Infectious Terror in "Edward Randolph's Portrait": Transatlantic Threat and the Monroe Doctrine

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Introduction : Terror in American Culture

The 21st century opened with the fearsome event of September 11, 2001: multiple attacks on symbolic sites of the United States- the two skyscrapers of World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC. In the wake of this terrorist attack not only on the United States but also on the global community, there was a widespread response of outrage, suspicion and terror. To make sense of the terrorist attacks, psychiatrist John Alderdice suggests that a psychoanalytic explanation of violence is necessary and that psychoanalysis can contribute to this explanation by its appreciation of mental and emotional disturbances of the terrorists. (Alderdice 6).[1]

In this paper, I would like to explore the global position of the 21st-century United States in terms of its national response to terror and terrorism. My approach is a psychoanalytic one as well as that of discourse analysis of literary texts. To investigate the emotional disturbance that triggers the aggressive drive both in an individual and a community, I will focus on the national psyche of one of the most turbulent events in American history —its Independence from England. The complex psychological underpinnings of colonial America during the period of the Revolutionary War of 1776 have been topics of numerous literary texts written by American authors. I will discuss the stories of the 18th-century American Revolution written by the 19th-century American writer, Nathaniel Hawthorne. The theme that links 18th and 19th-century America to 21st-century America is terror in the cultural scenes. My hypothesis is that psychological forces – especially emotionally charged sentiment–among the people of a country have implicitly guided the political discourses of the United States which declared the logical cause of democracy in "Declaration of Independence."

Michiko SHIMOKOBE, Infectious Terror in "Edward Randolph's Portrait"

A revolution is a turbulent event in which people are put in a state of psychological vulnerability. While a revolutionary spirit prompts people to pursue a new political system by destroying the old one, beneath the political discourse of justifying their cause, lies an anxiety caused by the possibility of having done wrong. The guilty feeling about destroying authority still harbors in American culture. If terrorism is defined as violence to achieve political aims by causing fear in society, the American Revolution and 9.11 share common psychological theme of terror. The word 'terror' has two meanings – extreme fear and a person or thing that causes extreme fear. The former connotation means the psychologically charged dynamism in the mind of a person; that is, you are the one who is fearful. The latter 'terror' signifies the object that produces this fear; that is, you might be the person who makes someone fearful. When the word 'terror' is used in the context of American political/cultural scene, the subject is 'we' who become terrified. There is no possibility that 'we' could be the 'terror' to someone else. If revolution is an attempt to rotate the statuses of the oppressor and the oppressed by moving around the position, the opposite meanings of 'terror' might be revolved.

I Terror in "Legends of the Province House"

The four sketches of "Legends of the Province House" collected in Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales*, were first published in four separate issues of *The United States Magazine of Democratic Review* in 1838 and 1839.[2] The stories are recognized as patriotic episode about the pre- and post- Revolutionary War period. However, none of the four tells the real story of the war and none of the stories' characters fought in the war. How realistic the Revolutionary War is to the characters in each sketch depends on the period described in the story. It should be noted that the sequence of publication differs from the sketches' timeline of events. It might be interesting, if we read the four stories not in the order of publication but in chronological order of their events. Do we find any organic link among the stories by putting them in their correct time sequence?

The four tales of "Legends" have been recognized as an organic unity by

Robert H. Fossum, Julian Smith, and Margret V. Allen.[3] I also will discuss the four stories of 'Legends' in terms of how they reveal not only Hawthorne's complex feeling towards the revolution but also the collective mind of the colonial people who carried out the revolution as an unprecedented enterprise. Henry James calls the sketches "certain *shadowy* stories" in his book, *Hawthorne*.I would like to explore this psychologically 'shadowy' phase—terror, horror, and fear—as a unifying theme that makes the four stories of "Legends" a cohesive entity.

The frequency of words pertaining to terror, horror, and fear in each story varies in each sketches as follows: (I)"Howe's Masquerade" 3 times (*dread, fear, horror*), (II) "Edward Randolph's Portrait" 16 times (*awful* 4, *dread, dreadful* 2, *horror* 2, *tremble* 2, *awe-stricken, horrible, dreaded, terror, shudder*), (III) "Lady Eleanore's Mantle" 12 times (*awe* 2, *horror, fear, dread, dreadful* 4, *affright, horrible, direful*), and (IV) "Old Esther Dudley" only once (*fear*). When the stories are arranged in chronological order of the events (III-II-I-IV), the frequency of the words related to terror changes from (3-16-12-1) to (12-16-3-1).

