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Body Politics and Pathways to Terrorism, a Social Psychological Study of Philip Roth's *American Pastoral*

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Abstract:

The past decades witnessed a dramatic acceleration in the use of terrorism not only to resolve political disputes but also to give vent to unexplained feelings of anger and violent tendencies. The aim of this paper is to conduct an analysis of the milieu that produced the female terrorist in *American Pastoral* using a social psychological approach. The paper investigates the dynamics of the terrorist's personality and how it is damaged by the failure to cope with the complications of childhood especially Oedipus Complex. Failure in this critical phase affects the female terrorist in adolescence and youth and leads her to embracing violent action. Ample reference is made to Freud as well as the seminal works of psychologists such as Bruce Bongar, John Horgan and Randy borum who studied the psychology of terrorism and how a terrorist is made. This paper also studies the bodies and physical appearances of selected characters as essentials for the mapping and interpretation of character and experience referring on the works of Shilling and Baudrillard who commented on the body as constitutive of the self as opposed to the disembodied approach of classical sociology. There is no consensus on what type of background provides the likely culture for a possible terrorist. New genres are required to offer novel perspectives on the phenomenon. The "neuroscience of brutality" is a nascent discipline that examines the possibility that evil could be a disease especially that brain scans reveal significant discrepancy between normal and violent people's ability to generate feelings of empathy and therefore keep their violent instincts in check. Until similar disciplines are developed to offer a much needed immunity against that fatal malady, averting these attacks, i.e. dealing with the symptoms rather than the disease, has proven more practical than unraveling the complexities of this demoniac mélange.

Keywords: terrorism, personality, Oedipus Complex, self, body, developmental approach

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"We can rearrange our institutions and our practices to diminish the dependence of transformation upon ruin" (Unger xxiv).

Bruce Bongar states that, "The past decade has witnessed a dramatic transformation in the nature and use of terrorism", calling for a new discipline responding to "the need for better psychological and social responses to terrorism and man-made disasters" (3). He emphasizes the urgent need to cover aspects of sociology and psychology that are relevant to terrorism. The aim of this paper is to conduct an analysis of the milieu that produces the main female terrorist at the center of Philip Roth's *American Pastoral* using a social psychological approach and tracing her steps on the "slippery slope" to becoming a terrorist following the "developmental approach." To investigate the social and psychological milieu that triggered the terrorist buttons in the main female terrorist, this paper studies the bodies and physical appearances of selected characters as essentials for the mapping and interpretation of character and life experience referring mainly on the works of Chris Shilling and Jean Baudrillard who commented heavily on the "socialization of the body", contending that "there is a tendency for people in high modernity (late twentieth century) to place ever more importance on the body as constitutive of the self" (Shilling 3). Shilling criticizes the "disembodied approach" that classical sociology adopted highlighting the fact that "our senses, knowledgeability and capability to act are integrally related to the fact that we are embodied beings" (9). Alex Hobbs agrees, claiming that, studies that offer "an exploration of body politics" is a "critical field that gains increased attention as contemporary culture and society become progressively more dependent on the visual for discerning meaning" (3).

Numerous studies have tackled Roth's novels, *American Pastoral* not excluded. However, the fact that there are two exceptional female terrorists at the heart of the novel invites an investigation of the social and psychological features and conditions that set the scene for the violent grand finale. Previous studies, e.g., Debra Shostak's, *Philip Roth-Countertexts, Counterlives* (2004), David Brauner's *Philip Roth* (2007), Mark Shechner's "Roth's American Trilogy" (2007), and Derek Parker Royal's "Reimagining the Ethnic Subject in Philip Roth's *American Pastoral*" (2001), tended to focus on the death of the American Dream or the ethnic versus the national identities of the main characters neglecting the terrorist action at the center of the novel. Even David Gooblar who dedicates a whole chapter to the study of *AP* in his book, *The Major phases of Philip Roth* (2011), dismisses the topic of terrorism claiming that it is "not the story of *American Pastoral*" (149). To investigate body politics in relation to the violent tendencies of the female terrorists, the present study employs the seminal works of major critical theorists, psychologists and social researchers, particularly John

Horgan, Randy Borum and Bongar, who introduced seminal works that attempted to analyze the dynamics of a terrorist personality and understand basic landmarks that misguide an individual's steps onto the wrong decision till he/she finally lands on the zone of the antisocial. The present paper deviates, however, from the traditional view of the terrorist as a person whose anger is primarily attributed to political reasons or social injustices. The previous elements sometimes work as a thin crust that, when scratched, reveals deep personal grievances.

Admitting that defining terrorism is "a vexing problem", Horgan defines it as "acts of violence with a political purpose perpetrated by groups without official status" (6). David J. Whittaker adds that the goal could also be the furthering of ideological or religious objectives and that what stigmatizes certain acts as terroristic is "the choice of target and mode of activity" (4). When the target is innocent civilians, then the perpetrator is most certainly a terrorist. These definitions perfectly suit the aim of this paper since all the presented acts of violence are directed against innocent civilians whose roads unfortunately happen to intersect with those of the terrorists at a certain, ominous moment.

