :

> the formative events of the twentieth century have crucially informed our biographies, threatening sometimes to overshadow and overwhelm our lives (Hoffman, 2017, p. 24).

Drinking the coffee, smelling the coffee and looking in the cup after the coffee was drank so that a glimpse of the future can be seen... take a bit of cookie, life is sweet and good, take a sip from your coffee, wake up and look forward, the more coffee and cookies the more chatter, the more chatter the more looking inside the cups, the more of that the more future-fixation... How this can be possible? How can one only look at the future and only select that past that is sweet and stimulating, how can one ignore the 'full-past'? Doing this, seen this being done throughout my childhood and also seen the whole world around doing pretty much the same has started a struggle inside me, an inner sense of inadequacy when seeing that not even in my dearest Bukovina -which was the quintessence of being 'on the border', where so many different "people and books lived"- people could not resist to cross boundaries of acceptability and humanity, whose actions have brought in darkness upon the diversity and inclusiveness of the many communities

that lived together in peace until then. There is still no statue or a plan to erect one soon for the shame and suffering that was created in those years, which contributed to the eradication of whole communities and ethnic groups, the Jewish population being the most affected. But I hear some asking similar questions as those going through my head now:

> What is my need about? [...] Recovering a lost world? Experiencing the loss? Or the process of remembering? (Hirsch and Spitzer, 2011, p. 12).

Figure 11: Family Photo taken during the Second World War (presumably around 1939-1940) in my birth town, Suceava, in Bukovina, [twenty years on from Bukovina joining Romania from the Habsburg Empire],

my Grandmother -Lucia (Lutzi)- in the middle, her two brothers and father,
and my Great Grandmother -Rosa (born Schley)- on the left.

My response would be that this was an "unknown (for me) trauma", something that others knew, but forgot about, or wanted to forget, or were asked to forget... those, like my grandmother and her friends and we as a society have crossed boundaries of the acceptable, have accepted that reality works by accepting incompatible aspects like sacrificing, killing the Other and at the same time declaring one's religious purity, or being at the same time on the extreme right and the extreme left of the political spectrum. Is this "home", can this still be a home? The 'sweet Bukovina' has become gradually a land of 'historical amnesia,' where sweetness can come only come from presently eaten cookies and freshly made coffee that awakens one and predicts the future. The past with its memories and traumas had to be manipulated and its rightful existence denied...

I do remember that I have asked my grandma: "Who is in that picture?", she could not hear me as was busy drinking coffee, eating sweets and speaking with her friends next door, in the back room of her summer kitchen, sitting around an octogonal table. It was almost lunch time and I knew that this was the time when grandpa would come down to the summer-kitchen where my grandma spent most of her time entertaining her friends, who would come one by one like in a magical procession, like coming to a psychoanalyst, there was a lot of transference going round... not sure if my grandma was the analyst or the patient, it wasn't always clear. Her start in life gave her a much needed grounding "on-the-border"; she

would not say openly anything from the past, but will live it everyday through the advice given and the listening provided towards Others, who were very important to her. Their struggles, despairs, darkness, difference gave her life, and she said many time: "the moment I won't be able to welcome them in my summer kitchen, chat house, I will seize to exist". Lunch time was sacrosanct and the "therapy" always stopped then, clear chicken soup with fresh garden vegetables was a favourite as many other dishes from the past, from the cook-books of her mother, Rosa Schley. I have then asked her again: "Bubby, who is in that picture from the China display over there?" Do not know, let me see... she was always happy to move around during lunch time as was delighted to act as a waitress for my grandpa, not sure why, but perhaps she craved the appreciations which otherwise never failed to come at every lunch time, before it and throughout the day for that matter. Grandpa came from another part of the country, from the south who was less cosmopolitan and multicultural; he came to study and finished his theology studies at Cernauti (Czernowitz) and then moved to Suceava (Suczawa) where he fell in love with Grandma and with that part of the country; that was during the Second World War and he lived there all his life. He brought with him some books, a few trees and grapevine roots and also something foreign to my grandma's family, his extreme right wing views - not uncommon at all amongst many of the Romanian intellectuals at that time, including Mircea Eliade- for which he was strongly challenged within the family, the word goes, before he could marry grandma. "They were 'working' in Germany for Hitler?" said grandpa, grandma with the photo in

her hand started to say that those were a part of her family, related to Zefi and another part who were more distant relatives from her maternal grandmother side, her grandmother, Maria Watzek. She was there in the picture, her daughter Rosa Schlei, my great grandmother, uncle Iuziu and another part of the family which had "disappeared, vanished" during the war, no one knows where. The picture was showing women dressed in some white long clothes with what appeared to be some vertical faded lines and they were standing in front of a building's set of stairs; they were there to work, they were in 1941 at a "labour camp" (Arbeitslager) at Bad Sulza... some of them returned, like your great grandma, but others could not, they were moved to other camps and then... no one knows anything of their existence any more... I can sense bitterness and profound sadness in my grandma's voice and appearance... not sure what else she was thinking about, but she snapped at my grandpa when he tried to add that "it was what it was"... "do you like your soup?" the question came briskly and without given a chance for a reply took the photo and put it back in the cupboard... I had after that one more chance to take a closer look at it in the main house's living room; grandma moved all her photos in the library cabinet and started to categorise them and cluster them in a more logical way, e.g. per events, family gatherings, trips etc. After seeing it in the living room once and then asking my grandmother once again about it, I have had a strong feeling of unease, a growing void and struggle to understand what really happened during those years. The growing sense of irreality was intensified by my grandma's inability to verbalise her emotions and

memories, it was as if someone locked everything inside her and then swallowed the key. This taste of bitterness worried me profoundly, but at the same time I was encouraged to see that an old local spirit of multi-ethnic cohesion was kept alive by her on a daily basis; the Other and the difference it brought was welcomed on a daily basis from 9:30 am to very late at night in my grandma's summer kitchen, which worked more like a Cafe place where debates and gossip, and coffee and sweets were keeping the hope alive. What this was not keeping alive was the past, which was firmly locked away, separated, and resisted through a sadness, an extreme desire not to know that turns into a chronic and selective amnesia, an unfortunate -and painful for me to say- "felix culpa" of which also Eliade was revealed to have as a member of the extreme right Iron Guard and then for the whole of his life. My grandma's self imposed happiness for which others were coming to her kitchen was as a response to the guilt of not being able to do more, or for the inability to do anything for many of her friends or family who spoke the same languages as she spoke, especially her Yiddish speaking friends and to a less extent her German speaking ones. I do remember Yiddish being spoken, but I also remember that my grandma was very resistant to talk about any Jewish connection she might, we might have had or still have, even though her friendships and a lost part of the family indicated a hidden grief. Her trip to Jerusalem only few years before her death was the trip she dreamed of for all her life, being also filled with sadness of not being able to see one of her best friends who died during a terrorist attack a few years earlier in Tel Aviv; Tante Zelig was her best friend

from childhood, her best Yiddish interlocutor and I suppose one of the few who had a key to unlock the past. I remember asking grandma if we are Jewish as well and she would look with eyes of steel at me, slightly over her glasses, with a fixed and incomplete smile on her face. "Don't be silly... what does it matter to you? We are just talking don't we?" Tante Zelig would then switch to the official language that I understood better and feel that she needed to add that "your great grandma, Rosa, had converted to Catholicism, and then to Christian Orthodoxim, she married and now is called Cioban (Shepherd in Romanian) so there should be not further question... Even I do not know where the Oldest building in the town is anymore (that is the Synagogue), am I Jewish still? Not sure, look, today is Saturday and I did my dishes... [laughter followed]"... No more discussion then, why does it matter anyway?