The earliest event of the stories occurs in "Lady Eleanore's Mantle" which is set in Boston fifty years prior to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. This is a story of a young lady who is intensely proud arriving from England as a ward of Colonel Shute, Governor of Massachusetts Bay. In this story, the fear brought to the New World is represented by the metaphor of the plague she brings to Boston. The second earliest event is narrated in "Edward Randolph's Portrait" in which Lieutenant-Governor Thomas Hutchinson signs the order to bring the British troops to Boston while he is beneath the portrait of Edward Randolph in the room of the Province House. The time is 1771; people are not ready to fight against England but they have been terrified by the violent assault by the King's troops. In "Howe's Masquerade" royal governor William Howe is giving a fancy-dress ball at the end of the Boston siege when a funeral march strikes up. Among the procession of disguised figures of earlier New England governors is one dressed exactly like Howe himself. The real Howe confronts the imposter with his sword. British rule in Massachusetts is almost

over at this moment. In the last event described in "Old Esther Dudley," the Loyalists in New England are completely defeated and have to leave for England. The victory of the United States is apparent and Old Esther Dudley who has been faithful to the royal governors refuses to hand over the key of the Province House to the new governor and dies. By following the sequence and frequency of the words associated with terror, we can trace the historical change of the colonial psyche of terror that climaxes in the second story, "Edward Randolph's Portrait" and its disappearance in the fourth story, "Old Esther Dudley."

"Edward Randolph's Portrait," is a story about the mysterious painting on the wall of a room in Province House and Lieutenant-Governor Thomas Hutchinson's decision to bring British troops to Boston. Michael J. Colacurtio says that, "Certainly no account of the Revolution is adequate without some reference to *the complicated mental and rhetorical process* which Hawthorne exposes in 'Edward Randolph's Portrait'" (Colacurtio 418 italics mine). I would like to follow "the complicated mental and rhetorical process" in this story to investigate the psychologically infectious phenomenon at this critical moment of American history.

When news comes to the colony that British troops are in Boston harbor, Thomas Hutchinson is surrounded by the people who are witnessing the anguished governor's mental battle. They discuss the picture on the wall which is covered at the top of the frame with "some ragged remnants of black silk" (261). Hutchinson gives a piece of information about the subject of that picture which seems to be just "the void blackness" (258) to the eyes of the contemporary people. According to Hutchinson, the picture is of Edward Randolph, the founder of the Province House who obtained the repeal of the first provincial charter. Listening to this information, Captain Lincoln cries, "He that was styled the arch enemy of New England, and whose memory is still held in detestation, as the destroyer of our liberties!" (262).

As Hutchinson finally seizes his pen and is about to sign the order to bring the troops ashore, Alice, his niece suddenly removes away the black silk that covers the picture. [4]

An exclamation of surprise burst from every beholder; but the Lieutenant-Governor's voice had a tone of *horror*.

"By Heaven," said he, in a low, inward murmur, speaking rather to himself than to those around him, "if the spirit of Edward Randolph were to appear among us from the place of torment, he could not wear more of the *terrors* of hell upon his face!" (266-267 italics mine).

Terrified by the face of the portrait, Hutchinson ends up seizing a pen.

Casting a scowl of defiance at the pictured face, (which seemed, at that moment, to intensify the *horror* of its miserable and wicked look,) he scrawled on the paper, in characters that betokened it a deed of desperation, the name of Thomas Hutchinson. Then, it is said, he *shuddered*, as if that signature had granted away his salvation (268 italics mine).

The terror climaxes at this moment. The first introduction of an army force into the colony must have been a tremendous threat to the Puritan community. The terror must have spread to the insubordinate people who would be exposed to the threat by the British army. That is why not only several selectmen of Boston but also Hutchinson's niece Alice Vane and his kinsman Francis Lincoln, the provincial captain of Castle William become terrified and protest.