Psychologists and sociologists disagree about whether the terrorist is a normal person who adopts violent action as a strategy to achieve personal or group ambitions or an abnormal person who stumbled upon difficulties during critical stations of his/her identity formation process. Martha Crenshaw contends that "the idea of terrorism as the product of mental disorder or psychopathy has been discredited" (1992, 72). She argues that "psychopathology has proven to be, at best, only a modest risk factor for general violence, and all but irrelevant to understanding terrorism" (73). Schmid and Jongman, however, explain that "The chief assumption underlying many psychological 'theories'... is that the terrorist in one way or the other not normal and that the insights from psychology and psychiatry are adequate keys to understanding" (31). Pearce regards the terrorist as "an aggressive psychopath, who has espoused some particular cause because extremist causes can provide an external focal point for all the things that have gone wrong in his life" (171). Martens supports the previous view adding that terrorists share basic characteristics with persons diagnosed with "antisocial personality disorder (ASPD)", "a clinically recognized diagnosis" characterized by "social alienation, disturbed early socialization process... suffering from early damage to their self-esteem... unresolved oedipal issues... suffering from deep trauma " (54). He also cites arrogance and intolerance of criticism which lead the antisocial to ridicule the belief systems of others while thinking perhaps too highly of their own. The terrorist as well as the antisocial insulate/steel themselves against self-criticism or the bangs of conscience by dehumanizing their victims or claiming that killing them was the only way to support their cause. In his seminal book *The Psychology of Terrorism*, Horgan states that

"Conventional wisdom" allows us "to conclude that it seems perfectly reasonable to suggest that people who willfully engage in terrorizing behavior (at whatever level) reflect a psychological disorder of some sort" (34). Hogan explains that there is, however, a difficulty inherent in the study of extreme behavior when researchers, blinded by the aftermath of a terroristic attack, overlook the significance of the preceding series of events and activities that critically demand the wisdom of hindsight. The previous challenge represents what psychologists refer to as "the fundamental attribution error" which people make when they "explain other people's behavior with reference to dispositional features (e.g. personality, what they are 'like')", while attributing "situational features" to their own (Horgan 41). He therefore recommends that researchers should not limit themselves to the proposition that there is "a distinct terrorist personality" (42), nor should they accept generalizations which only lead to "a distorted view of both the terrorist and the process of terrorism more broadly" (41). The present paper adopts the view that individuals who engage in terrorist behavior are psychopaths who reflect some sort of a psychological disorder that could be traced back to faulty social milieus or unfulfilled selfhoods. The claim that a terrorist's talent for planning and taking precautions warrants his normality does not stand solid in all cases. Psychopathy, "though widely recognized as a clinical syndrome, is not formally listed as a diagnosis in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders" (Borum 31). Bongar confirms that many psychopaths are intelligent people who keep a firm grip upon reality, their real problem being morally and/or socially deficient. He concludes that they are aggressive law breakers who lack the normal compassion or empathy for others and suggests that terroristic groups sometimes hire such psychopaths for the carrying out of their violent actions which probably was the case with Merry, Roth's terrorist. A social psychological approach is therefore most convenient since "any form of behavior, terrorist or otherwise, exists within a social and political context ... We can never separate terrorism from society because it is embedded in it" (Horgan 28).

CIA psychiatrist, Jerrold Post claims that "Terrorist groups require enemies in order to cope with their own internal tensions, and if such enemies do not exist they create them" (1989 174). He differentiates between two patterns of violent behavior responding to two patterns of dysfunctional family backgrounds. Individuals who hate their families adopt ideologies that are "a displacement of their rebellion and hostility onto the "state" authority. That is they act out hostility by rebelling against the "state" of their parents. The second type is, on the contrary, loyal to their parents and is motivated by a strong desire to "retaliate or avenge the wrongs done to [their] parents by the state" (1984 241). Merry, Roth's major

terrorist is the gifted daughter of a socially and economically privileged high, middle class family. She duly directs her hatred to capitalism as a political and economic system adopted by her parents and the state they revere. Her colleague, Rita Cohen represents a different type of terrorist who belongs to a poor, oppressed family and was very probably avenging her parents. The differences between the social and economic backgrounds of the female terrorists prove that terrorism "can technically come from anywhere and anyone" (Horgan 73). Neither civil strife nor poverty warrants the production of terrorists. As Horgan describes terrorism, it is "primarily a strategy and tactic open to any group from any background and for any politically related reason" (73). Both girls, however, exhibit definite symptoms of sadism which Freud defines as "the desire to inflict pain" (Complete Works 1484). In her book *Literary Trauma*, Deborah M. Horvitz defines sadism as "a psychological mechanism in which the sadist enacts and gratifies unconscious and erotic fantasies by inflicting pain and violence" (15). Merry's psychiatrist insists that her stuttering is a strategy to torment her parents and Cohen enjoys assuring Seymour that his daughter hates him and wishes him dead. Sadistic Cohen torments and humiliates Seymour to the extreme and puts him under tremendous sexual pressure insisting that he make love to her in return of carrying money to his daughter and, when he rejects her, she runs away with his bags.