And so, I moved on for a while and became an avid reader of many Romanian intellectuals from the interbellum period, including Mircea Eliade whose "History of religions" made me his fan. It was only very late and quite recently that my readings from his extensive writings as well as readings from some authors and especially the work of Norman Manea, a co-national who was born in the same city but forty years before me, opened my eyes. Manea's work helped me to regain my interest in my past as well as aided me to re-occupy a valuable space "on-the-border", which sadly I also left because of the "cookies and coffee" on offer for too long. I need to now speak to you directly and say that the "on-the-border" space never ceased to exist, but was only now existing within some people who were

conscious enough of its true value and departed in an internal exile and pilgrimage, and others who have departed on a physical pilgrimage.

Bukovina still maintains a whiff of its 'on the border' instincts that made possible and were also made possible by its cosmopolitanism and acceptance of the difference of the Other. It is just a whiff though, a barely perceivable one that does not penetrate the keyless doors towards the past; a bitter reflection:

> perhaps very few people are sufficiently lucid and courageous for this, and it is these few who deserve to be called people of conscience. To be truly separated from past errors one must acknowledge them. Is not honesty, in the final analysis, the mortal enemy of totalitarianism? (Manea, 1993, p. 104).

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Arke, what are you doing? A voice was heard clearly and then Dawanur appeared from a dark corner of the room, still fully veiled and quite shy to fully show him-her- self the middle of my grandma's kitchen... Why are you talking about Eliade in this way, he was a great intellectual and you admired him and so my friends did and still do... Afterall, the end of the Ottoman Empire was the work of the Jews, that's what I learned, that the Jews are to be blamed for many... they deserved to be deported and I am happy to see that your native Bukovina has done this to them... But what do you know, you are "feeling Jewish", I am not surprised of your position, you are to be blamed for... well, for everything. If I would have known all these before, I could have become a member of the Iron Guard, you are a disgrace to your granddad who was a member; you know that my friends were also

sympathisers of the Iron Guard, don't you? Why have you denied this part of your family past?

Augustus the Fool stepped out from under the kitchen table and added that Dawanur might like to listen to a few paragraphs so that the conversation can continue to a more engaging space, perhaps to a balanced place where different views can be accepted... Dawarnur hastily replied that nothing can bring him-her back to feel or think or believe in any other way as she-he has already found the ultimate truth and that she-he now knows who is responsible for... well everything bad in the world, like his-her friends once taught her and Eliade had reinforced this quite clearly, hadn't he?

> To me, then it is a matter of complete indifference whether Mussolini is or not a tyrant… it is entirely immaterial what will happen to Romania after the liquidation of democracy. If, by leaving democracy behind, Romania becomes a strong state, armed, conscious of its power and destiny- history will take account of its deed. [...] The Legion member is a new man, who has discovered his own will, his own destiny. Discipline and obedience have given him a new dignity, and unlimited confidence in himself, the Chief, and the greater destiny of the nation. [...] There are a great many revolutionary impulses that have been waiting for thousands of years to be put into practice. That is why the Son of Man descended: to teach us permanent revolution. [...] In the name of this Romania that began many thousands of years ago and will not end until the apocalypse, social reforms will be enacted with considerable brutality, every corner of the provinces new overrun with foreigners will be recolonised, all traitors will be punished, the myth of our State will extend all across the country, and the news of our strength will stretch beyond its borders (Eliade from 1934-1938, as cited in (Manea, 1993, pp. 108, 109).

Arke saw the scared face of his grandma and the shaky hands of his grandpa who in very low voice was saying "how could I have been so stupid, how? How could

have Eliade been so evil in his comments, why so many of us...? I am so sorry..."

Arke continued and had attempted to mediate the conversation by saying that everybody is entitled to express his or her views which then need to be discussed in the open. The one unconscious has to be invited in, Eliade has to be invited to defend his views, perhaps now when he is gone, just a void left of him, he could finally illuminate for us his "happy guilt" and hopefully also apologise for his views that instigated to the most horrific acts ever perpetrated by humans against fellow humans from other ethnicities or creeds in that part of the world. Can someone please call Eliade? He needs to respond and apologise, he needs to respond to the following challenge:

> the (Legion) movement was responding to the same appeals as Hitler's national socialism: find an identity (which in the context of that confused period was as understandable for the Romanians as for the Germans) and construct a mythology (in case of Romania, Christian Orthodoxy as the ideal of purity, utopian brotherhood, and so on and so forth). These slogans also offered Romanians a mechanism of identification. Today we would call it Christian Orthodox fundamentalism with a terrorist structure, for it ritualised a cult of death and of Christian sacrifice, violently excluded all "foreigners", idealised pastoral life, and rejected democracy, individuality, and modern Western civilisation (Manea, 1993, pp. 106, 107).

The biggest Jinni of all, the Grand Ifrit, started to laugh and said that we, Jinni, help humans cross boundaries of their own humanity towards Life or towards Death... it seems that I succeed to "help" Mircea more than Dunia tried to do, afterall she liked Eliade a lot and wanted to marry him, think that she succeeded to some extent. But, the Felix Culpa is my success alone, what a glory

that was to show that the human mind, philosopher's mind is helpless, hopeless and even evil if needed. You, Arke, can stay in your place on-the-border but remember that this is not forever, I am always there to "help" you cross it. Mircea cannot talk right now, his void just had a stroke and is not able to talk at present, his extreme right face had dropped but still seems quite happy and guilt free, as we like it... Mircea's words are to be read by someone else, it is a statement that is to be read whilst Mircea's void will be present, he is still able to raise his left arm and eyebrows... Dawanur then started to read from where he-she was asked by the Grand Ifrit to sit, crammed between the dishes' cupboard and the green wall by the summer kitchen' narrow entrance. She said: "my friends would be delighted to know that I am becoming Mr. Eliade's official voice"... His-her voice beared the excitement of a very young schoolchild who just learned something very important, true, a bit like a universal truth that one cannot but just accept without question:

> Democracy has been unable to inspire in the people a spirit of fervent nationalism - to make them a strong, virile, optimistic nation, imbued with a sense of mission and destiny. Being a foreign import, democracy is concerned with matters that are not specifically Romanian concerns: with 'abstractions' such as individual rights, the rights of minorities, and freedom of political consciousness - these do not strike at the heart of 'Romania's problem' (Manea, 1993, p. 108).

Dawarnur body language evoked a purity, peaceful acceptance only achievable after a round of 'successful' prayers; Eliade's void smiled from behind a cloud of pipe smoke who was coming straight into Arke's face, and heading towards his forehead; one would distinguish in smoke a star shape, an amputated star with one

corner less than a star Arke would be happy to wear (again) by his heart, but this void-full one will most likely hit Arke's main ability and competence, that will diminish his meaning in life: 'to bring light, as he was the light-bringer afterall'...

Mubashir steps in shilly and says that he is happy to be there again..., to be seeing my grandma again and that is looking forward for another cup of great fresh mint tea... he said... I am happy to be here again, in your summer kitchen which exists in the same form in all "on-the-border" spaces, being it the great Damascus behind the Umayyad Mosque, or Jerusalem beside the Al-Aqsa Mosque, or in the Jerusalem of Eastern Europe (Czernowitz) as the capital of Bukovina or in Suczawa (Suceava) where we are sitting now... I agree with you Mr. Eliade, "democracy is dead"... but you learned that from being a part of the influence of the Ottoman Empire for such a long time; surely, the First World War has empowered your nation to finally exist independently, but in complete dependence to the Western models, democracy being a part of its trickery...

Arke interjected and stopped Mubashir's sentence and demanded Eliade's apology, for the smoke, for the attempted and inspired harm meant towards him and others. Mubashir agreed with Arke and nodded his head in approval, but said that the fresh mint tea, the coffee and the cookies were waiting and this apology can be delayed as afterall one's 'happy guilt' is one's responsibility and can only be judged by God and not by man-made laws. Eliade's turn will come when we will have Khilafah re-established, he can be judged fairly then and so you will be as well, dear Arke, so no worries for now; this can take another 5 days, or five months, or

years, or a hundred years, so don't worry for now, and especially do not worry about the past persecutions, only work towards that future...

