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Diplomová práce

Terrorism in American Novels by Irving, Roth and Updike

Terorismus v amerických románech Irvinga, Rotha a Updikea

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Abstract

This diploma thesis undertakes an analysis of the theme of terrorism in three American novels, *The Hotel New Hampshire* by John Irving, *American Pastoral* by Philip Roth and *Terrorist* by John Updike. It contains short biographies of all three authors, a short definition of “terrorism” and a list of terror in literature. The thesis focuses on the act of terror, what led up to these acts and what the consequences were in the novels. Further, the thesis searches for political and psychological aspects of the given terrorists. For the diploma thesis methods of a comparison and contrast are used.

Anotace

Tato magisterská práce analyzuje téma terorismu ve třech amerických románech, *Hotel New Hampshire* od Johna Irvinga, *Americká idyla* od Philipa Rotha a *Terorista* od Johna Updikea. Tato diplomová práce obsahuje krátké životopisy všech tří autorů, stručné shrnutí pojmu „terorismus“ a seznam literatury, ve které se objevuje teror/terorismus. Práce se zaměřuje přímo na akt terorismu, co k tomuto činu vedlo a jaké jsou jeho následky. Dále je zkoumán politický a psychologický aspekt daných teroristů. Práce využívá metodu srovnání a kontrastu.

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1.0 Preface

The theme of terrorism is a current issue in the contemporary world, which in Western countries is primarily connected with Islam and Arabic world. Nowadays, the fear of terrorism has been intensified by mass and social media. The theme has even permeated the pop culture, mainly the film industry, especially as an aftermath of September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

This diploma thesis focuses on three American novels: *The Hotel New Hampshire* by John Irving, *American Pastoral* by Philip Roth and *Terrorist* by John Irving. The common thread in these novels is an act of terrorism. The novels are examined in order according to the time of the publication. The authors situated the novels in different places in the US and Austria and periods of time from the middle of the 20th century to the first decade of the 21st century.

The aim of the thesis is to analyse the act of terrorism in each novel, what the definition of an act of terror is and how it happens in each work. Also under analysis is what is hidden behind the socio-political terrorist attacks, motives and ideas of the perpetrators; targets, means and location. Further, the thesis tries to detect if there are or were real existing terrorist groups mirrored in the novels. The secondary aim is to discover a potential difference between the attitude to the terrorism and a terrorist itself in literature before and after the attacks on September 11. Said's *Orientalism* (1979) will be analysed for a closer understanding of relations between Arabs and Americans.

In the first part of the thesis short biographies of all three authors, an explanation of the term of terrorism and its definition by the United Nations, and a list of other novels focussed on the theme of terrorism is presented along with a brief overview of the terrorist literature.

The next part of the thesis incorporates a nuanced analysis of terrorism in each novel. In *The Hotel New Hampshire*, the act of terror is only a shorter episode in the story, so the entire plot of the whole novel is not recapitulated in

this thesis focused only on terrorism. The analysis of the participants of the act of terror is comprised the psychological aspects and their motivations to commit the concrete act of terror.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 John Irving

“Your memory is a monster; you forget – it doesn’t. It simply files things away. It keeps things for you, or hides things from you – and summons them to your recall with a will of its own. You think you have a memory; but it has you!”

John Irving

This American writer was born in 1942 in Exeter, New Hampshire. On one hand, Irving was quite a bad student at school, especially at math, science and languages. On the other hand, he was good at English and history. In the age of fourteen or fifteen he found out that he wanted to become a fiction writer. As a student he competed as a wrestler. This avocation lasted for twenty years and he utilised it in some of his novels, e.g. *The World According to Garp* or *The Hotel New Hampshire*, where the main characters engage in it. As an adult, Irving coached wrestling until 1989.

John Irving studied at the University of Pittsburgh, later at the University of New Hampshire. In 1963, he came to the University of Vienna where he studied several courses. Vienna was his first experience with living abroad, in his own apartment, in a different culture. He was twenty-six, 1968, when his first novel *Setting Free the Bears* was published. Also the next two novels, *The Water-Method Man* (1972) and *The 158-Pound Marriage* (1974), had gone unremarked by public. The fourth novel *The World According to Garp* (1978) distracted public attention. The story is about a fictional writer after the Second World War.

The World According to Garp, *The Hotel New Hampshire* (1981), and *The Cider House Rules* (1985) were also made into a film, which John Irving participated in making the screenplays. Other two films are based on his novels *A Prayer for Owen Meany* (1989), and *A Widow for One Year* (1998). To his other novels belong *A Son of the Circus* (1994), which concerns Irving’s

imaginary India; *Trying to Save Piggy Sneed* (1996), which deals with author's addictions, *The Fourth Hand* (2001), *A Sound Like Someone Trying Not to Make a Sound* (2004), or *Until I Find You* (2005). His latest novels are *Last Night in Twisted River* (2009), *In One Person* (2012), which deals with the theme of bisexuality and sexual identity; and *Avenue of Mysteries* (2015) is about a Mexican living in the USA. Irving's works were translated into more than thirty-five languages.

In Irving's novel figures such as prostitutes, transvestites, and midgets bring to the plot a motive of a sexual subtext, overtones or very often not hidden, as coitus or sexual assaults. He provokes and surprises his readers. Updike combines comical components, irony and satire, with tragic ones, serious topics and attitudes. He mixed up genres in one novel and uses narrating story within a story. His main topics are family, marriage and friendship, but life in his fiction is fatally and disastrously interrupted. Updike's selection of locations for his stories is worth noticing; an old hotel, a slaughterhouse, or a mental hospital.

He has written fourteen novels. John Irving won three literary prizes: a National Book Award in 1980 for *The World According to Garp*; 1981 an O. Henry Award for a short story *Interior Space*; the newest one, 2013 a Lambda Literary Award for the novel *In One Person*. His screenplay for *The Cider House Rules* was awarded an Oscar in 2000. Nowadays Irving lives in Toronto, Canada.

(Des Pres 1980; Irving 2018)

2.2 Philip Roth

"You cannot observe people through an ideology. Your ideology observes for you."

Philip Roth

Jewish-American author, Philip Roth was born in 1933 in Newark, New Jersey, the same state where the first act of terror in his novel *American Pastoral* occurs. His father, Herman Roth, managed a shoe shop, which went bankrupt due to the Great Depression in the 1930s. During his childhood he had to endure anti-Semitic assaults, even at the Jewish Weequahic High School, where he graduated in 1951.

At the same year he started studying at Newark's Rutgers University, later he transferred to Bucknell University, in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, where he wanted to extricate himself from the provincialism and get to know the other parts of the US. At Bucknell Roth took part in the literary magazine and became an actor in some student plays. In 1954 he graduated in English with a B.A. at Bucknell University and an M.A. in 1955, also in English, at University of Chicago. Later he served shortly in the US army. However, he had to finish short of the full service because of an injury. Then he taught at the University of Chicago, where he started to write short stories. After work for Chicago television he published his first collection of short stories *Good bye, Columbus* in 1959. For this work he won a National Book Award and an award from the National Institute of Arts and Letters. Roth was married twice, for the first time he married Margret Martinson Williams in 1959 but they divorced four years later. His second marriage with the Shakespearian British actress Claire Bloom started in 1990 and ended also four years later.

Later Roth lectured at the University of Iowa, at Princeton University and the University of Pennsylvania. Nevertheless the writer suffered from author's crisis between years 1962 and 1967, Roth's novella *Letting Go* was published in 1962. In the novella there is a young Jew academic, who copes with ethical dilemmas. *When She Was Good* (1967), as he himself expresses it is a book without Jews and his only novel with a female main character. He lectured literature at the University of Pennsylvania at the end of the 1960s and the 1970s. *Good bye, Columbus* was made into a film in 1969. Afterwards he moved to New York. In 1969 he published *Portnoy's Complaint*, which was perceived as a partially anti-Semitic and his nomination to the National Institute

of Arts and Letters in 1970 elicited a commotion. Roth coped with the critics of *Portnoy's Complaint* in his work *Reading Myself and Others* (1975).

In the 1970s he started to write satirical works, *Our Gang* (1971) is worth mentioning. This parodic novel about an administration of President Nixon, fictionally named Dixon, was highly appreciated. Other Roth's novels from that period are *The Breast* (1972), *The Great American Novel* (1973) or *My Life as a Man* (1974), where Nathan Zuckerman, a Jewish writer, appears. This Roth's alter ego appears in several other works such as *The Ghost Writer* (1979), *Zuckerman Unbound* (1981), or *The Anatomy Lesson* (1983).

"The three novels (*The Ghost Writer*, *Zuckerman Unbound*, and *The Anatomy Lesson*) were published in one volume in 1985 entitled *Zuckerman Bound: A Trilogy and an Epilogue*. Although the epilogue, *The Prague Orgy*, which was considered by many critics to be the best section of the volume, seemed to mark the end of the Zuckerman cycle, Roth resurrected his hero yet again for *The Counterlife* (1986), a stand-alone novel for which he won the National Book Critics Circle Award." (Pozorski 2013)

Roth had psychical problems after surgery in 1987 and he wrote out from those issues in *The Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography* (1988). In the 1990s he wrote a novel *Deception* (1990) about conversations between a fifty-year-old novelist, named Philip, and his younger lover, *Operation Shylock* (1993), or *Sabbath's Theater* (1995). *Patrimony: A True Story* (1991) narrates about Roth's father Herman's life and death. For this work he was awarded the National Arts Club's Medal of Honor for Literature in the same year.

In 1997 he published the first novel of a trilogy of life in post-war America, *American Pastoral*, for which he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. The second novel *I Married a Communist* (1998) narrates a married couple with different political attitude. The last novel of the trilogy *The Human Stain* (2000) tells the story of a university professor and social morality. The common denominator is the narrator of the novels, Nathen Zuckerman. In new millennium Roth published *The Dying Animal* (2001), *The Plot against America* (2004), or *Everyman* (2006), which is a story about a current anti-hero. *Indignation* (2008) narrates a young Jew and his overprotective father in the

period of Korean War. Roth's last novel *Nemesis* (2010) narrates about 1940s and polio in Newark.

(Baym 2007: 2720 – 2722; Pozorski 2013)

2.3 John Updike

„We do survive every moment, after all, except the last one.“

John Updike

One of the most appreciated American writers, John Updike, was born in 1932, in Shillington, Pennsylvania, to Wesley Russell and Linda Grace Updike as an only child. He died in 2009, at the age of 76, in Massachusetts, where he had lived since 1957. Updike was a novelist, short story writer, poet, literary and art critic.

Updike was married to Mary Entwistle Pennington from 1953 to 1974, and then to Martha Bernhard from 1977 to his death in 2009. He was a father of four children. In his private life he liked poker and golf. John Updike kept his distance from technology, he did not like computers, the Internet and cell phones.

Author of more than fifty books, including short story collections, poetry, and criticism, Updike is a multiple prize-winning laureate including the Rosenthal Award (1959), the National Book Critics Circle Award (1981), the National Book Award for Fiction (1982), the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction (1982 and 1991), and the Howells Medal (1995). With a style that is interwoven with his drawing talent and concentration on visual detail and as well on verbal accuracy, "his ample production has been achieved through dedicated, steady work; his books are the fruit of patience, leisure, and craft." (Baym 2007: 2711).

He lived in Shillington, Pennsylvania until the age of 13. This location is known his readers through his Olinger stories. His mother enrolled him at art

lessons from a local artist. Later the family moved nearby Shillington, to Plowville, to a farmhouse. This setting he used in his novel *Of the Farm*. At the age of 14 or 15 Updike began sending his drawings and cartoons to publications, e.g. *The New Yorker*. John Updike was influenced by his mother Linda and was interested in writing like her. The obsession to be published in *The New Yorker* accompanied him since he was 12, in the time when *The New Yorker* became renowned.

As Updike confessed to Schiff in an interview in 2001, he had a special relationship with his mother. She had big ambitions to become a writer but her situation did not enable her to fulfil it, yet she still tried to write. She was unable to finish it, which gave “a lesson for [him]: A writer should know when to quit on a project.” (Schiff 2001: 422).

In 1954 he graduated from Harvard College, where he studied English literature and attended courses on art. Then he set out for a study in England for a year, to Oxford at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, because firstly he wanted to become a graphic artist. As he explained, “It’s always been my ambition to be the next Walt Disney.”(Pamuk 2014)

The combination of both skills, writing and drawing, he utilized in his collection of drawings and cartoons for *The Harvard Lampoon*. His avocation in drawing is reflected in *The Centaur*, one of his early novels, which is based on his perception of his parents and his school experience, is the main character an eager painter. “[...] as Adam Begley informs us [...] while still at Harvard Updike was already `rethinking his ambitions, largely because he now recognized that he was a better writer than a cartoonist.’” (Pamuk 2014)

John Updike worked for *The New Yorker* from 1955 to 1957, where his short stories were published there by William Maxwell after his graduation. 1958 he published his first novel *The Poorhouse Fair* and poems *The Carpentered Hen*. Updike himself thought that the American literary scene needed an author who could be great and popular at the same time. On one hand, he had pretensions to become an important and special personality, on

the other hand, he wanted to stay an ordinary person. These two attitudes, his esteem for commonplace obstacles and the talent, interconnected in the novel *Rabbit, Run* (1960). This work was perceived affirmatively because it was unique, credible and less dramatic compared to other authors of that time. Regardless, *Rabbit* deals with the fragility and the fury of the individual, expletives, sexual freedom, guilt and life in small-town America. The whole Rabbit tetralogy, *Rabbit Redux* (1971), *Rabbit Is Rich* (1981) and *Rabbit at Rest* (1990), narrates about a lifelong story of Harry Angstrom, about his emotions, daily life, politics and the growing middle class in American society. In all these novels is his life apparent experience and approach to the middle class is expressed.