Horgan observes that one of the characteristics that the terrorist shares with the psychopath is the "lack of remorse or guilt for his/her activities and a selfish, egotistical world view that precludes any genuine welfare for others" (42). When asked about a justification for killing innocent people, Merry simply answers: "There was no other way to do it to" (246). Post argues that "A feature in common among many terrorists is a tendency to externalize, to seek outside sources of blame for personal inadequacies" (1989 308). On her way to terrorism, Merry starts accusing, rejecting and feeling superior to everybody. Even her incurable stutter she uses as "the machete with which to low all the bastard liars down" (AP 99). She declares that all politicians are monstrous or collaborators to monstrosity and rejects all legal channels of expression as of no avail. Her defiant attitude is obviously a strategy to justify her pending terroristic acts. She feels unjustifiably superior to whoever gives her a suggestion or a piece of advice and her arrogance shows in her changing stance towards the treatment of her speech difficulties. Merry decides that her stuttering is the fault of everybody giving too much attention to how she speaks rather than what she says. It was everybody around her that needed to adapt to the manner she talks which she came to consider a secondary thing about which she decides "not (to) give a shit" (AP 100). Merry condemns policy makers for the suffering of the poor but seems to have absolutely no compassion for the victims of the bombs she manufactures or throws or to the families left behind. When questioned about the people and the buildings she destroyed,

Merry simply replies that "There was no other way to do it" (AP 246) and declares that Lyndon Johnson, the then president of the US made her do it.

The pathways to terrorism vary according to the defining factors that characterize each path. G. H. McCormick first introduced the "developmental approach" to ascertain the idea that terrorism "is not the product of a single decision but the end result of a dialectical process that gradually pushes an individual toward a commitment to violence over time" (473). Crenshaw, Borum, Bongar and Eric Shaw are among the researchers that carried the idea further by investigating how the interaction of the social and psychological environments could steadily hasten the steps of a prospective terrorist towards violence. They vote for the opinion that becoming a terrorist is rather like gliding swiftly along a "slippery slope" or being launched into a trajectory that prepares the would be terrorist to accept "an apocalyptic view of the world and a correspondingly extreme behavioral commitment" (Bongar 21). They agree that on the road to terrorism the future terrorist usually passes by the following stations defined by Shaw as a "common developmental pathway by which terrorists enter their profession" (Shaw 366).

(1) early socialization processes; (2) narcissistic injuries (a critical life event that negatively affects self-image or self-esteem); (3) escalatory events ... and (4) personal connections to terrorist group members (which enhance opportunity, access, and incentives to enter a terrorist group). (Borum 28)

There is, however, an important station where the diverse pathways to terrorism seem to converge, namely, what Luckabaugh calls "the need for belonging" which he claims to be "the real cause or psychological motivation" (6) for joining a terrorist or religious group. Horgan cites "motive" and "vulnerability" as basic psychological factors that work as incentives which hasten or hinder the interaction of the social and psychological elements involved in the process. "Motive" refers to "an emotion" or a "psychological need" that "acts as an incitement to action" (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language) while "vulnerability" is defined as "factors that point to some people having a greater openness to increased engagement than others" (Horgan In Press). Borum adds that the previous two elements revolve around three themes, "injustice, identity, and belonging" (25). Hoffman Bruce, however, observes that "motive cannot be taken in isolation from opportunity" (339) which he defines as the suitable conditions that set the scene for the criminal action, e.g. keeping the company of violent people or living in a country ripe for social or political conflict. Albert Bandura indicates that "the path to terrorism can be shaped by fortuitous as well as by the conjoint influence of personal predilections and social inducements" (171).

Merry undergoes a turbulent socialization process that inflicts fatal "narcissistic injuries" upon her nascent sense of self. Borum explains that "An individual's search for identity may draw him or her to extremist or terrorist organizations in a variety of ways" (Borum 25). On the verge of identity formation, ensues the adolescent's need to find a meaning for his/her life, thereby define him/herself and achieve a sense of integrity and wholeness. A sense of wholeness and meaningfulness is dependent upon the process of identification which Eric Erikson refers to as "fidelity" and defines as "a need to have faith in something or someone outside oneself as well as to be trustworthy in its service" (59). Erikson's "fidelity" actually refers to the significance of ideology in the process of identity formation. Absence of fidelity results in social alienation, which, according to the developmental approach, presents a major station on the route to terrorism and leaves a gap that hinders the achievement of wholeness. Herein comes the role of political undergrounds that utilize identity seekers' need for an ideological framework to embrace their beliefs and guide their behavior patterns. Borum uses psychologist Jim Marcia's concept of "identity foreclosure" to describe what happens when an adolescent adopts a "set of ideas and values (an identity)... without personal, critical examination" (25). The real problem is that the need for personal meaning and belonging exceeds/blemishes the self-seeker's rational with the ultimate result that he plunges headlong into a cause that he exerted no mental effort to analyze. Such collectivities stand as a safe haven providing the troubled youth with the long craven self-definition. He/she is labeled as a member of a group that has a clear-cut framework of thought and action. Being a member of that group, in turn, offers a clear-cut, easy answer to the persistent question "Who am I?" In the case of Merry, the Weathermen group offers not only an ideology but also a justification for the repressed hatred she has been hoarding against her family for personal reasons rather than the public cause wherein she wraps her anger. Deprived of something or someone to believe in and suffering from fragmentation and a diminished self-esteem, the girl undergoes a crisis of identity that renders her susceptible to "totalism or to totalistic collective identities that promise certainty" (Crenshaw 253). Belonging to the radical group provides Merry with a cause to live and die for. It offers her personal meaning and bestows significance upon an otherwise lukewarm existence. Groping in the dark for something to hold on to, the desperate self-seeker adopts principles and stances without in-depth examination of their validity. From conversations with her father, it is obvious that Merry is parroting clichés. As Gooblar describes her, she is "ripe for indoctrination, an easy target for the utopian vision" wherein terrorists wrap their destructive acts (148). Gooblar maintains that Merry's story is "the story of a failed project of self-determination" (149).