Arke has heard, took a sip of coffee and left for a walk and then his thoughts started to flow and flow; he started to talk with himself as he was walking down and then "up the hill", through the forest and then deciding to either go left or right, certainly not going forward; he decided to stay in the middle of the road, exactly on-the-border. After a few minutes of reflection, he produced his own internal analysis, as if very bright light beams have shone through multiple cracks on what existed before him, in front of him. He was used with these "natural phenomena" as he himself could be seen through a "loophole", through a keyhole to a space and time beyond the mere yet the all important "masks" of reality:

'One actively transgresses and goes beyond her "mask", or "masks" can bear the desire to transgress that is then counter-acted, reacted upon in a perceived defensive act... transgressions can be looked at through keyless keyholes, through the deep cracks on walls and split wrinkles on masks. He paused to breathe in and then out -like in a prayer- as he leaned on the massive ancestral beech tree that has just re-emerged from under traditionally deep potholes right and left of the white dotted centre of the paved road to nowhere... One one hand is Mubashir (The Actionary) side, I can see a learned and internalised historical trauma by a "stereotypical British kid" who does not keep his British identity in more regard than at a very superficial level, but who in turn brings his hand to his heart when

he speaks about belonging to an imagined, conceptual, yet very real Muslim community, the Ummah. The imagination, the concept and the reality of the centuries to come of the Ummah were revealed to Prophet Muhammed and this is what counts more for Mubashir than the superficial and man-made political systems in which he happened to have been born in, raised from and developed to the present day. The referential points in Mubashir story are equally factual and imaginary, however very real and oppositional in their default position, but all work to create a valid picture of past and present sufferings and their "one" solution, as it was prescribed fourteen hundred years ago. Going back to re-enact that solution seems to be a part of the ritual of healing and development, however the oppositional and antagonistical views at play may seem to -instead- generate more discontent and resentment.

The ideas of a unitary Ummah and of a Khilafah seem to be equally transformative as well as transgressive vehicles as these seem to antagonise with Western ideas of democracy and of national identity. In Mubashir's case these concepts seems to indicate a clear direction as well as future trajectory within his biography, which looks both at the reality and the superficiality of his Western identity, as this seems to be considered only as a reference point for what is felt as superficial in one's life, and at the same time looking at both the present irreality and the emotional depthness conferred by the desire to re-establish the Khilafah as a necessary precondition of the rightful existence and progress of a global Muslim community, the Ummah.

For Alkayria (The Reactionary) on the other hand, it seems that the transgressive movement is not done towards and under an intellectual concept, but it comes as a reaction to a perceived Western threat and aggression against Muslims, irrespective of where they are. Present re-enactments of old rivalries between the West and the Muslim world have been unified not by a concept, but -instead- by a fear of Western attack and oppression of the Muslim world following the 9/11 event. The Western interventions are blamed as transgressive as these cross boundaries of what is constitutes humanity; Alkayria's own actions can therefore be seen as counter-transgressive as these are reactive to Western transgressions against humanity and the Muslim community. The desire to serve one's community, anywhere that is, even though this is not directly referred to as Ummah, is not seen in any contradiction with Alkayria's own Western entity and identity, which seems to run in parallel without many questions being asked. For Alkayria, the Western actions following 9/11 are seen as transgressive against a the whole Muslim community with the associated feelings of being targeted, and this in itself gives the legitimacy for a counter-transgressive and defensive movement that serves to preserve one's community.'

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It was getting quite late in the day, a dense fog was slowly settling in and around the ancestral beech tree, it has silenced the joyful birds, the night was opening its "royal" roads to the unconscious, the sounds of voids from under the hills have

started to become once again clearer... Arke was hearing his grandma's calls for "home" from beyond the forest, from the bukovinian'trans-sylvania, "come 'meyn Kind' (my child), dinner is served soon, we have some important guests coming so we expect 'ein Schmooze' (a chat), we need you here to host it, food is provided"...

Arke rushed "home" taking known-since-childhood paths through the forest and then arrived in no time, but later than expected as everyone sat round the hexagonal table from grandma's summer kitchen back room, where only her friends would normally be invited for cookies, coffee and all necessary "future dose". I knew some of those present, but not all, felt nervous, but comfortable in that space and time... As I entered, I could see that those present have not waited for me, which was a big relief for me, they almost finished the many small starter dishes always present on a festive dinner table at grandma's. It was a reserved atmosphere and the room seems to be smaller than usual, but large enough to get all round the table and there were also some "floating" around as it was evening time, getting closer to midnight...

It is a very late evening for everybody, I appreciate your presence and hope that we'll have a good time eating, talking. Without further formalities and as the time is rapidly marching to that optimal "on-the-border" sequence, I propose that we quickly go round to introduce ourselves, shall we? I will start, I am Arke Schley and you are all very welcome in my grandma's summer kitchen, perhaps the last space from present Bukovina where the 'on the border' spirit still applies and often comes back; people come here everyday like to a Japanese "air bar", to inhale the

normality of a forgotten past. I, Arke, I am perpetually on the border and will never leave this space, have never left and will be ensuring its perpetuity and usefulness for those who started internal or physical pilgrimages. I can see you came from far, some of you from really far indeed, you are most welcome, feel safe and confident, respect the Other and express your views, we will have ein Schmooze as grandma would say, a bit of a chat, a simple, but necessary conversation, a frank exchange of opinions, debate and disagreement are expected, but please remain calm and cordial with the Other, we shall draw some conclusions just after midnight, at around seven past; hope that's OK... I think you had some food and so we can get to our agenda, which is around the transgressive and transcendental makeup of the concepts like Ummah, Khilafah and the Other-as-Enemy. Let's go round the table and introduce ourselves, so from my left please.

Yes, I am Alkayria, and as you know from our previous interactions, I am passionate about my people, about my Muslim community, I am a Brit of a Pakistani heritage, after 9/11 I felt compelled to help my fellow brothers and sisters, and especially the children of Afghanistan as they were attacked in retaliation by the West. I was recruited by Al-Qaeda and left for Pakistan and then joined Taliban forces in Afghanistan, thought that I would play my part in helping children in need, but realised very soon that it was all a big lie and that children were trained to become suicide bombers; I felt that this is deeply un-Islamic and left, had a lucky escape, got back to London and since then I have dedicated my life to de-radicalising young people in the streets of East London. In

regard to the concepts you mentioned, the Ummah has always been important to me as it signified all Muslims around the world, the fight of the West against its youngest members -Ummah's children- being a big blow to my heart and had to do something about it. I am not into Khilafah and stuff as that's I.S.'s territory, those guys are evil and do not represent Islam.

Hello, peace be on you all, I am Mawardi, presently a talking void, I have wrote "The Ordinances of Government" at around 1031 and I have been always interested in the role of the Khilafah and the person of a Khalif for the Muslim community; the leader needs to have a strong sense of justice, knowledge, physical ability as well as he must have descended from Quraysh, as we were taught by the "orthodox caliphs" like Abu Bakr who has quoted the Prophet's words in these matters. The Khalif can be chosen by a close election from only a few, a maximum of six people (Kennedy, 2016). In respect to the idea of Ummah, my views are that this -according to the Quranic text- refers to "a small group within a [much] larger community of believers" (Hassan, 2011, p. 49), and finally I have never heard of this notion of the West, or the events of 9/11, I wasn't even born in 911; I will bring this thought to my Khalif's attention; he is the rightful "successor of the Prophet", not the Caliph of God, tradition prescribed by Abu Bakr's (the first Caliph) refusal to accept more than being a successor to the Prophet.