However, it turns out that there are two other terror-stricken people at the scene: Edward Randolph in the portrait that hung in a room of the Province House, and Hutchinson himself who makes the decision to quarter troops. The former in the picture wears "the terrors of hell upon his face," and the latter, after having scrawled his name on the paper, "shuddered, as if that signature had granted away his salvation."Terror is diffused throughout the room where the psychological drama of the battle between the oppressor and the oppressed is taking place. Let us follow the two cases of terror's infection: Edward Randolph's into Hutchinson, and Hutchinson's into people around him.

II Two Cases of Infectious Terror

Case 1: I will discuss how Hutchinson is infected by the intense fear depicted in the mind of the legendary personage of Edward Randolph. Despite the furious protest of the people around him, Hutchinson dares to sign the order that brings the British troops to Boston. He trembles and looks at the countenance of Edward Randolph in the portrait, saying, "It would drive me mad-that awful face!"(268). Listening to his words, Alice whispers that, "He (Edward Randolph) trampled on a people's rights. Behold his punishment – and avoid a crime like his!" (268).

Randolph was the man who obtained the repeal of the first provincial charter. By his deed, their Puritan forefathers lost "democratic" privileges they had enjoyed in colonies.

> "Our annals tell us," continued the Captain of Castle William, "that the *curse* of the people followed this Randolph wherever he went, and wrought evil in all the subsequent events of his life, and that its effect was seen likewise in the manner of his death. They say, too, that the inward misery of that *curse* worked itself outward, and was visible on the wretched man's countenance, making it too *horrible* to be looked upon" (262 italics mine).

That is why the expression of the portrait tellingly shows the anguish of a person being cursed and hated by the people. The torture of Randolph's soul had come forth upon the countenance and made him "wear the terrors of hell upon his face." How does the terror of a person two generations apart infect the lieutenant-governor of Massachusetts?

As Hutchinson hesitates to sign the order, he looks up at the figure in the picture who appears to be looking down at him. At that moment, the face "seemed to intensify the horror of its miserable and wicked look." Hutchinson desperately snatches his pen and scrawls his signature on the paper. It is said that he "shuddered, as if that signature had granted away his salvation" (268).

Thus the Randolph's terror enters Hutchinson's mind and makes the signer

wear the terrors of hell upon his whole body. What Hutchinson fears is repeating what Edward Randolph did to the people and doing the same thing to the people. When Alice warns him not to trample on the people's rights and to avoid a crime similar to Randolph's, Hutchinson strives to ignore it and makes his final decision.

What Hutchinson is afraid of is that he will become another Edward Randolph, that is, a *new* Edward Randolph as the arch-enemy of *New* England. Thus, terror of Randolph, the founder of the Province House enters the mind of Hutchinson, the present occupant of the house. At the end of the story, an episode which informs us of the dying scene of Thomas Hutchinson proves that he did, in fact, repeat his ancestor's deeds.

> And as for Hutchinson, when, far over the ocean, his dying hour drew on, he gasped for breath, and complained that he was choking with *the blood of the Boston Massacre*; and Francis Lincoln, the former Captain of Castle William, who was standing at his bedside, perceived *a likeness in his frenzied look to that of Edward Randolph*. Did his broken spirit feel, at that dread hour, the tremendous burthen of a People's curse? (269 italics mine).

Thus transatlantic infection is brought on in the story of the royal governor of New England who "died far over the ocean."

Case 2: There is another infection of terror in this story in which the terror passes from Hutchinson to the people present at the scene. The infection occurs at the same time and the same space where both the person who infects others and those who get infected are present. While the infection from Randolph to Hutchinson is diachronic (proceeding from one generation to another), this infection is synchronic (taking place in the room of Thomas Hutchinson). At the end of the story, we are informed of an episode after the event: "When morning came there was a stifled whisper through the household, and spreading thence about the town, that the dark, mysterious picture had started from the wall, and spoken fact to face within Lieutenant-Governor

Hutchinson" (268).

In the morning, rumors fly about town that the figure in the portrait came out of the wall and had a conversation with Hutchinson during the night. Though nobody can prove whether such a miracle had been wrought, this episode suggests the possibility of coexistence of persons in different generations and of the substitutability of one with the other since they share each other's infectious terror.