Luckabaugh contends that the potential terrorist is primarily attracted to a "community" rather than an abstract ideology or a violent

framework of action. It is this need for belonging that motivates the potential terrorist to join, stay and act within the political or religious dictates of a certain group that becomes his shelter from a world where he/she does not fit. Johnson and Feldman suggest that "membership in a terrorist group provides a sense of identity or belonging for those personalities whose underlying sense of identity is flawed" (298). Merry's failed search for meaningful selfhood is obvious in the series of chaotic allegiances she adopts throughout her childhood and adolescence. Her family background was ripe with conflicting beliefs and attitudes. Even as a little girl she has been torn between "Jewish resentment" on her father's side and "Irish resentment" on the side of her Catholic mother. She was required to hide during the day the Christian paraphernalia that decorated her room during the night lest her Jewish paternal grandparents be offended. The "Catholic phase" she picks from her maternal grandma is soon replaced by the 4-H Club, which is even sooner forsaken for astronomy. Later, in an attempt to make up for her average appearance in comparison to her gorgeous mother's, Merry harbors the fantasy of emulating Audrey Hepburn. The suddenness and swiftness with which she forsakes one phase to the other proves that she is motivated by a need to belong and resolve an identity issue not real faith in the ideologies she temporarily embraces. She "lived intensely in the new interest, and then the passion was suddenly spent and everything, including the passion, got thrown into a box and she moved on" (AP 94). As her father reflects, Merry "was a perfectionist who did things passionately" (AP 94). Terry Eagleton maintains that "There is something pathological about this rage for order: it conceals a ferocious inner compulsion which is the very opposite of freedom. Fundamentalism is one symptom of this disease" (23). In agreement with several neuroscientists, Gooblar suggests that it is perhaps because of her natural disposition that Merry totally adheres to that final allegiance which allows her to take violent action. Roth obviously refers to two risk factors that are identified by psychologists as possibly involved in instigating violent behavior: "environmental exposure" and "an inborn or inherited characteristic" (Borum15).

According to Professor Shilling, one of the major critics who commented on the "socialization of the body", "there is a tendency for people in high modernity (late twentieth century) to place ever more importance on the body as constitutive of the self" (3). The twentieth century witnessed a loss of faith in the basics that for a long time worked as firm foundations for establishing a solid sense of self, primarily grand political narratives and religious authorities. The collapse of the first set of pillars resulted in a generation that had no faith in their history, governments or political stances while the collapse of the second resulted in a spiritual

void and a faulty moral code, hence the expansion of dependence on the body as a means of self-definition. The body provides a visible, concrete entity which contours and dimensions can be modified, perfected and evaluated according to definite criteria as opposed to the abstractions of politics and religion. According to this body directed criteria, the physique is the embodiment of the invisible self; a perfect, sensual body is the sign of a solid, influential, well-defined self.

Psychohistorian Lloyd De Mause contends that "The roots of terrorism lie not in this or that American foreign policy error, but in the extremely abusive families of the terrorists" (344). The physically mediocre girl feels totally eclipsed in the blinding sunshine of her charming parents. Cohen, Merry's co terrorist, criticizes the American society for celebrating the body as a site of meaning and a core of identity declaring that it presents a destructive culture for a person with a "soul." According to her psychiatrist, Merry's sensory antennas pick clear signals of disapproval for her inadequacy to grow up in her mother's beautiful image. Although "gifted and bright", she always receives messages that physical appearance is everything in a society that swarms with sports and beauty icons. Even though the Swede rejects the doctor's placing so much importance on appearance, he inwardly expresses the opinion that the doctor was projecting his own envy of the Swede and Dawn upon Merry's case: "He's obsessed with our look. That's why he hates us-we're not short and ugly like him" (95). When he discovers that his wife has a lover, the Swede wonders "Doesn't she ever find this guy a wee bit fat in the face?" (381). The girl's inner suffering emerges to the surface first in the stutter that at least averts attention from her modest figure and second in a fierce rejection of her parents as representatives of the icons her society idealizes. From a psychoanalytic point of view, Merry's stuttering was an outlet for a troubled unconscious and a defense mechanism to divert attention from the unequal competition with her mother to the weakness that granted her the attention and sympathy of her parents besides the ability to manipulate them. As Sigmund Freud explains in his *The Psychopathology of Everyday life* (1901), "speech disturbances like...stammering and stuttering...is a question of an internal conflict" (1189).

Cohen explains Merry's psychological problems perhaps even more effectively. She carries the message that Merry hates her parents and never wants to see them again and describes Dawn as "a mother who completely colonized her daughter's self-image" (135). Both statements propose that Merry suffers from "a narcissistic wound" which resulted in a damaged sense of self. Pearlstein concludes that "the external psychological determinants or sources of political terrorism appear to lie in what are termed narcissistic injury and narcissistic disappointment" (47). He even claims that "in 90 percent of political terrorist case studies, narcissistic disappointment plays a critical psychobiographical role" (49). As Shaw

contends, narcissistic injuries stand as the second stage on the trajectory to terrorism. The girl's anti-social behavior also coincides with Freud's interpretation of terrorism as a "generational phenomenon rooted in the Oedipus complex" (Crenshaw 390). Interpreting Freud's statement within a framework of terrorist behavior reveals two "psychoanalytic formulations" to be at the center of the "psychopathology of terrorism... (1) that motives for terrorism are largely unconscious and arise from hostility towards one's parents and (2) that terrorism is the product of early abuse and maltreatment" (Borum 18). Merry undergoes complications resolving her oedipal complex. Driving alone from the beach with her father and trying to assume the role of her mother, she places her head against his bare shoulder and, playing the grown up, she pleads, "Daddy, kiss me the way you k-k-kiss umumumother" (88 *AP*). Although Seymour offers his daughter the kiss, he quickly punishes her by withdrawing from her too radically, becoming "physically distant more than was necessary" (*AP* 92). Punishing Merry like that, her father "having exaggerated the implications of that kiss, having overestimated what constituted provocation, he went on to alter a perfectly harmless spontaneous bond, only to exacerbate a stuttering child's burden of self-doubt" (*AP* 92). The stuttering was therefore an alternative strategy to win her father away from the charming mother.

Baudrillard introduces the concept of the body as "capital" and as "fetish (or consumer object)" (130). He contends that "there is no depth, only surface" (). In a parallel vein, Shilling introduces the concept of the body as "a project" which "should be worked at and accomplished as part of an individual's self-identity" (5). In both cases, bodies should be treated as "malleable entities" (5) in terms of shape and content. As a social product they should be managed and maintained, shaped and reshaped to meet the public taste/accredited standards of the consuming society and the agendas of their owners. The double process of management and maintenance requires the individual to be aware of his/her body as a personal resource and also as an embodiment of self-identity. Shilling postulates that the pervasiveness of "self-care regimes" is an example of individuals taking personal responsibility for the enhancement of their selfhood by improving the shape of their bodies while also taking good care of the contents.

Roth dedicates remarkably large parts of his novel to the description of bodies and appearances and how they reflect a person's failures and successes and guide his/her allegiances. *American Pastoral* abounds with examples of people who run their body projects with an eye on identity construction as well as profit. Roth describes the body's surface as "as serious a thing as there is in life...from which one is not to be freed" (*AP* 78). As Roth introduces male and female characters within different age groups it becomes obvious that body projects vary according to age and

gender. Sports, especially bodybuilding and beauty contests are two major investments that could possibly gratify the ambitions of young men and women. An individual should "revert back into one's body and invest it narcissistically", not to get in touch with the hidden soul but simply to turn it into "a more functional object for the outside world" (Baudrillard 131). The three main characters, Seymour, Dawn and their daughter Merry present examples of the limitations and opportunities involved in the strong relationship between the body and self-identity. Investing in the body secures the first two Levovs a social status and a firm financial position. Seymour and Dawn give vent to their Jewish and Irish resentment through the utilization of their bodies that also work as "object(s) of salvation" (Baud 129). Their beautiful, handsome physiques free them of the traditional classifications that could have narrowed their possibilities and tightened their scope within the boundaries of their social and religious connections. As Baudrillard describes it, "The body is a cultural fact" (129). Seymour's blonde face and steep jaws and the exquisite beauty of his wife over shine their cultural or religious differences. Through constant practice and bodybuilding Seymour attains the unique physical ability which enables him to equally excel in three different sports. That, in addition to his strikingly handsome features, defines who he is especially that he is given a nickname, the Swede, based upon his WASPish features. As an adolescent and a young man, the Swede never faces obstacles and "appear[s] never to have to struggle to clear a space for himself" (*AP* 19). He never even notices the complications that his peers have to negotiate in resolving their identity crises. His training and sportsmanship raise the name of his school and later of his town thereby enhancing his self-image. "Bodybuilding", illustrates Shilling, "is a good illustrative example of the body as a project [since] bodies appear to allow people to make strong, public and personal statements about who and what they are" (5). Dawn, too, works on her body; she spends money buying clothes and going to model agencies to win the beauty contest which she describes as "a way ...to kick in [more] money" (178). Dawn has to go through a meticulous process of preparation giving herself a tan to shine in white swimsuits and make full use of nudity. She also has to pay back for the people who invest in her beauty by signing autographs, opening department stores, etc. Through her participation in the beauty contest Dawn learns to venerate her body and that "life's possibilities resided in hair-not in the hands of your destiny but in the hands of your hair" (*AP* 183). Physical charm also transforms Dawn, a part time clerk in a dry-goods store after school whose ultimate aspiration was to become a teacher, into Miss New Jersey who was pursued by actors and businessmen and finally won by the Swede, her match, if not even superior in looks. The money Dawn gains for nothing except her distinguished beauty secures her brother a university education that their hard working father could not possibly afford.

The way Seymour and Dawn invest in their bodies illustrate Baudrillard's concept of "functional body" or "functional beauty" which regards beauty as "an absolute imperative only because it is a form of capital" (133), managing and investing which is no less important or difficult than the management of any business. It is invested in line with the norms and principles of "a society of production and managed consumption" (131) i.e. with the final object of producing a yield. As Baudrillard asserts, the relationship between the body as "subject" and the body as "object" or "threatening double" reproduces the same relations of social and economic life. If it is neglected, the body strikes back and if it is wisely invested it secures profit. In the capitalist society of the novel the body holds the same status of private property and is therefore subject to the variables of profit and loss accounts. It is, however, "the finest of these physically possessed, manipulated and consumed objects" (131). The investment in the body, however, is always of "an efficient, competitive, economic type" (131) as appears in the competitive nature of both the athletic games and beauty contest which inaugurate the most gratifying and profitable phases of Seymour and Dawn's lives. According to the "new ethics of the relation to the body" being beautiful is no longer a static fact representing a gift of nature that happened once and for all but an embodiment of a dynamic relation marking those "who take the same care of their faces and figures as they do of their souls" (132). It has become a sign of ambition, organization and success. It is therefore understandable why Roth highlights the renowned politician who usually shows off her long, beautiful legs to the public and also to cameramen. Sheila Salzman, described as "such a refined person" (AP 354) makes a connection between Merry's destructive drive and her weight, "I just thought she was so fat and so angry... She wasn't the same girl that she'd been...She'd gotten so fat" (413). When she neglects the functional value of her body in enhancing her business life by cautioning her advertisers against publishing her photos along with the animals she breeds, Dawn's business wanes and eventually fails.

As they grow older, the Swede and his wife change their body management policies. The Swede and his middle aged friends try to keep fit and healthy by taking regular medical tests or whatever measures that could fix, predict or prevent health problems, like prostate cancer, heart attacks or heart diseases. In a high school reunion the narrator discovers that, like himself, most of his colleagues had reconstructed some inside or outside parts of their bodies. They had either bypasses, removed prostate cancer or numerous transplants. He also notices that some of them use hairpieces, which indicates that self-care regimes are designed to help people form a positive feeling about their own appearance and the impression it leaves on others and not simply prevent disease. Beck indicates that "These regimes

promote an image of the body as an island of security in a global system characterized by multiple and inescapable risks" (14).

When she faces the crisis of her life after her daughter throws the bomb that kills a humanistic doctor, Dawn's selfhood is shattered. Instead of being an ex-Miss New Jersey and the wife of a prominent man she becomes the mother of a bomber. Dawn decides to take care of herself the only way she knows how, by taking care of her body and restoring her beauty. "Recognizing that the body has become a project for many modern persons," explains Shilling, "entails accepting that its appearance, size, shape and even its contents, are potentially open to reconstruction in line with the designs of its owner" (5). Dawn decides to have a facelift that proves more effective than the psychiatric treatment she has been given. When Seymour consults the family doctor about the wherewithal of the facelift, the latter suggests that it was going to offer Dawn the psychological equilibrium she was lacking. He enumerates the emotional and psychological implications of such a "purely physical" procedure which he describes as "a wonderful survival strategy" (*AP* 353). "Now it is as if I have been given a new life," Dawn adds, explaining that the transformation is not a matter of external appearance and that "The heroic renewal [that] began with the face-lift [was] both from within and from the outside" (106, 107). As Robert Gerber (1992:46) notes, "Today the super-endowed, surgically altered woman has become a reference point of fashion" (8). Plastic surgery emphasizes the relation between feeling comfortable within the boundaries and contours of a person's body and the establishing of self-identity.

Bodies and body related topics is a highly recurrent motif in *AP* which indicates an obsession with molding the body in a certain shape that responds to "some idealized version of the self" (Shilling 5). As Shilling explains citizens are required to take individual responsibility for the maintenance of healthy bodies to fight the global dangers that modern life poses. This could be achieved by "engaging in strict self-care regimes, [which] require individuals to take on board the notion that the body is a project whose interiors and exteriors can be monitored, nurtured and maintained as fully functioning" (Shilling 5). This idealization of the body poisons the life of the girl who does not feel comfortable within her skin nor does she have the ability to manage her body as a successful project. Cohen poses the question, "What kind of nightmare is that for a girl with a soul?" (135) According to Chris E. Stout,

terrorist violence is rooted in the failure of a culture to meet the psychological and physical needs of its members and the displacement of the fear and anger that results from this thwarting of needs onto a ...culture whose beliefs and values pose a threat to one's own cultural worldview. (5)

Rejecting a culture that rejected her first, Merry carefully selects a target that justifies the attack she launches against her family and allows her to

remove the ladle from the seething anger that has been accumulating for years. She decides that her main enemy is the capitalist system which allows her family to hoard huge profits by exploiting skillful workers who receive meager wages for their indispensable craftsmanship. At the same time she embraces communism the chief opponent of capitalism. This enmity is a cover masking her embedded resentment and allowing her to throw bombs at malls and shopping centers.

Unlike Seymour and Dawn, their daughter's body project is a total failure. In his book, *The Consumer Society*, Baudrillard poses a question which he finds essential for mapping the healthy relationship between a person and his/her body: "Are you at ease in your body?" (130) The previous question refers to what Baudrillard calls the "psycho-genesis of the appropriation of the body and its image" (130). He postulates that the "skin" has replaced the "soul" in embracing the body and giving it significance. People should be in touch with their bodies and learn how to read them and respond to their needs. He even goes as far as to suggest that repression in the form of cellulite occurs in the body as it occurs in the psyche, particularly when it is neglected. Merry is unable to put her body to the market in a manner that brings it into profit. Neglecting her shape, weight and hygiene, the girl sins against her own body which strikes back turning into a "maleficent, repressive agency which takes its revenge" by almost annihilating any chances of future advancement (Baud 130). Merry "thickened across the back and the neck... she became large, a large, loping, slovenly sixteen-year-old, nearly six feet tall" (99). If Baudrillard contends that "one handles [one's body] as one might handle an inheritance" (131), then Merry was perhaps punishing her parents for disinheritance. They deny her their perfect physique and handsome features and instead of taking action to modify her appearance through sports, like her father, or plastic surgery like her mother, she treats her body as a dumb, fossilized entity. Merry requires people to peer through her thick body at the embedded self to appreciate it in separation from the unattractive physique which earns her the ridicule of her friends. She complains "about her fears of ostracism-of other kids ignoring her, of her girlfriends ganging up on her" (203). Seymour relates his daughter's destructiveness to loneliness which he describes as "the superpower of superpowers" (226). This troubled phase pushes Merry further onto the slippery slope to terrorism.

Shaw indicates that "escalatory events" and "personal connections" smooth the terrorist's road to his final destination. Horgan and Taylor agree confirming that "Most involvement in terrorism results from gradual exposure and socialization towards extreme behavior" (17). Before she joins the terroristic group, Merry is repeatedly allowed by her parents to watch the TV news programs which exhibit graphic sights of war and protests and

is mainly attracted by the sight of monks setting themselves ablaze to hoard sympathy for their cause. Terrified at the beginning, Merry soon becomes "less horrified than curious" (*AP* 154, 155). Rejected by school friends, Merry seeks other companions who are only connected by a shared ideology. Before she joins the Weathermen she comes under the influence of Professor Marcia Umanoff, who recommends transgression as "the richest response to life" (*AP* 359). She is described as "a militant nonconformist" who is given to "calculatedly apocalyptic pronouncements designed to bring discomfort to the lords of the earth" (*AP* 338). Marcia's views appeal to Merry especially the opinion that "a disheveled appearance" is a sign of "a thinker" as well as "a protest against convention" (*AP* 339). From Marcia, Merry acquires arrogance, self-righteousness, sympathy with the Vietnamese cause and revolt against all limits and conventions. Umanoff represents intellectuals who are not careful about the destructive influence their words have upon the vulnerable youth. Her thoughts and gift of the gab throw oral bombs that are no less destructive than those terrorists use to explode buildings and people. Shortly, Merry associates with companions who have extreme ideas and spends the whole time in the phone discussing things with them. They overlook her appearance and care only about her loyalty to the group as measured by the services she introduces, i.e. throwing the bombs she manufactures.

Baudrillard postulates that the sacrificial practices that focus on the body bear witness to "a historical transformation [that] has taken place" and that "instead of seeking salvation through the soul we have come to seek salvation through the body" (15). The body "has literally taken over that moral and ideological function from the soul" (129). The previous postulation is evident in the sacrifices, religious practices and regimes that count on the body as a route to salvation and the connection with the spiritual side of a human being. Like her parents, Merry attempts the use of her body as "an object of salvation" but fails to respond to the expectations of the market. From Baudrillard's partially structural perspective, people consume signs, not commodities. He argues that the middle and lower classes lack sufficient mastery over the world of production and consumption and consequently "fetishize objects and ... find salvation in the consumption of objects" (8). Consuming too much food expresses dissatisfaction and an insatiability for something other than what is literally being consumed. "What people seek in consumption is not so much a particular object as difference and the search for the latter is unending" (8). Merry was trying to assert the fact that she is not her mother and getting herself huge makes the comparison with her petit mother out of the question. The girl eventually fails, however, because she does not invest her body the right way either to bring her profit or endow her with positive selfhood. She temporarily derives a sense of self-identity from the prominent rule she plays in the terrorist organization from which she was

dismissed, having accomplished several fatal missions and become liable to be caught by the authorities. Her final trial at salvation was also through her body by embracing Jainism, an Indian religious sect which advocates the humiliation and starvation of the body in respect of all forms of life including the vermin. In defiance of her society Merry takes negative care of her body, launching a reversal process that guides it through a journey from health to death by following a sect that requires her to end her life by systematic self-starvation. For the second time Merry fails to gain any profit from investing her body. Again she mistreats her body by negating it, dirtying it and giving herself an extreme haircut which her father describes as an act of violence. She becomes a hunted pariah and receives more rejection from her father who literally pukes all over her. It is remarkable how neither mother nor daughter could get the soul inside acknowledged in separation from their bodies. To no avail, both conduct a struggle to prove that their bodies host significant souls that linger to be acknowledged. This stark failure is an assertion of psychosocialists' claim that the body has become more important than the soul it hosts. Ultimately both succumb to the identities conferred upon them by society.

As Post explains, "belonging to the ... group becomes the most important component of the ... psychosocial identity" (1987 235). Becoming a Jain was also Merry's final desperate attempt to belong. Desperate of achieving individuality or uniqueness, Merry employs the same strategy of defining herself through membership in a group. The striking contradiction between the principles and lifestyles of the two groups she joins emphasizes the girl's lack of reasoning or critical thinking before she joins either. She tries to share in the "religious collective identity" of that Indian sect but she fails. It is obvious that again she has no real knowledge of the philosophy of that group whom she joins perhaps only to justify hiding her face from the authorities. In accordance with the developmental approach, disengaging from terrorism is the final station on the slippery slope to terrorism. This usually happens when a terrorist is either disillusioned with the policies of the group or dismissed on condition that he/she keep the secrets of the group.

Terrorism is hitherto perhaps the worst enemy of mankind. The terrorist is very much like a cancerous cell that deviates from the normal course of behavior causing the dismay and destruction of the body that hosts and nourishes it. Sometimes it has to be destroyed or totally removed, others it receives treatment that requires the whole body to respond and join forces. Similarly, society should act as a unified body to uproot the damaged cells that feed on its peace and stability. Social researchers and psychologists have not reached consensus on what type of family or political background provide the likely culture for a possible terrorist. The same environment that

produces a brilliant scientist and a successful businessman produces a terrorist whose main aim is to destroy success in the name of a certain cause. After disaster strikes, social and psychological researchers investigate the history of the related families and come up with the result that one smile less or an extra kind gesture from the afflicted family to the abusive member could have influenced his choices in a more positive way. Satisfactory studies have yet to be conducted to explain why members of wealthy, successful families decide to turn into haunted criminals and professional murderers. What twisted logic or moral code persuades them that the chaotic taking of lives and spilling of innocent blood could improve the quality of life? The previous question calls for a systematic investigation into the genesis and interpretation of terrorist actions. Regardless of the illegitimacy of the acts the word "injustice" usually pops up together with claims of religiosity. Whether used as a cover for political agendas or as a motive in itself, the religious dimension of terrorism has become perhaps more influential than the political. A new term other than the "psychopath" or the "sociopath" should be coined to study the individuals whose religious or spiritual satisfaction rests upon a terrorist experience and who find calm while surrounded by the cries of the innocent being hurt. Researchers should try to explain how and why evil constitutes an attraction to terrorists while it stands as the Arch Fiend of the threatened public. New genres that offer novel answers are basically required since traditional disciplines have hitherto offered lame answers which try to force the pieces of the demoniac puzzle into a coherent whole after disaster strikes. The "neuroscience of brutality" is a nascent discipline that examines the possibility that evil could be a disease especially that brain scans reveal significant discrepancy between normal and violent people's ability to generate feelings of empathy and therefore keep their violent instincts in check. Until similar disciplines are developed to offer the humankind a much needed immunity against that fatal malady, averting these attacks, i.e. dealing with the symptoms rather than the disease, has proven more practical than unraveling the complexities of this demoniac thicket of social, political, psychological and perhaps even physiological mélange.

الملخص

سياسات الجسد والطرق المؤديه للارهاب. دراسه نفسيه اجتماعيه لروايه فيليب روث المشهد الرعوى الامريكى
نبيله على مرزوق احمد

لقد شهد القرن الماضى تصعيدا رهيبا فى اللجوء الى العنف ليس فقط لحسم النزاعات السياسيه و لكن ايضا للتنفيس عن مشاعر الغضب التى قد تكون غير مبرره والتي يصحبها ميل الى استخدام العنف. تهدف هذه الورقه الى تحليل البيئه التى افرزت الانثى الارهابيه فى روايه المشهد الرعوى الامريكى لفيليب روث طبقا لنظريه التحليل النفسى وايضا من منظور اجتماعى يستخدم منهج "التصاعد" او "التطور" الذى يستخدمه

علماء النفس والاجتماع فى محاوله للوقوف على الاسباب التى تؤدى بالفرد الى اعتناق السلوك الارهابى. يتناول البحث ديناميكيات الشخصيه الارهابيه وكيف تترك مشاكل الطفوله ومنها فشل الطفله فى المرور بسلام من مرحله "عقد اوديب" آثارا سلبيه تؤدى الى متاعب نفسيه تظهر لدى شخصيه الفتاه الارهابيه فى فتره المراهقه والشباب كما تدرس المراحل التى تمر بها الفتاه حتى تصل الى مرحله السلوك العنيف فى ضوء الدراسات التى قام بها جون هورجان و راندى بورم وبروس بونجر حيث ان ثلاثتهم قدموا اعمالا قيمه فى دراسه "سيكولوجيه الارهاب". ويقدم البحث كذلك دراسه للمظهر الخارجى لعدده شخصيات باعتبارها احد مكونات الذات فى ضوء اعمال جين بودريلار و كريس شيلينج الذين اختلفا مع النظرية الاجتماعيه الكلاسيكيه والتى كانت لا تعترف بأهميه الجسد كمكون للذات. هناك العديد من الدراسات التى تناولت "المشهد الرعوى الأمريكى" بالتحليل لكنها كانت تتجاهل "الارهاب" كموضوع رئيسى فى الروايه الا ان وجود فتاتين ارهابيتين فى قلب احداث الروايه لا يمكن تجاهله. ليس هناك اتفاق على العوامل النفسيه والبيئيه التى تساعد على اعتناق الافراد للارهاب حتى ان الامر يتطلب النظر الى هذه الظاهره من منظور جديد ويقترح البحث اللجوء الى التخصص الوليد المعروف ب"علم دراسه الاعصاب المتعلق بالعنف" وهو علم يتناول احتماليه ان يكون الشر مرض خاصه وان تصوير المخ بالاشعه يظهر تباينا ذا دلالة بين قدره الشخص الطبيعى والشخص العنيف على الشعور بالتعاطف الذى يؤدى الى الاحجام عن العنف. وحتى تكتمل هذه الدراسات يجب ان يأخذ العالم بمبدأ الوقايه ومحاولة منع الحدث الارهابى قبل وقوعه وهو ما يعنى علاج العرض وليس المرض.

الشخصيه الارهابيه- عقدة اوديب- النفس- الجسد- المنهج التصاعدي

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