Thank you for your hospitality, thought for a moment that I am still in my beloved Baghdad but this is equally a city and space of peace (a Bukovinian Madinat al-Salam), or at least it was as I learned from Arke's introduction. It

has the same feel, at least here... I am Juwayni Abd al-Malik al-Juwayni, I know Mawardi's work very well as I read it diligently over the many past decades, but I have to say, I reached very different conclusions as him; hope that you read my political treaty 'Succour of the Nations' as it was finalised only a few years ago, in 1085. [Arke sighted, but said nothing... others have looked around and remained silent]. I also do not know what the West is, but thought that its ideas of democracy are interesting somehow as these connect with my idea of free election of the Khalif, but I disagree that all men can or should vote (on his left, Mubashir was nodding in approval), but only

> the electors should be free men with experience in law, government and administration [the elector] has to have power and authority (Kennedy, 2016).

The Khalif can be anyone, not necessarily connected to a special noble and ancient tribe, and in general descent is not important or necessary, but the qualities of leadership and authority and these qualifies one for the "office". I furthermore think that the Ummah is important inasmuch it is led by an authoritative Caliph; the Ummah need a powerful leader to exist:

> military power and true belief are the only meaningful qualifications for the office and that, rather than being a divinely appointed ruler (Kennedy, 2016).

Alkayria is nodding his head unclear whether he agrees or not, but at the same time -and Mubashir seemed to agree- "partially true, partially nonsense"...

202

Mubashir added that the Khalif will be and should be the guarantor of the enforcement of the God-made rule on earth... Arke intervened saying that the debate will start soon and that these comments can be saved for later; all agreed... more coffee and cookies are needed.

Mubashir was next to introduce himself. I am a member of Hizb-ut Tahrir since I was in college and I happily continue to be; I am passionate about the reinstatement of the Khilafah as a guarantor of peace and order in the world, I neither believe in democracy or socialism, as all political systems have failed and we need to reestablish the Khilafah... I will say more when the discussion starts; but for now I also need to say that Ummah is a united global community, it is where my heart is and my whole loyalty is with it, not with "the Queen and country". Fighting the West can only happen after and the Jihad can only happen after the Khilafah is established, the time will soon come...

Finally, the last honorable presence tonight, please... I am Ghazali and my teacher's void is here, I am very touched by this invitation and was not expecting to see you Master Juwayni and apologise if I will say anything wrong. From behind, the Grand Ifrit and Eliade's voice made surprised faces as if that was the first time they see their Master apologising and also in advance for a presumed and preempted mistake... I know what the West is and have been against its influence and role for centuries as I was for instilling fear in the hearts of men, Grand Ifrit helped me a lot with this also through his corruption of intellectuals around the world - ha, yes you Mircea as well amongst others and today you are a guest as

your actions connect to this land- and more recently the partially successful campaigns of Abu Bakr al Baghdadi and his I.S.

I died in 1111 and wrote the "Book of Mustazhir". I assert that

> there has to be a caliph to make the shari'a effective; he is God's caliph and the mainspring for all that is right. [... I dismiss] the idea of public participation, even one restricted to people of virtue and religious probity, and [I...] opt instead for having a single elector. [I also insist] on descent from the Quraysh. (Kennedy, 2016).

For me Ummah is a global community, but only those who agree with us deserve to live, others... do not exist for us, are mere objects that can be disposed of... Arke, I am sure that you know what I mean... Eliade's voice was silent but the lips produced the right-shape of smoke, the one corner-less star that was so disturbing to the whole atmosphere. The Grand Ifrit thought that silence must be broken and proudly wanted to show Ghazali how he managed to influence the most recent of self-proclaimed caliphal speech:

> [On 29 June 2014] The new Commander of the Faithful and caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, addresses Muslims thus [...] O Muslims everywhere, glad tidings for you and expect good. Raise your head high for today - by God's grace- you have a state and a khilafa which will return your dignity, might, rights and leadership. [...] Soon, by Allah's permission, a day will come when the Muslim will walk everywhere as a master, having honour, being revered, with his head held high and his dignity preserved... The Muslims today have a loud thundering statement and possess heavy boots. They have a statement to make that will cause the world to hear and understand the meaning of terrorism and boots that will trample the idol of nationalism, destroy the idol of democracy and uncover its deviant nature (Kennedy, 2016).

Eliade's voice murmured through Dawanur's candide tone: "I am happy to see that this spirit continues, the powerful ancient spirit as expressed through myths of an Eternal Return and of the Age of Gold; I am however feeling guilty that I limited my actions to the notion of nation-state, perhaps those were the times and I think that it was a necessary phase in the terror of history; I feel happy and guilty at the same time that I could not do more for the cause, but I have followers who are here today with you. I am happy to see that people of Bukovina are afraid and that they crossed borders, the borders of humanity, we managed to have buried, to torment, to steal the right to nostalgia and to inflict pain. What more can one wish for? Death is perfect, death is the ultimate perfection, there is no more Other, there is no more "on-the-border" stuff"... Arke intervened and reminded all that their voids can only be heard because the back room of grandma's summer kitchen is still on the border and that no one could have bury it yet, and also midnight was approaching and it would be the perfect time to allow the only ones alive to exchange opinions whilst other would place their "indicative vote"... All agreed, it seemed.

Alkayria responded to the challenge and added that al-Qaeda was never truly interested in the establishment of a global Khilafah, where all Muslims will be united, but was more interested in the establishment of smaller "Islamic states" or "Emirates" such as the one in Afghanistan. Fighting the aggressors and developing its strength around "liberated" nation states seems to be the strategy...

The caliphate is not therefore seen as a solution to the problems facing Muslims, but rather as a motivating factor which justifies the

spread of a global struggle against occupation to seek its establishment. Consequently, agreement on the image and model of the caliphate is not a prerequisite of membership, but rather by participating in resistance itself, someone can become a part of the global jihad (Pankhurst, 2013, p. 202).

In response to you Alkayiria, I know - Mubashir said- that you are not a part of al-Qaeda any longer and would like to invite you to tell me if you agreed with all they stand for as you have just outlined; did you? Alkayria nodded that he agreed with them apart from the use of children as suicide bombers and the killing of innocent people, that was too much for him... Mubashir then said that he is glad that Alkayria is not with al-Qaeda any longer. Maybe you can join us at Hizb-ut Tahrir? We have a clear view about the role of the caliphate, the role of our global Umma and the right methodology to achieve all these. We

take a legalistic rather than utopian view of the caliphate, constructing a constitution and structure for it which is largely in like with the position espoused in the orthodox literature, which is claimed to be based upon Prophetic model and practice of the first four caliphs (Pankhurst, 2013, p. 200).

We have a clear view about how our world can be transformed, the answer lies in the return to the Golden era of our Prophet from which we can extract all the necessary learning.

Arke looked at the clock on the wall that hasn't changed it's dials since that day in October 1941, it shows seven minutes past midnight. Somehow that was also the time then but in a new, but not different, era. Arke thanked everyone for the courtesy they showed to one another and for the good Schmooze, the candles were

almost burned out, but he felt that a final point needs to be illuminated for now, he

then read from a book he recently found:

In the absence of ancient and foreign models, the Muslim community soon began to develop a body of precedent based on its own early history, as remembered and misremembered and invented, by its participants and eyewitnesses and recorded in the form of akhbar, which were essentially short stories and anecdotes. These in turn were gathered together and edited by a later generation, at the beginning of the eight century or earlier, into collections of accounts which over time became elaborated written accounts. In the form in which we have them today, they date from the mid-ninth century to the first half of the tenth, thus being a century and a half, or even two centuries, older than the events they describe. [...] But all historical writing is like that. (Kennedy, 2016, p. location 169).

CONCLUSION:

"MAGIC MIRRORS"

Figure 12: Mirrors: reflect and recreate (*Secrets behind magic*, no date)

A Summary - what, why and how I have researched

    There are a few emergent relationships, which have guided my interest throughout this project; I have uncovered them gradually as they were enabling me to find a relevant and respectful positioning as a researcher, academic, teacher, in

relation to "someone-known-to-me", aspiring fiction writer and, generally, as someone interested in the status of one's being and becoming.