But why did the terror of these two governors of the colony get into the minds of the people who are governed by them? Why does Hutchinson's terror spread far and wide in the chamber and subject the spectators to horror?

> But those who, in that brief interval, had beheld the awful visage of Edward Randolph, desired no second glance, and ever afterwards *tremble at the recollection of the scene*, as if an evil spirit had appeared visibly among them (269 italics mine).

What terrifies the people so much is neither the awful face of Randolph nor the figure of Hutchinson standing aghast under the picture. People "ever afterwards trembled at the recollection of the scene. "What happened at "the scene?" They witness Hutchinson becoming infected with Randolph's terror, thereby repeating what his prototype did. This horror was so harmful to people's spirit that spectators got psychologically involved with the chain of violence by just being present at "the scene." The real terror lies in the possibility of turning the victimized into the victimizer.

III The Terror of Being a Victimizer

In "Edward Randolph's Portrait" which deals with the complex psychological dynamism of the Revolutionary War, the persistent symptom of anxiety seems to be triggered by the fearful feeling of perpetrating crime or being a victimizer. Infectious terror and the repetition of violence brings forth one of the contemporary topics in our global society—terrorism. I would like to

explore the psychoanalytic phase of one of the critical historical events of the United States, the American Revolution through the notion of trauma. In *DSM-IV* (*Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Fourth Edition), Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is defined as "the response involved [in] intense *fear*, helplessness, or *horror*" [5](italics mine). Recurrence of the memory of the event and acting of a traumatic event are two major symptoms of PTSD.

According to recent psychoanalytic insight into terrorism and terrorists, children who suffered chronic physical or emotional abuse are prone to develop hatred and violent tendencies toward others. Terrorists are born when one becomes terrified and is forced into helpless passivity. Salman Akhtar, Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical SchoolÅ@studied the psychodynamic characteristics of terrorist leaders and their followers and found that the psychology of terrorists can be explained by "using concepts from both individual and group psychology" (*Terrorism and War*, 87-88). According to Akhtar, terrorists are deeply traumatized individuals who have "suffered chronic physical abuse and profound emotional humiliation" (Akhtar 90).Their strongest emotional feeling is not their retrospective psychological pain but the perspective fear that they might lose something essential to their physical and psychological identities. Passivity is what they loath most. Akhter elucidates that psychoanalytic dimension of those people as follows:

> To eliminate this fear, such individuals feel the need to 'kill off' their view of themselves as victims. One way to accomplish this is to turn passivity into activity, masochism into sadism, and victimhood into victimizing others. Hatred and violent tendencies toward others thus develop (Akhtar 90 ; quotation marks Akhtar's).

Terrorists are victimized beforehand and they attempt to turn their helpless passivity into a terrorizing activity.

The American Revolution is one of the historical events in which not only a political cause was declared with the most brilliant discourse but also emotion-

al drive was released freely and implicitly. Lord Alderdice, in his introduction to *Terrorism and War*, realizes the importance of the psychoanalytic approach in discussing political discourse:

> I have come to the view that the psychoanalytic approach can create a space for reflection too valuable to be restricted only to work with individuals and small groups. This is particularly important when *political discourse in a community is overtaken by powerful emotions*, as is the case during times of crisis, like now (Alderdice10 italics mine).

The powerful emotions provoked in the minds of the people of pre-revolutionary America could be the negative feelings of the victimized as well as the hopeful feelings of building a democratic society. The colonial people might have felt that they were suffering from political, religious, and /or emotional abuse by the authority of England. As a natural result, they must have tried to get rid of the fear by turning their passivity into violence in the name of "revolution". This is the hidden version of the Revolutionary War in which the Puritans accomplished their goal but turned out to be terrorists.[6]

It can be said that the minds of the people in the United States have been filled with the only idea of proving themselves to be the citizens of a democratic society and notthe terrorists who perpetrated a rebellion. Since the start of the republic, proving that they are not terrorists has been the cultural obsession of the United States. The historical tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne that deal with the transatlantic threat to the colonial period of America, both implicitly and ironically, transfer the infectious terror of being a victimizer.

IV The Monroe Doctrine in "Legends of the Province House"

Hawthorne wrote the four sketches of "Legends of the Province House" in the post-revolutionary period of 1836-1837 when people in the United States became conscious of transatlantic affairs after the war of 1812. In 1823, thirteen years before "Legends" was written, the sixth president James Monroe delivered the 7the Annual Message which came to be called The Monroe Doc-

trine. Today, we recognize that two ideas – non-colonization and separation of the Western and Eastern hemisphere – constitute the Monroe Doctrine, the founding document of U.S. foreign policy. However, it is interesting that at the time of this address to Congress, "the Doctrine had no effect on the European powers and that the United States had neither the strength nor the inclination to enforce it" (Rappaport 2). Monroe declared his policy as follows:

> ...the occasion has been judged proper for asserting *as a principle* in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that *the American continents*, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers (italics mine).

By "the American continents, "the president cunningly signified not only North America but also South America. Historians agree that the Monroe Doctrine tried to secure *the Western hemisphere's* right to refuse *the Eastern hemisphere's* political and colonial intervention. In fact, Monroe declares that "we (U.S.) should consider any attempt on their (European powers) part to extend their system to any portion of *this hemisphere* as dangerous to our peace and safety" (italics mine).

However, the rhetoric of Monroe's message represses a critical contradiction within the term 'this hemisphere' (the Western hemisphere). A close reading invites us to read the *the Western hemispheres* signifying not only the upper half of the hemisphere but also the lower half of it. By calling the countries of the South America "our Southern brethren "Monroe's rhetoric abuses the metaphor of a family. Under the cause of post-colonialism by which the United States pretends to protect the lower half of the Western hemisphere, lies the twisted logic of protection and domination. The Monroe Doctrine turns out to be the paradoxical declaration of another form of imperialism that betrays the hidden desire for future Anglo-America domination over the South American countries.

The intentional/unintentional confusion of protection and domination in

this historical discourse has a psychological effect on American culture. Takayuki Tatsumi points out "the twisted logic naturalizing the ambivalence between post-colonialism and crypto-imperialism in the rhetoric of the Monroe Doctrine"(Tatsumi 53). In the post-colonial discourse, the United States champions the cause that accuses the imperial powers in the Eastern hemisphere of victimizing the people in the Western hemisphere. On the contrary, the context of crypto-imperialism suggests the possibility of victimizing the other. This double layers of logic has made possible the political message issued at various turning points of US history, as Manifest Destiny in antebellum America, Pax Americana in the 20th century, and the Bush doctrine of the 21st-century. Though the positive phase of the doctrine has motivated the political psyche of the United States, its contradictory positions invite cultural anxiety about its intention of intervening in international affairs. Being victimized and being the victimizer easily revolved in the rhetoric of the Monroe Doctrine. In "Edward Randolph's Portrait" we find the embryo of the anticipated fear of being the victimizer. Thus, the transatlantic threat is represented in Hawthorne's texts in a way that the contemporary discourse of the Monroe Doctrine performs paradoxically.

1   John Alderdice wrote the introduction to *Terrorism and War: Unconscious Dynamics of Political Violence*, an anthology of psychoanalytic papers on war and terrorism, the idea of which came up among the researchers of the

British Psycho-Analytical Society a month after the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001. The editors of this collection aimed to bring together "the wealth of knowledge and research into human aggression and its consequences within the field of psychoanalytic psychotherapy" (*War and Terrorism* xii).

2   May 1838, July 1838, December 1838, and January 1839.

3   Among the arguments on the unity of the four sketches is that of Margaret V. Allen; " In this quartet of stories of the Revolutionary War era, Hawthorne explores the relation of present to past and of fact to fiction. The stories, mingling fictitious with historical characters and events, show the continuity of past and present and inevitability of progression and change."

4   Alice Vane learned how to restore the damaged picture in Italy. She says, "It would be almost worth while to wipe away the black surface of the canvass, since the original picture can hardly be so formidable as those which fancy paints instead of it" (644).

5   309.81 Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Criteria A consists these two to diagnosed as PTSD: (1) the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others. (2) the person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror.

6   Alderdice's comment on the communal psyche of terrorists is interesting on this point. He says, "the terrorists are able to present themselves, to at least some sections of the community, *as the protectors of civil society against an oppressive regime*—exactly the view the terrorists set out to demonstrate and address" (Alderdice 10 italics mine).

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