Generally, Updike used all his lifelong experiences and journeys, e.g. he reflected it in his character Bech, *Bech, a Book* (1970), *Bech Is Back* (1982), *Bech at Bay* (1998) and *The Complete Henry Bech* (2001). From short stories *Oliger Stories* (1964), belongs to the most admired ones. It is three versions of *The Scarlet Letter* by Hawthorne are all written from different perspectives. In *Couples*, (1968), Updike wrote about infidelities in the suburb of Ipswich. September 11, 2001 he and his wife were in Brooklyn and saw the fall of the World Trade Centre. About this experience he wrote in *The New Yorker* and later was inspired to write his last novel *Terrorist* (2006), the novel by Updike which I will focus on.

(Baym 2007: 2711 – 2712; Pamuk 2014)

2.4 Terrorisms

To define a unitary definition of terrorism is a problem even for the United Nations. Nevertheless, in 2005 its members agreed that a mutual definition is needed for the future fight against it. (United Nations 2005) Frank explicates reasons why it is a demanding task,

“Terrorist” is itself notoriously difficult to define, not only because of the great variety of regimes and groups to which the attribute has been applied but also because of the term’s implicit delegitimization of the acts it describes. (Frank 2012: 9)

The etymology of the word terror, to frighten or scare, is in Latin *terrere*. (Bockstette 2008: 8). The historical context of the usage of the term is connected with the Reign of Terror of the Jacobins in France in the 18th century. In a sense, Machiavelli in *The Prince* speaks about causing respect and how to reinforce one’s power through anxiety, yet not directly through fear because it leads to hatred of the ruler. (Machiavelli 1997: 16 - 91)

Žaloudek classifies three types of terrorism: individual committed by an individual; state, which state perpetrates against another state; and organized, which is executed by terrorist groups. These groups violently enforce their political program or make violent efforts to change the social system. (Žaloudek 1996: 426) It is possible to use „the adjective for politically, religiously, or ideologically motivated acts of violence or disruption that cannot be reduced to the level of discourse.“ (Frank 2012: 10)

Mareš defines terrorism as

a usage of aggressive and excessive violence (or threat of that violence), which is planned with a dominant purpose to send a serious intimidated message for an obviously larger number of people (target audience), and not only for them, who are primarily aggrieved by the violent acts or threats. (Mareš 2005: 22)

Patrick J. Kennedy, an American politician, defines terrorism not as a political term yet from the point of view of its impact on common American society:

Terrorism is a psychological warfare. Terrorists try to manipulate us and change our behavior by creating fear, uncertainty, and division in society. (Wang 2016: 1)

Bockstette clarifies that the primary aim of these acts of terror is not to hurt physical bodies but to effect on emotions. “The use of terror serves not primarily the purposes of fighting, injuring or destroying the opponent.”

(Bockstette 2008: 8) Further, terrorists use the symbolic strength of their acts and dispatch their conveyance to the target audience. (Bockstette 2008: 8)

2.5 Other Works of Terrorism

The theme of terrorism in literature is not new. It emerges before a hundred and forty years with writers such as Conrad, Dostoevsky, James, or Stevenson. The literature of terrorism could be divided into two periods, pre- and post-9/11. According to Appelbaum and Paknadel and their study about terrorism in novels published between 1970 and 2001, terrorism is a criminal violence committed against the innocent others. The situation changed after the attacks on the World Trade Center. Already five days after the attacks, American journalist and writer Roger Rosenblatt wrote an essay, in which he asserted that the attacks would change postmodern literature, which is characteristically marked just for its ironical perspective, from irony to reality, with some serious substance. He also clarifies that writers should concentrate on individualities and put their feelings and experiences in the centre of the plot. (Frank 2012: 1-23)

A list prepared a course “Pre- and Post-9/11 Literary Analysis” in 2007, serves as a basis for the list of other works of terrorism in this thesis. The works were selected on the basis of the plotting of acts of terror. It follows that the novels deal with any constituent of an act of terrorism, an effort to produce a fear in the public or killing unknown people. This killing is not necessarily a target of concrete people or a place, even in the figurative sense to intervene the whole hostile governance. Many novels selected for the list by Keefer, describe the coping with the emotional trauma of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

Aswany, Alaa al: *The Yacoubian Building* (2002)

Conrad, Joseph: *The Secret Agent* (1907)

De Lillo, Don: *Mao II* (1991)

De Lillo, Don: *Falling Man* (2007)

Dubus III, Andre: *Gardens of Last Days* (2008)

Khadra, Yasmina: *The Sirens of Baghdad* (2002)

Khadra, Yasmina: *The Attack* (2005)

Khalifeh, Sahar: *Wild Thorns* (1983)

Neate, Patrick: *City of Tiny Lights* (2005)

Pamuk, Orhan: *Snow* (2002)

Patchet, Ann: *Bel Canto* (2001)

Wilentz, Amy: *Martyr's Crossing* (2001)

(Keefer 2007)

3.0 Marxist Terrorists in *The Hotel New Hampshire*

In John Irving's novel many worrisome phenomena are shown in brutal form, including an act of terrorism. The main characters involuntarily participate in this terrible act of inhumanity. In the following words the narrator - John - explains his image of a terrorist. In the meantime he becomes an involuntary participant of an act of terror.

A terrorist, [...], is simply another kind of pornographer. The pornographer pretends he is disgusted by his work; the terrorist pretends he is uninterested in the *means*. The *ends*, they say, are what they care about. But they are both lying. [...] It is never the ends that matter – it is *only* the means that matter. (Irving 1981: 354)

3.1 The “Opera bomb”

The fictional act of terror was committed in the fall of 1964 in *The Hotel New Hampshire* by Irving, about nine years after the signing the Austrian State Treaty, 1955, which constituted an acknowledgement of Austria as an independent state without foreign armies of occupation. Before that point in time, Austria was divided into four occupation zones after the end of the WWII. The capital city, Vienna, was also divided into American, British, French and Soviet sectors.

The period of the 1950s and 1960s was influenced mainly by the phenomenon of the Cold War. In Austria, especially in Vienna, there was a great influence by both political sides – Capitalist West and Communist East. Lackner does not present any real act of terrorism in that time in the city of Vienna or the state of Austria. (Lackner 2015: 525-585). One may only suspect that the author was influenced by acts of terror perpetrated by “Rote Armee Fraktion” (RAF) in Germany in the 1970s.

Irving himself explains the difference between the real Vienna and the Vienna in the novel in the interview with Larry McCaffery from 1982.

Vienna in my fiction isn't a real place but represents a fictional realm where I can take certain liberties. In other words, I use Vienna as a security blanket; [...]. So the Vienna of my fiction is separate from the real Vienna. [...] My sense of Vienna, whenever I get there in my fiction, is that it's legal to dream there. I can start taking advantage of another kind of reality which is not bound by the usual restrictions. (McCaffery 1982: 6-7)

The realization of the bomb attack is approaching, but not all the radicals are of one opinion about it. Old Billig is afraid that Arbeiter's car bomb will explode early and all people in the hotel will die. After the intercourse with John, Fehlgeburt discloses the plan of blowing up the State Opera in autumn. Fehlgeburt explains why she was chosen for the task and why she cannot leave Austria with Berrys.

"Because I drive the car," Fehlgeburt said. "I'm the driver," she said. "And the car's the main bomb, it's the one that starts all the rest. [...]" "Because I'm the most expendable," she said, and there was Ernst's dead voice again, there was Arbeiter's lawn-mover-like process of *thought*. I realized that in order for Fehlgeburt to believe this, even our gentle Schwanger would have had to convince her. "Why not Schwanger?" [...] "She's too important," [...] "Why not Wrench?" [...] "He's obviously good with cars." [...] There will be other cars, other bombs to build. It's the hostage part I don't like, [...] "Who are the hostages?" I asked. "Your family," she said. "Because you're Americans. [...]" "Why not let Ernst be the driver?" [...] "He's the idea man," Fehlgeburt said. "He thinks it all up. Everything," [...] "And Arbeiter?" [...] "He's too loyal," [...] "And Old Billig?" [...] "He's not trustworthy," [...]. (Irving 1981: 312-313)

John and his family want to report the information about the future attack to the American agencies in Vienna. Finally, they decide to wait some time. Only later they find out that Fehlgeburt was shot dead by Schwanger, but the other radicals do not know about it. Afterwards, the group of radicals commences on the task but Old Billig is missing. The whole family is trapped and taken hostage. The father ascertains that his daughter Franny had intercourse with the leader of the suicidal radical group, Ernst, who says that the affair was another necessary phase.

The radicals expect that people on stage, the whole orchestra and first rows of the audience will die which should ensure an international audience,

and mostly American audience according to the hostages, the Berrys. The maker of the sympathy bomb is Schraubenschlüssel. He has been preparing the car at least since 1957 until 1964 when the terrorist act should be executed. Schraubenschlüssel seems to the non-radical participants as a shallow man who cannot even take care of the car. However, the complete opposite is the truth. When he describes the workings of the bomb he knows everything in detail, yet he looks insidious and stupid at the same time.

“There are actually *two* bombs,” Schraubenschlüssel said. “The first bomb is the car. The whole car,” he said, smiling slyly. “The car simply has to be detonated within a certain range of the Opera – quite close to the Opera, actually. If the car explodes within this range, the bomb in the Opera will explode, too – you might say ‘in sympathy’ with the first explosion. Which is why I call it a sympathy bomb,” Wrench added, moronically. (Irving 1981: 349)

A tense loud altercation follows the choice of the bomb-car driver. Freud is chosen despite the fact that he is blind. The father Berry knocks Ernst out in a quick move with a baseball bat and Ernst dies. Subsequently, this group without the leader is helpless. Finally they decide to continue as planned. Schwanger goes to the Opera House to verify if the bomb in the Opera is functional. In the hotel only two of the radicals are left: Arbeiter and Schraubenschlüssel. Schraubenschlüssel goes with Freud to the car. Arbeiter stays in the hotel and he is killed in self-defence after a short while by John. The car explodes when Freud drives into the hotel. Freud and Schraubenschlüssel are dead. Father, who goes to help to Freud, is hit with small pieces of the bomb-car and he goes blind.

3.2 Relationships within the Radical Group

Berry’s family moved from America to Vienna. They live with their father’s old friend Freud in a hotel called the Hotel New Hampshire, which is located in the first district but is located in fact in the worst street. John calls it the second hotel New Hampshire. Residing in the hotel is a group of radicals there during the days and a bunch of prostitutes works there at night. All the

dwellers of the hotel know each other. The group of the radicals and each member of the radical group have his/her own tasks. They seem at first relatively innocuous. Despite the fact that some of the radicals are typewriting all day long, especially Ernst, the original owner of the hotel, Freud, correctly supposes that “[n]ot all these radicals are intellectuals” (Irving 1981: 244).

Not surprisingly, the new owners of the hotel want to know what the radicals are actually doing and who they are. The radicals use a hotel room as a base for their organisation. They have about twelve typewriters, a mimeograph machine¹, office supplies and several telephones. Later on maps, blueprints, automobile and electrical equipment are brought in. The group never receives calls but they call out to people all the time. The Radical’s main activity before planning their attack is writing manifests. Berry’s family does not understand the purpose of the radicals. In the words of Susie,

“[...] I’m not into their politics.” “But what *are* their politics?” Frank asked. “To change fucking everything,” Susie said. “To start again. They want to wipe the slate clean. They want a whole new ball game.” (Irving 1981: 247)

A group of left-wing and Marxist radicals comprises of six people. They called themselves the Symposium on East-West Relations. Their philosophy of revolution was radical:

They [...] believed in the commercial possibilities of a simple ideal: [...] they could, one day, be “free”. They [...] thought that their own bodies were objects easily sacrificed for a cause (and easily restored, or replaced, after the hardship of the sacrifice). (Irving 1981: 247)

Each member of the group uses a code name, nickname or only the first name but never their true names. Berry’s family uses German and English forms of the radicals’ names randomly. Nevertheless, the German forms are used more often at the end of the terrorist’s part of the novel.

The leader, speaker and the most charismatic member of the radicals is Ernst, who presents himself as a pornographer. He is also called lady-killer. Ernst wants to shock other people and for that reason he creates the worst sort

¹ copy machine

of pornography. He also believes erotica and pornography will lose its position and power in the new world after the revolution.

Old Billig (whose name translates as Old "Cheap") is an older man who was always a radical Resistance fighter. This man is known as a radical's Radical. He belonged to every possible radical movement before but when the movement finds itself at its end, he flees. He does not belong to the main part in the terror group. Old Billig is perceived as suspicious and not a trustworthy man by young radicals but on the other hand, they admire him for his endurance.

Schwanger (whose name translates as "Pregnant") is an older woman who is a radical author. She is well-known among other radicals because she wrote and published two novels. The first novel is about pregnancy and the second one about having an abortion. All money she earned from selling these novels she donated to different radical groups in Vienna and Austria. Berry's children feel she is like a motherly radical who takes them to Coffeehouse Mowatt. This coffeehouse is located near the State Opera.

Fehlgeburt ("Miscarriage") is a young Austrian student of American literature. Fehlgeburt feels like an expendable member of the group and she admires Schwanger. She was never pregnant but she is called Miscarriage as the opposite to Pregnant. Fehlgeburt is not a radical radical but one of her life aims is not to have children until after the revolution. Fehlgeburt has intercourse with John. For her it is for the first time and last time. She does not seem to enjoy it but she complies with all matters she wants to manage in life.

Unpopular and silly, Arbeiter ("worker") is not a very intelligent member of the group. He supposes that the US is a criminal country which "is [...] controlled by the *group*-thinking of corporations." (Irving 1981: 262). He worries that a potential war in the US would be misunderstood as a race war instead of as a war of class stratification.

Schraubenschlüssel ("Wrench") is a simple looking thinking man who is not successful with women. During the days he works as a streetcar worker and

then stays on the car all the time but it never works. Therefore he seems both sleepy and angry all the time.

Regarding the communication between all the participants, Americans speak English, but after years the children can speak fluent German, also Freud and Susie. Father understands only a little and while being held captives, his son Frank must translate the conversation between American and German groups. The radicals also have a different knowledge of English. Old Billig has the poorest level of English. Old Billig can say two phrases: “Yankee go home!” and “Imperialist dog” (Irving 1981: 254). Arbeiter’s knowledge of English was described by John as “little plodding” (Irving 1981: 262). Fehlgeburt can speak the best English of the group because she studies American literature, she communicates with the Americans in English although “with Miss Miscarriage’s lilting Austrian accent”. (Irving 1981: 256). Moreover she practises her pronunciation by reading American novels: “[...] Miss Miscarriage, [...] read[s] aloud to Lilly (not just to comfort a motherless child but to improve her English).” (Irving 1981: 256)

Fehlgeburt’s studying of American literature causes dissensions in the group. Schwanger reproaches her to study economics what can help their group in the future. Old Billig thinks literature is for dreamers. All the Radicals suppose it is a weakness. Fehlgeburt herself has inner problems caused by reading *The Great Gatsby*. These inner problems are caused by her pleasure in reading this American novel, which expresses values against her persuasion of communistic world order.

“I don’t know, but-somehow-it makes me want to go to the United States. I mean, it’s against my politics – your country – I know that. But that *ending*, all of it – somehow – is just so *beautiful*. It makes me want to *be* there. I mean, there’s no *sense* to it, but I would just like to be in the United States.” (Irving 1981: 261)

Schwanger uses her discretion and murdered Fehlgeburt who had leaked the plan for the bomb attack. The others rate Old Billig to be disloyal to their aim to change the world order and persuasion. The group is not united in their action but competitive. It is the reason why the attack is a complete failure.

3.3 Causes and Consequences

The Symposium on East-West Relations, a left-wing and Marxist radical group, intends to produce a new world order without class stratification. To accomplish this, they need an international audience, not merely the local European. For that reason they used an American family for kidnapping. The radicals are underestimated all seven years when they were preparing for their act of terror. In compliance with the impression that the terrorists make, Freud in the novel notes, "And those aren't any first-class terrorists, either" [...] "They can't keep a perfectly good car running!" (Irving 1981: 325).

The act of terror ends in failure. All the radicals of the Symposium on East-West Relations die, except for Schwanger, she "[...] must have just kept walking. [...] she decided simply to stay and watch the end of the opera [...]" (Irving 1981: 359). They do not achieve their aim, which was to catch the world's attention and mainly the attention of the United States of America. The impact of their effort is published in a number of newspaper articles. In none of these articles is it ever mentioned about Fehlgeburt or other members of the radicals, or the accurate versions of the requirements, intentions and targets of the Symposium. The "heroes" are named: the Berrys. The world did not receive the message of the group and nothing has changed: the order of it stays as it was.

A lot of nonsense was written about what the radicals had *meant*. An unbelievable amount of garbage would be written about the "statement" they had been trying to make. (Irving 1981: 359)

3.4 Conclusion

To sum this act of terror up, John Irving's description of a few brutal and social taboos seems shocking to present the topic of an act of terrorism which, along with these characters' attitudes towards the USA, helped to sell the novel. The RAF: Red Army Faction, the terrorist Western Marxist organization

had been terrorizing West Germany since 1970s and was topical when the novel was first published

The Red Army Faction was formed in 1970 when a small group of West German revolutionaries decided to go underground and carry out armed actions against U.S. imperialism. Within a few years, almost all of the original members were either dead or captured, yet the harsh treatment the latter received as prisoners garnered them a degree of sympathy, and their own unflinching resistance earned them the respect of many. In fact, the RAF was to remain a factor in German politics for almost thirty years as successive waves of radicals extended the struggle, carrying out increasingly sophisticated and daring campaigns of assassination and bombings against key members of the West German ruling class and American armed forces stationed in the Federal Republic. (Smith 2009: XXI)

John Irving combined the known data about this terrorist group together with the place which was best known to him in Europe, namely Vienna, Austria. The fictional group The Symposium on East-West Relations has many signs and attributes in common with the real RAF. Located in a German-speaking area, the real terrorist in Germany and the fictional terrorists in Vienna, Austria, both groups are Marxist organizations, in which women played a prominent role. Furthermore, the RAF and the Symposium held hostages and used car bombs as a means of terrorism.

As an example of holding hostages by RAF, Hanns Martin Schleyer, a powerful entrepreneur, who was a member of the SS in Germany in his youth, led the Confederation of German Employers' Association. He was held hostages for 43 days and afterwards murdered by Siegfried Hausner Commando on October 18, 1977. (Smith 2009: 477-507) In Final Schleyer Communiqué written on October 19, 1977, the RAF states the reason for his murder:

[...] we have put an end to Hanns Martin Schleyer's pitiful and corrupt existence. [...] As compensation for our pain and suffering over the massacres in Mogadishu and Stammheim, his death is meaningless. [...], we are not surprised by the dramatic and fascist methods the imperialists use to exterminate the liberation movements. (Smith 2009: 507)

On one hand, the real terrorist organization may have worked as a model group of terrorists in Irving's novel. On the other hand, there is no evidence that the act in the novel is based on real, true incidents or specific individuals.

4.0 The Anti-Vietnam War Terrorist in *American Pastoral*

Roth was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the novel, *American Pastoral* (1997), which was listed 2006 by *The New York Times* in “Best American Fiction in the Last 25 Years” as the fifth one; and was adapted as a film 2016 by Rosenberg and Luccesi. (Koy 2015: 47) The storyteller, Nathan Zuckerman, opens the novel with his narration, but is “later swallowed up by Seymour’s narrative.” (Sigrist-Sutton 2010: 47).

Roth points out “two dominant critical perspectives on the novel – ethnic identity, [...]and]American history” (Pozorski 2009: 78). The novel pictures a human drama and a personal heartbreak set in the late 1960s and the 1970s. The novel portrays the rise of three generations of a Jewish family and the fall of the fourth one, the offspring of two attractive American people of different religions, who cope with the aftermath of the idyll of the 1950s.

Roth’s themes of the idyll and perfectionism, and consequent fall or loss of American ideals are obvious in *American Pastoral*. The names of three parts of the novel *Paradise Remembered*, *The Fall*, and *Paradise Lost* evoke the *Bible* and John Milton’s epic poem *Paradise Lost* (Eagle 2012: 19). This idea according to Royal, “it illustrates the fictitiousness of any mythologized national Eden”(Pozorski 2009: 75). From that point of view, Seymour Levov stands in as Adam and his holding leads to the loss of the Eden. On the other hand, the bomb attack could work as a tearing off the apple from the tree and the succeeding awaking. The disputation between two perspectives on the United States; between Merry’s, who acts against everything and her father Seymour Levov, who loves America as a whole, is often criticized. (Eagle 2012: 23) Roth explores through Seymour Levov,

the politics of the American myth and with it, the tendency to rewrite historical events to continue that myth. By focusing the mutations in our historical memory of the Sixties radical student protest against American empire, Roth ultimately depicts one way in which we collectively misremember in order to secure our hold on the American myth. (Sigrist-Sutton 2010: 51)

As Eagle suggests, a strong motif of the whole novel is Merry's stuttering, which represents the disparaging connection between stuttering and violence. "Roth [...] expand[s] the personal struggles of Merry [...] with fluency into the much broader issue of women's political voicelessness." (Eagle 2012: 27) The stuttering of Levov's daughter represents the inability of Merry's entire generation to present their opinion against the war in Vietnam, "a failure which for Roth results in ever-escalating forms of violence."(Eagle 2012: 28)

4.1 The "Rimrock bomber" Subplot

The Roth's novel begins at the end of the Second World War in Newark, New Jersey, with the familiarization of the main character, Seymour Irving "Swede" Levov depicted as a local hero and generally popular high school athlete, symbolizing the thriving assimilation of Jews in American society. The Levovs, a wealthy Jewish family, are the proprietors of the glove making company, Newark Maid. Seymour Levov and his brother Jerry are the third generation of the European Jewish immigrants. Levov spends less than two years by the Marine Corps beyond the sea, and after his return he gets married to Dawn Dwyer, Miss New Jersey 1949, and a Catholic.

The narrator of the story, Nathan Zuckerman, an author and regular stand-in for Roth himself, receives a letter from his lifelong hero and ideal in 1995, Seymour Levov, who writes him he wants to pay homage to his recently deceased father, Lou Levov, by asking Zuckerman to write a novel about him. Levov meets Zuckerman talking only about his three successful sons and his new wife. Zuckerman loses his lofty illusion about "Swede" and is disappointed by their conversation. Later Zuckerman arrives at his forty-fifth high school reunion where he finds out from Jerry Levov that Seymour had died. Besides other things, Jerry reveals the terrorist past of Seymour's daughter to Zuckerman. Jerry also narrates about one family meeting where he catches his brother crying for his dead daughter, she could have been about forty. Zuckerman determines to write a novel about this act of domestic terror inside

the United States. He sets out to Newark and searches for information. From that point the narrator changes and the rest of the plot continues from the Seymour Levov's point of view.

Levov's story starts on the way back from the beach, where he was with his beautiful wife and eleven-year-old daughter Merry. His stuttering daughter asks him to kiss her as he kisses Merry's mother. After her urging he does that, which brings him later to reflecting it as one of the possible causes of her act of terror. Merry's stuttering negatively influenced the behaviour of the whole family. Little Merry writes down a diary about her difficulty, she goes to a psychologist and speech therapist, but nothing helps. One day Levov holds a conversation with the speech therapist, Sheila Salzman, and she says that Merry manipulates people into stuttering and it is advantageous for her most of the time. Levov does not agree.

Meanwhile, Merry grows up, stops dealing with stuttering and becomes a radical at the age of sixteen. Her Marxist and anti-Vietnam war radicalization leads to the act of terrorism at Hamlin's Coop Shop and post office in Rimrock, resulting in the death of a local doctor. After the explosion, Merry disappears and the FBI accuses her of the act of violence and puts out a warrant for her arrest. Levov's hopelessness shows through his search for his daughter by reading all the newspaper articles and asking all of her friends about her whereabouts.

After two years a young woman appears in the glove factory. She fabricates that she might have known Merry. Her name is Rita Cohen and she forces Levov to bring her Merry's belongings: a stuttering diary, Audrey Hepburn notebook and a ballet leotard with ballet shoes. Rita's requirements include ten thousand dollars in ten and twenty banknotes which Levov hands to Rita in a hotel room, where she also proffers her body to Levov. He refuses, leaves the money in the room and flees the hotel. Subsequently, he contacts the FBI but Rita already has escaped.

After three years, Levov still knows nothing about his daughter. He desperately seeks any little clue where his Merry could be and how she survives in hiding from the FBI. Levov also contemplates the causes of Merry's radicalization and departure from her family all the time. As he himself mentions, he feels crazy occasionally, for instance his disputation with the hallucination of Angela Davis, an Afro-American activist. The story recounts the riots of African-Americans workers in 1967 in Newark. In the meantime, Merry's mother Dawn undergoes plastic surgical intervention in Switzerland after two sojourns in sanatorium due to two psychical breakdowns. 1973 Levov receives a letter from Rita Cohen, who leaks where Merry is to be found.

Levov meets his daughter in the worst neighbourhood in Newark and finds out that she has committed several other bomb attacks, resulting in the deaths of other three people, it means four in total. Levov is in despair when he sees Merry in her terrible conditions and state of health. She becomes a pacifist through book-learned Jainism and she is going to starve herself in the faith of *ahisma*, to not hurting anything alive including flora. Levov does not trust the person a single word. In one moment, he swoops on her and violently opens her mouth to check her teeth in order to verify her identity. However the smell which comes from her unwashed body and mainly her mouth causes him to vomit on her face. Merry contends that she does not know any Rita Cohen and she has never obtained the money through her from her father. Merry describes her evasion of the FBI, her journey through the States where she was raped several times. Levov feels so lost that he calls his brother, a dentist, who holds him responsible and tells him to forcibly take her home, which he does not do.

In non-linear fashion the novel moves to a new setting. Dawn prepares the dinner with their family friends, husband Orcutts, Levov's parents and husband Salzman. The company speaks about the news which shocked the American society, the affair Watergate and the porno film *Deep Throat*. Before the feast Rita Cohen calls to Levov what results in Seymour's nightmare daydreaming about the return of his daughter home. Levov thinks about their

meeting and he realizes that he and his wife have raised a murderess. He understands it due to her avowal she killed four people. During the dinner Levov detects the long-term affair between his wife Dawn and his best friend Orcutt. Afterwards he acknowledges he had a four-month-long affair with Merry's speech therapist, Sheila Salzman. He cannot bear the fact that Salzman was hiding Merry for three days after the explosion without revealing it to him and they have an argument. Sheila tries to explain she did not want to betray Merry's trust. The whole story ends in Levov losing all illusions about life, the United States, American Dream and human behaviour.

4.2 Causes and Consequences of the Act of Terror

Levov ruminates about all the causes of the radicalization of his daughter Merry through the novel. He comes up with several potential causes, some fall into the political, some into psychological aspects.

Levov mentions several times the innocent summer kiss with his eleven-year-old daughter when the whole family comes back from the seaside and Merry begs father to kiss her as he kisses mother. Firstly, he does not want to kiss her, but after all, he is persuaded to do that. Also Merry's therapist refers to the Oedipus complex and Merry's effort to capture her father's attention. Levov keeps his physical distance from Merry after this experience, which he always gives grievous weight to. Merry's uncle, Jerry Levov, puts the blame on her stuttering, "[s]he stuttered, [...]. So to pay everybody back for her stuttering, she set off the bomb." (Roth 1997: 73) However her therapist, and later Seymour's lover, explains that Merry's speech defect is traceable to the unbalanced relation with her mother. It may have been the therapist's means to attract Seymour's attention to her and break up with his wife. Seymour is depicted as a handsome and quite rich man, which could be the therapist's motive to her psychological argument. Just the attractiveness of Merry's

parents and the awareness of the attainableness of her own prettiness might be one of the causes of her hatred towards them.

[...] the etiology of Merry's problem had largely to do with her having such good-looking and successful parents. [...], her parental good fortune was just too much for Merry, and so, to withdraw from the competition with her mother, to get her mother to hover over and focus on her and eventually climb the walls – [...] to win the father away from the beautiful mother – she chose to stigmatize herself with a severe stutter, thereby manipulating everyone from a point of seeming weakness. [...] "The benefits may far outweigh the penalties." (Roth 1997: 95-96)

Last but not least there is the first contact with the reality of the Vietnam War in the television, when Merry watches the suicide burning to death by a Buddhist monk, Thich Quang Duc, in 1963. The coverage disturbs her to such an extent that the nightmares about it wake her up and she comes to parent's bedroom crying and sobbing "these gentle p-p-people". (Roth 1997: 154) She is consternated that other people do not take interest in it, "Do you have to m-m-melt yourself down in fire to bring p-p-people to their s-sense? Does anybody care? [...] Doesn't anybody in this w-world have a conscience left?" (Roth 1997: 154). Merry's mother reassures her that she is interested and some other people too but not all. About seven other acts of self-sacrifice come afterwards and Merry's attitude changes.

Further, the graphic TV reporting from the Vietnam War keeps Merry well informed about the killing and burning of Vietnamese day after day. Paul Johnson states that the American media had represented the war mainly positively between years 1961 to 1967, and *the New York Times* and *Washington Post* belonged to the war's biggest supporters initially. After 1967 the dailies change the rhetoric along with the huge American television companies to a neutral standing, later to an unfriendly stance. (Johnson 2014: 705). Merry's linking up with the radicals in New York serve as the origin of the "Rimrock bomber" in the social context of this period.

The consequences of the act of terror are not official due to the F.B.I.'s failure to capture of the perpetrator who has been in hiding for the rest of her

life. The direct aftermath is the death of Dr. Conlon, a husband and a father in Merry's bomb attack, and the emotional loss of his family. By contrast, the doctor's wife feels the situation slightly different:

"You are as much the victims of this tragedy as we are. The difference is that for us, though recovery will take time, we will survive as a family. We will survive as a loving family. We will survive with our memories intact and with our memories to sustain us. It will not be any easier for us that it will be for you to make sense of something so senseless. But we are the same family we were when Fred was here, and we will survive." (Roth 1997: 216 - 217)

Conlon's wife's statement brings us to the contrasting disintegration of Levov's family and the break-up of the marriage of Seymour and Dawn. When their daughter vanishes without a trace and they realize that she really committed the terrorist attack, the Levovs' lives turn upside down. Dawn has two nervous breakdowns and starts blaming Seymour for their suffering. It was Seymour, who was picking her up all the time and she had to fall prey to his will to live the perfect American dream life with a beautiful wife. Finally, Seymour finds out that his wife has a sexual affair and wants to walk out on him. Also the other members of Levov's family hold the ruining of Seymour against Merry, as her uncle Jerry says about it: "His life was blown up by that bomb. The real victim of that bombing was him." (Roth 1997: 68)

4.3 The Act of Terror

Levov recommends informing Merry's hometown about the situation in Asia to her after he finds out that his daughter has been radicalized by Marxist-oriented groups in New York. Merry speaks about Northern Vietnam as about the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, what annoys especially her mother. Merry brings some communist material from New York as well. The groups, which Merry keeps in touch with, have the intention not only to stop the Vietnam War, contrarily but to give rise to a socialist revolution.

“[...] Start in your hometown, Merry. That’s the way to end the war.”
“Revolutions don’t b-b-begin in the countryside.” “We’re not talking about revolution.” “You’re not talking about revolution.” (Roth 1997: 113)

Merry follows the advice of her father and starts to dispute with her surroundings about the state of war in Vietnam. Before her planned action she talks to all her schoolmates and prepares them for an expectant event in their town. These talks are used as the only evidence against her by the FBI. As the extract explains, the FBI has nothing more against her, except a few statements by her schoolmates, teacher and a one-date boy. What speaks against Merry is also her disappearance.

“Quaint Old Rimrock is in for a big surprise.” From the sound of it, Merry had gone around school the day before the bombing telling that to four hundred kids. That was the evidence against her, [...]. The post office had been blown up, and the general store along with it, but nobody had seen her anywhere near it, nobody had seen her do the thing, nobody would have even thought of her as the bomber if she hadn’t disappeared. (Roth 1997: 140)

The act of terror is dated February 3, 1968. The unexpected and brutal act of violence is located at the local shop which is connected with the post office. This office could be perceived as a governmental institution or as belonging to the establishment, yet the complete opposite is the truth. There is the key divergence between how Levov feels the term ‘humanity’ and how the radicals want to accomplish the social transformation:

We’re talking about *humanity!* When has there ever been progress for humanity without a few small mishaps and mistakes? The people are angry and they have spoken! Violence will be met by violence, regardless of consequences, until the people are liberated! Fascist America down one post office, facility completely destroyed. Except, as it happened, Hamlin’s was not an official U.S. post *office* nor were the Hamlins U.S. postal employees – theirs was merely a postal *station* contracted, for x number of dollars, to handle a little postal business on the side. Hamlin’s was no more a government installation than the office where your accountant makes out your tax forms. (Roth 1997: 216)

As mentioned above, the act of terrorism is perpetrated in Old Rimrock, Levov’s hometown, and Merry is reckoned as the assumed offender of this act.

During the act of terror, Doctor Conlon is killed, who was a very popular man. He took good care of his patients and served professionally in a local hospital. This act is not only assessed as a disruption of the town's running, either the damage to the safety of the United States, which symbolized by the American flag.

[...] after turning their living room into a battlefield, after turning Morristown High into a battlefield, she went out one day and blew up the post office, destroying right along with it Dr. Fred Conlon and the village's general store, a small wooden building with a community bulletin board out front and a single old Sunoco pump and the metal pole on which Russ Hamlin - who, with his wife, owned the store and ran the post office - had raised the American flag every morning since Warren Gamaliel Harding was president of the United States. (Roth 1997: 113)

In the high school reunion of Jerry's and Zuckerman's class, Jerry narrates about the bomb attack to Zuckerman and he clarifies even more details about it. "Somehow she plants a bomb back behind the post office window, and when it goes off it takes out the general store too." (Roth 1997: 69)

Levov does not believe during the whole five years that his own daughter could have done that hideous and damnable act. When he meets her once more, he has to know the truth about the bomb attack in Old Rimrock. In the point where Merry confesses to the act, Levov still hopes that there have been some other radicals who instigate Merry to do it, and that he can find the one red attacker.

"Merry, did you do it? I must ask you this now. Did you do it?" [...] "Do what, Daddy?" "Did you bomb the post office?" "Yes." "You intended to blow up Hamlin's too?" "There was no other way to do it." "Except not to do it. Merry, you must tell me now who made you do it?" "Lyndon Johnson." "That will not do. No! Answer me. Who talked you *into* it? Who brainwashed you? Who did you do it *for*?" [...] "How strongly you still crave the idea" [...] "of your innocent offspring." "Who was it? Don't protect them. Who is responsible?" "Daddy, you can detest me alone. It's all right." "You are telling me you did it all on your own. Knowing that Hamlin's would be destroyed too. [...]" "Yes. I am the abomination. Abhor *me*." (Roth 1997: 247 - 248)

Levov can put up with the fact that his beloved daughter killed one person, however he cannot bear the discovery, that she killed four people overall and she is the maker of the bombs:

“In Oregon she was involved in two bombings. [...] “You planted the bombs.” “I did.” “At Hamlin’s and in Oregon you planted the bombs.” “Yes.” “Was anyone killed in Oregon?” “Yes.” “Who?” “People.” “People,” he repeated. “How many people, Merry?” “Three,” she said. (Roth 1997: 258 - 259)

Certainly, Levov knows that his daughter cannot construct a time bomb and she had an accomplice. He supposes Merry protect other terrorists involved in those terrorist attacks. This means she does not trust her father not to betray her accomplice to the F.B.I. in exchange of mitigating a sentence for Merry.

In the novel there are more bombs attacks, which are caused by children of rich and powerful men, e.g. a left-wing New York lawyer. As well as Merry, all these youths fight against their white prominent and non-alarmed parents, and their aim is “[t]o change the system and give power to the 90 percent of the people who have no economic or political control now.” (Roth 1997: 151) As Paul Johnson suggests, the rise of anti-war protests in the 1960s among American youth was caused by the inopportune means of the military drafts in that period. (Johnson 2014: 706) According to the historical facts, the group of radical students around Merry might be Roth’s fictional representation of the Weathermen Underground, whose name never appears in the novel, but who committed very similar acts in the 1960s and 1970s.

4.4 Means to Terrorism

Primarily, all materials from the radicals belong to their means of domestic terrorism, as magazines, *The Communist Manifesto*, which Merry speaks about, poster etc. These materials help to radicalize future attackers. Secondly, people are the crucial part of the preparation of the act of terror. In

this case it is sixteen-year-old Merry Levov, and her determination to change the world in compliance with a vision of world domination. Thirdly, the main part is the construction and the planting a bomb.

Sixty sticks of dynamite, thirty blasting caps, a cache of homemade bombs - twelve-inch pipes packed with dynamite - are found only twenty feet from the body. It was a pipe packed with dynamite that blew up Hamlin's. (Roth 1997: 150)

In Merry's case the bomb explosion comes early in the morning, which means that the number of victims does not exceed one. It does not change her decision to inflict the chaos, or else scare people, which enable the radicals to establish equilibrium their own point of view.

4.5 Participants

4.5.1 Meredith Levov

Merry Levov was born into a loving family as the only child and grows up in the American countryside near her mother's cow farm. Merry's father describes her as

a girl blessed with golden hair and a logical mind and a high IQ and an adultlike sense of humor even about herself, blessed with long, slender limbs and a wealthy family and her own brand of dogged persistence – with everything except fluency. (Roth 1997: 95)

As Merry grows up and the political situation changes, she changes her appearance. She breaks free from the childish look and understanding of the world. When Seymour finds out his daughter goes with New York radicals, he tries to keep her attention through their conversations about Merry's trips and new friends. However:

And then it was too late: [...] she thickened across the back and the neck, stopped brushing her teeth and combing her hair; she ate almost nothing she was served at home but at school and out alone ate virtually all the time, [...], so that almost overnight she became large, a large, loping, slovenly sixteen-year-old, nearly six feet tall, nicknamed by her schoolmates Ho Chi Levov. (Roth 1997: 99 - 100)

She always becomes enthusiastic about everything very quickly. Firstly, it was the Christian faith, her grandmother brings her to it and Merry equips her room with crosses or pictures of Jesus Christ, and visits church with grandmother Dwyer. Secondly, she tried to offset her stuttering with an admiration for an American actress, Audrey Hepburn. Merry glued her pictures and articles into a notebook. Her last captivation is world socialist revolution, which she subordinates her lifestyle and relationship with her parents to.

“My responsibility is to you and not to the war.” “Oh, I know your responsibility is not to the war – that’s why I have to go to New York. B-b-b-because people there do feel responsible. They feel responsible when America b-blows up Vietnamese villages. They feel responsible when America is b-blowing little b-babies to b-b-b-b-bits. B-but you don’t, and neither does Mother. [...] You don’t really care, Daddy, one way or the other.” (Roth, 1997: 107)

As Dawn, Merry’s mother once tells her, she fights against, what could denote that the young girl does not direct only against the war but also against capitalism, which the United States and her father represent. The property and exploitation of Levov’s employees are the very system which Merry reproaches to her father. It is, in fact, Seymour’s American Dream she protests against.

Merry appears in the story again in 1973, she is twenty-one working at a veterinary office in the worst district of Newark, living in one room in terrible conditions. She uses a name from a gravestone: Mary Stolz, which means in Yiddish “proud”, given her half-Jewish origin, it could not be a coincidence. After meeting with her father, she explains to him, she converts to Jainism and therefore she cannot use tap water to wash herself, breath without a veil to not to kill living organisms in the air and also, she becomes a radical pacifist. Her father is convinced that she is so afraid of the judicial sentence that she is punishing herself by means of Jainism, to self-starvation and the consequentially suicide.

After the bomb attack, the rest of the family feels despondent. This feel changes over the years and Merry’s uncle Jerry describes her after years as: “[s]he was miserable, self-righteous – little shit was no good from the time she

was born.” (Roth 1997: 69) The reader knows about Merry’s death also from her uncle, it should be approximately in 1993 when Merry is forty-one.

4.5.2 Seymour Irving Levov

Seymour Levov is the third generation of Jewish family Levov who lives in Newark’s suburb in New Jersey. The Swede is appropriately proud of being an American. The nickname Swede attributes not only to his appearance: blond hair, blue eyes, athletic figure but to his assimilation. Levov’s surroundings admire him like a local hero, according to the narrator Zuckerman. Levov enjoyed being part of America as he likes it but later it is this America he lost, as well as all his illusions at the end. Sigrist-Sutton states Levov represents the American myth of the politics of the 1960s, which tends to be rewritten and with it the historical events, especially, the protests of radical students against US establishment. (Sigrist-Sutton 2010: 51).

Let’s remember the energy. [...] Rationing was ending, price controls were being lifted; in an explosion of self-assertion, [...] workers – laborers by the millions demanded more and went on strike for it. And playing Sunday morning softball on the Chancellor Avenue field and pickup basketball on the asphalt courts behind the school were all the boys who had come back alive, neighbors, cousins, older brothers, their pockets full of separation pay, the GI Bill inviting them to break out in ways they could not have imagined possible before the war. [...], during the greatest moment of collective inebriation in American history. And the upsurge of energy was contagious. Around us nothing was lifeless. Sacrifice and constraint were over. The Depression had disappeared. Everything was in motion. The lid was off. Americans were to start over again, en masse, everyone in it together. (Roth 1997: 40)

Levov is portrayed as a successful and promising man, who observes the rules. He represents the “Embodiment of the American dream.” (Koy 2015: 53) This is one of many things which his daughter hates about him. His fight for and against his daughter changes him and as his brother mentions: “He got caught in a war he didn’t start, and he fought to keep it all together, and he went down.” (Roth 1997: 65). On one hand, Levov loses himself for Merry, on the

other hand he tries to start a new life, what he succeeds in. He has three sons and a younger wife.

As a father, Levov is portrayed as a patriarch “as rather lenient, benevolent and optimistic father-figures who seem incapable of coming to terms with their part in the chaos of [his] child’s life, leading to acute misunderstandings.” (Koy 2015: 50) The whole novel guides their father-daughter relationship; however Merry resists Levov’s ideals, he is “[...] a father giving life-life, to his daughter, of course, but also it conveys the sense of spreading an ideological legacy about the American Dream.” (Pozorski 2009: 81)

4.5.3 Rita Cohen

Rita Cohen, due to her name a Jewish girl, is a mysterious and unidentifiable character of Roth’s novel. Even Levov has once doubts about the real existence of Rita. Rita is the only one related element between Levov and Merry during her escape. Rita represents his only prospect to see his daughter again, either to see Merry’s life in a different way. Rita clarifies Merry’s problematic relation to her parents: “[...] The daughter of the beauty queen and the captain of the football team – what kind of nightmare is that for a girl with a soul?” (Roth 1997: 135-136)

Levov perceives it and for that reason he brings Rita all Merry’s thing she asks and even money to a hotel room, ten thousand dollars. In that room the vulgar and abusive scene takes place, Rita imitating Merry’s stuttering: “Let’s f-f-fuck, D-d-d-dad-“(Roth 1997: 143; 144) Rita lying in a bed and demanding intercourse with Levov shows the generation gap regarding the sexual revolution; the openness, vulgarity and laxity of the then young generation regarding the question of sexuality.

In a letter addressed to Levov, Rita Cohen indicates that she is a disciple of Merry and she cannot bear her ascendancy anymore. With hindsight Rita’s confession says more about Rita than Merry:

She is an incredible spirit. She has changed everything for me. I got into this over my head because I couldn't ever resist her power. [...] You must believe me when I tell you that I never said anything or did anything other than what Merry demanded me to say or to do. She is an overwhelming force. [...] I lied to her only once. That was about what happened at the hotel. (Roth 1997: 175)

4.6 Conclusion

Roth's novel reviews the life of a fictional terrorist based on the background of real historical events which included Jewish members of the Weathermen. The story is narrated from the Levov's perspective as a parent of the terrorist. The act of the terror is evaluated by Levov, his brother and the narrator. The terrorist herself only responds to her father's questions about it. Nevertheless, some information from Seymour's brother Jerry is revealed, who replenishes the facts about an execution of the attack and the death of Merry. Seymour Levov loses his ideal America: "[t]he daughter has made her father see" that this dream was an illusion. (Roth 1997: 418) Thus, Levov sees genuine America full of chaos and inequality at the end of the novel.

Roth's choice of the crucial character as a young female could be connected with the feminist radical movement of the 1960s. (Pozorski 2009: 77) The fictional act of terror is certainly inspired by the real one in the 1960s in the United States caused by a terrorist organisation Weather Underground, or the Weathermen. This group was a faction of the student group *the Students for a Democratic Society* (SDS). The lyrics of Bob Dylan's song "Subterranean Homesick Blues" from 1965 served as their *Manifesto*. The organisation did not present itself as a terrorist group, which would like to raise fear, however they wanted to weaken and successively remove the capitalists in the US, who control the working class. (Briley c2018)

Seymour Levov recommended to his daughter to bring the war home, in a sense to inform about the Vietnam War. The same task was assigned the *Weather Manifesto*. According to Briley,

[t]he bellicose nature of the *Weather Manifesto* evoked considerable controversy then and now, as the radicals sought to embody their principles with the formation of revolutionary collectives that would “bring the war home.” In other words, the goal was to subject Americans to some of the violence and destruction inflicted daily upon the Vietnamese people. (Briley c2018)

The hearing before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary United States from January 31, 1975, can serve as an example of the acts of the group and their justification of terrorist acts:

The bomb in the Pentagon was set off May 19, 1972 in a fourth-floor women’s restroom of the sprawling complex and again the Weather Underground claimed credit, saying the act was in response to continued U.S. bombing and mining of North Vietnam. (1975: 9)

Kathy Boudin, a member of Weathermen and a daughter of a lawyer, who participated on a townhouse explosion in West 11th Street in Greenwich Village, March 6, 1970, (Patterson 2003) was released after twenty-two years from prison on August 20, 2003. (Goodman 2003) The other member, Mark Rudd, a then foreman of SDS at Columbia University, published his memoirs *Underground* about his experience of his membership in the SDS and Weathermen in 2009. (Rudd c2017) As Briley states, the social revolution failed and after the end of the war many members of Weathermen reintegrated into regular society. (Briley c2018)

In *American Pastoral* the point is that the bomb attack was completed. However the offender was not apprehended and punished. Her guilt is reflected by Seymour in the self-punishment in the form of her self-destructive sacrifice. Merry, the terrorist, has never shown regret for her acts, murder of four innocent people. Merry only admits her acts and describes how it happened, though she has absolutely no regrets at all.

5.0 The Islamic Jihadist in *Terrorist*

The psychological novel *Terrorist* by John Updike was his 22nd and final novel and was published in 2006. In the novel John Updike adapted two translations of the Koran, the first by J. M. Rodwell in 1861 and the second by N. J. Dawood in 1956. Further, Updike had hired as consultant Shady Nasser who served as an expert on Arabic and the Koran. Updike incorporated into his novel notions from the study *Islam Today*, by A. Ahmad (1998), and Edward Said's monograph *Orientalism* (1978). (Hartnell 2011: 479) Hartnell pointed out "the ideology of trauma" formulated by Fritz Breithaupt, which characterizes the attitude of Americans as the innocent victims of the act of terror of September 11, 2011.

From this point of view, the author sympathizes with his fictional terrorist, Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy. Updike narrates a story about an incomplete act of terrorism through the terrorist himself, his faith, beliefs and aversion to the Western lifestyle. Nevertheless, "[w]hat emerges in *Terrorist* as the Islamist critique of American society is in many ways Updike's own." (Hartnell 2011: 484)

"Not *hate* your body," he corrects her, "but not be a slave to it either. I look around me, and I see slaves – slaves to drugs, slaves to fads, slaves to television, slaves to sports heroes that don't know they exist, slaves to the unholy, meaningless, opinions of others. [...]" (Updike 2007: 70-71)

The judgment targeted at the behaviour of people in contemporary society, may not come exclusively and demonstrably from a hostile Muslim person. It is a typical critique by the older generation to the younger, and primarily to the youngest one. Undoubtedly, the critique of American society appears also during the Christian Holy Mass, where the priest of the Joryleen's African American church preaches about the impropriety of abusing drugs, bringing illegitimate children into the world, especially among sins. The priest also criticised the economic and working system in the United States.

[...], “‘Would to God that we had died in Egypt!’ So why *did* God bring us out of slavery into this wilderness” – he consults his book – “‘to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? A prey! Hey, this is serious! Let’s hustle our asses – our oxes and asses – back to Egypt!” He glances into the book, and reads a verse aloud: “‘They said to one another, Let us make a captain, and let us return to Egypt.’ That Pharaoh, he wasn’t so bad. He fed us, though not much. He gave us cabins to sleep in, down by the marsh with all the mosquitoes. He sent us welfare, pretty regular. He gave us jobs dishing up fries at McDonald’s, for the minimum wage. He was friendly, that Pharaoh, compared to those giants, those humongous sons of Anak.” (Updike 2007: 53)

In fact almost all characters are based on clichés proceeding from a number of alienating issues. The first weak point in Ahmad’s life is the long-standing unconcern his mother feels about Ahmad which seems to contribute to Ahmad’s future career. Disinterest on the side of Central High School weighs in on it equally. Ahmad’s feeling of security leans only on his faith in Allah. Although Shaikh Rashid, Ahmad’s imam, interprets the Koran by himself, even Ahmad has second thoughts about the imam’s unswerving religious belief. Therefore Ahmad assumes he is a better and stronger believer than others. All these bromides, which are generally known and accepted, cause him to feel lonely in the world. Ahmad feels he is predestined to become a martyr, a terrorist *de facto*. He feels exceptional and different in his faith. In the novel he tends to divide people to either believers or *kafirs*/infidels.

[...] – some hint of the Merciful’s relenting at some point in time, and calling a halt to Hutama, the imam casts down his eyes, which are an unexpectedly pale gray, as milky and elusive as a kafir woman’s, and says that these visionary descriptions by the Prophet are figurative. They are truly about the burning misery of separation from God and the scorching of our remorse for our sins against His commands. But Ahmad does not like Shaikh Rashid’s voice when he says this. It reminds him of the unconvincing voices of his teachers at Central High. He hears Satan’s undertone in it, a denying voice within an affirming voice. (Updike 2007: 4)

According to Alroy’s article “Do the Arabs Want Peace?” from 1974, it is explained that “the Arabs are unregenerate savages” (Said 1979: 308) and opinion about them continues:

[...] Arabs are, first of all, as one in their bent for bloody vengeance, second, psychologically incapable of peace, and third, congenitally tied to a concept of justice that means the opposite of that, they are not to be trusted and must be fought interminably as one fights any other fatal disease. (Said 1979: 308)

Said describes the attitude to Arabs from the point of view not only experts on Orientalism, yet a lot of ordinary people have a resembling conviction:

These contemporary Orientalist attitudes flood the press and the popular mind. Arabs, for example, are thought of as camel-riding, terroristic, hook-nosed, venal lechers whose undeserved wealth is an affront to real civilization. (Said 1979: 108)

This perspective is supported by experts' articles and publications. A huge interest in Orientalism appeared after the WWII and continued nowadays due to a dismal political situation in the area of Arabic world and mass media. Thus,

a sizable apparatus of university, government, and business experts study Islam and the Middle East and by which Islam has become a subject familiar to every consumer of news in the West, have almost entirely domesticated the Islamic world, or at least those aspects of it that are considered newsworthy. [...] - for no non-Western realm has been so dominated by the United States as the Arabic-Islamic world is today [...]. (Said, 1981: 25-26)

Updike researched many Islamic aspects of the terrorist's development and his gradual involvement in terrorism. For that reason these contradictions do not yield a sense of real events or the real typical and the only "terrorist-figures" instead of fiction. Hartnell pointed out when he wrote *Terrorist* Updike was seventy-four years old, and he narrates about an adolescent as well as detailing about a different religion. (Hartnell 2011: 484). Updike's novel should not be used as a guide of how to identify a terrorist or a potential future or how it works in a terrorist cell, which the novel might seem to be.

5.1 Terror Plot

The key character in the novel, Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy, is an eighteen-year-old son of an Irish-American Catholic nurse and an Egyptian immigrant father. Living with his mother in New Prospect, New Jersey, Ahmad attends the local high school. The story starts at the beginning of April before Ahmad's graduation when he visits Jack Levy, a guidance counsellor at Ahmad's high school. Jack Levy is a sexagenarian, who is disgusted by his work and life. Levy finds out Ahmad wants to get a driving license for a truck to make a living by it, instead of studying at university, despite his high academic achievements. Jack Levy is worried about his student. After counseling him he decides to visit Ahmad's mother at home. As a consequence of this visit, a sexual relationship is developed between Jack and Ahmad's mother.

Ahmad passes the driving license test at the beginning of summer and starts to work for Chehab's family at the company *Excellency Home Furnishings*. Two men of Chehab's lead the company, the old father Habib and his son Charlie. Habib Chehab remembers the country of his origin and conditions there. He is still appreciative of freedom and opportunities in the United States of America. His son Charlie seems to be a radical young second-generation malcontent of American society. Charlie Chehab later recruits Ahmad for the planned act of terror.

During the summer Ahmad delivers furniture to customers and becomes financially independent of his mother. One day he takes an order to a more distant city. For Ahmad an odd and strange group of Arabian-looking group of men accept delivery of a piece of furniture. Ahmad is curious about the group. He pretends to leave with his truck. After he stops the vehicle, he goes back to the house. He spots how a man cut some money out of the furniture. He feels astounded and leaves the area.

Several days after this incident, Ahmad plucks himself up some courage to ask Charlie if he knows something about it. Then Charlie approaches Ahmad to affiliate with people who believe in jihad. Ahmad consents to find out that

something is being planned in the term of one significant anniversary. Later Ahmad is introduced to the technicians who are preparing the bomb. The technician explains to Ahmad how to switch the bomb mechanism on.

Meanwhile, Ahmad' mother maintains her intimate sexual relationship with Jack Levy, who inquires from time to time about Ahmad and his blue-collar job. She gives Levy some information about it which disturbs him because he knows, that Ahmad could be inclined to extremism. Ahmad goes through his first sexual experience with an African American prostitute, Joryleen, who was his classmate in high school.

When the day of the attack comes, Ahmad is prepared and determined to put himself out for Allah. Afterwards he learns that the terror plan had been leaked. Nevertheless, Ahmad continues as scheduled. He is driving a truck with the bomb when Jack Levy appears on his route and waves at Ahmad to stop. Ahmad lets Levy get on board. In an exciting moment in the novel, Levy explains to him that Charlie, a CIA agent, has been murdered and the whole plan has been discovered. In the tunnel, where the bomb should be detonated, Ahmad starts to have doubts. He does not set it off. After leaving the tunnel Levy decides to go to the CIA and explain that Ahmad is a victim, not a culprit. Ahmad perceives non-realization as his failure and he experiences the loss of his God.

5.2 Causes and Consequences of the Act of Terror

The atmosphere in the United States of America after September 11 attacks permeates the mind of Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy. The first aftermath for an ordinary family, who could be recognized as a Muslim or Islamic, generally coming from the Near East, had been the callings following the attacks. Teresa Mulloy explains it to Jack Levy during their first meeting, besides Ahmad is commenting about it as well:

“[...] I got a recording saying it had been disconnected.” “We had to, after Nine-Eleven,” she explains, [...]. “We were getting hate calls. Anti-Muslim. I had the number changed and unlisted, even if it does cost a couple dollars a month more. It’s worth it, I tell you.” [...] “There were just one or two calls,” Ahmad interposes. “No big deal. Most people were cool. I mean, I was only fifteen when it happened. Who could blame me?” (Updike 2007: 76 - 77)

On one hand, one can conclude that it really was not very important for Ahmad himself or his mental development as a teenager from his own words. On the other hand, when he believes that Americans are devils and they have a negative influence on the situation on Earth, Hartnell named the situation as *the clash of monotheistic religions* (Hartnell 2011: 477), or *antagonism* by Thomas (2011: 426), with all its adverse consequences. It attests to us that the notion of terror could have been one of the initiators of Ahmad’s future radicalisation.

Two viewpoints may be distinguished of the aftermath of September 11: macropolitics in reality to the next worldwide running and micropolitics in Updike’s novel, where the main after-effect lies in the conscripting of a young suicide bomber and a prospective jihadist martyr. (Thomas 2011: 426)

Thomas (2011: 425) suggests following Slavoj Žižek that intolerance and violence characterize our times and we are found in the phase of the Age of Terror. Thomas states that problems occur in the various historical particularisms, which means a parallel evolution in ethnic, religious, national and linguistic concepts, between the Western market-globalized and Islamic world.

Hartnell writes as stated in an essay written by Andrew Joron *The Emergency*:

At this moment (late 2001), public space in the United States is bedecked with flags, colourfully curtaining the contradictions of the ‘war against terrorism,’ which is itself a higher, officially sanctioned form of terrorism. (Hartnell 2011: 481).

This quote shows how the attitude of Americans and their government to the question of dealing with the terrorism after the attacks on the World Trade

Center can be perceived by the public. Next she writes about how fighting against terrorism is an inadequate act against humanity, and how it is sanctified by the U.S. leaders from the moral and political point of view. This consideration is apparent also in the novel by Charlie Chebab at the beginning when we feel that he has radical thoughts be connected to extremist groups:

“[...] Look at America abroad – war. They forced a country of Jews into Palestine, right into the throat of the Middle East, and now they’ve forced their way into Iraq, to make it a little U.S. and have the oil.” (Updike 2007: 145)

On contrary, real American media form a public view on Arabic population in the United States, as well as on the situation with oil in the Near East. As an example:

[...] a striking television advertisement [ran] in the summer of 1980. Film clips of various immediately recognizable OPEC personalities – Yamani, Qaddafi, lesser-known robed Arabs figures – alternated with stills as well as clips of other people associated with oil and Islam: Khomeini, Arafat, Hafez al-Assad. None of these figures was mentioned by name, but we were told ominously that “these men” control America’s sources of oil. (Said 1981: 3)

In connection with the U.S. war against terrorism after September 11, Thomas (2011: 425–429) divides the perspective between global and local. He clarifies as well the coherence and continuity of the global effect of all political and also the military effects in local destinations on both sides. The world should be seen as one inseparable, porous, pliable and complex system, which is composed of a tangle of all sectors of human activities such as finance and the International Monetary Fund; tourism; health services and trafficking with viruses and drugs; sports; and various fundamentalism, e.g. Al Qaeda. It is obvious that these political aspects might have an impact on the main protagonist’s perception of the Western civilisation.

The juridical consequences of the act of terror in Updike’s *Terrorist* are not stated in the novel. We may only assume what would have been happened when Ahmad obeyed Levy and his recommendation to turn himself into the responsible authorities. It seems highly improbable that the eighteen-year-old

youth, who is over the minimal age of criminal responsibility all over the United States, could get off the federal investigation of terrorism as one of the main offenders, especially in 2004, only three years after 9/11.

“[...] We’ll go right to police headquarters, behind City Hall. We won’t let the bastards intimidate us. Your turning this truck back in one piece makes them look good, and if they have half a brain they know it. It could have been a disaster. Anybody tries to bully you, remind them you were set up by a CIA operative, in a sting operation of very dubious legality. You’re a victim, Ahmad – a fall guy. I can’t imagine the Department of Homeland Security wants the details out in the media, or hashed over in some courtroom.” (Updike 2007: 304)

The mental and transcendental consequences are connected with Ahmad’s faith, are pointed out in the last paragraph of the novel, where he clarifies that he lost his God, faith, alternatively hope for future:

All around them, up Eighth Avenue to Broadway, the great city crawls with people, some smartly dressed, many of them shabby, a few beautiful but most not, all reduced by the towering structures around them to the size of insect, but scuttling, hurrying, intent in the milky morning sun upon some plan or scheme or hope they are hugging to themselves, their reason for living another day, each one of them impaled live upon the pin of consciousness, fixed upon self-advancement and self-preservation. That, and only that. *These devils*, Ahmad thinks, *have taken away my God*. (Updike 2007: 305)

In the last paragraph of the novel Ahmad compares passing Americans into an insect and just as he imputes to them guilt for his loss of his God. His hatred against these Americans might come from Levy’s words “Thank God you chickened out” (Updike 2007: 305), which Ahmad could justly consider as a mockery and contempt for him. Levy’s remedial statement “Or relented, let’s say. Saw the light.” (Updike 2007: 305) does not ease the tension of the non-fulfilment of Ahmad’s divine task. Ahmad feels that he failed in eyes of his God in favour of lives of Americans, who in his view only chase after self-advancement and self-preservation.

5.3 The Act of Terror

The terminal terrorist attack was abortive because Jack Levy, Ahmad's high school teacher, dissuaded Ahmad from committing the suicidal bombing attack. Regardless, much of the preparation of the act of terror in New Jersey through the novel may be observed.

Charlie Chebab approaches Ahmad with a proposal to die in the fight against the enemies of Islam. Nevertheless, Ahmad does not understand the meaning of the content of the word *them*:

Charlie is asking him a question. "Would you fight them, then?" Ahmad has missed what "them" refers to, but says "Yes" as if answering a roll call. Charlie appears to repeat himself: "Would you fight with your life?" "How do you mean?" Charlie is insistent; his browns bear down. "Would you *give* your life?" [...] "Of course," he says, trying to lighten the exchange with a flicking gesture of the right hand. "If God wills it." (Updike 2007: 186)

Regardless, Ahmad had already been chosen before, but Shaikh Rashid had to ask him, if he wants to be a part of this act. To support their actions, he quotes the Koran to Ahmad. When he feels that Ahmad is unsure, he manipulates him with it. Even Ahmad knows that but he wants to do the act, which he is predestined to do, as he thinks. Ahmad really yearns to do it.

"Ahmad, listen to me. You do not have to do this. Your avowal to Charlie does not obligate you, if your heart quails. There are many others eager for a glorious name and the assurance of eternal bliss. The jihad is overwhelmed by volunteers, even in this homeland of evil and irreligion." "No," Ahmad protests, jealous of this alleged mob of others who would steal his glory. "My love of Allah is absolute. Your gift is one I cannot refuse." (Updike 2007: 233 - 234)

The date of the attack is planned on the anniversary of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre, September 11, 2004. The year is not exactly given in Updike's novel, still, it is clear from Ahmad's personal data: Ahmad was fifteen in 2001 and now he is eighteen-years-old.

"When," [...] "will my *istishhād* take place?" [...] "Your heroic sacrifice," [...]. "Within a week, I would say. [...], but a week would

approximate an anniversary and send an effective message to the global Satan. The message would be, 'We strike when we please.'" (Updike 2007: 232)

One of the mechanics tells the location of the bombing to Ahmad when he is explaining to him how the bomb works. Before Ahmad had no idea where it should happen and he is a little surprised. The mechanic foists God's will Ahmad through the statement that the God is waiting for him.

"[...] That much needed to break steel tunnel sheath." [...] "Tunnel," Ahmad repeats, stupidly, nobody having spoken to him before now of a tunnel. "What tunnel?" "Lincoln," the man answers, with slight surprise but no more emotion than a thrown switch. "No trucks allowed in Holland." Ahmad silently absorbs this. The man turns to Charlie. "He knows?" "He does now," Charlie says. [...] "Morning rush," he explains. "From Jersey side. Right-hand tunnel only one for trucks. Newest built of three, nineteen fifty-one. Newest but not strongest. Older construction better. Two-thirds through, weak place, where tunnel makes turn. Even if outer sheath hold and keep out water, air system destroyed and all suffocate. Smoke, pressure. For you, no pain, not even panic moment. Instead, happiness of success and God's warm welcome." (Updike 2007: 244 -245)

5.4 Means to Terrorism

Ahmad recognizes how an act of terror is prepared. Firstly, he finds out that money is transferred by means of the furniture store. In that point of the plot he is terrified and does not comprehend what the money is for. The money is a necessary part of the preparation of paralyzing the US, which "comes," [...] "from those who love Allah, both within the U.S. and abroad. [...] *Allāhu akbar!*" (Updike 2007: 196) Subsequently, Ahmad is asked by Charlie Chebab about being interested in participating in the attack against enemies of the Islamic community. After he gives his consent, Ahmad has become the means of the prepared act of terror.

The bomb is prepared by mechanics and technicians and installed into a truck. The truck is a Ford GMC 3500 in a bleak white colour. On one side a heading of a company *Window Shades Systems* is advertized. As technicians

calm Ahmad down, it drives just like the truck from Chebab's company, even though it is a different type of truck. "Ahmad dislikes the truck at first sight; the vehicle has a furtive anonymity, a generic blankness." (Updike 2007: 243) Having acquainted Ahmad with the vehicle, the technician shows him the interior of it and explains to him how the bomb functions:

[...] an unusual element between the seats – a metal box the size of a cigar box, its metal painted a military drab, with two terminal knobs on the top and insulated wires trailing from these back into the body of the truck. Since the space between the driver's and passenger's seats is deep and awkward to reach down into, the device rests not on the floor but on an inverted plastic milk crate, duct-taped to the crate's bottom for security. On the side of the detonator – for such it must be – there is a yellow contact lever, and in the center, sunk a half-inch in a little well where a thumb would fit, a glossy red button. The color-coding smacks of military simplicity, of ignorant young men being trained along the simplest possible lines, the sunken button guarding against accidental detonation. The man explains to Ahmad, "This switch safety switch. Move to right." –*snap*– "like this, device armed. Then push button down and hold – *boom*. Four thousand kilos ammonium nitrate in back. [...]" (Updike 2007: 244)

The essay by Thomas adverts to the Islamic terrorists' knowledge of bombs and chemicals. It had been visible since September 11 2001. As Thomas writes, "the hijackers were just as smart and technoliterate as the financiers and power brokers who populated the World Trade Center [...]" (Thomas 2011: 428)

Ahmad becomes – physically, mentally and also spiritually – the key part of the explosive contrivance. Ahmad has been prepared by Shaikh Rashid about the theoretical part of being a suicidal terrorist, being conversant with the teachings of Islam. Charlie Chebab helps Ahmad to become a self-confident young man through an arrangement of Ahmad's first sexual experience with Joryleen. A considerable influence on Ahmad had their mutual male friendship of a younger and an older man, which symbolized Ahmad's not existing relation with his father. These facts show how easily Ahmad was manipulated to think about God and terror when also regarded sexual behaviour of Americans as abhorrent and an insult to God.

5.5 Participants

5.5.1 Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy

Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy is an eighteen-year-old athlete and a good student at Central High School, living in New Prospect, New Jersey. Ahmad is the only child of an Irish Christian mother, Teresa Mulloy, and an Egyptian father, Omar Ashmawy. When the novel begins, Ahmad has only a few months before his high school graduation, in the period when he is full of doubts and disgust regarding American culture and society.

In defiance and resistance of the mainstream culture, Ahmad wears a white shirt and black trousers or jeans every single day. It is a demanding task for Ahmad to wear a clean and ironed shirt daily. In contrast, Ahmad's surroundings suppose that his clothes symbolize his vain effort to be a part of some social group, to be included. When Ahmad disputes Joryleen's opinions about Ahmad's approach to his peers, he considers for himself that he makes an effort to earn money in order to dress in that way not for the sake of peers or God, Allah, but owing to his self-conceit, self-importance and arrogance.

"You should learn to smile more." [...] "People will like you more." "I don't care about that. I don't want to be liked." "You care," she tells him. "Everybody cares." "*You* care," he tells her, [...]. [...], Joryleen adds, "You didn't care, you wouldn't pretty yourself up with a clean white shirt every day, like some preacher. How's your mother stand doing all that ironing?" [...] his mother rarely irons, for she is a nurse's aide at the Saint Francis Community Hospital and a spare-time painter who sees her son often for less than one hour in twenty-four. His shirts come back stiffened by cardboard from the cleaners, whose bills he pays out of the money he earns clerking at the Tenth Street Shop-a-Sec two evenings a week, and on weekends and Christian holidays, [...]. But there is, he knows, vanity in his costume, a preening that offends the purity of the All-Encompassing. (Updike 2007: 6-7)

Ahmad does not fit in his classmates and he does not feel comfortable even in the company of his mother. There suggests a question: In what group

does Ahmad want to belong? In the following extract, he considers Arabs his brothers, which means he feels to be more Muslim from the Near East than an American.

“[...] What, may I ask, had you planned to do after graduation? If you have no job prospects, think about the Army. It’s not everybody’s sweetheart any more, but it still offers a pretty good deal – teaches you some skills, and helps with an education afterwards. It helped me. If you have any Arabic, they’d love you.” Ahmad’s expression stiffens. “The Army would send me to fight my brothers.” (Updike 2007: 38)

In another situation he comes to realize that he is glad how he looks like. His feelings are described how they are fully torn apart. He perceives himself as a young strong and handsome man, in contrary to his faith that it is an inappropriate behaviour against his God, which he is adamantly believed in:

Ahmad knows it is a sin to be vain of his appearance: self-love is a form of competition with God, and competition is what He cannot abide. But how can the boy not cherish his ripened manhood, his lengthened limbs, the upright, dense, and wavy crown of his hair, his flawless dun skin, paler than his father’s but not the freckled, blotchy pink of his red-haired mother [...]? Though he shuns, as unholy and impure, the glances of lingering interest he receives from the dusky girls around him in the school, Ahmad does not wish his body marred. He wishes to keep it as its Maker formed it. (Updike 2007: 16)

The tone of Ahmad’s skin confines his appearance as well. He compares the shades of skin of inhabitants in his neighbourhood and all his close people, as a mother, a father, he himself and Shaikh Rashid, who is termed as a surrogate father. This designation causes oddly, in contrast to Ahmad’s observations that Shaikh Rashid disbelieves in God as much as Ahmad himself. The “son” oversteps his father/ leader but it does not disturb their relationship. On the other hand it is indubitable that in the vicinity of Ahmad no other male example is available than Shaikh Rashid.

Ahmad himself is the product of a red-haired American mother, Irish by ancestry, and an Egyptian exchange student whose ancestors had been baked since the time of the Pharaohs in the muddy rice and flax fields of the overflowing Nile. The complexion of the offspring of this mixed marriage could be described as dun, a low-luster shade lighter

than beige; that of his surrogate father, Shaikh Rashid, is a waxy white shared with generations of heavily swathed Yemeni warriors. (Updike 2007: 10)

Ahmad experiences an unpleasant situation with Jack Levy regarding Ahmad's name and origin, which might intensify his skin colour. Just this and similar causes could raise Ahmad's feeling, he needs something different, his own, what fill an empty space, where he does not feel to be a part of America, a component of society. It is easily understood that even he lives in a regarding mixed-up area skin-colour, origin and religion. It is an awkward moment when one has to explain that one is not an alien.

[...] Mulloy (Ashmawy), Ahmad. "Your name is interesting," [...]. "Who's Ashmawy?" the counsellor asks. "Sir, shall I explain?" "Please do." [...] "[...] You know the expression 'under the counter'?" "Of course. I am not a foreigner. I have never been abroad." (Updike 2007: 32 - 33)

Ahmad is pictured as a teenager, who is strong in his faith but insecure in believing in himself. Ahmad convinces himself of his own uselessness and being expendable in the world's system. Although this extract is indeed situated in the inception of the story, his philosophical thoughts and feelings about life, faith and the conviction of his death pervade ordinary uncertainty of an adolescent. All is supported by God's unquestionable will.

In the year past he has grown three inches, to six feet – more unseen materialist forces, working their will upon him. He will not grow any taller, he thinks, in this life or the next. *If there is a next*, an inner devil murmurs. What evidence beyond the Prophet's blazing and divinely inspired words proves that there is a next? [...] Who would forever stoke Hell's boilers? What infinite source of energy would maintain opulent Eden, feeding its dark-eyed houris, swelling its heavy-hanging fruits, [...]? The deaths of insects and worms, their bodies so quickly absorbed by earth and weeds and road tar, devilishly strive to tell Ahmad that his own death will be just as small as final. (Updike 2007: 2 - 3)

Ahmad's only memory of his father includes his physical appearance and Ahmad's conviction that his father, Omar Ashmawy, is a practicing Muslim who cares about his holy look. That could be one of the reasons why Ahmad takes care so much about his appearance. He clarifies a significant point of his

relation to his mother when he describes his father admiringly. His grudge against his mother emerges in her decision to eliminate Omar Ashmawy from their lives. Then he also sketches his purpose to find his father one day and to strike up a conversation with him. Ahmad appreciates not only father's solicitude towards his appearance, but also his unwavering belief in God, which is Ahmad's conclusion. Contrarily, his mother explains to Levy, that Ashmawy was in fact not a strong believer.

"A warm, dark shadow," Ahmad says, leaning forward, with a jerk, in his earnestness. "Very white, square teeth. A small, neat mustache. I get my own personal neatness from him, I am sure. Among my memories is a sweet smell, perhaps aftershave lotion, though with a hint of some spice in it, perhaps a Middle Eastern dish he had just consumed. He was dark, darker than I, but elegantly thin-featured. He parted his hair very near the middle." [...] "I have only one or two photographs. My mother may have some she has hidden from me. When I was small and innocent, she refused to answer my many questions about my father. I think his desertion left her very angry. I would like, some day, to find him. Not to press any claim, or to impose any guilt, but simply to talk with him, as two Muslim men would talk." (Updike 2007: 33 - 34)

As suggested above, Ahmad's attitude toward his mother seems odd. On one hand Ahmad respects Teresa as his mother, yet on the other hand, he condemns Teresa Mulloy for atheism, her behaviour, the relationships with plenty of men and last but not least for her immodest clothing style. All these flaws represent for Ahmad the same contemptible world as the rest of people, the world which is against his faith. Thus,

For some years it has been awkward, their bodies sharing the limited space of the apartment. Her ideas of healthy behavior include appearing before her son in her underwear or a summer nightie that allows the shadows of her private parts to show through. (Updike 2007: 166)

Ahmad appreciated how his father cares about his appearance. Generally, Ahmad admires his own vision of him. All the more he sees the imperfections of his mother, which he finds in her lifestyle: clothes, men, art; as well in her improper behaviour in public.

His mother seems to Ahmad to flaunt her poverty, her everyday failure to blend into the middle class, as if such failure were intrinsic to the artistic life and the personal freedom so precious to infidel Americans. She contrives, with her bohemian wealth of bangles and odd clothing, such as the factory-blotched jeans and vest of purple-dyed leather she wore on this day, to embarrass him whenever they venture together into public. (Updike 2007: 138)

In contrast, Teresa gets dress appropriately for her son's graduation at Central High School in compliance with Ahmad's requirements for what is essential for him. However, it does not help to bring them closer to each other.

Her outfit is staid enough – eggshell-colored linen suit over a white chemise – yet colorful touches suggest a free spirit, an artist as well as a mother. Clunky turquoise rings weigh down those short-nailed, firm-fleshed hands of hers, and her arms, showing haloes of fuzz candescent in the sunlight, hold a clicking horde of gold and coral bracelets. Most surprisingly, a large silk scarf, patterned in angular abstract shapes and staring circles, is knotted beneath her chin and covers the hair of her head [...]. [...], "He [Ahmad] wanted me to wear it. He said if there was one thing he wanted for his graduation it was his mother not looking like a whore." (Updike 2007: 113-114)

As suggested above, the absence of Ahmad's father, who had been replaced with an idealized and glamorized version of himself, might cause his effort to gratify somebody, in his case Islamic God, Shaikh Rashid or lately Charlie Chebab. Just the image of his Muslim father made a gap between Ahmad and his Catholic mother, who is regarded as a *kafir*/infidel in his faith. That is one possible explanation why Ahmad calls her as a whore, though that is at least an inappropriate designation for his own mother.

By way of contrast, when Ahmad spends a night with Joryleen, who works as a prostitute, he notes "I like you too well to treat you like some whore." (Updike 2007: 217). He considers her a whore, yet he does not want to act with her like this. A few moments after that he addresses her mockingly as "Little Miss Popular" (Updike 2007: 219), using this scornful naming once before at high school (Updike 2007: 7). Following the sexual act, Ahmad feels torn apart, "Her singing and his coming have left him so sleepy that the thought, as he walks the dozen blocks home, of going to bed and never waking up has no terror for him." (Updike 2007: 226) He never mentioned that he regretted that

act for the strict religious reasons as he should have. Hence he appears as a hypocrite.

Ahmad is represented as a multi-layered character of a pubescent, which is confirmed in his righteous belief, while his mind seems to be riven about his feelings and attitudes to his parents, his cleric, images of death, the *Koran* and God. In some passages, Ahmad even philosophizes about interpretations of the *Koran* and he compares other people and himself to insect. It would seem that the Muslim religion gives him the right path, as he several times mentions. His blind and idolizing faith steers him almost to the death, and what is worse, to the massacre of innocent people.

5.5.2 Shaikh Rashid

Shaikh Rashid occupies an important position in Ahmad's life. They know each other since Ahmad was an eleven-year-old boy. It means seven years since Ahmad had entered the improvised mosque, a prayer room and discovered his faith. At that point Shaikh Rashid had become his mentor and a male paragon. As Hartnell avers "Updike's implication is that Ahmad's faith is irremediably conditioned by that of his teacher." (Hartnell 2011: 487). Later he secures Ahmad a job at *Excellency Home Furnishings*. Therefore this company is committed to the act of terror. At this point it is self-evident, Shaikh had been setting Ahmad up for this mission. Ahmad himself said several times that Shaikh Rashid is not strong enough in his faith:

They are truly about the burning misery of separation from God and the scorching of our remorse for our sins against His commands. But Ahmad does not like Shaikh Rashid's voice when he says this. It reminds him of the unconvincing voice of his teachers at Central High. He hears Satan's undertone in it, a denying voice within an affirming voice. (Updike 2007: 4)

This man, who pushed Ahmad into the planned terrorist attack, does not want to participate in it directly himself. He gives the reason to Ahmad when he tries to process with Ahmad. "Compared with you, I am old, and it is to the

young that the greatest glory of battle belongs. To sacrifice one's life, [...] before it becomes a tattered, exhausted thing. What an endless joy that would be." (Updike 2007: 232)

5.5.3 Charlie Chebab

Charlie Chebab becomes Ahmad's employer, mentor and later also his friend, who mediates Ahmad's first sexual experience. Charlie recruits Ahmad for the terrorist. Near the end of the novel, it is revealed that Charlie has cooperated with the CIA before his death. Charlie Chebab is initially pictured as a hater of American conditions which he explains to Ahmad while working on the truck:

"[...] They want to turn you into this entertainment – Madman, it's crap, the same crap that kept the masses zombified in the Depression, only then you stood in line and paid a quarter for the movie, where today they hand it to you free, with the advertisers paying a million a minute for the chance to mess with your heads." (Updike 2007: 170)

5.5.4 Other Minor Characters

Hermione Fogel and her superior

Hermione Fogel is Beth Levy's sister who works as an assistant to the Secretary of Homeland Security. She is in love with him because she spends a lot of time with him. Updike portrays her as a paranoid and hysterical patriot. Hermione's superior is known through his ordinances and measures against the expected and investigated attacks. The US administration and government are depicted as secretive organizations which do not inform their nationals properly.

"[...] even I shouldn't know, [...]" "[...] her boss is about to elevate the terror-threat level for this area from yellow to orange. I thought it might be on the radio, but it wasn't. What do you think it means?"

[...] “It means they want us to feel they’re not just sitting on our tax dollars. They want us to feel they have a handle on this thing. But they don’t.” (Updike 2007: 29)

Jack Levy

Jack Levy works at New Prospect Central High School who meets Ahmad in final months of his school attendance as his career counsellor. Levy represents a middle-class American who lives a dissatisfied autumn of life with his obese wife. The stereotype of Levy’s life disturbs his extramarital affair with Teresa Mulloy. Jack Levy gives the impression of being a dull and meaningless character until he speaks with Ahmad cleverly and persuades Ahmad to not blow up the tunnel. The text proclaims that in the *Koran* it speaks against destruction:

“Do it,” Jack Levy urges. “I’m going to just relax. Jesus, I’ve been tired lately.” “For you there will be no pain.” “No, but there will be plenty of others,” the older man responds, slumping way down. [...] *He wants to die*, Ahmad thinks. *He taunts me to do the deed for him*. In the fifty-sixth sura, the Prophet speaks of *the moment when the soul of a dying man shall come up into his throat*. That moment is here. The journey, the *miraj*. [...], God asks, *We created you: will you not credit us? Behold the semen you discharge: did you create it, or We?* God does not want to destroy: it was He who made the world. (Updike 2007: 301)

It is for thought that Levy as a career counsellor did not take enough interest in his student’s future career sooner. On the other hand, when Ahmad’s decision raises Levy’s suspicion, Levy bravely acts and pays close attention to him. It is the heroism of Levy that stops Ahmad from committing the brutal act of terrorism.

5.6 Conclusion

To sum up, the novel gives a compact view of one participant in an act of terror. The plot contains many stereotypes, which are connected with the

recruiting of a terrorist, as well Arabs and Muslims. American society does not discriminate an Arab and a Muslim. American society has interconnected the race and religion in one attribute, which is not legitimate. According to Hermione, Updike uses word Arab as a synonym of Muslim as well,

“[...] They make a little mess for a while but they don't bring the world down. They get caught and put in jail, eventually. You're forgetting all the clever men, and women too, that design these firewalls or whatever. Surely they can keep ahead of a few fanatic Arabs – it's not as if they invented the computer like we did.”
(Updike 2007: 131)

The mentioned habituated and not easily changeable attitudes to Arabs might influence Ahmad's seclusive loner behaviour and single out of the community in his vicinity. On the other hand, in the novel there is missing the interconnection of Ahmad with the rest of the Muslim community, contrary to his regular visits to a mosque for seven years. What seems remarkable in the novel is the certain animosity between fellow fighters, for example, Ahmad and Shaikh Rashid, who compare their faith to each other.

The novel cannot avoid discriminating between a “good” and “bad” Muslim, which seems to me as a negative point of view. The father and son Chebab's are a good example. The father impresses positively, he likes the United States and is pro-American. His son Charlie acts against America, and that attitude shifts him to the wrong side.

Updike foists the picture of the terrorist through Arabic words and extracts from the *Koran*. The author also connects the faith with open violence, which seems minimally schematic. The US politics stay hidden, apart from Hermione. She is pictured as a hysterical assistant of her boss. Only she acts for the US government, which is not portrayed negatively for any of its practices in the novel.

Updike's novel takes a look into a terrorist cell, which might seem less organized than expected. On the other hand, the evolution of Ahmad's thinking, experience and demeanour is so fascinating that the missing details of the preparation of a terrorist attack can be forgiven.

6.0 Conclusion

The diploma thesis focuses on the acts of terrorism in three American novels: *The Hotel New Hampshire* (1981) by John Irving, *American Pastoral* (1997) by Philip Roth and *Terrorist* (2006) by John Updike. The thesis analyses details of the particular acts of terrorism which inspired these works of fiction. On this basis, comparison and contrast of the novels could be analysed according to the terrorists and their motivations, means of terror, causes and consequences of those acts of terrorism.

According to the definition of terrorism and its types, it is domestic and organised terrorism in all three novels. In *The Hotel New Hampshire*, Irving depicts a group of Marxist terrorists and their inner group relations. This group, named the Symposium on East-West Relations, plans to begin a Marxist revolution in Austria which would change the world system. With regard to the ascertained facts, the fictional group is based on the real German terrorist group RAF "Rote Armee Fraktion", which was active in the 1970s. In contrast, the fictional terrorist attack described by Irving is situated in Austria and the only plot of the attack does not take place in the United States. *American Pastoral* does not discover a terrorist group in a factual unit, yet the concrete terrorist is presented and the relation to her parents. In this case, Merry Levov belongs to a student Marxist movement, which mainly agitated against the Vietnam War and the social and racial inequalities in American society. The fictional group is based on The Weathermen, a real terrorist group operated in the US in the 1960s. Updike's novel *Terrorist* depicts the aftermaths of September 11, 2001. Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy is portrayed as one component of a larger cell of Islamic terrorists. In *Terrorist* there are also other participants of the prepared act of terror such Imam Shaikh Rashid or the Chebabs as the intermediaries of the financial flow. The aim of fictional terrorists is the destruction of the whole American society owing to a different faith. It is a religious conflict: Muslims against majority of Christians and Jews.

All three fictional acts of terror can be affiliated to the historical actual terrorist groups or movements and form a definite opinion against mainstream society and its lifestyle attitudes. Merry Levov and Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy use the term Miss, the beauty queens, as a pejorative, which symbolizes popularity and attractiveness as one of the main values of American society. In contrast, Merry blames her mother for hypocrisy because of her involvement in the contest as a young girl. Ahmad uses the word as an insult to his friend Joryleen, who tries to be nice to everyone unlike him. Both Merry and Ahmad have problematic relationships with their American mothers.

In *American Pastoral* and *Terrorist*, the key protagonists are teenagers, yet each of them comes from a different social, religious and family environment. Merry Levov grows up in a religiously mixed up family, half Jewish - half Christian family, which is protective towards their stuttering daughter. She is fifteen-year-old when she decides to commit an act of terror, despite father's insistent effort to avoid such extreme protests. When her father meets Merry for the last time, he finds out that she has converted to Jainism and has become a pacifist. Her creed to a different and exotic religious faith results in her father's deeper incomprehension of her previous demeanour. As suggested, religion is mainly relevant in *Terrorist*, where Ahmad is Muslim, as well his missing father and contrary his Irish Catholic mother. Eighteen-year-old Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy lives with his hard-working mother without his father. Nevertheless, both his parents are not strict practising believers, yet Ahmad sides with missing father's faith. Just his less caring mother and absence of the glamorized Muslim father becomes a launching pad in Ahmad's way to become a martyr in the Holy war against infidels. A specific character is Ahmad's career counsellor, Jack Levy, a Jew, who starts to concern himself with Ahmad's future after finding out his plan to become a truck driver. He convinces Ahmad not to set the bomb off. Fehlgeburt from *The Hotel New Hampshire* is the youngest member of the group. She is an easily susceptible student, who should become an instrument of the act of terrorism. Similar age and immaturity of those protagonists cause their departure from the mainstream thinking and result in the participation in those acts of terror. The effort of older members of the

terrorist cell to sway people around them is obvious in Irving's novel. On the grounds of the different family environments of Merry and Ahmad and their decision to commit the acts of terror, it seems that the style of upbringing is not great importance for the radicalization of children. Contrarily, the influence of torch-bearers outside the family during maturing is crucial. In both cases, Ahmad and Merry could be classified as anti-American Americans.

The Symposium on East-West Relations in *The Hotel New Hampshire* seems like a mob of curious individualities randomly yet inseparable from each other due to their vision of a Marxist new world social organisation. The irony is not absent in Irving's description of the group, what might be one of the causes of the impression of the terrorist group. The other cause could be the partly missing history of protagonists, which could be a key of their motives to perpetrate the act of terror. On the other hand, in this case, the terrorists do not rank among the main characters of the novel as in other two novels. The mutual aim of dissimilar terrorists is to change the social system worldwide. *American Pastoral* offers more motives for Merry Levov, yet her protest against the Vietnam War is a fight against society. Merry herself is depicted as an unattractive dumpy teenager. Ahmad's reasons say many about today's multicultural American society, which seems to be highly racist, minimally from Ahmad's point of view. Ahmad is a racist, he calls all non-Muslims as infidels/*kafirs* and tries to surpass them in the way of strict observance of *Koran*. The means of terrorism do not differ much. In all three novels, the act of terror is or should be committed with a bomb. In *The Hotel New Hampshire* and *Terrorist*, the mechanics implement the bomb into a car or a truck, through which the vehicle itself becomes a bomb. Preparation of the attacks is described in *The Hotel New Hampshire*, where the car bomb is prepared for seven years as well as the participants. In *Terrorist* the recruiting of a new suicidal terrorist, construction of a bomb and other components (finance, participants) are described. The preparation is not specifically delineated in *American Pastoral*.

The locations of the acts seem to be symptomatic of the aims of all three fictional terrorist groups, in *American Pastoral* is the bomb placed in a post

office, which symbolized the establishment of the US together with the American flag in front of it. This explosion catches the media's attention. The media reflect it as a criminal act. In *American Pastoral*, two accomplished acts of terror were committed by Merry in New Jersey and in Oregon. Likewise in *The Hotel New Hampshire*, the aim, the world establishment, reflects in the Austrian State Opera in Vienna. This fictional radical group needs to be heard by the global audience, especially by the American government as the worldwide great power, what explains taking the Berrys hostage. Although their planned bomb explodes in a different place and does not destroy the Opera, they make Berry's father blind and several members of the group are killed, as well as Freud. The public celebrated Berrys and the group's visions, ideas and aims are wrongly understood. In *Terrorist* Ahmad does not finish the act of terror, he does not set off the bomb in a tunnel. This act of terror is not successful and accomplished. That is why the public opinion is not given any attention.

The secondary aim of the thesis was to detect the possible difference in the literature written in the pre- and post-9/11 era. According to Frank (2012, 1-23), the literary shift to the individual's feelings and experiences responds the Updike's conception of the novel *Terrorist*, which presents the terrorist Ahmad as a concerned young man. He is quite easily manipulated into committing the suicidal attack. The aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center is the likening of Arabs to Muslim and to terrorism as an invariable fact. Said's works *Orientalism* (1979) and *Covering Islam* (1981) were analysed for the understanding of relations between Arabs and Americans, the findings were applied to the fictional characters in *Terrorist*. This predestination does not occur in *The Hotel New Hampshire* and *American Pastoral* with the Austrian or American domestic terrorists with religion playing no role. Nevertheless, these two novels correspond to the description of the terrorism in novels before September 11, where the terrorist groups and attackers commit violent and criminal acts against innocent and not involved people. In *The Hotel New Hampshire* nobody takes The Symposium on East-West Relations seriously until the evening when the group launches the attack. Then, even after the attack

fails, the cell gets none of the highly desired media coverage. In *American Pastoral* the terrorist's father Seymour Levov does not accept for years that his daughter Merry could commit the criminal terrorist act twice or kill four people. On the other hand, the theme of guilt occurs only in *American Pastoral*, nevertheless Merry Levov does not feel guilt: only her father feels guilty.

To conclude, the novels *The Hotel New Hampshire* and *American Pastoral* should resemble each other due to historical closeness and non-influencing of September 11, yet the deeper view into protagonists' life and motives in *American Pastoral* and *Terrorist* impress the reader and cause some sympathy for the attackers. All three analysed novels with regard to the secondary resources including the appropriate view on the act of terror of the given era in pre- and post-9/11 literature.

7.0 Czech Resumé

V této práci jsou analyzovány tři americké romány: *Hotel New Hampshire* (1981) od Johna Irvinga, *Americká idyla* (1997) od Philipa Rotha a *Terorista* (2006) od Johna Updikea. Autorka práce se při analýze zaměřuje na akt terorismu, co k činu vedlo a jaké jsou jeho následky. U každého románu je rozebírán také politický a psychologický aspekt účastníků teroristických činů.

V první části práce jsou uvedeny stručné životopisy autorů a je zde rovněž vymezen termín terorismu, který je definován jako prosazování názorů a ideologií násilnou formou jednotlivci nebo skupinami, které k prosazení svých názorů využívají násilné činy, jejichž oběťmi jsou nevinní lidé, kteří s danou teroristickou skupinou nemají nic společného. Další kapitola je věnována literatuře s tímto tématem a obsahuje výčet dalších děl, ve kterých se terorismus vyskytuje.

V prvním románu vystupuje fiktivní skupina (jediná v této práci), která zaútočí mimo území Spojených Států Amerických. Jedná se o marxistickou skupinu Sympozium východo-západních vztahů z Irvingova *Hotelu New Hampshire* operující v hlavním městě Rakouska, ve Vídni. Románový teroristický útok pomocí bomby v automobilu se má po sedmileté přípravě uskutečnit v roce 1964, pro teroristickou skupinu však dopadne neúspěšně. Bomba nevybuchne podle plánu v rakouské státní opeře, ale již na cestě k ní. Při explozi přijde o život jeden z útočníků a jeden z rukojmí, další rukojmí je oslepen. Autor románu, John Irving pobýval během svých studií nějaký čas ve Vídni, a nejspíš proto zasadil děj svého románu do tohoto města. Zároveň se autor nechal inspirovat událostmi ze 70. a 80. let 20. století, kdy členové marxistické organizace Frakce Rudé armády terorizovali občany Německé spolkové republiky. Tato skutečná německá skupina brala rukojmí, konstruovala bomby a zabíjela stejným způsobem jako fiktivní Sympozium východo-západních vztahů z Irvingova románu

Druhý analyzovaný román *Americká idyla* se odehrává v 60. letech 20. století v New Jersey, ve Spojených Státech a líčí osud třetí a čtvrté generace

židovské rodiny Levovových, která se přistěhovala z Evropy do Ameriky a založila firmu na výrobu dámských kožených rukavic. Hlavní hrdina, Seymour Levov, se snaží najít příčiny a pochopit důvody, proč jeho koktající patnáctiletá dcera Merry nastrážila na místní poště bombu, při jejíž explozi je usmrčen kolemjdoucí místní doktor. Merry Levovová, levicově smýšlející radikálka, bojovala proti válce ve Vietnamu a po výbuchu bomby se několik let schovává před vyšetřovateli FBI i před svou rodinou. Po dlouhém čase ji její otec najde ve velice zuboženém psychickém i fyzickém stavu. Dcera mu sdělí, že se z ní stala džinistka a pacifistka. Seymour Levov dále zjišťuje, že jeho dcera za pomoci bomby zabila další tři osoby a navíc svých činů nelituje, což jejího otce zničí. Díky své dceři si Levov uvědomuje, že se doba změnila a on už nežije v idylických 50. letech, kdy byl místními spoluobčany zbožňován. I tento román je inspirovaný skutečnými studentskými a teroristickými hnutími, která vystupovala proti válce ve Vietnamu a proti rasové i společenské nerovnosti v 60. a 70. letech ve Spojených státech, např. Weathermen Underground.

Poslední román od Johna Updikea *Terorista* popisuje, jak se z osmnáctiletého středoškoláka Ahmada Ashmawy Mulloye stává sebevražedný atentátník. Ahmad pochází ze smíšeného manželství irské katoličky a egyptského muslima, který však od rodiny odešel, když byl Ahmad ještě malý chlapec. Otce tak hlavní hrdina zná pouze z několika fotografií a ví oněm jen málo informací od své matky, přesto ho obdivuje a snaží se přiblížit jeho zidealizovanému vzoru. Od chlapeckých let navštěvuje Ahmad mešitu, kde ho imám Shaikh Rashid vyučuje arabštinu a *Korán*. Následně Rashid domluví chlapci práci v rodinném podniku Chebabů, kde má rozvážet nábytek zákazníkům. Proto se Ahmad snaží získat řidičské oprávnění pro nákladní auto. Tento krok mu však rozmlouvá jeho poradce pro volbu povolání, Jack Levy. Charlie Chebab, syn majitele firmy, pro kterou má Ahmad pracovat, mezitím Ahmada přizve k plánovanému teroristickému útoku na Spojené Státy. Ten má být spáchán pomocí bomby v nákladním autě. V den útoku na dálniční tunel se Ahmadovi do nákladního auta vnutí Jack Levy, jemuž se nakonec podaří Ahmadovi odpálení bomby rozmluvit. Příběh posledního románu je inspirován útoky na Světové obchodní centrum v New Yorku na počátku nového milénia.

Práce Edwarda Saida *Orientalism* (1979) a *Covering Islam* (1981) byly použity jako základní teoretické prameny pro bližší pochopení arabsko-amerických vztahů.

V závěru práce jsou porovnávány lokace, způsoby a prostředky potřebné pro realizaci teroristických činů ve výše zmíněných románech. Dále je porovnáván věk a zázemí atentátníků. V *Hotelu New Hampshire* se jedná o šestičlennou skupinu, jejíž nejmladší členkou je Fehlgeburt, studentka vídeňské univerzity. V *Americké idyle* i *Teroristovi* teroristické útoky spáchají nebo se na přípravě podílejí teenageři ve věku patnáct a osmnáct let, kteří však pocházejí z rozdílných rodinných prostředí. Merry Levonová je opečovávané dítě z dobře situované rodiny, kde fungují oba rodiče. Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy žije pouze s matkou, která kvůli zaměstnání a vztahům s muži nemá na syna moc času. Přestože jde o rozdílná rodinná zázemí, oba teenageři se rozhodnou podílet se na teroristických činech a odvrátit se tím od mainstreamové společnosti. O nábožensky motivovaný konflikt jde především v *Teroristovi*, ve kterém mělo k fiktivnímu atentátu dojít tři roky po teroristických útocích 11. září 2001, a ve kterém Ahmad bojuje proti nevěřící americké společnosti.

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