I have first discovered and used the relationship between my identity as an educator and the subject of learning, which I have found to be linked to one's journey through life. From this emergent space of a personal journey of discovery, I have had to also look deep inside my own self and entity; it was then that another relevant relationship had surfaced, more specifically between my identity as an educator coupled with that of my emergent fiction writer self and a found space and entity 'on the border'. I have discovered the value of being 'on the border' also through the eyes of a co-national, an internationally acclaimed fiction writer -Norman Manea- who was born in the same small city forty years before me, who was also concerned with understanding his own exposure to the horrors and terrors of fascism, then communism to then start (re-start) his 'nomadic' existence by leaving Romania at the time when I was only ten years old. I have then followed -now it seems- the same 'nomadic' instinct and I have started my pilgrimage by leaving my native Romania fifteen years later. Only by being 'on the border' -it appears that way- one can survive the horrors and the terror and then learn about one's place in the universe without the need to cross any-thing, to turn Right or Left, or move Eastwards or Westwards. However, I could only have learned this by physically departing the "border country", so that I can be 'on the border'. It seems that being 'on the border' can only happen retrospectively and also through some form of personal sacrifice.

Through an exercise of sustained 'narrative imagination', I unexpectedly started to unearth some deep-seated and border-related personal vulnerabilities, uncertainties and even non-uniformities. These were related to my relationship with the past as well as with the Other, more specifically with the research participants, with my family's past from my mother's side as well as, on the other hand, in relation to 'someone-known-to-me'. This was a turbulent, quite uncomfortable and at times disorienting auto/ biographical exercise. In the midst of it, however, I have

discovered that there is an important relationship between learning journeys -conceived as pilgrimages- and the very subject of 'terrorism' and, more specifically, of 'terrorist learning'.

Following on from my research, after interviewing an ex-Al Qaeda member (named Alkhayria, The Charitable in Arabic) and another London-based Muslim activist (named Mubashir, The Missionary in Arabic) who belongs to Hizb-Ut Tahrir, my contention is that there is an unsayable and hidden side of learning, not just rational, but also emotional, spiritual, one that welcomes the existence of opposites. I have started to look at this learning as being opposed to the Enlightenment's linear stories.

This learning seems to work on an abductive rather than deductive or inductive logic, which "nurtures our systemic wisdom by connecting the conscious and unconscious mind"; this learning "governs the changes in our body and soul, prior to abstract and paradigmatic construction. Art, religion, play, humour, and metaphor are based on the rhythms and logic of primary process. Slow and deep rhythms" (Bateson, as cited in Formetti and West, 2018, p. 226-227). These learning rhythms seem to be either related to the 'wheel of life' and the production of myths (mythopoesis), or are connected to an abnormal interpretation and enactment of such myths (which I named mythopathy) which seem to relate to a 'wheel of death'.

Contributions to Knowledge

I consider that this thesis has made possible the emergence of several important contributions towards understanding the phenomenon of 'terrorist learning' at micro, meso and macro levels. Furthermore, these contributions are not only to knowledge and theoretical development, but were also found in areas such as research methodology and methods, ethical dealings and, not last, towards developing a relevant writing style.

Firstly, nine contributions to theory have emerged:

1) Within the domain of everyday life, learning is closer to pilgrimage than to linear reasoning, as there are strong links to 'unsayables', to the spiritual and the mythical. Either myth creation (mythopoesis) or the unusual interpretation of myths (mythopathy) can emerge within a learning journey, which can form towards life or towards death;

2) There are two different types of pilgrimage, one towards life and another towards death;

3) Terrorism and learning and not mutually exclusive terms and are not extra-ordinary enterprises;

4) Terrorism is not useful as a legal term, but 'terrorist learning' can describe an unsayable and troubling reality of a pilgrimage towards death;

5) Other people's biographies reside within ours;

6) 'Terrorist learning' resurfaces inter-generational and social unconscious dynamics by facilitating the 'return of the repressed', of a trauma;

7) 'Secrets' are important for the process of learning, but the 'gaps left within us by the secrets of others' constitute a motivational basis for 'terrorist learning';

8) Factually and conceptually, there is a "narrative life" of terrorism and 'terrorist learning' that resides within our auto/ biographies. This "narrative life" is trans-historical, trans-generational and trans-cultural.

9) Optimism for dialogue and path change is still relevant until the very last moment when the 'trigger is pulled' and death itself occurs. The educator/ teacher has a fundamental duty to keep this optimism alive and practically possible.

The analysis of the narrative life of terrorism inside us and of the 'terrorist learning' was done in three phases, firstly into the world of masks, secondly then to follow beyond and through the masks to find potential transgressive loopholes and thirdly to touch upon and conceive transcendental relationships between various biographies in play. Different levels of reality have been explored with the help of the

"narrative imagination" (Andrews, 2014) and uncovered that there is indeed a "typography" of acknowledgement and further development of tragedy and trauma. I used Eva Hoffman's (Hoffman, 2017) suggested six-stage dynamic frame of interdependencies between biographic voids, the knowledge of trauma and the development of new trauma:

- From a traumatic event to a fable and then into the psyche;
- Inner psychic movements;
- From psyche to narrative;
- From narrative to morality;
- From morality to memory and the past
- From the past to present and also future.

The auto/ biographical web develops vertically and across this six-stage dynamic frame to encompass various phases or moments in the life of a mask, to different levels of "keeping on", and then towards different types of pilgrimage. There are three levels of "keeping on" that overlap their understanding reach, as following:

- Level one, which is about "Balancing Acts", looks at making, wearing and encountering a mask. As mentioned in the earlier subchapter on 'Masks, Phantoms and the Others within us', this research adopts a distinction between ritual and biographical masks and emphasises the importance of a 'second face' within one's biography. People construct masks for themselves as well as find other people's masks within their own biographies, as if on a pilgrimage that equally hides, represents and reveals 'the other within us'. Masks enable biographies to either be displayed or hidden, to be transformed or transgressed. Furthermore, there is a meaningful connection between myths and masks, with the mask having the role to describe and explain various meaningful 'origins' within one's biography and in relation to other biographies that might reside within. Level one follows interdependencies across from a traumatic event to the fable, to the psyche and then into

building a narrative. One possible type of pilgrimage would be towards life and mirrors a learning process that starts from a disjuncture and then into play and from play into dialogue, and then from dialogue to more play and humour. On the other hand, another type of pilgrimage is towards death and will move from disjuncture to discontent, from discontent to resentment and, then anger and hate. At mask level, processes of "splitting" and of "projective identification" seem to be in operation. In chapter six from the book titled 'Clinical Lectures on Klein and Bion' (Anderson, 2014, pp. 74–88), Michael Feldman reviews these Kleinian concepts and recognises that "splitting" has a primary function to conceive the world in terms of binaries, of good and bad experiences and that "projective identification" has the role to protect the ego against anxiety and by projecting the 'bad' onto something else and exterior. These dynamics of 'splitting' and of 'projective identification' can -with the help of masks- take the primary binary between good and bad to exalted and troubling oppositional levels such as between 'us and them', between 'holy and unholy';

- Level two, which is about finding "loopholes", is more specifically about inquiring on the world of masks by encountering and then removing them as well as perhaps attempting to exchange and re-display them. Over the learning processes of a pilgrimage towards life, I have looked at how the dialogue can morph into play and humour, to then re-shape itself into metaphors, which provide either an understanding or a further development of myths. On the contrary, a 'terrorist learning' process -akin to a pilgrimage towards death- develops itself from resentment to anger and hate, to the misunderstanding of myths that can lead to objectifying the Other. There is a movement from a narrative to a lax morality to a significant memory of a so-called 'certain' and homogeneous aspect of the past;

- Level three, or "flying high", is about moving beyond the boundaries of masks by removing, exchanging and re-displaying them as well as finally by

destroying and remaking them for future wearing; and so the circle is complete and re-starts. The learning of the pilgrimage towards life develops itself through the phases from metaphor to understanding and developing myths to then create the possibility to potentially (not a must) sacrifice oneself for the good and wellbeing of Others. At its antithesis, the learning experiences of a pilgrimage towards death - proper to a 'terrorist learning'- display a staged movement from anger and hate towards a misunderstanding of myths, to then necessarily objectifying the Other to ultimately (but not always necessary) sacrifice oneself against the Other or sacrificing just the Other.

Trauma Dynamic	event-fable -psyche	psyche	Psyche -narrative	Narrative - morality	Morality - memory - past	Past - present/ future
Masks (Moments)	making	wearing	encountering	removing	Exchanging & displaying	Destroying & remaking
Levels of "Keeping on"	Level 1	Level 1	Level 1 Level 2	Level 2 Level 3	Level 2 Level 3	Level 3
Pilgrimage towards life	Disjuncture and play	Play and dialogue	Dialogue, play and humour	Humour, metaphor , understanding myths	metaphor , understand myths	Understand myths to sacrifice oneself for the Other
Pilgrimage towards death	Disjuncture and discontent	Discontent and resentment	Resentment, anger	Anger and hate to misunderstanding of myths	Misunderstanding of myths to objectifying the Other	Sacrifice oneself against the Other or sacrificing the Other alone.

Table 1: The Auto/ Biographic Web of the Narrative life of terrorism inside us and of "terrorist learning"

Contributions to Methodology

In order to conceive the world of 'terrorist learning', there are four contributions to method and methodology that this thesis makes:

1) The 'narrative life' of 'terrorism' and its associated learning generates a web of meaning, which emerges from a "narrative imaginative" auto/ biographical engagement with the available stories -being referential to reality or not- that link the past, present and the future. I see the task of representing this 'narrative life' as an opportunity to also learn something about myself, as the representation is an intimate process of identity work;

2) An auto/ biographical study of 'terrorist learning' should allow stories to emerge, interact with each other and collide, which will not only best describe reality, but also endeavour to create reality. There were three levels of narrative imaginative analysis: a) a micro level, called "balancing acts" where masks of reality were constructed and stories of pilgrimage have uncovered a perpetual dealing with one own's masks, b) a meso level, looking at "loopholes" behind masks where stories were represented through transgressive movements and c) a macro level, concerning transcendental "high flights" above and in-between various stories presented and for the purpose of enactment of different types of sacrifice, e.g. from sacrificing own views to see the world through Other's eyes (life-driven), to sacrificing oneself against the other, or just sacrificing the Other (death-driven);

3) Fiction writing and fictional characters have been used auto/ biographically to access, interact with, represent and inter-link difficult stories of 'terrorist learning'; fiction-making enabled me to find cracks in an otherwise opaque reality as well as re-imagine a new reality where the teacher rediscovers its duty to enable the Other to regain its rightful place;

4) Have found a necessary space and time from where the inquiry on 'terrorist learning' can happen, more specifically I discovered an intimate, liminal and

-for me- rediscovered space 'on the border'; this space was also used as a common platform where different stories of learning -including those of 'terrorist learning'- can join in, interact, collide if necessary so that the past and present can be reimagined for all involved, e.g. teachers, learners of all sorts (including those labelled as terrorists), and more generally for all of us.

Contributions to Ethical Approach

In addition to these contributions to knowledge and methodology, I consider that this thesis also brings forward some useful considerations in regard to the need to develop a sensible ethical framing for approaching important but difficult topics such as 'terrorist learning'.

As I see them, my contributions are around:

1) Seeing 'agonising parts' of my own writing as necessary ongoing ethical exercises, through which participants' confidentiality can be enhanced and also for my own positioning to be continuously in check; the ongoing and almost constant interrogation of my values and reasons for doing this research was also a part of this agonising but useful exercise of ethical writing;

2) Piloting what I call a 'nomadic ethic' when dealing with an important but difficult subject like 'terrorist learning'; this kind of ethical approach works from a space 'on the border' and acknowledges that been nowhere or being without a base has value for seeing the world from other people's perspective, and by resisting to judge or to label them as 'terrorists'. My own shortcomings and vulnerabilities were also looked at and, according to this 'nomadic ethic', there is no deliberate and preemptive separation between researcher and the researched, between reality and fiction; the 'nomadic ethic' pulsates -in this sense- from a space from beyond conventional binaries.

Contribution to Writing Style

I have realised that when approaching a topic of such an unfortunate, yet of a contemporary importance and difficulty such as 'terrorist learning', the writing style should naturally readjust in line with the author's/ my exercises of 'agony'; my writing desire was to walk towards something of importance but barely distinguishable and yet being able to illuminate a small part of it, to enter courageously in daunting spaces where stories and secrets, phantoms and voids, lives and endings coexist, even across generations. Therefore, my writing style resembled a patch work or a mosaic of different stories, which were equally fragmented, interrelated and woven in a complex tale. Departing from the 'traditional' academic writing style was not a privileged and rebellious choice, but merely was a necessity, even an existential one, I feel, *and Arke also nodded in full agreement. It was the moment when Arke jumped confidently from his 'space' and said as if for the first time he addressed the reader in a very direct way. His voice was calm, warm, well-measured, as from a space of a great past importance, as if he belonged to a nomadic people, without a base, but with a story in mind and on a pilgrimage, yet who from time to time would find a place where they could coexist with 'books and people'. On a perpetual journey to a Celestial City... Anyway, until we get there I have to say that I do consider this writing style to be another contribution of this thesis and I am hoping that its liminality-filled lines, twists and turns, which come from a space 'on the border', have brought some light on this topic of 'terrorist learning' and also would invite others (fellow academic researchers and writers) to enter their own uncomfortable spaces of "torment, melancholy and pain", from where illumination is not promised or expected but can surprisingly and temporarily occur as a miracle of*

life, love and togetherness. Good journey dear friend, I am here and, remember, I am your light-bearer over darkest paths towards, at and beyond the gates of a Celestial City...

APPENDICES

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear Participant,

My name is Stefan Alexa and I am a research student based at Canterbury Christ Church University.

I am interested in what and how people joining proscribed organisations learn, and in what motivates them, as well as how this can best be understood. My aim is to explore and illuminate some of these processes in depth, drawing on the stories of those who have been attracted to join proscribed organisations, and to think about this material collaboratively with them.

All the material gathered will be treated in the strictest confidence and only used with your permission, in the eventual thesis. And, I will of course share the eventual findings with you.

I think you will agree that the topic is of considerable contemporary importance and your cooperation in the study would be greatly appreciated.

Best Wishes,
Stefan.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

This research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Stefan Alexa. As an educator, my main and general interest is in learning and more specifically in non-mainstream stories and experiences of learning. This research aims to explore some stories related to the experience of joining proscribed organisations. These stories will be analysed in collaboration with the you, the participant.

The Auto/ Biographical methodology -that I am using in my research- involves conducting interviews with a view to understand these learning experiences through your eyes. You will be asked to take part in one to one open discussions (open ended conversational interviews) with me, the researcher.

You will be encouraged to share your stories, experiences in an open and honest conversation with the researcher. As a researcher, I do highly welcome your willingness to share your lived experience and stories during what I trust will be an open and honest dialogue. Given the potentially sensitive nature of the material you have a right not to answer to any questions as well as to withdraw from the study at any stage. I will be careful not to push you in directions you do not wish to go, or to assume anything but the role of the researcher. However, you need to know that, as a researcher, I have a duty to report to the relevant authorities any information that will be judged to lead to a potentially criminal activity in present or future.

The transcript and recording are your material, and I will ask your permission to use it. This can be edited as you wish and will be used as a basis for any follow up interview(s). You have the right to withdraw retrospectively any consent given and to require that your data, including recordings, be destroyed. Obviously, it is important to know your position as soon as possible after reading transcripts. Refusal or withdrawal of consent would normally be within a month from the interview, or two weeks from receiving a copy of your transcript.

You will also be given a recording of your interviews and I will produce a transcript of the interview, which will be sent to you. There will be a mandatory non-disclosure agreement, which will need to be fully understood, agreed and signed by you. I will keep copies of the material, including final edited versions of the transcript(s), and the recordings, in a secure place; the material will also be encrypted. Any other access to the material will be with your permission.

All data and personal information will be stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data can only be accessed by

Stefan Alexa. After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed).

Confidentially in a key issue. I will provide you with a Consent Form which will allow you to preserve anonymity if you wish. The material is to be used for this EdD research only. I will take all the steps to preserve your anonymity in the presentation of case studies but this cannot be guaranteed absolutely. I will contact you - if needed - on the use of the material and have a particular responsibility to draw any sensitive issues, and their possible use, to your attention.

As mentioned above, recordings and transcripts of the interview(s) will be provided for your review and also will be used as a part of my EdD thesis. Data, its analysis and subsequent theoretical developments are likely to also be disseminated during academic research workshops and on conference presentations and papers; however, you will be informed about these beforehand and also be provided with copies of these papers.

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw - within the terms specified above - without having to give a reason.

The following is a list of points to be explored in the narrative interview, as appropriate:

a.   Focus:
Your motive for joining and leaving a proscribed organisation, to be understood in the context of your past and current biography and lifeworld

b.   Method:
  -    by encouraging stories of personal experience

  -    open-ended questions and prompts that would encourage stories to be told and emerge naturally. Will also ask for concrete examples, however this will be largely participant-led and partly free-associative.

  c. A check-list:

  • The study and ethics
  • About you and what you do
  • Your life journey and learning biography, starting from family, school and professional life
  • Experiences, feelings, thoughts, stories of life:
                        → long before joining the proscribed organisation
                        → just before; role of significant others for joining
                        → from the moment of joining and immediately after
                        → after joining
                        → after leaving and now
  • Reflections on the interview process: how it felt, take outs for the future
  • Next time: recording and transcript.

Any questions, please contact:

Stefan Alexa

Faculty of Education
Canterbury Christ Church University
North Holmes Road
Canterbury, Kent CT1 1QU, United Kingdom

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project:

Name of Researcher:

Contact details:

Address:

Tel:

Email:

Please initial box

. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above
. study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw
. at any time, without giving any reason. This will be normally within a month from
the interview.

. I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers
. will be kept strictly confidential, except where there might be issues of
disclosure.

. I agree to take part in the above study.

.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
Name of Person taking consent   Date   Signature
(if different from researcher)

| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Researcher | Date | Signature |

Copies: 1 for participant
                1 for researcher

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GLOSSARY

9/11

The September 11 attacks were a series of four coordinated terrorist attacks by the Islamic terrorist group al-Qaeda against the United States on the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001.

Abu-Bakr

He was a companion and, through his daughter Aisha, a father-in-law of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, as well as the first of the Rashidun Caliphs.

Abu-Bakr al Baghdadi

Leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. ISIL has been designated a terrorist organisation by the United Nations, European Union and many individual states, while al-Baghdadi is considered a Specially Designated Global Terrorist by the United States.

Al-Aqsa Mosque

A renown mosque located in the Old City of Jerusalem; it is also the third holiest site in Islam. The mosque was built on top of the Temple Mount, known as the Al Aqsa Compound or Haram esh-Sharif in Islam. Muslims believe that Muhammad was transported from the Sacred Mosque in Mecca to al-Aqsa during the Night Journey.

Al-Qaeda

A militant Sunni Islamist multi-national organization founded in Peshawar Pakistan, 1988 by Osama bin Laden, Abdullah Azzam, and several other Arab volunteers during the Soviet–Afghan War. Al-Qaeda operates as a network of Islamic extremists and Salafist jihadists.

Apophatism

It is also known as negative theology, is a form of theological thinking and religious practice which attempts to approach God, the Divine, by negation, to speak only in terms of what may not be said about the perfect goodness that is God.

Arke

This name means 'light' or the 'light-bearer' in Yiddish.

Augustus the Fool

A "red clown" type, with outlandish costumes featuring distinctive makeup, colourful wigs, exaggerated footwear, and colourful clothing. Their entertainment style is generally designed to entertain large audiences. Also, this type of clown was regarded by Norman Manea - in his book titled "On Clowns" (1994)- as standing for the artist's persona in the wider society.

(the) Blair Government

Tony Blair originally formed the Blair government in May 1997 after being invited by Queen Elizabeth II to form a new government following the resignation of the previous Prime Minister, John Major of the Conservative Party, as a result of the Labour Party's landslide victory at the 1997 general election.

Bukovina

A historical region, variously described as being situated in Central or Eastern Europe. The region is located on the northern slopes of the central Eastern Carpathians and the adjoining plains. Bukovina was a part of the Austrian Empire

from 1775 to 1918, when was annexed to Romania. After World War II, Bukovina was divided between Romania (Bucovina with the capital in Suceava) and Ukraine (with the capital in Czernowitz).

Czernowitz

City in western Ukraine, previously the capital of the whole region of Bukovina. It's known for the 1875-founded Chernivtsi National University, which features Romanesque and Byzantine architecture and the Chernivtsi University Botanical Garden. At the heart of the old town is Central Square, with the blue, neoclassical City Hall. Nearby, the Chernivtsi Museum of Art exhibits 17th- to 20th-century art from the historic region of Bukovina in a former bank.

Dawah

The proselytizing of Islam.

Dawanur

The name means the 'hidden light' in Arabic.

Dunia

The name of a character from Salman Rushdie's 2015 Novel titled "Two Years, Eight Months and Twenty-Night Nights". Dunia's character was a Jinni who married a philosopher, Ibn Rushd.

Disjuncture

A separation or disconnection.

Emir

An aristocratic or noble and military title of high office used in a variety of places in the Arab countries, West Africa, and Afghanistan. It means "commander", "general",

or "High King". When translated as "prince", the word "emirate" is analogous to a sovereign principality.

(logical) Fallacy

The use of invalid or otherwise faulty reasoning, or "wrong moves" in the construction of an argument. A fallacious argument may be deceptive by appearing to be better than it really is.

Ghazali (Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali)

One of the most prominent and influential philosophers, theologians, jurists, and mystics of Sunni Islam. He was of Persian origin. Some muslims consider him to be a Mujaddid, a renewer of the faith who, according to the prophetic hadith, appears once every century to restore the faith of the ummah. This is also the name of a character from Salman Rushdie's 2015 Novel titled "Two Years, Eight Months and Twenty-Night Nights".

Hizb-ut Tahrir (HT)

An international, pan-Islamist political organization, which describes its ideology as Islam, and its aim the re-establishment of the Islamic Khilafah to resume Islamic ways of life in the Muslim world.

Ibn Rushd

Often Latinised as Averroes, was a Muslim Andalusian philosopher and thinker who wrote about many subjects, including philosophy, theology, medicine, astronomy, physics, Islamic jurisprudence and law, and linguistics. This is also the name of a character from Salman Rushdie's 2015 Novel titled "Two Years, Eight Months and Twenty-Night Nights".

ISIS (Daesh)

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, officially known as the Islamic State and also known by its Arabic-language acronym Daesh, is a Salafi jihadist militant and terrorist group and a former unrecognised proto-state that follows a fundamentalist, Salafi doctrine of Sunni Islam.

Jean

A character from Eugene Ionesco's play named "Rhinoceros", which was first published in 1959.

Jihad

A struggle or fight against the enemies of Islam, or to propagate Islam; also known as a "holy war".

Jinni

Plural jinn, also called genie, Arabic jinnī, in Arabic mythology, a supernatural spirit below the level of angels and devils. Ghūl (treacherous spirits of changing shape), ʿifrīt (diabolic, evil spirits), and siʿlā (treacherous spirits of invariable form) constitute classes of jinn.

Juwayni Abd al-Malik al-Juwayni

Persian Sunni Shafi'i jurist and mutakallim theologian. His name is commonly abbreviated as Al-Juwayni; he is also commonly referred to as Imam al Haramayn, meaning "leading master of the two holy cities", that is, Mecca and Medina.

(Immanuel) Kant

  An influential Prussian German philosopher in the Age of Enlightenment. In his doctrine of transcendental idealism, he argued that space, time, and causation are mere sensibilities; "things-in-themselves" exist, but their nature is unknowable.

Kafir

  An Arabic term for "non-believers".

Khalifa (the Caliph)

  Name or title which means "successor", "ruler" or "leader". It most commonly refers to the leader of a Caliphate, but is also used as a title among various Islamic religious groups and orders.

Khilafah

  An Islamic state under the leadership of an Islamic steward with the title of caliph.

(the) Other

  An individual who is perceived by the group as not belonging, as being different in some fundamental way. Any stranger becomes the Other.

Madinat al-Salam

  The Round City of Baghdad is the original core of Baghdad, built by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur in 762–766 CE as the official residence of the Abbasid court. Its official name in Abbasid times was The City of Peace. The famous library known as the House of Wisdom was located within its grounds.

Mawardi (Al-Mawardi)

Known in Latin as Alboacen, was an Islamic jurist of the Shafi'i school most remembered for his works on religion, government, the caliphate, and public and constitutional law during a time of political turmoil. He played an important role in formulating orthodox political theory as to the nature of the authority of the caliph.

Medina

A city in western Saudi Arabia. In the city center, the vast Al-Masjid an-Nabawi (Prophet's Mosque) is a major Islamic pilgrimage site. Its striking Green Dome rises above the tombs of the Prophet Muhammad and early Islamic leaders Abu Bakr and Umar. The Masjid al-Qiblatain (Qiblatain Mosque) is known as the site where the Prophet Muhammad received the command to change the direction of prayer to Mecca.

Mr. Boeuf

A character from Eugene Ionesco's play named "Rhinoceros", which was first published in 1959.

Noumenon

In Kantian philosophy, it means a thing as it is in itself, as distinct from a thing as it is knowable by the senses through phenomenal attributes.

(the) Ottoman Empire

Known in Western Europe as the Turkish Empire, was a state that controlled much of Southeast Europe, Western Asia and North Africa between the 14th and early 20th centuries.

Phantoms

The term refers to:

- An apparition, more specifically a
    - Spirit
    - Ghost
- An illusion, a distortion of the senses.

Pilgrimage

A journey, often into an unknown or foreign place, where a person goes in search of new or expanded meaning about the self, others, nature, or a higher good, through the experience. It can lead to a personal transformation, after which the pilgrim returns to their daily life.

Plato

An Athenian philosopher during the Classical period in Ancient Greece, founder of the Platonist school of thought, and the Academy, the first institution of higher learning in the Western world.

(the) Poppy flower

The remembrance poppy is an artificial flower that has been used in the UK since 1921 to commemorate military personnel who have died in war, and represents a common or field poppy.

Profane

Not relating to that which is sacred or religious; secular.

(the) Prophet Mohammed

An Arab religious, social and political leader and the founder of Islam. According to Islamic doctrine, he was a prophet, sent to present and confirm the monotheistic

teachings preached previously by Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and other prophets.

Schmooze

A long and intimate conversation (from Yiddish language).

Suceava

The largest city of Suceava County, situated in the historical region of Bukovina (as its present capital on the Romanian side), north-eastern Romania, and at the crossroads of Central and Eastern Europe respectively.

Qabbani (Nizar Tawfiq Qabbani)

A Syrian diplomat, poet and publisher. His poetic style combines simplicity and elegance in exploring the themes of love, eroticism, feminism, religion, and Arab nationalism. Qabbani is one of the most revered contemporary poets in the Arab world, and is considered to be Syria's National Poet.

Quran

Also romanised as Qur'an or Koran, is the central religious text of Islam, which Muslims believe to be a revelation from God. It is widely regarded as the finest work in classical Arabic literature.

Quraysh

A mercantile Arab tribe that historically inhabited and controlled Mecca and its Ka'aba. The Islamic Prophet Muhammad was born into the Hashemite clan of the tribe. Despite this, many of the Quraysh staunchly opposed Muhammad, until converting to Islam en masse in c. 630 CE.

(the) Repressed

Repression is the psychological attempt to direct one's own desires and impulses towards pleasurable instincts by excluding them from one's consciousness and holding or subduing them in the unconscious.

Sacred

Connected with God or a god or dedicated to a religious purpose and so deserving veneration.

Saraswati

Hindu goddess of knowledge, music, art, wisdom, and learning. She is a part of the trinity (*Tridevi*) of Saraswati, Lakshmi, and Parvati. All the three forms help the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva to create, maintain, and regenerate the Universe, respectively.

(the) Self

An individual person as the object of one's own reflective consciousness. This reference is necessarily subjective, thus self is a reference by a subject to the same subject. The sense of having a self—or self-hood—should, however, not be confused with subjectivity itself.

The Grand Ifrit Zumurrud Shah

The name of a character -a fearsome and evil Jinni- from Salman Rushdie's 2015 Novel titled "Two Years, Eight Months and Twenty-Night Nights".

The Maid

A character from Eugene Ionesco's play named "The Lesson", which was first published in 1954. See below the entry for 'The Pupil', where more details will be introduced around 'The Maid's' role in this play.

The Professor

A character from Eugene Ionesco's play named "The Lesson", which was first published in 1954. See below the entry for 'The Pupil', where more details will be introduced around 'The Professor's' role in this play.

The Pupil

A character from Eugene Ionesco's play named "The Lesson", which was first published in 1954. As a character, 'the Pupil' naively follows the teaching of 'the Professor' only to find out a darker side of the learning process; this play introduces ideas around risky and perverted learning relationships, which lead to a consolidation of dictatorial, mindless, absurd, and even murderous behaviours. It very much epitomises the times -during and post Second World War- lived by Ionesco in Eastern Europe and then in Paris, times of fragility at the level of politics and human relationships, as well as times of profound dehumanisation and human tragedy, times from which 'lessons' should be learned. 'The Maid' is the enabler of crimes as well as symbolises the role of the wider public in ignoring (through duplicity), covering and perpetuating the hate and the crimes against Others.

Transcendent

Beyond or above the range of normal or physical human experience.

Transcendental

Relating to a spiritual realm, however linked to human experience and existence.

Ummayad Mosque

 Also known as the Great Mosque of Banu Umayya, located in the old city of Damascus, is one of the largest and oldest mosques in the world.

Ummah

 An Arabic word meaning "community". It is distinguished from Shaʿb which means a nation with common ancestry or geography. Thus, it can be said to be a supra-national community with a common history.

(the) Unsayable

 Not able to be said, especially because considered too controversial or offensive to mention.

Whiteface Clown

 The classic clown, is the clown most people first think of when they hear the word "clown." Associated with the circus, the whiteface clown is the most intelligent of the clowns, and is typically at the top of the pecking order. Also, this type of clown was regarded by Norman Manea - in his book titled "On Clowns" (1994)- as standing for the dictator's persona.

World War I

 Also known as the First World War, the Great War, and initially in North America as the European War, was a global war originating in Europe that lasted from 28 July 1914 to 11 November 1918.

World War II

  A global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945. The vast majority of the world's countries—including all the great powers—eventually have formed two opposing military alliances: the Allies and the Axis.

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLE