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Hitler in America:
A Study of Chronotope in Alternate History Novels

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Abstract

In *The Man in the High Castle*, by Philip K. Dick, and *The Plot against America*, by Philip Roth, World War II has a different outcome: Adolf Hitler defeats his opponents and initiates his total domination plan; Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan govern the world, changing its social and political organization. The novels relate to alternative historical events and to how their political and economic consequences affect individual lives. This master's thesis will analyze the thought experiment proposed in the novels related to the moral dilemmas and burdens the American people would succumb to had the Axis Powers defeated the Allied Forces. The present thesis will establish a theoretical framework based on Mikhail M. Bakhtin's chronotope and contextualize the selected novels according to Gavriel D. Rosenfeld's historical views. An analysis will be made on how the deprivation of freedom interferes with the moral judgment of the characters in *The Man in the High Castle*, and on the consequences of a totalitarian regime on the lives of a persecuted minority in *The Plot against America*.

Keywords: Chronotope, Alternate history, World War II

Resumo

Nos romances *O homem do castelo alto*, de Philip K. Dick, e *O complô contra a América*, de Philip Roth, a Segunda Guerra Mundial tem outro desfecho: Adolf Hitler derrota seus oponentes e inicia seu grande plano de dominação total. A Alemanha nazista e o Império Japonês governam o mundo e com isso alteram a organização política e social do mundo. Esses dois romances são de histórias alternativas e ilustram como as consequências políticas e econômicas desta nova organização política afeta os indivíduos. Esta dissertação analisará as possibilidades hipotéticas levantadas nos romances referentes aos dilemas morais e aos sacrifícios que seriam impostos ao povo americano caso as potências do Eixo derrotassem as Forças Aliadas. A presente dissertação seguirá uma linha teórica baseada no conceito de cronotopo de Bakhtin, além de contextualizar os romances escolhidos de acordo com a visão histórica de Rosenfeld. Será feita uma análise acerca de como a privação da liberdade interfere nos julgamentos morais das personagens em *O homem do castelo alto*, e das consequências do regime totalitário nas vidas de uma minoria perseguida em *O complô contra a América*.

Palavras-chave: Cronotopo, história alternativa, Segunda Guerra Mundial

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- Introduction

History is not just what is read in books or told by the ones directly involved in

momentous historical events; history is what happens every day, everywhere to everyone. Historical events generate various versions and points of view. Literature has the gift of provoking thoughts that help to compose versions that echo events and transcend reality. Any artistic work can make you reevaluate the various possibilities granted by your life experiences. When you have the opportunity of listening to firsthand experience of individuals involved in historical events, it is almost impossible not to get influenced by their stories.

I had the opportunity of living in Stuttgart, Germany due to an exchange program in my adolescence. The topic of World War II would come up every now and then in conversations with many friends I made there. I began to hear many versions of the war, especially from the elders who had firsthand experience of some events. My upstairs neighbor was a widow whose husband had been sent to war right after their marriage; he returned as one of the crippled young ex-soldiers and spent the rest of his days living miserably. My German teacher's father had been taught at school to despise Jews because, according to the teachers, Jews were an inferior race. These lessons of hatred were taught in classrooms and written in the notebooks by children who went to school in the late 1930s. Another of my teachers had escaped from East Germany wrapped in a carpet that was placed in the trunk of a car. When the car finally came to a halt in a safe place and he was unwrapped, he was nearly dead. These and many other accounts suffered by the people I met and their families grabbed my attention and so I began to investigate a bit further about one of the most devastating of all wars in recent history. The war that lasted six years and one day had the most impressive toll of casualties of all wars.

In the alternate history novel *The Plot against America*, by Philip Roth, the

following line grabbed my attention:

Lindbergh's not mentioning the Jews was to them a trick and no more, the initiation of a campaign of deceit intended both to shut us up and to catch us off guard. "Hitler in America!" the neighbors cried. (17)

The possibility of having a Nazi controlled United States of America inspired me to investigate further into literary works of the Alternative History genre so that the fictional consequences of this situation could be analyzed.

- Bakhtin's Theory of the Chronotope

In *The Dialogic Imagination* Mikhail M. Bakhtin expounds on the importance of and the relation between time and space in the study of fiction. He coins the term “chronotope” (which can be literally translated from Greek as time-space) to convey the idea that, in literary works, “spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole” (84). He uses this term to highlight the usage of indicators of time and space in literature. Bakhtin does not provide instructions on how to apply the chronotope as a tool to decipher time-space aspects of the novel; rather, he opens a long discussion on the subject, a discussion that is far from having solved the theoretical and methodological problems inherent in the concept.

Bakhtin argues for the importance of the fusion of time and space so that works of literature and other forms of art can be better analyzed, discussed, and understood. He pinpoints aspects of different types of chronotopes used in the major genres of literary works that survived throughout the centuries since the early stages of the development of the novel. He highlights the fact that when closely analyzed, indicators of time and space become an important instrument to conceptualize the relation between fiction and reality. It is through the fusion of time and space, Bakhtin claims, that the work of art is understood and made vivid, thus permitting the reader to experience the work.

2.1 Adventure-novel of Ordeal

At the outset of the essay, Bakhtin signals that the studies concerning time and space in literature and in art have still much to evolve. His study encompasses works of Greek writers such as Heliodorus of Emesa (220-250 C.E.) and Achilles Tatius

(second century) going through the work of the Renaissance humanist François Rabelais until German, French, and Russian writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He starts with ancient forms of novel, beginning with a Greek Romance type that he calls the “adventure-novel of ordeal” (“Forms of Time” 84). This kind of novel illustrates a well-developed genre of adventure-time, revealing a recipe, that is, a scheme that was much used in the novels of the second and sixth centuries. The plot usually introduces a beautiful chaste young couple who meet by chance during some public event or festivity. Their family background is unknown or holds some mystery to be revealed only at the end of the plot. They instantly fall in love with each other but for some reason cannot get married straight away; they go through a series of misfortunes, and get married at the end of the story. The time in which the plot unfolds in the novel happens between these two major events in the protagonists’ lives: meeting each other and getting married at the end.

The obstacles could as well be anything ranging from natural catastrophes to revengeful ruthless enemies, or to greedy, envious, and hypocritical relatives or even to mysterious and unscrupulous acquaintances. The timespan and bulk of the obstacle do not influence the outcome of the story, nor the amount of obstacles placed between the hero and his bride.

The time of the plot is an element that does not have any direct influence on the novel; it could be many weeks, months or only two days, the day the couple met and the day they got married for the period has no meaningful impact on the lives of the characters.

Time is “empty” in the sense that events are not connected to each other in any causal relation; none of the events is linked in a

sustainable consequence. No matter how frequently the hero has rescued the intended bride from earthquakes, floods, dragons, or pirates, he gets no older or wiser. (Holquist 109-10)

Time does not play an important role in modifying or assisting the maturing process of the young couple nor of the other characters; the cyclical events of everyday life do not interfere in the plot. In the Greek romance, “all the events and adventures that fill it constitute time-sequences that are neither historical, quotidian, biographical, nor even biological and maturational” (Bakhtin 91). The adventures could be switched around into different sequences from the actual order they occur in the novel and no great loss or gain would come about; the hero would not become wiser or braver and the beloved maiden would not have gotten more familiar with her hero’s personality. Another relevant aspect of time in the adventure-novel of ordeal is that the damsel and her hero do not age, no matter how many obstacles they are faced with; by the end of the story they are still a youthful couple eager to get married and live happily ever after.

The present study analyses a genre that has a different attitude toward the maturing process of the characters. The Alternative History genre, which is the focus here, depicts the change that occurs along the lives of the characters after a point of divergence in a major historical event. In this case, the Second World War is presented with a different outcome from the real one. According to the novels chosen for this work, Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan defeated the Allied Forces; therefore, the social, political, and economical order of the world is completely altered.

The role played by protagonists in the adventure-novel of ordeal is taken by the minor characters in the AH genre. These secondary characters that do not change

their behavior nor display any maturing process throughout the story help to highlight, through the contrasting stances and their actions during the plot, the maturing process of the protagonists. One of the main aspects of the AH stories is to show how the change in the sociopolitical order of a given nation influences the population and their attitudes toward the others, especially between the dominant elite and the minority groups. This change is underscored especially through the changes that occur in the protagonists' lives in their interactions with other characters.

2.2 Rabelaisian Chronotope

Bakhtin also looks attentively into the folkloric bases of the Rabelaisian chronotope and highlights the importance of time markers in collective activities: social life, festivities and labor (especially agricultural labor such as the growth of plants and livestock). Time elements are concerned mainly with the future, namely actions such as working (sowing and harvesting) and mating (marrying and childbirth), movements toward multiplying possessions and family. The term “collective growth” is used in reference to all signs of prosperity, i.e., sowing and harvesting, all evidence of quantitative and qualitative growth.

This time is *profoundly spatial and concrete*. It is not separated from the earth or from nature. It, as well as the entire life of the human being, is all on the surface. The agricultural life of men and the life of nature (of the earth) are measured by one and the same scale, by the same events; they have the same intervals, inseparable from each other, present as one (indivisible) act of labor and consciousness. Human life and nature are perceived in the same

categories (Bakhtin 208).

In this sense, Bakhtin stresses that no matrix of events are grander or more valuable, human and nature play an equal role in reinforcing chronotopic elements in the plot. The use of images that depict cyclical activities of the characters serve to connect them to the space they are inserted in, the images are essentially chronotopic for without these elements hardly any sense could be made of the sequence of the story. Concreteness is developed through the intersection of cyclical events of nature (parts of the day, seasons of the year), personal life events (marriage, birth of an offspring, work, and death) and momentous historical events (royal weddings or royal deaths, major catastrophes, and wars).

When it comes to composing the notion of collective life, not only time and space are important elements in the plot, but also the characters' values and emotions are crucial. Situations and events that happen to individual characters are depicted so that a notion of how the community is and acts according to social and moral values is shown. In Bakhtin's words, "*Individuums* are representatives of the social role, events of their lives coincide with the events of the social whole, and the significance of such events (on the individual as well as on the social plane) is identical" (Bakhtin 218). For individuals to represent groups, they must be thoroughly exposed; they must be stripped away of any masks, all details of their everyday life are relevant – their routines are as important as the group's rituals, habits, and routines.

The elements that Bakhtin analyses in his study of the Rabelaisian chronotope are very determining in the analysis of allohistorical novels. Once there is a proposed inversion of power, the consequences of this inversion are highlighted by the changes in the collective activities. In AH novels, different situations compose the political

status of the community. In *The Man in the High Castle*, by Philip Dick, the point of divergence between the real historical denouement of World War II and the fictional one has already taken place before the plot begins. That is, the war has already been won by Hitler and Dick expounds his vision of how America would have become had this really happened. He shows how the swapping of political power within the society affects different ethnic groups and the reader sees the characters living in a world ruled by the extremist Nazi Party. Therefore, in this novel, the major alteration in the political order of the world has already occurred. The changes that occur in the characters' personality are triggered by the meta-history novel written by a character of the novel; these different behaviors among the characters expose the thought experiment that Dick proposes in his work.

In Philip Roth's *The Plot against America*, the point of divergence occurs at the beginning of the first chapter. The Fascist Charles A. Lindbergh is still campaigning for the presidential elections against President Roosevelt's reelection. Gradual changes are presented to the reader regarding the status of the Jewish community in America with the election of a dictatorial right-wing president. The deviations that occur in the values and emotions of the characters have a causal relation that is depicted through the fictional Roth family. The novelist exemplifies the anguishing and disharmonious situations caused in the lives of the American Jewish community in the United States catalyzed by the fascist political orientation of the White House. This transformation is delineated through the conflicts that start to take place in the harmonious family of law-abiding Herman Roth, the father; the caring and sensible mother Bess Roth; Sanford Roth, the eldest son; Philip Roth, the youngest, and Alvin Roth, the cousin.

2.3 Chronotopes of the Castle and of the Road

Bakhtin noted that the English novels of the late seventeenth century incorporated the castle as a recurring location for the Gothic novels. “Admittedly the traces of time in the castle do bear a somewhat antiquated, museum-like character” (Bakhtin 246). This territory fuses the historicity of the feudal tradition with its architecture and memorabilia, associating the culture of the individuals who inhabited it with past generations. The castle allows the plot to display the characters’ values and the social position they belong to in the fictional world. Although masters, noble guests, high-ranking members of the court and low-ranked servants interact in the same space, namely the castle, they play different roles and therefore reinforce the importance of values and emotions experienced within the same ambience. There is a notable difference between the encounters that take place on the road and the ones in castles; while on the road, representatives of various social classes often meet without the striking notion of social contrasts (high or low social ranks can be easily effaced or highlighted in road chance meetings). “People who are normally kept separate by social and spatial distance can accidentally meet; any contrast may crop up, the most various fates may collide and interweave with one another” (Bakhtin 243). This interweaving of characters from contrasting social status may also occur in castle chronotopes, but not with the same naturalness and frequency as on the road. The chronotope of the castle intensely connects time, space, and value, though not in the same randomness as the chance meetings that take place in the road chronotopes. A similarity between road and castle chronotopes is that the road chronotopes usually take the characters through familiar places: “the road is always one that passes

through *familiar territory*, and not through some exotic *alien world* ... it is the *sociohistorical heterogeneity* of one's own world that is revealed and depicted ...” (Bakhtin 245). Therein lies the idea that the chronotopic choices of the author can attribute specific characteristics to the plot. These choices help to develop the description and development of the various characters and their stances toward their fictional lives and their interactions within the fictional world.

In the novels chosen for this story, the chronotopic choices are crucial to depict the values, moral standards and the social position of the protagonists and the characters influenced by their actions. Herman Roth, one of the main characters in *The Plot against America*, is portrayed in many scenes in his home interacting with his wife, kids, and some of his relatives and friends; some of the most decisive and conclusive attitudes take place in the house among the family members and relatives. In these scenes, characters' values and the social position play an important role in the outcome of the dialogues and interactions.

In *The Man in the High Castle*, one of the storylines has the character Juliana Frink as protagonist. The most important contribution of her character to the plot happens on the road, interacting with another character, a mysterious truck driver. The road chronotope used by Dick is fundamental in the process of showing the personality of Juliana and of Mr. Baynes, another important character in the novel. Baynes is on the road throughout the story because he is traveling undercover to reveal a Nazi plot of devastating proportions. His trip does not seem to contribute to his maturing process, but it unveils another character's personality, Mr. Tagomi's, and shows how his strong moral values matter to the development of the story. Actually, a parallel can be traced between Mr. Tagomi and Mr. Roth: both display a strong

personality and are good examples of characters that try to maintain their moral convictions despite what is happening in the world around them.

As the young narrator in *The Plot against America* explains,

My father was a rescuer and orphans were his specialty. A displacement even greater than having to move to Union or to leave for Kentucky was to lose one's parents and be orphaned. Witness, he would tell you, what had happened to Alvin. Witness what had happened to his sister-in-law after Grandma had died. No one should be motherless or fatherless. (358)

The same opinion about the importance of one's roots and the value of life is seen in the following line from *The Man in the High Castle* said by Mr. Tedeki to Mr. Baynes after Mr. Tagomi shoots and kills two German hit men to save Mr. Baynes: "You witness the man's despair. He, you see, was no doubt raised as a Buddhist. Even if not formally, the culture was there. A culture in which no life is to be taken; all lives holly" (177). Mr. Tagomi and Mr. Roth have a strong sense of responsibility of their acts towards others. They are respectful and feel responsible for helping or protecting, when necessary, other one's lives no matter if the other ones are close to them or not.

2.4 Chronotopes in Stendhal and Balzac

In the novels of Stendhal and Balzac, the characters interact in public places such as salons and parlors. It is in these public places that "political, business, social, literary reputations are made and destroyed, careers are begun and wrecked, here are decided the fates of high politics and high finance" (Bakhtin 247), highlighting the importance of power in the form of money and in the form of social connections in

that setting. The chronotope present in nineteenth-century novels shows that interpersonal relations are in a completely different setting from that existing in the Greek romances. This concept is exemplified in the lives of the New Jersey Jewish community members as described by young Roth:

It was work that identified and distinguished our neighbors for me far more than religion. Nobody in the neighborhood had a beard or dressed in the antiquated Old World style or wore a skullcap either outdoors or in the houses I routinely floated through with my boyhood friends. The adults were no longer observant in the outward, recognizable ways, if they were seriously observant at all, and aside from older shop keepers like the tailor and the kosher butcher – and the ailing or decrepit grandparents living of necessity with their adult offspring – hardly anyone in the vicinity spoke with an accent. (3–4)

One aspect is that the randomness of the meetings that happen on the road or in alien worlds is not so frequent in the novels of this time. Although salons and parlors are not the only places where characters interact, they are locations where the political and financial intrigues intertwine with social and private life, by showing connections between French political, financial and social moments in the historical period used in the plot and the roles of the individuals immersed in that setting.

The examples given by Bakhtin illustrate how chronotopes and historical change of the real world are interrelated; they show the connection between internal and external elements that are constantly juxtaposed in the novel. As Holquist notes,

At one extreme, chronotope has a relatively restricted set of applications that apply to literary texts conceived as single units. But

chronotope may also be used as a means for studying the relation *between* any text and its times, and thus as a fundamental tool for a broader social and historical analysis, within which the literary series would be only one of several interconnected types of discourse. It is at this level that the chronotope's contribution to a historical poetics may best be seen. (113)

There are natural boundaries that obstruct the link mentioned above, the one between certain real life situations and fiction. Nevertheless, when the reader observes the chronotopes in the literary works in relation to the historical moment of the plot and of the author's life, it is easier to unveil many aspects of the values that guide the characters' interactions in the plot. The chronotope makes the narrative become concrete; it makes it possible for events to become palpable as an objective narration of a story, not merely as the sequence of isolated data, scenarios or situations jammed together. The subjective elements of the novel are drawn together in the chronotope, for "[i]t is precisely the chronotope that provides the ground essential for the showing-forth, the representability of events" (Bakhtin 250). As time becomes dense and the space delineated, the characters have a steady ground from which to play their parts and, together with the narrator, guide the reader through the novel. The readers' real life situations help them to connect to the writer's fictional world; this makes the fictional world concrete, therefore allowing the reader to experience the story.

2.5 Major and Minor Chronotopes

Bakhtin observes that besides the major chronotope there are many minor ones in a novel. There can be secondary chronotopes that interact among each other and

others that do not interact at all, but they are interconnected and co-exist within the work helping to compose the major chronotope. Minor chronotopes may complement or oppose each other, thus creating different scenarios in which the narrative unfolds. “The general characteristic of these interactions is that they are *dialogical* (in the broadest use of the word)” (Bakhtin 252). They interact, but do not mingle with one another to become one; they maintain their characteristics throughout the novel. All these combinations of different times, spaces, values, and images merge with the elements of the real world and, in this way, the fictional world becomes alive. It departs from the stagnant position of the pages of a book and develops into incredibly entrancing worlds in the minds of the readers. It is important, though, not to confuse the real world with the fictional world, “the *represented* world with the world outside the text (naïve realism); nor must we confuse the author-creator of a work with the author as a human being (naïve biographism); nor confuse the listener or reader of multiple and varied periods . . . with the passive listener or reader of one’s own time...” (Bakhtin 253). Though neither the minor and major chronotopes nor the worlds (real and fictional) fuse into one, they are interconnected. The various chronotopes within the same novel can complement or oppose each other, emphasize or diminish certain aspects of the characters, thus composing the fictional world. The real world is enriched by the fictional world and the fictional world gains its concreteness in its reflection of the real world. The boundaries between the chronotopes of the real and fictional worlds are very tenuous and permeable, but they do exist and do not mingle into a single unit.

A work of art is linked to the real world by elements that compose the work’s chronotopes; these components are responsible for maintaining the artwork’s unity.

The elements of the chronotope will underscore both the disparities and the similarities between the work and the real world. “Therefore the chronotope in a work always contains within it an evaluating aspect that can be isolated from the whole artistic chronotope only in abstract analysis” (Bakhtin 243). The elements of the chronotope should not be seen as dismembered parts. The unity of the work is of the utmost importance to reach an understanding of the piece as a whole, and thus analyze it. So, time and space compose the grounds for the author to create the work of art. “In literature and art itself, temporal and spatial determinations are inseparable from one another, and always colored by emotions and values”. It can be said that the nature of the work arises from the concomitant development of emotions and values of the characters arising from the temporal and spatial settings in which they interact, all of which is created by the author (at the moment of writing) and the reader (while reading).

The difference between informing data and plotting a story lies mainly in the chronotopicity of the elements in the narrative. One can give precise descriptive details of a certain location and the exact moment in which something happened; nonetheless, this compound information will not develop into a narrative if the events are not chronotopically represented. The work gains shape and concreteness in the major and minor chronotopes that compose the plot and in the relation not only between time and space, but between value and emotion too. A work of literature can influence and promote change through its relation between the fictional and the real world only if the work achieves the due concreteness that conveys images from the pages of the book to the reader’s mind.

This is very well illustrated by the five storylines that depict Dick’s fictional

world. All stories have elements that help to compose the plot giving it the necessary shape and concreteness. The same happens with all minor chronotopes in Roth's novel because all them assist in construing a fictional world that has a tenuous line separating real and fictional worlds.

2.6 Dynamic Descriptions

For the events in a novel to generate images, they must be dynamically depicted; they must cause reactions among the characters of the plot before affecting the reader. As Bakhtin observes, “[T]he beauty of Helen is not so much described by Homer as it is demonstrated in the reactions of the Trojan elders; these come to light simultaneously in the sequence comprised by the activities and deeds of the elders” (251). The time and space of the actions are illustrated and made palpable by the values and emotions generated by the characters' reactions to them. Likewise, in *The Man in the High Castle*, there is a description of Frank Frink's ex-wife Juliana in the first chapter in a way that will generate an image in the readers' mind before she is actually introduced later on in the plot.

Juliana – best-looking woman he had ever married. Soot-black eyebrows and hair: trace amounts of Spanish blood distributes as pure color, even to her lips. . . . Juliana greeted strangers with a portentous, nudnik, Mona Lisa smile that hung them up between responses, whether to say hello or not. And she was so attractive that more often than not they did say hello, whereupon Juliana glided by. (Dick 14-15)

One of the reasons that make Juliana Frink get involved in a conspiracy in the novel is

her looks, as the mysterious truck driver later explains. The descriptions of scenes and events reverberate into a sequence of dynamic happenings in the plot; these happenings compose the material that gives shape and form to the images created in the reader's mind. It can be said that the material of the text, that is, the plot that is composed, has a blend of the chronotopes created in the text and the chronotopes of the real world in which the writer is involved at one end, and the chronotope of the reader's world at the other end. In other words, these three chronotopic worlds come together to develop into an experience for the reader. Many elements are essential for the creation of the represented world, as they are the ground for "the world that *creates* the text, for all its aspects – the reality reflected in the text, the authors creating the text, the performers of the text (if they exist) and finally the listeners or readers who recreate and in doing so renew the text – participate equally in the creation of the represented world in the text" (Bakhtin 253). The locations, historical moments, social symbols, and feelings evoked by a text are guided by a compound sequence of the various chronotopes that influenced the text from its creation to its reception, from the author's to the reader's real world blended with the book's fictional world. According to Bakhtin, reading a novel through the lenses of the chronotopic approach can help to reveal important aspects of the relation between the work and the real world.

The disrespect with which the Jewish characters are treated in both novels chosen for this study is underscored by the reactions caused in the characters, and all of this is reinforced by the readers' notion of the real historical sufferings the Jewish people endured in World War II. In *The Plot against America*, the absurdity of the newly elected Republican president's anti-Semitic actions is highlighted in the

reactions of Mr. and Mrs. Roth and the other members of the New Jersey Jewish community. A good example is Mr. Roth's indignation because of the dinner offered at the White House in honor of the Nazi foreign minister. It shows the readers how unreasonable the behavior of the American president is to honor the Nazi German minister with a dinner at the White House while the Nazis are incinerating millions of Jews.

Another example is Walter Winchell's presidential campaign against the Republican Lindbergh who foments anger among the non-Jewish population with country-wide hateful reverberation. Despite all the protection given Winchell during his campaign, he is gunned down as he is delivering a speech to a large crowd. The riots caused by the candidate's speeches and the way he was silenced by an anti-Jew American citizen, reveal the importance of the dynamic descriptions in depicting the actions and reactions that help create the reading experience.

The description of the scene in *The Man in the High Castle* in which Mr. Tagomi's office is invaded by the German hit men who are hunting down Mr. Baynes and the way Tagomi defends Baynes is quite intriguing. The description offered by Dick shows how strong the scene is and the consequence of the reaction the characters have because of the invasion. In a split second, the calm, centered, and peaceful Mr. Tagomi shoots down two hit men.

At his desk, Mr. Tagomi pointed his Colt .44 ancient collector's item and compressed the trigger. One of the SD men fell to the floor. The other whipped his silencer-equipped gun toward Mr. Tagomi and returned fire. Mr. Tagomi heard no report, saw only a tiny wisp of smoke from the gun, heard the whistle of a slug passing near. With

record-eclipsing speed he fanned the hammer of the single-action Colt, firing it again and again. (Dick 175-76)

This short scene of action is an example of the technique employed by Dick to entrance the readers and intensify the reading experience. While Dick uses many of these scenes of thrilling action, Roth highlights his descriptions with intriguing mind games shown mainly in the reactions of the fictional Roth family members.

A very strong moment is during a heated up argument between Aunt Evelyn and Mr. Roth. The sister-in-law tries to convince Mr. Roth of the importance of his son Sandy attending a dinner at the White House to tell an audience of his valuable experience in the exchange program promoted by the government. The problem is that the guest of honor to the dinner is von Ribbentrop, a German foreign minister.

Aunt Evelyn was astonished (or pretended to be) by my parents' inability to grasp what it meant for a boy Sandy's age to be invited to the White House, what it would mean for his future to have been a dinner guest at the White House... "I am not impressed by the *White House!*" my father cried, hammering on the table to shut her up after she'd said "the White House" for the fifteenth time. "I am only impressed by who lives there. And the person who lives there is a Nazy". (186)

A paradox can be noted in Bakhtin's essay regarding the historical elements of chronotopes. While for Greek romance works he states that the chronotope is tied to a historical sequence attached to specific points in time of the novel's contemporary real world, he describes nineteenth-century novels as transhistorical works. Holquist writes, "[O]n one hand, the adventure chronotope defines the place of the Greek

romance in a historical sequence. But the same chronotope is also treated as a transhistorical feature to be found in works separated from each other by many centuries” (Holquist 112-13). Despite such paradoxical points, the concept of chronotopic historical elements can function as bridges for studying both the connection between the texts, the historical periods they were written and the transcendence of historical bounds within a novel. In this way, the chronotope will become a “fundamental tool for a broader social and historical analysis, within which the literary series would be only one of several interconnected types of discourse” (Holquist 113). Having this criterion in mind, we note that the study of novels of any period will benefit from the concept of time in relation to the historical period of the author and the temporal/cultural elements that are not conditioned by the author’s contemporaneity. The latter criterion is very useful in the studies of novels that do not have linear narratives.

2.7 Fictional Time versus Real Life Time

Whenever a plot is not written according to an evident beginning, middle and end of a story, it will only make sense to the readers if they can perceive the logical sequence of the story, despite the order in which the narrative exposes the events, that is, despite eventual digressions, flashbacks or foreshadowing. Stories are written in a language different from the one used in every day communication but are understood by means of the same chronological patterns of real life events. Similarly, literary time, which is a distortion of real life time, is a necessary convention for literariness of a novel – a plot would hardly make any sense if it did not distort real life time.

Bakhtin does not accept the distinction of conventional and real time. He

argues that “[a]s a category in dialogism, the chronotope is grounded in simultaneity at *all* levels, including those of both ‘literature’ and ‘real life’ (Holquist 115). As Holquist notes, Bakhtin grounded this idea on principles used by Albert Einstein, who states that chronology and event are interdependent, “something happens only when something else with which it can be compared reveals a change in time and space . . . for everything will depend on how the relation between what happens and its situation in time/space is mediated” (Holquist 116). Actions are depicted so that they cause some change in the plot; there is a direct relation between the period of time the action lasts and the place in which the action takes place with the alteration caused by the action in the plot. Nevertheless, the impact of the action on the characters and on the plot is open to various interpretations.

The idea develops into a matter of interpretation of the elements of narration, so depending on which focus is given to the facts unfolded in the plot, the story will have a certain impact on the reader, “for instance – is a battle won or lost?” Many of these interpretation questions posed throughout a novel may have a different answer to each reader, and sometimes the same reader can have opposing readings of the same plot if the text is read more than once. The possible and contrasting interpretations will depend, on the one hand, on the unity and literariness of the text and, on the other, on the relation between the elements of the real world of the writer and reader, that is, the way by which the elements of the real world are fictionalized. “In other words, . . . the means by which any presumed plot deforms any particular story will depend not only on formal (“made”) features in a given text, but also on generally held conceptions of how time and space relate to each other in a particular culture at a particular time (“given”) features. The reader of a particular historical time

and culture may interpret elements of time and space in a work differently from a reader that shares a different background; therefore, each reader will understand the chronological order of a narration according to their individual experience, thus making personal associations of the given and made features to create meaning.

2.8 Action and Value

Despite the elements of time and space, it is through the action that the plot develops into a story and the character's personality is shown. The combination of time, space and action are revealing aspects. "As such, time's action is perceived as a form of consumption: every time we act, a little more is revealed about who we are, and thus each event in our lives consumes not only a certain chronological duration, but also other possibilities of who we might become" (Holquist 119). Action then is a result of the plotting of descriptive effects the writer wants to generate through a sequence of scenes that are depicted in a specific time and space in the novel. The elements that construe the plot (elements related to action, time and space), intertwine in order to create meaning to the story along with the description of the characters' personality traits, so, the characters' personalities are the result of the influences exerted on them by the time and space in which they develop their actions.

Although action helps to mold the plot in its direct connection with chronotopic elements, meaning cannot be detached from value. It is through the specificities of the chronotopes that a situation is depicted. "It must be a chronotope *of* someone *for* someone *about* someone" (Holquist 151). Chronotopes refer to specific events in the works of art; they are not general one size fits all constructions that can easily be transposed from one event to another without compromising the general idea

described in the story. The specificities of the chronotopes are associated with the denotation of the word “situation,” which is related to the notion of value.

Our English word ‘situation’ is really already a chronotope that has had its temporal and spatial components separated into two distinct usages: on the one hand it means a place or location, as in the expression ‘the house was in a good situation’. On the other hand it refers to a particular time, a combination of circumstances at a given moment, as in the expression ‘the current situation’ (Holquist 151-52).

As Holquist observes, both of the above mentioned usages of the word “situation” are directly linked to the comparison and judgment of a particular event (temporal or spatial) with another event including all its interrelated factors, therefore, the values of a particular situation. This means that “time and space are never merely temporal or spatial, but *axiological* as well (i.e. they also have *values* attached to them)” (Holquist 152). For a scene in a novel to have meaning there must be a direct relation among elements that describe time, space, and value. It can be said that the description of a scene is more realistic when it includes moments of action in that scenario; the depiction of a good plotting is made through the depiction of the chronotope.

A good example of this is the description of the riots against the Jews that break up in Roth’s novel:

There, in the city’s biggest Jewish neighborhood, shops were looted and windows broken, Jews trapped outdoors were set upon and beaten, and kerosene-soaked crosses were ignited on the lawn of the fancy houses along Chicago Boulevard and out in front of the modest two-

family dwellings of the housepainters, plumbers, butchers, bakers, junk dealers, and grocers who lived on Webb and Tuxedo and in the little dirt yards of the poorest Jews on Pingry and Euclid. (265)

As the actions of the non-Jewish citizens are described, the reader can grasp the beginning of the terror that would be unleashed on the Jewish community. The lack of respect shows the axiological elements that give the notion of the value depicted by the actions of the non-Jewish and the reactions of the Jewish community.

In Holquist's words, "[c]hronotope is a term, then, that brings together not just two concepts, but four: a time plus its value; and a space plus its value" (155). In any work of art, these concepts are inseparable and simultaneous; without their direct connection, no meaning can be construed in any work of art.

2.9 Utopia and AH

Allohistorical writers do not create utopic worlds; they create a fictional world that can reflect the desire of a group of people who imagine a nation that has different social and political grounds from the one they live in, but these fictional worlds are not necessarily utopic worlds. Nevertheless, a parallel can be traced between some characteristics found in both genres. In "How to Play Utopia: Some Brief Notes on the Distinctiveness of Utopian Fiction", Holquist compares game, utopian fiction, and society. "Utopia has in common with chess first of all the general characteristic that it is a simplification, a radical stylization of something which in experience is of enormous complexity, often lacking any apparent symmetry. Chess substitutes for war, utopia for society" (135). In AH fictional worlds, writers empower the party that was weakened by the conclusion of a real world war, that is, those who lost the war in

the real world become the fictional victors. This is done to show a pseudo-utopian version of the world through the eyes of those who live under the laws of conquerors and new leaders of their nation due to their defeat. As in utopian fiction, AH novels follow a certain convention of their own; they abide to a specific pattern of time, place, and values that compose the plot according to the imagined effects derived from the chosen point of divergence in history. The scheme used in utopian novels is similar in the sense that they are also the projection of a world in which a group of people lives a much better life as compared to the one they would live had they not been in a fictional world that is more adapted to their lifestyle and beliefs.

Utopia, like chess, has its own time and place, which are set over against the world of experience. Just as chess is separated from life by its conventions, utopia cuts itself off from life by conventions of its own. These conventions vary from work to work, but there are certain frequently recurring techniques of border creation, two of which are especially defining: setting the imaginary society in a distant time or place, or both. (Holquist 136)

Holquist uses the game of chess to allude to how the representation of war through the game can assist in developing a simulacrum of real life war in a ludic environment. In the same way, AH novels take place in a setting that enables writers to depict situations that could not exist outside the allohistorical fictional world, due to the real conclusion of the wars, but that can set the ground for speculation on how life would or could be different in that setting.

The point of divergence, which is the essence of the genre, sets the borderline between how history occurred and how it could be otherwise, thus providing the

breaking point between real and fictional worlds. Holquist mentions that:

W.H. Auden has written somewhere that opera is the sustained expression of those moments in life when we say “I felt like singing”. By analogy, we may say that utopia is the extension of those moments in life when we say “What if...” (137)

The mere possibility granted by the two words, “what if” is the main driving force of the AH genre, so it is the possibility, at least in a fictional world, of imagining the world as if it had a completely different political orientation. In utopian fiction, the “what if” does not imply that the novel has a point of divergence; rather, it is the extension of the idealization of a world. Hence, it is the utopian world itself. The similarities between allohistorical fiction and utopian fiction help to underpin important features of both genres. In “Utopia and Science Fiction”, Raymond Williams noted that utopian fiction has four basic characteristics:

- *the paradise*, in which a happier kind of life is described as simply existing elsewhere;
- *the externally altered world*, in which a new kind of life has been made possible by an unlooked-for natural event;
- *the willed transformation*, in which a new kind of life has been achieved by human effort;
- *the technological transformation*, in which a new kind of life has been made possible by a technical discovery. (52)

These four types can be noticed in allohistorical fiction when we analyze the scheme that is most frequently used. The genre consists of creating a fictional world that is ideal to a certain party (“paradise”) with the imagined outcome of the war (“willed

transformation”) due to the military superiority of one party over another (“technological transformation”) that resulted in a different political organization (“externally altered world”). Williams indicates that these types may overlap. He points out that the characteristics above can take a negative aspect and would define dystopia:

- *the hell*, in which a more wretched kind of life is described as existing elsewhere;
- *the externally altered world*, in which a new but less happy kind of life has been brought about by an unlooked-for uncontrollable natural event;
- *the willed transformation*, in which a new but less happy kind of life has been brought about by social degeneration, by the emergence or re-emergence of harmful kinds of social order, or by the unforeseen yet disastrous consequences of an effort at social improvement;
- *the technological transformation*, in which the conditions of life have been worsened by technical development. (52)

The concept of utopia and dystopia, then, are very closely related to each other in that they depend on the group of people the narrative focuses on. “It is tempting to extend both categories until they are loosely identical, and it is true that the presentation of *otherness* appears to link them, as modes of desire or warning in which a crucial emphasis is attained by the element of discontinuity from ordinary ‘realism’ (54). The mood set by the negative features mentioned above composes the characteristics of dystopia showing the *modus vivendi* of the defeated party, whereas the positive

features compose the lifestyle of the conquerors. In this sense, the concept of dystopian and utopian worlds is linked to the point of view of the party portrayed in the narrative. As Williams mentioned in his essay,

To imagine a whole alternative society is not mere model-building, any more than the projection of new feelings and relationships is necessarily a transforming response. The whole alternative society rests, paradoxically, on two quite different social situations: either that of social confidence, the mood of a rising class, which knows, down to detail, that it can replace the existing order; or that of social despair, the mood of a declining class, or fraction of a class, which has to create a new heaven because its earth is a hell. (58)

The theme of the novel and the historical period in which the work is written make a difference in terms of message and mood. Normally, alternative history novels focus primarily on the defeated, showing in detail how the oppressed would be subjugated, and how better days are bound to come if they can somehow invert the situation. Utopian novels can be set in newly discovered lands, but also in familiar locations, as it normally happens in the AH genre. “The projection of new heavens and new hells has been a commonplace in science fiction” (62), writes Williams. If the characters are living in heaven or hell, it depends primarily on to which side of the game they belong.

In this at once and liberating and promiscuous mode, science fiction, as a whole, has moved beyond the utopian; in a majority of cases, it is true, because it has also fallen short of it. Most direct extrapolation of our own conditions and forms – social and political but also

imminently material – has been in effect or in intention dystopian: atomic war, famine, overpopulation, electronic surveillance, have written 1984 into millennia of possible dates. (63)

The transformations are not merely superficial, they act in the notion of morality and the sense of justice of both parties, but more strikingly in the behavior of the ruling party, which due to the fact that it needs to subjugate the conquered to keep their newly conquered status, it must fiercely rule over the land it began to control.

Besides entertaining, art may have the important task of raising serious issues and depicting them in a way that makes viewers or readers rethink values that are important to the society they live in. This can sometimes make people analyze past and present so that the strategies can be traced for their realization of actions that will ensure the condition they want for themselves in the future. In “Science Fiction, Religion and Transcendence”, Tom Woodman writes, “If space travel raises concrete theological issues that can make amusing or serious themes for science fiction, then the same is true for the ethical or theological implications of various other scientific achievements, fictional or real” (114). AH novels show the ethical implications of the changing of power from one group to another in a very clear way. When we analyze the ethical issues derived from the swapping of powerful positions among groups of people, it is important to highlight the changes of stances and personality traits that are altered in the process. Scout Sanders mentioned in “Characterization in Science Fiction: Two Approaches 1, The Disappearance of Character” that “in the twentieth century science fiction as a genre is centrally about the disappearance of character, in the same sense in which the eighteenth-and nineteenth-century bourgeois novel is about the emergence of character” (132). Thus, it is possible to say that one of the

most striking characteristics of AH novels is that of revealing the characters' personality and it is through their actions (that help to reveal their personality) that some problems of the contemporary world are shown.

Dictators can only rule when they are able to control the minds, or at least the attitudes of the vast majority of the population of the nation they rule. A representation of this control is when the actions of a great number of people become uniform. The representation of the control exerted upon a society becomes very clear when we see the rallies of soldiers parading in main avenues of the capital cities of most countries around the world; Hitler also used this ancient technique with his Nazi army. "Those endless rows of identical soldiers goose-stepping past the camera, those high angle shots of faceless multitudes ranked like wires in a printed circuit, those boots stamping in unison – all dissolve the individual into the collective. The rallies themselves were a physical expression of the mental conformity which every dictator seeks" (Parrinder 134). Conformity results from behavioral and mental oppression, and in oppressive regimes the real moral and ethical values become more evident because most of them are strikingly ignored. When people's basic rights are constantly disrespected, both oppressors and oppressed seem to lose the limits between right and wrong.

2.10 AH in World War II

Even though Bakhtin's study did not encompass novels of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, his study can help provide a better understanding of the characters' motivations, beliefs, and values of recent works of art. For a fictional work to classify as alternative history, the main question posed by the work consists of two

words: “What if...,” that is, “What if any given major historical event had a different outcome from the one known by social groups and registered in well-thought-of historical documents?” More than sixty years after Adolf Hitler’s Nazi regime was defeated and the outcome of the war became known to many generations that came along after it, we can notice how the aftermath influenced the social and political organization of the United States of America, the European countries, and hence their populations. The war had a direct influence on how these countries would be organized and by whom they would be controlled from then on, a political result bearing consequences in the relationships among citizens and among different political parties.

Both in the real and the fictional world there are always struggles for power. Whoever gains power in times of war or peace has direct influence on the citizens’ lives through political dominance. In the novels selected for this thesis, the aftermath of the war is the opposite of the historical one, and the aim of the proposed study is to analyze the thought experiment of the two authors, especially how the characters interact in this different world order and the moral consequences they must bear.

In Philip K. Dick’s novel *The Man in the High Castle*, we have an alternative history based on the creation of a fictional world that departs from a momentous historical period that directly affected all of Europe, parts of Asia, northern Africa and parts of the Americas. Dick proposes a different outcome for World War II, as he creates a fictional world in which Hitler defeats the Allied Forces and goes on with a master plan to conquer the world. The relation between the real and the fictional world is indispensable for the experience proposed by any alternative history. Carl Freedman writes,

As with any novel of alternative history, the founding critical strategy of *The Man in the High Castle* lies in its uncoupling of the necessary from the actual, and thus in its defamiliarization of the historical status quo. In historical actuality, the status quo of Dick's America (which is still, to a considerable degree, our own) was based largely on the Allied victory over the Axis in the Second World War: a literary epoch-making military triumph that led to the integration of the world's capitalist economies into a single bloc dominated by the United States and to the concomitant Cold War between the capitalist bloc and the always much weaker Stalinist bloc led until its defeat and collapse by the Soviet Union. (166)

In novels of alternative history, the relations of chronotopic elements of the real and fictional world are fundamental to the plot; without the connection between these two worlds, alternative history would not be possible. As Freedman noted, the time of the plot is contemporary to its composition, though it announces a complete social, political, and economical reorganization of the world. In this sense, the past, before the present of the plot, was responsible for a different outcome of a war that involved many countries. In Freedman's words, "Dick's novel – set in an America contemporary to the text's composition but in an alternative historical line in which Germany and Japan triumphed in World War II – undertakes, then, precisely to think the unthinkable" (166). The reference of place used is the United States of America, though not with the same political boundaries as the ones known up to now. Dick's fictional United States is divided into three parts: a relatively thin strip of the west coast belongs to the Japanese Axis (most of the storylines take place there); the east

coast has a broader strip of land controlled by the German Axis. These areas are separated by the Rocky Mountain buffer zone that occupies most of the central part of the continent. There is no central character; many storylines compose the plot, providing the reader with many different angles of life under the totalitarian regime. The change proposed by Dick in the political boundaries of the United States play an important role in the plot.

In Philip Roth's novel *The Plot against America*, the political boundaries of the United States are not altered. The focus of the plot is a Jewish-American family who gradually see how an anti-Semitic nation can change their lives. The narrator and protagonist is young Philip, a boy who is being raised by his parents in a Jewish neighborhood in Newark. Confusion and fear underline the narration of the young boy, who often shows the reader how difficult it can be to live under continuous fear of having to flee and leave the comfort of home and friends behind, as most of his Jewish neighbors are doing. The anti-Semitic tension of the 1940's affects the family and friends, and though young Philip overhears many stories told by his parents, he does not always have a clear picture of what is happening or what is bound to happen to his family and community.

The alternate history novels of the Second World War enable the reader to peek into a fictional world that had a political organization different from the one that derived from the real result of the war. Writers used the genre to show the atrocities committed during the war, to criticize past political decisions, and to hypothesize how citizens would be affected if they lived under a totalitarian regime. Most importantly, though, writers were also providing food for thought for readers to evaluate contemporary political situations that result from their leaders' decisions.

Gavriel D. Rosenfeld studied alternate history works such as novels, short stories, films, television programs, newspaper articles, plays, comic books, scholarly essays, and other cultural works of the three nations that produced most of AH works related to the Second World War, the Great Britain, the United States, and Germany. One of his observations concerns the war legacy in the construction of an identity of the citizens affected directly and indirectly by the war and how the facts and memory of the war affected their lives. His study focuses on historical events that actually never happened, but what effects these events would have, had they occurred according to AH works. The memory of the war is linked to the real life facts that determined the outcome registered in history books; nevertheless, a great component of the construction of the memory of any individual is related to what could have happened, had the important historical events in real life occurred differently.

- Aspects of Second World War AH Novels and History

3.1 Contrasting AH with Other Genres

If human beings had the power to change the past, many of their wrongdoings would be reversed into good deeds, whereas other feats would definitely become worse. As people think back and speculate on how life would be better or worse had historical events developed into different outcomes, they reevaluate the present social condition of many nations. Alternate history novels invite the reader to revisit historical events and reconsider them, as writers create fictional worlds that allow them to analyze and criticize past and present social, political and economic scenarios.

Alternative history, or AH, is frequently mistaken for other science fiction subgenres, such as secret history, future history, time travel, parallel worlds, and outdated fiction. Nonetheless, alternative history differs widely from these offspring and must be distinguished from them. Secret histories are related to a difference between history, as it is known today, and a change or an event in the past that is largely or completely unknown to the civilized world. An example is Edwin Black's *IBM and the Holocaust*, which unveils an alliance between IBM and Germany established in the first weeks after Adolf Hitler came to power. Future history is about situations that have yet to take place and thus may or may not have originated from acknowledged historical facts. Walter Warren Wagar's predictions on what the world would be like in the next two hundred years resulted in the novel *A Short History of the Future*. Time travel stories focus on the journey forward or backward in time, and though they carry many similarities with alternative history stories, they do diverge from it in terms of structural priorities, especially because they have as their key point

the possibility of traveling in time and not the change due to a different historical outcome. H. G. Wells's notable novella *The Time Machine* illustrates this subgenre. Parallel world fiction deals with planets that, as the name says, are in different dimensions from ours and therefore bear little or nothing in common with our world. A good example of this subgenre is the science fiction novel *Dune*, by Frank Herbert, in which forces of the Empire struggle against each other to gain control of the planet Arrakis. The outdated fiction novels relate to historical events that were set in either the present or the past of the time they were written. In 1863, Jules Verne wrote *Paris in the Twentieth Century* (published posthumously in 1994). The book presents Verne's impression on how Paris would be in the 1960s, about 100 years ahead of his time. As time elapsed, the time reference of the plot, 1960, becomes past to anyone who reads the novel after 1960s.

An alternative history novel requires a point of divergence from the actual historical facts, and these facts must have happened before the time in which the author wrote the novel. Common points of divergence "include the deaths of kings and politicians, decisive military victories or defeats, the rise of grand cultural or religious movements, and even demographic trends, such as migrations or plagues" (Rosenfeld 11). In the literary work, there must be both a change capable of altering the world, as it is known, and an examination of the consequences caused by this change in the fictional world.

3.2 Literature and Reality

Gavriel D. Rosenfeld examines a wide range of AH works related to the Second World War in his book *The World Hitler Never Made*, first published in 2005.

His study shows how the alternate version of one of the most momentous wars in recent history is used to rewrite and influence the memory of that war throughout the recent decades. In the first part of his work, he analyzes and compares novels that were written in the three countries that produced the bulk of World War II alternate history novels: Great Britain, Germany, and the United States. Rosenfeld underscores how the shifting representation of the Nazi regime and the popular reactions to these representations determine the image of the Nazi past in Western memory. He evaluates resistance and collaboration, dilemmas of military intervention in the United States of America, Germany's imagined triumph, and whether the world would be better or worse without Hitler. He also analyzes the motivations of the United States of America to enter the war and whether the United States should have stayed neutral, what kind of world was depicted in the novels written during and after the war, which critique was made in alternative history novels, and mainly, how the memory of war was portrayed in the accounts.

As theoreticians and students work with alternate possibilities of the Second World War, many questions arise, some of which are listed in Rosenfeld's book. "What if the Nazis had won World War II? What if Adolf Hitler had escaped from Nazi Germany in 1945 and gone into hiding in the jungles of South America? What if Hitler had been assassinated or had never been born? What if the Holocaust had been completed or could somehow be undone?" (1-2). These questions were the source of inspiration to a large range of writers who, contrasting, opposing and reevaluating possibilities of the outcome of the war, engaged readers into thinking about the war from different perspectives. The motivation behind these works starts with the main driving force of alternate history works: "What if...?" questions.

Such questions are commonly asked while we reevaluate the outcome of certain situations in our lives, i.e. the school or college we studied in, the job we accepted or failed to pass the selection process, the town we moved or did not move to, the friends or partner who we share our lives with. “[W]hat if we had decided to go down Robert Frost’s famous ‘Road Not Taken? . . . When we ask ‘what if?’ we are either expressing gratitude that things worked out as they did or regret that they did not occur differently” (Rosenfeld 10). We must bear in mind that these questions, though they refer to past events, they actually show concern over present situations. “It is no coincidence, therefore, that alternate histories typically come in the form of both fantasy and nightmare scenarios” (10-11). Alternate history works can be regarded as an instrument for questioning the present; it can show gratitude and relief, if the outcome of a given situation is positive, or desolation and misery for negative outcomes.

In *Structural Fabulation*, Robert Scholes reminds the reader that language and reality are two different aspects of literature, “and never the twain shall meet” (4). He notes how the language used in the novels depicts the characteristics of the contemporary political and social reality the writers want to show and comment on, or better put, that they want to highlight and thus, criticize.

Scholes writes about the social importance of fiction, especially when considering the two functions he mentions in his book: sublimation and cognition. The first function refers to finding a way in which to make sense of the situations life puts forth, as he explains, “turning our concerns into a satisfying shape, a way of relieving anxiety, of making life bearable” (5). This function is related to the fact that readers rethink what is happening in the world around them and how it affects them so

that they can find a connection between what is right or wrong in their lives and consider what can or cannot be changed in order to improve quality of their lives. It also relates to future possibilities, the readers' awareness that destiny can be completely different from the one expected according to what could be considered as a normal course of life due to their present situation. "As sublimation, fiction takes our worst fears and tames them by organizing them in a form charged with meaning and value" (5). In AH this function is very notable because the genre deals with the inversion of a situation, one in which the civil rights are stripped away from a certain group of people making life become totally different from what it was shortly before the war ended. "But the sublimation of anxiety and fear is only one of fiction's major functions" (5). In literature, sublimation is the function that relates to the readers' analysis of what is happening in the world around them, how it actually is; AH deals with how it could be otherwise.

Cognition deals with the reader's notion of individuality, that is, the idea that fiction and reality are not the same. According to Scholes, to think of both as one would be a "realistic fallacy" (6). As he explains, "fiction offers us not transcriptions of actuality but systematic models which are distinct from reality, though they may be related to it in various ways." Fiction is not supposed to be a photocopy of real life, rather a painting or an impression of how fictional worlds can influence real life or be influenced by it. "All writing, all composition, is construction. We do not imitate the world, we construct versions of it. There is no mimesis, only poesis. No recording. Only constructing" (7). According to Scholes, when a novel does not have both or even one of these two functions, sublimation and cognition, it is either "a bad fiction or no fiction at all" (4). A good work of fiction invites readers to rethink past, present

and future possibilities related to themselves and the world around them.

Fiction has its starting point in reality; the distortions that are created along the work will always maintain the connection to reality. This connection is vital for any work; it is the way the distortions are made that makes the work worthy of note. “No man has succeeded in imagining a world free of connection to our existential world, with characters and situations that cannot be seen as mere inversions or distortions of that all too recognizable cosmos” (7). In this sense, fiction takes the reader beyond reality, but never beyond a reality that is recognizable according to the reader’s real world, or beyond the world that can be made possible through the reader’s imagination, based on the reader’s notion of reality. There must be an imaginably possible distortion, or else the work is simply nonsense and unintelligible.

Fiction must be helpful in its relation to humankind, in this way it becomes valuable in its influence over the readers’ stance in the real world. For this to happen, fiction must maintain its connection to reality while distorting it.

If fictions are model versions of reality, rather than either records of the real or fabrications of the unreal, then we must explore the ways in which such models may relate to our existence. And here we may call upon the history of fiction to help us. For the relationship thought to exist between fictional models and reality has itself changed in time. If we, then, make a critical model intended to depict such a change as a developing history, this model should enable us to make some projections into the future, and to speculate about the possible paths open to fiction at the present time. (11)

Time has a considerable influence over fiction. AH novels have a specific timing in a

country's history due to the novel's intended functions which is related to what was happening in the real world and what the writers wanted the readers to be aware of. Novelists may use their works to explain the readers what they think is happening or what may happen in their society; they want to influence their readers towards one or another point of view; or motivate people to take action in a certain direction. "Every fictional work presents a model which stands in some temporal relation to the world of its composition. This seems simple enough, but it is complicated by the fact that time itself has been conceived of differently at different points of history" (11-12). Therefore, whenever a work is read, there are three different points in time united in the reading, the period depicted in the novel, the period in which the novel was written, and the one in which the reader is.

Scholes explains that since history is seen as an ongoing progression of actions, events and situations, past and present historical time are closely linked to each other and this helps to verify how writers depict fictional future worlds.

At first recurrent cycles are noted, in which history seems to repeat itself. But finally the irreversibility of certain historical processes becomes clear. At this point a man may be said to be fully aware that he is *in* history, as a raft is in a river, and that some things, once passed, will never be seen again. The writing of fiction has of course been deeply influenced by these developments. The novel itself may be said to have developed and reached its greatest achievements precisely by learning to regard the present as history. The rise of the novel as a narrative form was marked by a shift from concern with a legendary past to concern with a historical present. (14)

Due to the new literary style of the nineteenth century, when realist writers clearly marked behavioral changes, literature has never been so closely related to historical and behavioral changes as in alternate history novels. The notion “that history is an irreversible process led man inevitably to a new view of the future. . . . The idea that the future might be radically different in its social or economic organization was unthinkable until some time in the seventeenth or eighteenth century, and the impact of irreversible technological change did not become apparent until the nineteenth” (14-15). Once descriptions of past, present and future time in fictional worlds were taken away from the rigid immutable state they had been put in by novelists and poets of previous centuries, writers of the nineteenth century were able to experiment freely with ways of using past, describe the past in ways and styles that had scarcely been touched. The way of showing the passing of time and the way of construing the setting of storylines within the novels were taken away from the hard and fast forms used in previous literary styles. It is true that AH novels had already been written before the nineteenth century, but after this literary shift in which novelists started to manipulate past, present, and future more freely, AH novels had a fresh start.

The idea of a future different from the present, but logically connected to it by developments of present circumstances, gradually impressed itself on writers during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Then utopian fictions, which had always been located outside human time, could be projected into a historical future and linked to the present by imaginative extrapolation. And such works began to appear, as did projections of a disastrous dystopian future. (15)

In the case of allohistorical fiction, writers fictionalize different possibilities for

present or future worlds based on a point of divergence located in a past historical event to show “imaginative models of the future, alternate projections that can give us some sense of the consequences of present actions” (17). In this way, literature fulfills the important role of reinforcing the need for a better social, political, and economic scenario in any country, not just the one or ones mentioned in the novel. Fictional worlds are connected with worlds that are known to readers; when a book is read, another world is created based on the readers’ notion of the world. “All fiction – every book even, fiction or not – takes us out of the world we normally inhabit. To enter a book is to live in another place. Out of the nature of this otherness and its relation to our life experiences come all our theories of interpretation and all our criteria of value” (27). The shift that occurs in the readers’ mind from the real world into a literary world instigates changes that could reflect into the readers’ real world, no matter where this world is geographically located.

As AH writers construe worlds that defamiliarize readers with the realities of their worlds, they encourage the readers to rethink facts and opinions that were once thought of as inflexible but actually are not so rigid and deserve another analysis. This invitation to a critical analysis of the world is not exclusive to allohistorical or any other genre. “What is unique in this form of fiction is the way in which it defamiliarizes things. In the worlds of SF we are made to see the stoniness of a stone by watching it move and change in an accelerated time-scale, or by encountering an anti-stone with properties so unstony that we are forced to reinvestigate the true quality of stoniness” (46). The idea behind this concept is how the writer conveys the message, considering genre, form, and style, so that the message is better understood by the reader. The novel must cause estrangement so that the habitual responses can

be avoided.

In alternative histories, one of their ideas is to ponder the use of power and its consequences in history, for, as Scholes mentions, the fundamental principle of science fiction is precisely this technique of changing the reader's perception of the world. He reminds us that for Darko Suvin the fundamental principle of science fiction is precisely the technique of defamiliarization or estrangement (Scholes 46).

The idea of defamiliarization has been common to all artists, not just novelists. Allohistorical novels generate a clash between what happened and what could have happened, had history been recorded through different eyes, for instance, through the eyes of the defeated party's possibility of victory. The possibility to show history otherwise is a great tool to examine history as it is.

3.3 Historicizing and Problematizing

Whenever writing about historical events, novelists have to deal with the fact that history is a problematic issue. There are always countless versions of any historical event; every time a story is told, a new version is created. Therefore, the term "historical fiction" is more suitable than "historical fact" when it comes to depicting past events that conflict with other accounts. In this sense, what some historians claim to be the truth is more correctly an approximation or a representation of the truth, if ever the word truth can be used when talking about people and history. As Linda Hutcheon asserts in *A Poetics of Postmodernism History, Theory, Fiction*,

The provisional, indeterminate nature of historical knowledge is

certainly not a discovery of postmodernism. Nor is the questioning of the ontological and epistemological status of historical ‘fact’ or the distrust of seeming neutrality and objectivity of recounting. But the concentration of these problematizations in postmodernism art is not something we can ignore. (88)

To problematize means to examine attentively social and cultural aspects related to every historical event and all the possible interpretations that may be drawn from the event. Judgments, interpretations and points of view are based on scientific, social, moral, and political grounds. Hutcheon mentions some of the concepts used to problematize history: “our beliefs in origins and ends, unity, and totalization, logic and reason, consciousness and human nature, progress and fate, representation and truth, not to mention the notions of causality and temporal homogeneity, linearity, and continuity” (87). Such criteria guide the interpretations that are drawn from the accounts, for history and fiction are discourses influenced by the systems of signification.

What the postmodern writing of both history and literature has taught us is that both history and fiction are discourses, that both constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past (“exertions of the shaping, ordering imagination”) In other words, the meaning and shape are not *in the events*, but *in the systems* which make those past “events” into present historical “facts”. This is not a “dishonest refuge from the truth” but an acknowledgement of the meaning-making function of human constructs. (Hutcheon 89)

The assertion above problematizes the idea of assuming history as fact and fiction as

creation. When the concept of fact is disconnected from history and literature assumes the position of historical fact, the whole notion of meaning making is distorted from common systems of signification. Therefore, whenever writing about history, novelists temporarily assume the function of historians because their fictional work is based on historical events that were documented and experienced by many; nevertheless, the plot is a creation, in this sense, the concept of fiction blends with history.

The act of writing must also be examined. AH novels deal with a major historical event, but the novelist distorts historical facts and depicts the fictional world through an alternative perspective; the narration is influenced by the novelists' stance and interpretation of the historical events. "Thanks to the pioneering works of Marxists, feminists, gays, blacks and ethnic theorists," Hutcheon argues, "there is a new awareness in these fields that history cannot be written without ideological and institutional analysis, including analysis of the act of writing itself" (91). In the case of the AH genre, the shift between fiction and reality, especially in *The Man in the High Castle*, due to the metafictional book *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*, highlights the writer's ideology. Reality is distorted in the main plot when Dick fictionalizes a world where Hitler defeated his opponents and won World War II. Another distortion appears in the book written by a character within the book, *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*, which has the historical version of the war, and describes the defeat of the Nazi regime as if it were fiction.

While reading any novel, readers have the perspective of their present experiences, so despite having an event plotted in the past, the novel is inevitably compared with the present. "The past really did exist. The question is: *how* can we

know that past today – and *what* can we know of it?” (Hutcheon 92). The challenge is to read about the past keeping the present in a perspective that does not replace the factual knowledge of the past. Awareness of past events and present interpretations overlap in historical fictions, especially in AH novels.

Historiographic metafiction self-consciously reminds us that, while events did occur in the real empirical past, we name and constitute those events as historical facts by selection and narrative positioning. And, even more basically, we only know of those past events through their discursive inscription, through their traces in the present. (97)

So it comes down to the description of the fact and not the investigation of the truthfulness of the description of the fact. The focus of the narration will always depend on the self-assessment, opinion, and impression of the writer when describing the event and of the reader when reading and interpreting it. The main issue is not the truthfulness of the event, but rather the way by which the event is narrated; there must be an integration of both concepts for the novel to be created and to become credible. “In postmodern fiction, the literary and the historiographical are always being brought together – and usually with destabilizing, not to say unnerving, results” (101). If the plot does not consistently merge fact and fiction, the novel will not have verisimilitude and it will certainly not be appealing. History and fiction do not have hard and fast boundaries separating each other, some historical events are documented, and writers base their story on official documents but will always impress their stance throughout the plot.

Historiographic metafiction, like both historical fiction and narrative history, cannot avoid dealing with the problem of the status of their

“facts” and of the nature of their evidence, their documents. And, obviously, the related issue is that of how these documentary sources are deployed: can they be objectively, neutrally related. (122)

Many versions of the past can be created based on diverging information. History is constantly being challenged by discovery of evidence that enable new versions of events to be rewritten. History changes along the years, versions vary, and the idea of rewriting or reexamining history is very important because balance is achieved through the assimilation of constant change. Fiction makes the evaluation and the understanding of events and their consequences clearer by creating and showing new aspects of the same event. “Nevertheless, it also realizes that we are epistemologically limited in our ability to know that past, since we are both spectators of and actors in the historical process” (122). Of course it is improbable that any writer will not get a biased analysis of any situation, and therefore impress his stance in the plot, despite being directly involved or not, but this is not a problem in fiction. It is true that “storytellers can certainly silence, exclude, and absent certain past events – and people – but it also suggests that historians have done the same” (107). Fiction does not have to deal with truth and falsity as history does, but even for the study of history, these are uneasy issues to deal with concerning the truthfulness of information. As a storyteller gives a different version of the past, a new explanation about the present is simultaneously being given. When a story is being told, there should be attention not only to what truth is told “as much as to question *whose* truth gets told” (123). The storyteller will depict events that echoes documented history through the lenses of personal past experiences because there is a huge gap between knowing and telling.

3.4 The Legacy of War

The alternate scenarios of World War II became very popular in the early 1990s, when the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the conflict was approaching. The legacy of the war was very much present in the minds of the generation that was directly involved in it, as it felt it needed to impress onto the next generation the horrors committed by some and suffered by many so that such atrocities would not be repeated. These allohistorical narratives were also used to criticize contemporary governors and presidents raising public opinion against political problems such as arbitrary or biased political decisions that could do more harm than benefit to a given social or ethnic group. Another very important role of the alternate history works was to help the countries to historicize the past so that they could carry on with their normal activities away from the heavy and negative burdens caused by wars or even the shadows produced by a traumatic and despicable past.

Allohistorical literature is surrounded by great polemic and the revision of these accounts through the lenses of an alternate possibility generates great objections from literary critics and scholars alike. “Several scholars expressed qualms about giving attention to narratives whose unconventional conclusion about the Nazi past they regarded as impious, at best, and dangerously revisionist, at worst” (Rosenfeld 4). Nevertheless, many authors regarded the subject with due respect, examining it as a cultural phenomenon that would bring more benefit than harm when properly scrutinized. After all, the “psychological forces that determine how the past takes shape in remembrance” (12) also determine what political decisions should be taken in the maintenance of power and order so that the nation can provide peaceful conditions for its people to live in and prosper.

One of Rosenfeld's objectives in the study that led to *The World Hitler Never Made* was to help scholars and theoreticians in the analysis of how history could have been written otherwise so that a clearer picture of the results of the war can be seen. It is due to the construction of the memory of important historical facts that there is a clearer understanding of the influences of war over the social, economic, and political aspects of a nation. Rosenfeld believes that through the study of the alternative versions of the war, the real consequences become more apparent. He states that he hopes "to convince readers of alternate history's legitimacy as a subject of scholarly inquiry and persuade them that examining tales of what never happened can help us understand the memory of what did" (4). The understanding of what did happen also leads to assisting in the processes of normalization, aiding social groups to cope with the effects produced by historical facts so that present and future can lead to a better life for the community.

This was especially true in Germany because the generations that came after World War II ended carried a heavy burden of blame because their nation started the war and was directly responsible for the atrocities committed against non-Aryan people. The identity of the generation that came after the war was marred by what their predecessors caused throughout their continent and beyond. They needed to frame the past so that they could carry on with their lives and build their present and future without that dark memory of the war triggered by their blind compliance with an insane leader. There was no limit to how alternate history worlds were presented, so the portrayals of World War II AH fictional worlds have no limit.

The producers of alternate history persist in extending the limit of what is permissible in portraying the Nazi years, but audiences and critics

continue to insist on a narrow spectrum of representational boundaries. The consequences of these differences remain to be seen. But the broader trend is clear: allohistorical narratives of the Third Reich point to a growing normalizing trend in the Western memory of the Nazi Era. (25)

Especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, which was a result of the articulation of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democracy Union (CDU), the normalizing trend gained strength. The political articulation necessary to make the Eastern and Western Germanys become one once again was a result of the need to normalize recent German history and cope with the consequences of the moral and physical destruction left by the Nazi Regime. The unification of the East and West Germanys was the epitome of the need to normalize German political condition in relation to neighboring countries so that the Nazi past could not haunt present and future international relations.

3.5 AH Themes

After scrutinizing hundreds of AH literary works, Rosenfeld noticed that four themes recur in most of them.

These included tales in which: 1) the Nazis win World War II; 2) Hitler escapes death in 1945 and survives in hiding well into the postwar era; 3) Hitler is removed from the world historical stage either before or some time after becoming the Führer; 4) the Holocaust is completed, avenged, or undone altogether. The predominance of these four themes is significant, for it only suggests their resonance within the Western

imagination but enables us to impose some conceptual order on what otherwise would be a bewilderingly diverse range of works. (13)

These four themes enable uncountable possibilities for writers of AH novels to create post-war scenarios that differ completely from the actual post-war reality. They also provide ground for relationships among the various characters that interact in fictional worlds that reflect the alternate outcome of one of the most devastating wars of all times. Fictional worlds depicted the continuation of the horrors that the fascists began to spread during the war; some AH writers questioned whether the communists would have done better or worse than the fascists had they grown into a leading political regime in the world.

Of the four recurrent themes Rosenfeld mentions, the first one caused a great polemic due to the devastating consequences to all “non-Arians”. Hitler planned to exterminate all non-Aryan people, despite his not fitting into the quintessential Aryan characteristics himself. He began executing Jews and African descendants, and then Russians and Gypsies, and would most certainly have done the same to other races and ethnic groups had his army achieved his goal. The second and third themes deal practically with the same issue, the idea of Hitler escaping death or surviving in hiding is quite similar to having him executed either before or after becoming the Führer. Had he really been killed or simply deprived of power, the war would not have reached the devastating proportions it did and not so many lives would have been lost. The idea of his surviving in hiding delivers the message of impunity, the notion that Hitler still has power to corrupt justice and not to be judged for villainy despite losing the war. In this case, the corrupted justice would allow him to live peacefully and get away with impunity despite all the murders caused by his fixation

with ruling the world.

The fourth category has a wider range of possibilities. There are opposing outcomes for the social and political consequences in people's lives if the Holocaust is completed or undone altogether. On the one hand, had Hitler completed his plan, probably not a single Jewish life would be spared and all non-Arians would most certainly become slaves. On the other, had he been stopped before his madness had affected the millions it did, there would not have been so many atrocities as there were in Europe during the war and history would have had completely different references.

One way of criticizing the ruling political forces without creating direct conflicts is through art, not just literature, but any artistic manifestation. In "American Science Fiction since 1960," John A. Sutherland asserts, "It is a feature of SF of the post-1960 period that it has attempted a more direct political intervention than hitherto, and that it has taken its various stands on a political base which is diverse and frequently adversary" (180). All themes and issues explored by novelists had specific goals; one such goal was to alert the people against the negative aspects of certain political tendencies. In the same essay, Sutherland mentions Thomas M. Disch's *Camp Concentration* (1968), whose title is directly linked to the Second World War and its horrors.

The allusion to obscene Nazi experiments is clear enough, but in this case the main experimental subject is a thirty-five-year-old draft resister to what we understand to be in the Vietnam War . . . *Camp Concentration* thus makes the same equation as the omnipresent slogan of the 1960s, US=SS. (183)

AH novels criticized the leaders' political stances and actions thus reminding the

readers of the horrors of an unquestioned and deranged dictator. These accounts also showed the generations that did not have firsthand experience of the war how devastating it had been. “Wartime depictions of a Nazi victory were motivated by the desire to dramatize the dangers posed by Germany to the United States” (Rosenfeld 97). Of course, only those who actually experienced the war could relate to the novels on a deeper level; nevertheless, those who had only heard of it from older relatives, friends, or seen images from documentaries and other sources were able to learn more about how the wounds of war created such a deep scar on those who lived through its horrors. The warning was not just against Germans, but also against all political regimes that could possibly lead to similar catastrophes.

In 1961, the journalist William L. Shirer published an essay in which he discussed how Hitler would have ruthlessly suppressed other nations had he defeated his opponents. “This essay was largely an empirically documented discussion of what the Nazis *did* do in occupied Europe as a method of debating what they might have done in the United States had they succeeded in defeating it” (Rosenfeld 103). The writer argued that the essay was not a fiction; he based his analysis on secret German documents that were found after the Nazis lost the war, some containing what was actually being done to subjugate the citizens in conquered nations. Shirer alerted his readers against the brutal occupation that would certainly have occurred had Hitler not been stopped. He explains that the Nazis would have devastated the American people by “dissolving the nation’s main political institutions and arresting its main political and intellectual leaders. After suppressing the mass media, outlawing trade unions, closing churches, and destroying synagogues, they move on to more dramatic criminal acts . . .” (Rosenfeld 103). The Jewish communities would not be the only ones

persecuted: after making the United States free of Jews, Hitler would move on to the Negroes and then the majority of the white American population, making them become white American slaves subject to Aryan-German conquerors. The warning given by Shirer was against not just Germans, but all political regimes that could possibly lead to similar catastrophic dominance; nevertheless, “Shirer aimed to revive the American memory of Germany’s real historical crimes. The tone of moral outrage that framed his allohistorical discussion of a Nazi victory mirrored the tone used in his bestselling historical study of the Third Reich’s rise and fall” (Rosenfeld 104). These and other accounts of what might have happened had the United States not intervened reinforce the rightful asserted decision to help European nations defeat the Axis. Whether the United States should intervene in the war was an issue that divided the American politicians of the time into two strongly opposing groups, generating one of the most debated American political and social dilemmas.

3.6 The American Dilemma

As Rosenfeld writes, the issue that most troubled the people of the United States of America during the Second World War was whether they should interfere in what was called the European war, whether they would either intervene or simply stand as spectators of the Holocaust. US politicians were divided into isolationism and interventionism. The isolationists thought that they should keep away from the war that they claimed to be the European war, while the interventionists argued that they could not impassively watch the genocide.

In *The Plot against America*, Roth describes the anxiety and fear of the American-Jewish community when the anti-Semitic isolationist Charles A. Lindbergh

runs for president of the United States against the interventionist Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In Lindbergh's campaign, he explains,

“My intention in running for presidency . . . is to preserve American democracy by preventing America from taking part in another world war. Your choice is simple. It's not between Charles A. Lindbergh and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. It's between Lindbergh and war.” (30)

The isolationist politicians regarded the German invasion as if it were occurring in a world apart and therefore would never harm the American people; the interventionists were certain that the threat posed by the Third Reich affected directly the economic interests of the United States in trades with European countries. The interventionists saw not just the humanitarian, but also the political and economic need to interfere. They knew that the economic and political connections with Europe were stronger than the isolationists thought and that the United States would very quickly feel the negative impact of a powerful and insane dictator ruling over such an important and vast land. Rosenfeld writes, “Over the course of the 1930s, public opinion gradually swung over to the interventionist camp, but Roosevelt remained constrained by isolationist demands all the way up to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The alternate histories of the war years reflected these larger tensions within American society” (97). While Britons were closer to danger and needed to explore the possible outcomes of the war, Americans were less preoccupied due to the physical barrier imposed by the Atlantic Ocean. The United States military forces took a decisive and extremely important part in the outcome of the war. The military involvement was a victory of the interventionists over the isolationists. “Once the United States entered the war against Nazi Germany in late 1941, however, the

goal of the intervention was fulfilled and wartime alternative versions of the war largely disappeared” (99). Nevertheless, AH novels showed the North American readers the need to become a strong and united nation in hard times.

In Roth’s story, Lindbergh’s victory over Roosevelt changed the lives of the Jewish people in the United States, who definitely had many reasons to fear for their future because they knew that Lindbergh was a fascist. The non-Jewish community was confident and at ease with their newly elected president; they had faith in Lindbergh’s connections to the rulers of the world’s most powerful nations:

Lindbergh can deal with Hitler, they said, Hitler respects him because he’s Lindbergh. Mussolini and Hirohito respect him because he’s Lindbergh. The only ones against him, the people said, are the Jews. And certainly that was true in America. All the Jews could do was worry. (55)

America was still mending the memory of the economic crack caused by the Great Depression and World War I; most Americans were unwilling to go through the economic burden and human losses that a conflict of that magnitude brings on a nation.

After Germany was defeated, there was no immediate need to continue writing AH novels about World War II, so during the next 15 years not one saw the light of day. The war had turned the United States into the absolute leading Western country in terms of military power, political dominance, and economic influence. Fear now shifted to the Soviet Union and the dreadful Cold War, a fear that made Second World War AH novels unappealing or uninteresting to the public. But in the late 1950s and early 1960s, once again, AH novels became appealing for the public and there was a

new function for this genre. They were regarded as important because they “revived the wartime image of Nazism as the epitome of evil . . . instead of motivating Americans to fight against the Germans, these accounts served the didactic function of preserving the Germans’ crimes in memory . . .” (Rosenfeld 100). The political decisions taken by the White House to intervene in international conflicts were reinforced by the AH novels that were written in that period and thus showed the American citizens their role as a Western military superpower that had the obligation of keeping constant surveillance of and direct interference in any military conflict anywhere in the world. Since the role of the United States in World War II had been so decisive and important to world order and peace, politicians impressed on the American citizens the idea that they had the obligation to continue doing so.

Many novels portrayed the horrors of the Nazi dominated United States living under the rigid totalitarian regime. In most alternate history novels that have Second World War as background, the Germans were depicted as barbarians willing to maintain power through spreading terror and brutality against Jews and non-Jews who tried to defy their orders. One of such novels mentioned by Rosenfeld is *The Sound of his Horn*, by John William Wall, which emphasizes the brutal side of German domination:

The Nazis conquer America with the utmost savagery, punishing the home-grown resistance for sheltering Jews by destroying entire towns – à la Lidice – such as Mount Kisco, New York, and executing hundreds of thousands of non-Jewish Americans for defying German orders. After consolidating their rule, moreover, the Nazis elevate sadism to a social norm, breeding blacks as domestic animals, using Slavs for

savage blood sports, and rendering all racially ‘inferior’ peoples defenseless by giving them tracheotomies at birth to prevent them from speaking or screaming. (Rosenfeld 112)

According to most AH novels, the treatment given to non-Aryans in European territory by the German fanatics was as brutal as or probably even worse than what was given to the ones living in the United States. Many novels also underline the fact that the Nazis will not stop until they rule the world, but their real plan is to conquer Japanese territory. Rosenfeld notes that in *The Sound of his Horn*, the Nazi’s “lust after total power, plotting a final nuclear reckoning with Japan to achieve complete world domination. Indeed, by the end of the novel, the Nazi government has given the Japanese a final ultimatum to surrender or face nuclear destruction” (112). Likewise, in *The Man in the High Castle* there is a conspiracy that has as a final solution to the German’s never-ending hunger for territorial growth a nuclear attack against Imperial Japan’s Home Island. Such accounts of the German savagery serve mainly to preserve the horrible memory of the atrocities committed by the Nazi fascists during the war.

In the 1970s, journalists worried about a growing fascination for Nazism and Hitler’s image among some of the youth. This interest for the Nazi regime, known as the Hitler Wave, “had partly been unleashed by the publication of former Nazi armaments minister Albert Speer’s bestselling memoir, *Inside the Third Reich*, in 1970” (Rosenfeld 112). After the success of the publication, Speer gave an interview to Eric Norden that was published in the June 1971 edition of *Playboy*. “Speer’s comment to Norden that ‘If the Nazis had won the war, [people] . . . would be living a nightmare’ no doubt inspired the writer to imagine some of the very scenarios that he described in *The Ultimate Solution*” (Rosenfeld 113). Both the novel and the

interview reminded the older generation of and explained to the younger ones the criminal acts inflicted on common citizens throughout Europe by the Nazi army. Rosenfeld notes that, while “many Americans seemed to be losing sight of Nazism’s criminality, Norden redirected readers’ attention to it – in the process, vindicating the real historical decision of the United States to intervene in World War II” (113). Even though AH novelists were using the Hitler Wave mainly to sell books, it was a very important response of writers to the possibility of the atrocities of the war being forgotten.

All in all, up through the early 1970s, American alternate histories were united in their depiction of a Nazi victory in World War II. By representing Nazi rule as fanatical, evil, and omnipotent, these accounts expressed a clear sense of moral revulsion against it. This is not particularly surprising given that many of the authors of these tales belonged to the generation that had experienced the traumas firsthand. (115)

As Rosenfeld writes, the emphasis given to the vile conduct of the Nazis in alternate history works was the driving force of the genre in the 1970s. Literature was giving moral support to American intervention in the war, “these narratives served to vindicate America’s real historical decision to intervene in World War II against Germany” (115). It was a way to stand against the isolationist frame of mind and thus give the due credit to those who decided to intervene and help European nations to fight against Hitler’s attempt to conquer the continent.

Some of such allohistorical stories won important prizes and were very well received by critics and public. “*The Man in the High Castle*, for example, won the

prestigious Hugo award for best science fiction novel of 1962 at the World Science Fiction Convention” (115). It was considered as “one of the finest works in the field [of science fiction] in a long time” (115). The significance of AH novels in America was very clearly understood by the readers, who knew of the importance of “preserving the memory of Nazi crimes despite cold-war pressures to ignore them” (116). This was shown by the commercial and critical acceptance of the World War II AH works.

3.7 The Two Fictional Worlds

The present study focuses on *The Man in the High Castle*, by Philip K. Dick, and *The Plot against America*, by Philip Roth. The books are set in the United States and present the influences the Nazi victory would have exerted on the inhabitants of the United States. In these novels, the aftermath of the war is the opposite of the historical one, and the aim of this thesis is to analyze the thought experiment that the two authors created, especially how the characters interact in this different world order and the moral consequences they must bear. Dick and Roth depict a world in which the Nazi regime is politically and economically the most influential; therefore, the Germans control not only the United States of America, but also most of the world.

The novels show an enormous change in the lifestyle of the citizens because the Nazis overturn the major political party. Dick depicts many characters interacting in various situations that reveal their stance toward the regime in which they live. The diversity of scenes and scenarios that are created in the five main storylines help to illustrate how life in the United States of America would be completely altered under the totalitarian Nazi Regime. As Rosenfeld noted, “*The Man in the High Castle* was

distinguished by an extremely intricate and multilayered plot. Dick's novel resists simple summary, but in its broader contours it chronicles how the lives of various American and Japanese characters in San Francisco are disrupted by the erratic policies of the hegemonic Nazi regime" (106). Through the variety of storylines, Dick is able to delineate the daily routine of the characters under German strictness; in this way, the reader can compare the way American citizens live under their current political situation with the one that would be had Hitler won. "Dick's support for interventionism was furthermore visible in the novel's horrific portrait of the United States under Nazi occupation" (106). The way that he presents Germans and Japanese undermining the American people hints at the writer's disagreement with isolationists in their thinking that the United States did not have to interfere in the European war.

The novelists also describe different posture among German and Japanese rulers when it comes to their conduct toward the Americans. Germans treat the conquered US citizens with disrespect and violence, using humiliation and terror as a means to maintain dominance over them. "The Japanese, for their part, treat the occupied America in traditional imperialistic fashion, exploiting it economically but refraining from overt acts of terror or violence" (Rosenfeld 106-07). The Japanese respect the dignity of the American citizens despite being in a politically privileged situation, for their sense of respect toward any life form, human or animal, is above any political position. Keeping their power by means of humiliation and terror goes against their religious belief; because of this they always have a tolerant and humanitarian stance toward the defeated.

3.8 Moralism and Normalization

Many works of art explored the issue of the Second World War, but according to Rosenfeld, AH novels explored the war through lenses that helped the generations to cope with the burden and consequences of the war. Rosenfeld showed that besides having a strong commercial appeal and developing into a cultural phenomenon, allohistorical works assisted in the understanding of the past. According to him, these themes fit into two distinct moments: moralizing and normalization.

From 1945 up through the mid-60s, during what I have called the *era of moralism*, alternate histories adhere to strict ethical conventions in representing the Third Reich. In the ensuing *era of normalization*, from the mid-1960s to the present day such morally principled tales have continued to appear, but they have been challenged and dramatically outnumbered by those offering a more nuanced view of the Nazi years.

(Rosenfeld 375)

Rosenfeld concludes that the memory of war lost some of the moralizing trend and indicated a dangerously increasing apathy toward the memory of the horrors of the Holocaust between the late 1950s and early 1960s. “During the era in which many Europeans and Americans were not yet convinced of Germany’s commitment to democracy, fears of a neo-Nazi revival prompted the writers of alternate histories to remind their readers of the Third Reich’s historical crimes” (376). A more dystopian image of the Nazi victory was depicted, the accounts “shared a belief in Nazism’s inherent evil and expressed a reinvigorated commitment to remembrance. On balance, the tales of these years reflected the enduring trauma of the Nazi experience. At the same time by imagining a nightmarish vision of an alternate past, they validated the virtues of the present” (377). These horrific images aimed to draw attention to the

threat posed by neo-Nazi frame of mind that was gaining power in that period.

From mid-1960s to early 1980s, AH novels began to show more normalized conclusions. As the economic strength of Great Britain, the United States, and Germany began to wither, AH novels “ceased representing the Nazi past in a self-congratulatory manner and began to do so more self-critically. Employing the varied techniques of *universalization*, *relativization*, and *aestheticization*, these tales advanced the process of normalization in emphatic fashion” (377). Nazis were not depicted as monsters anymore; rather, writers focused on expressing dissatisfaction with the current social, political, and economic situation of their countries.

In this period, some American novelists started questioning their countries intervention in World War II; they argued that if the United States had not intervened, they would not have to worry about the menace of communism and the Cold War. British writers expressed “dissatisfaction with the nation’s fall from global dominance” (377). In Germany, the novels from this phase delineated the tendency to a normalizing stance toward the Nazi past, Germans needed to transcend the monstrous legacy left by the Nazi Regime in order to normalize political relations with other countries. Most of the works from these three nations reflected the pessimism that lingered over them due to the economic crisis of the 1980s. The different political moments that influenced allohistorical writers were illustrated by the anxieties and worries depicted in most of the works.

If the dystopian accounts of the early postwar years expressed both lingering memories of the Nazi era’s brutality and ongoing uncertainty about postwar Germany’s political reliability, the normalized narratives of later years (especially in Britain and the United States) revealed the

displacement of these fears by new, present-day anxieties about national decline. (380)

Since the three nations were in economic decline at that time, some works suggested that the world would be better off with Hitler than without him. There was a tendency of imagining that the alternate history would be better than the real history of the present situation due to the pessimism caused by economic crisis.

At the end of the Cold War, American AH novels continued with their self-congratulatory and moralistic approach; other “postwar problems (such as Vietnam War) reduced the singularity of Nazism as the epitome of evil within American consciousness” (384). What actually started to happen after the 1990s was that the United States, Great Britain, and Germany “were involved in the process of refashioning their respective national identities to suit new postwar realities” (385). Each of these nations started this process at a different moment and for a different reason and each one faced different problems during the process.

In the United States, two main driving forces pushed this process forward: one was the fear of the Cold War with the threat of the strong communist block of the Soviet Union, China and Eastern European countries that became united and strong with the Warsaw Pact. The second was the Vietnam War, which was dividing public opinion and causing great national distress. Although the normalization process was different in each of these three countries, it was no less complex in any of them. “The normalization of the Nazi past, in short, is not an undifferentiated process but should be seen as a complex phenomenon composed of parallel trends that are different in motivation but ultimately quite similar in their cultural consequences” (387). The novels chosen for this study are from different periods of the normalization process

and the assertions and conclusion drawn in Rosenfeld's study help to elucidate the focus given by each writer.

3.9 Rosenfeld's Contribution

Rosenfeld has shown that prominent writers used AH genre to write about the memory of World War II and due to their competence and prestige, AH novels reached a vast number of readers. Some of these works became best-sellers and because of their commercial success, they have "reflected as well as shaped Western views of the Nazi era to a greater extent than critics might care to admit" (389). The importance of the genre in modeling and construing the memory of the war while observing contemporary needs of moralizing, normalizing and criticizing was evident to theoreticians and public alike. "Many works of alternate history escaped critical assault and met with respectful, if not admiring, reviews, but the strongly negative reactions towards the higher-profile examples clearly signify that they had struck a nerve" (390). No matter how historians, critics, and the public received the AH genre, it is clear that due to its popularity, "it is worth being aware of its potential impact" (392), because it played an important role in shaping the memory of war as well as assisting on the critical analysis of contemporary politics.

Some historians and critics of AH novels blame writers of the genre for confusing the study of history. As Rosenfeld stresses,

Moreover, alternate history risks *distorting* what little people already know of the past. The more allohistorical tale one reads, the blurrier the line can become between fact and fiction, between reality and wishful thinking. The producers of alternate history, furthermore, have

frequently been guilty of *confusing* readers about their underlying motivations or agendas for speculating about the past. (392)

AH works were not simply for entertaining; they constituted an artistic phenomenon that was crucial for the countries that were directly involved in the Second World War. The contemporary moral standards are not the only neither the best basis for analyzing history. It is important to understand some of the values of the historical period that will be analyzed, because “[w]ithout evaluating the past on its own terms, and by its own moral standards, we impose our own values upon the historical record and thereby risk misjudging and distorting it” (393). German scholars needed to historicize the Nazi era “by abandoning their simplistic black-and-white image of the Third Reich as a story of demonic villains and virtuous heroes and replacing it with a grayer perspective that recognized the period’s immense complexity” (393). It is necessary to observe all social, political, and economic aspects of the era before making judgment of values. Interpretations must not be closed into a rigid scheme based only on moral standards of the past or even be approached from a value-neutral perspective (if ever that is possible) that does not allow different analyses or varied readings of historical events.

Overall, Rosenfeld showed the reach of the AH genre, as well as its importance for the generation directly affected by the war and the ones that came after it. The novels showed how the various alternative possibilities in the understanding of what happened, what could have happened differently, and what are the results of what happened in the destiny of the citizens that were directly affected during the decade that preceded the war and the decades that came after it. The way the four main themes mentioned above were portrayed in the novels led to different

interpretations of the historical events and each assisted through its own way in the main objectives of AH works: moralizing, normalizing, criticizing, and keeping the facts in memory. Hitler was not the only one to be held responsible for the Holocaust; Rosenfeld showed that an amalgamation of social and political aspects was affecting a large number of people not just in Germany, but also in other European nations that helped to culminate in what became the most devastating of wars.

What will be told about World War II in the future, how will it be remembered or written about based on the most recent themes of the latest AH novels is still not clear. Unfortunately, German authors are not writing many World War II AH novels anymore. British and American authors are the ones producing the bulk of AH novels; it is not good for the memory of the war not to have the manifestations of the German novelists alongside with the authors from other nations.

But if past trends provide any indication, future allohistorical narratives will directly reflect contemporary fears and fantasies. The rise of Islamic terrorism, in particular, may have a notable impact upon Western views of the Nazi past. The likely effect of this threat is anything but clear, but it is possible that fears of terrorism may help attenuate the memory of the Nazi era. (Rosenfeld 395)

The most recent crisis, war or conflict of any given historical period will always seem harsher than the previous one; some conflicts or wars take longer to be attenuated in the minds of the ones who were directly impacted by them due to the number of people involved and the way these people were affected. Imagining alternative possibilities will also assist in the decision-making process for crucial military actions and political stances in momentous historical situations.

The devastating proportion of the historical event in the lives and memory of the people is directly related to the amount of effort that needs to be put in the effort to moralize, normalize, and historicize the event. Literature, along with other works of art, does not foretell but can foreshadow real world events through its inventiveness.

Alternate history, of course, cannot predict the future. But it can stretch our ability to imagine how it might come about. At a time in which the United States military has consulted Hollywood screenwriters to conceive of still unimagined terror threats, at a time in which pundits everywhere are calling for the development of new paradigms for formulating foreign policy, collecting intelligence, and ensuring domestic security, any means of reshaping our imagination of what may one day come to pass are welcome. (396)

Whenever we imagine alternative possibilities, we become more prepared to deal with what has happened and get ready for what may come about in our lives and thus “cope with the unpredictability of our contemporary world” (397). As we look back into the recent events that most influenced the United States and the Western world, namely, the September 11 attacks, the Anthrax terror, Saddam Hussein’s and Osama Bin Laden’s killings, through the lenses of AH novels, we can be better “equipped to fashion the world as we would like it to be” (397). In doing so, we can understand, accept, and move on, so we can prosper despite adversities posed before us in any given situation.

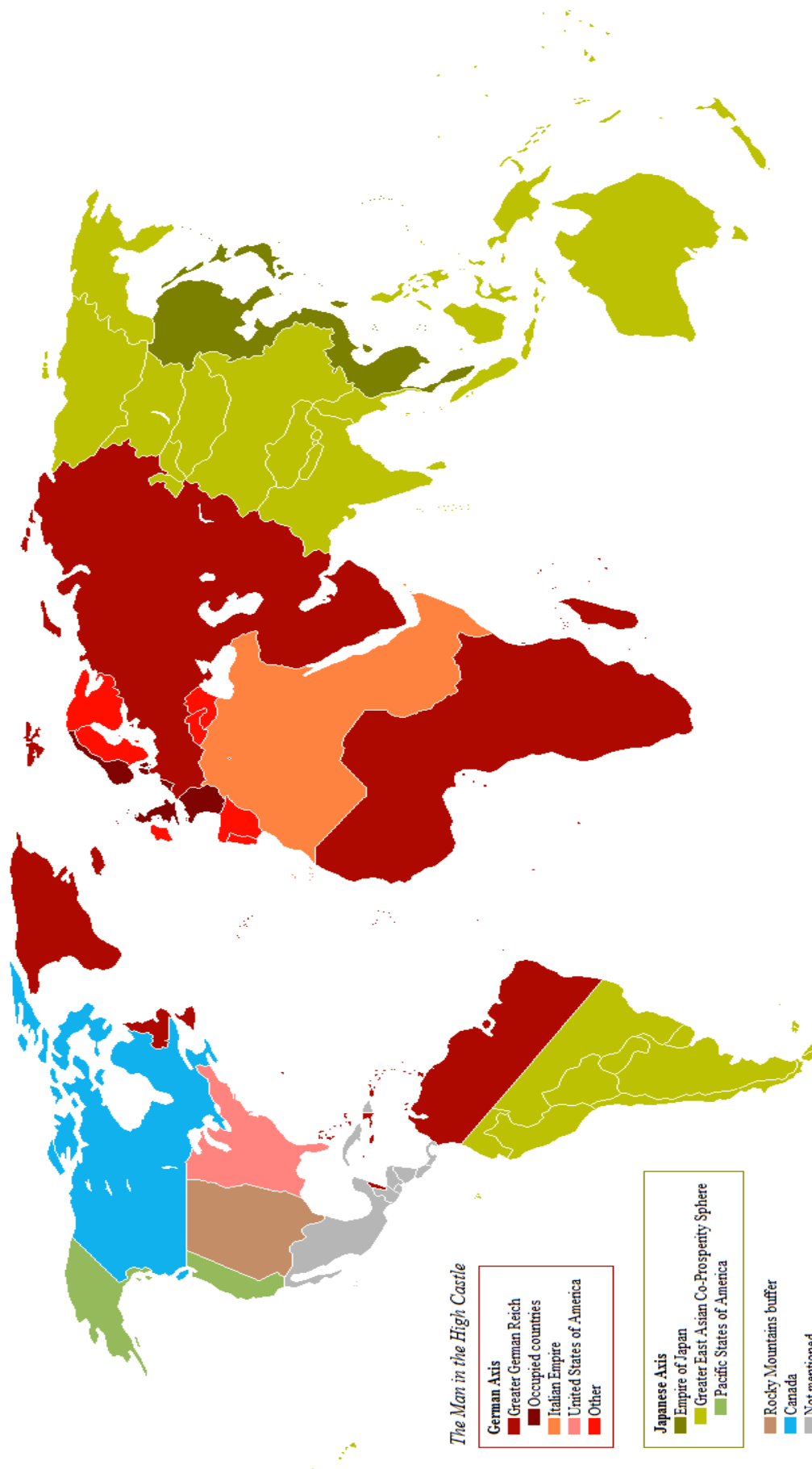
- *The Man in the High Castle*

The Man in the High Castle is set in an America that has seen President Franklin Roosevelt assassinated and has not had any other president capable of leading the country out of the Great Depression. The ruling political party maintains an isolationist policy toward the European war, and therefore the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union lose the Second World War against Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. The political map of the world is drastically altered from 1947 on when the winning superpowers start ruling; major changes occur not just in Europe, but also in the whole world. Dick shares with the reader the first images of his fictional world when he introduces Frank Frink, a Jew who tries to lead a normal life, though with a different identity and last name, in Japanese controlled territory; any Jew found alive would be sent to Germany and executed. “While the Germans were busy bustling enormous robot construction systems across space, the Japs were still burning off the jungles in the interior of Brazil, erecting eight-floor clay apartments for ex-headhunters... And then he thought about Africa, and the Nazi experiment there. And his blood stopped in his veins...” (Dick 11-12). The grim description of the world under Nazi and Japanese control goes as follows: the Mediterranean Sea is turned into farmland and the African continent is destroyed, the tribes wiped out and the people used in experiments. “Prehistoric man in a sterile white lab coat in some Berlin university lab, experimenting with uses to which other people’s skull, skin, ears, fat could be put to. Ja, Herr Doktor. A new use for the big toe; see, one can adapt the joint for a quick-acting cigarette lighter mechanism” (12). The fictional world depicted in the novel is quite intimidating for those characters who are neither

Japanese nor Aryan.

The United States is divided into three separate territories: the Pacific States of America (PSA), ruled by the Japanese Axis; the Rocky Mountain States, a buffer between PSA and the United States of America, and the USA, a puppet state controlled by Nazi Germany. Most of the story takes place in the PSA, but a very important part develops in Colorado, in the buffer Zone, the part when Juliana Frink (Frank Frink's ex-wife) travels to meet Hawthorne Abendsen, the author of *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*. This is an alternate-alternate history novel that most characters read and feel uneasy, as Hawthorne Abendsen postulates a world in which the Nazis lost the war.

The political map of Dick's fictional Nazi controlled world is as follows:



4.1 Historicity

The way time and space are depicted in the minor chronotopes within the story helps readers understand the different roles the characters play and how they influence the plot. Although time is mostly linear, there are specific timelines that guide different stories; five main storylines within the story show the importance of historicity in the exposition of events. Historicity is a key element in a plot in which deceitful and truthful information is constantly being counterpointed in the minor chronotopes to compose a coherent major chronotope and thus depict the novelist's opinion. Two characters talk about the difference between two objects, one having historicity and the other not. For the explanation, the character Wyndam-Watson uses a Zippo lighter as an example of what it means to have historicity.

“One of those two Zippo lighters was in Franklin D. Roosevelt's pocket when he was assassinated. And one wasn't. One has historicity, a hell a lot of it. As much as any object ever had. And one has nothing. Can you feel it?” He nudged her. “You can't. You can't tell which is which. There's no ‘mystical plasmic presence’, no ‘aura’ around it.”
(57)

The issue alluded to in this dialogue is virtually the essence of the technique Dick uses throughout the plot; the constant play between what has reality and falsity in his fictional world is what gets the idea across. Dick expounds on the idea that not only historicity is important in evaluating a work of art. He shows this in a conversation held between the art dealer Childan and Paul Kasoura, one of his customers, who is deeply moved by the aesthetic of one of the contemporary artifact and compares it to a relic.

“This is alive in the now, whereas that merely *remained*. By this mediation, conducted by myself at great length since you were last here, I have come to identify the values which this has in opposition to historicity. I am deeply moved as you may see.” (Dick 155-56)

The narration and especially the conclusion of the plot show that the uncertainty between what is true and false, what is traditional and contemporary permeates the story. The collectables and relics are very important for Childan and his clients; nonetheless, both types of objects are valuable, the ones with historicity and the ones that are contemporary. The last dialogue in the novel, held between Juliana Frink and Hawthorne Abendsen, show Dick’s point, regarding the importance of truth. It goes as follows:

“How strange,” Juliana said. “I never would have thought the truth would make you angry.” Truth, she thought. As terrible as death. But harder to find. I’m lucky. “I thought you’d be as pleased and excited as I am. It’s a misunderstanding, isn’t it?” She smiled, and after a pause Mrs. Abendsen managed to smile back. (229)

This dialogue is part of the last scene when two important characters who oppose the political dominance of the Nazis and Japanese finally meet. The misunderstanding mentioned by Juliana in the dialogue encompasses the whole notion of the alternate-alternate history counterpointed with the alternate history that is constantly juxtaposed in the plot. Once again, Dick depicts confusion between truthfulness and falsity in the fictional world. Juliana strives to save Hawthorne’s life, the character that created the ideal world for non-Aryan characters such as her, the meta-history novel. They meet at the end when she is able to save him from the undercover agent who tries to use her to

come close to Hawthorne and kill him. Their dialogue reaffirms the constant play between what is true and false in the plot. Despite following linear time, the minor chronotopes that are developed help to illustrate the constant shift; reality and falsity are constantly at stake.

4.2 Plot and Storylines

One of the storylines has Mr. Baynes as protagonist. He is an undercover captain of the Reich's Counter Intelligence who travels to the PSA to warn the Japanese against a nuclear attack plotted by a faction within the Nazi Party that intends to expel the Japanese from their territory. As he is introduced in the story, arriving in a rocket from Europe, he tells the person sitting next to him, Alex Lotze, that he is a Swedish executive in the plastic industry. As they carry on their conversation, Baynes gets irritated with at Lotze's attitude and with his "German mind" (37). At the end of their short conversation, Baynes tells Lotze that he is a Jew and threatens Lotze saying that he has strong connections in Berlin, despite being a Jew.

Baynes said "You can report me. But I have very high connections. Some of them are Aryan, some are other Jews in top positions in Berlin. Your report will be discounted, and then, presently I will report you. And through these same connections, you will find yourself in Protective Custody." He smiled, nodded and walked up the aisle of the ship, away from Lotze, to join the other passengers. (39)

One must have strong connections to survive in the Nazi world; there is no democracy, human rights organizations, or civil rights laws to protect anyone. This is

one of the thought experiments developed by Dick: political power is acquired through knowing the right people, no matter which ruling power.

How can a Jew have such influence in Berlin in a society ruled the Nazi? The dialogue between Baynes and Lotze announces one of the criticisms posed by Dick against the fact that the commoner has no concrete political force; power is always delegated to a select group of people, both in extremist and autocratic regimes and in democracies. The individuals of any party in power must make connections (even with political enemies) to survive and remain in power. As the story advances, the reader finds out that Baynes is actually Captain Rudolf Wegener, another character who uses a fake identity to achieve his goal. The unfolding of the novel shows Dick's suppositions on the exertion of power by the leader; in other words, had the United States become a puppet German state, would the power be exerted differently than it was in the 1960s when the novel was written? Would the Vietnam War happen? Would the economic situation of the nation be as it was? Would segregation against African-Americans have such painful outcomes in recent history? Who would have suffered the most, Native Americans, Jews, African Americans or White Americans? These questions are underscored if the readers have in mind the historical and political scenario contemporaneous to the writing of the book.

Another character is Frank Frink, who is actually Frank Fink, a Jew who lives in the PSA. If the Germans find out that he is Jewish, they can ask the Japanese to turn him in so that he can be sent to Europe and sentenced to death. Some Jews were able to change their identities and pretend not to be Jews to escape the Nazis' persecution. Ed McCarthy, a friend of Frink's, and him start to design and sell a collection of jewelry that strongly affects those who see and buy them. Frank ends up

caught in the dilemma of fabricating false jewelry to sell as genuine to make more money or keep his dignity by trying not to fool customers saying the items are genuine antiques when they are not. The possibility of selling the counterfeit pieces in place of real ones is revealing; Dick is depicting the fictional Nazi controlled world to underline that there is a shift in values when truth is distorted. How would an individual behave if he were in the same position as Frink or McCarthy? The moral basis of the characters and the reactions they have show how they are affected by the political shift that occurs in the AH fictional world.

One of the main characters is Mr. Tagomi, a trade missioner in PSA whose storyline intertwines with Mr. Baynes's and Frank Frink's stories. Mr. Tagomi is a Japanese trade missioner who is polite, reasonable, ethical, and displays strong moral principles. He receives important information from Baynes about Operation Dandelion, the German plot to gain control over the Japanese territory. Tagomi gets involved in a dramatic and decisive situation when he needs to kill two German hit men to defend Baynes: he takes two lives to save one. The consequence of this action is deep remorse for Tagomi, as he explains to the German consul. "Guilt nonetheless is on my soul," Mr. Tagomi says, "Blood, Herr Reiss, can never be eradicated like ink" (210). This shows the different personality traits of the two colonizers, the ruthless Germans who are absolutely not trustworthy and the Japanese that despite ruling over a land that historically did not belong to them, the PSA, they are not unscrupulous and unprincipled as the Germans who want to overthrow and dominate a country that used to be an ally and helped them win the war.

Besides killing the German hit men to save Baynes, Tagomi makes the decision of not signing the papers for the extradition of the Jew Frink to Nazi

territory.

“No,” Mr. Tagomi said. He returned the 20-50 form to Mr. Ramsey. Then he grabbed it back, scribbled on the bottom, *Release. Ranking Trade Mission. S.F. authority. Vide Military Protocol 1947. Tagomi.* He handed one carbon to the German consul, the others to Mr. Ramsey along with the original. “Good day, Herr Reiss.” He bowed. (211)

Such actions show the moral standards and personality values of the character despite his high post in a politically dominated territory. The scene ends with Tagomi having a heart attack in consequence of killing two men. He strongly values life, and having taken someone’s life with his own hands is something that he cannot forgive himself for, even though he was under extreme duress.

The storylines of Frink and Tagomi mingles with Robert Childan’s, who owns American Artistic Handcrafts Inc., an Americana antiques business. He tries to maintain his pride and honor while dealing his rare antiques with his customers. As he explains to a new customer that enters his store, “No contemporary American art; only the past could be represented here, in a store such as this” (7). This line explains his attitude of living in the glorious past the American people had before they lost the war. Childan shows his merchandise to a young couple who enter the store, Paul and Betty Kasouras, who become dazzled with his products and tell him that they are moving to a new apartment and want some of his antiques to decorate their home. They soon invite Childan to visit, probably so that he could help them choose the pieces. As he pays them a visit, he feels very important to walk into the affluent Japanese neighborhood. Being socially around members of the elite, who were his best customers, gives him great pride but also causes anxiety and apprehension. All

these storylines show the consequences of the swapping of political power derived from the point of divergence; Dick emphasizes the change in lifestyle and downgrading of American social status through Childan's attitudes toward his business and the way he feels when he deals with his clients.

A mysterious customer finds out that one of the artifacts bought in the antiques shop, a Colt .44 revolver, is a counterfeit and this causes Childan great distress; the client was willing to buy many more items in the store but returns and gets his refund for the gun. The client is from Japan; he does not seem to know anyone in the PSA and seems to be there for a short period, after which he will return to Japan. "Childan felt a tiny measure of relief. Then few others would detect. Perhaps no one else. Secret safe. Let matter drop? He considered. No. Must investigate" (53). He feels that the incident will not mar the respect and recognition of the business's good name. Childan considers, later on in the story, to start selling items that are not traditional American artifacts. He receives the visit of Frank Frink, who goes to his store to sell some of his handmade jewelry.

"Handwrought. Each unique. Each an original. Brass, copper, silver. Even hot-forged black iron."

Childan glanced into the hamper. Metal on black velvet, peculiar. "No thanks. Not in my line."

"This represents American artistry. Contemporary."

Shaking his head no, Childan walked back to the cash register. (127)

Eventually, Childan takes some of the pieces on consignment and has a surprise with a customer who is mesmerized by one of the pieces of Edfrank's Jewelry.

Another storyline shows Juliana Frink, the young energetic and beautiful judo

instructor who lives a quiet life in Colorado and is Frank's ex-wife. She becomes involved with Joe Cinnadella, whom she meets in a café at lunchtime. He and his colleague are truck drivers; they stop by only for a meal. Joe and Juliana flirt at the café and start a relationship. He sleeps over in her apartment and his workmate continues the trip, leaving him behind. He gives Juliana a copy of the polemical book *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*, and the story fascinates her with the possibility of having their world changed into the alternative outcome of the war as proposed by Hawthorne. Joe talks her into meeting the author in his home, the high castle of the title.

As he ate, Joe nodded at the book and said. "That Abendsen lives around here, according to the cover. In Cheyenne. Gets perspective on the world from such a safe spot, wouldn't you guess? Read what it says; read it out loud."

Taking the book, she read the back part of the jacket. "He was in the U.S. Marine Corps in World War II, wounded in England by a Nazi Tiger Tank. A sergeant. It says he's got practically a fortress that he writes in, guns all over the place." (78)

Joe poses as a nice person, but ends up being sinister; he tries to use Juliana to achieve his plan. She later finds out that he is actually a Swiss mercenary assassin who tries to use her to get close to the Hawthorne Abendsen to kill him. She fights him to save her life and Abendsen's.

Once again, the plot has a character that uses a false identity to pursue his goal, this character lacks basic moral standards, and he is cruel and deceitful. In the same storyline, there is a good character contrasting with the evil one; Juliana possesses

strong moral principles and she displays her good intentions and high-minded values behind her actions. Dick constantly shows a stark contrast of moral basis between the characters of both sides of fictional AH society, the dichotomy between the evil Nazi and Japanese conquerors and the nostalgic and humble temperament, but charged with the pride of the conquered American citizens.

4.3 Meta-History

As mentioned earlier, *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* is a book written by the character Hawthorne Abendsen, the titular man of the high castle. The book exerts a considerable influence on other characters because of the inversion of political dominance proposed by Abendsen in contrast with the situation in *The Man in the High Castle*. In Dick's novel, reality is always questionable and he uses this device to provoke thoughts on what is right and wrong when it comes to evaluate the sociopolitical grounds of a society. The theme is underscored by the major chronotope of Hitler winning the war counterpointed or juxtaposed by the meta-history of Hitler losing the war. Since Abendsen speculates on the possibility of the Allied Forces having won, Dick's plot shows the effects of the distortion of the truth through the reaction of the characters who read the alternate-alternate history proposed by Abendsen.

Dick uses the meta-history, to oppose realities and turn falsity into reality in his alternate history. The meta-history within the main story enables the real readers (not the fictional ones) to alternate the views of the world back from the previously alternative concept that Dick used to compose his work and to notice how this book influences the characters. This is probably the main thought experiment proposed by

Dick. The plot instigates the readers to rethink the political institution that guides the American society of his time. Is it possible for the government to shift into a political orientation different from the current one? If so, what would be the positive and negative impacts on the society? What concrete changes would occur in the society through the inversion of values in the actions of the politicians and in that of the citizens? What would be the concrete changes and implications of the United States of America becoming a Nazi colony?

As in the Bakhtinian concept of dynamic description mentioned in the first chapter of this study, just as the readers of Homer can perceive the beauty of Helen by the reactions of the Trojan elders, not only by the description of the beauty, the readers of *The Man in the High Castle* can perceive the possibility of living under an inversion of powers through the reactions and comments of Abendsen's readers. Most characters that read Abendsen's book find it intriguing; it is unimaginable for the characters that a world that does not have the Nazis in power may exist. Both Abendsen and Dick invite their readers to consider a concrete possibility of change.

According to Bakhtin, the minor chronotopes help to create the major chronotope, which is the macro picture of the plot. The combination of descriptions of time, space, values, and emotions help to show how influential the meta-history of Abendsen's novel is in the reactions of the characters of *The Man in the High Castle*. The *mise en abime* technique used by Dick shows how the subplots are important in supporting the shift of political influence: they are connected in the proposed opposition of powers, thus explaining what Dick is proposing all through the novel: truth is not easy to depict; many are the truths behind any story and version. Dick states that the whole condition in which the characters find themselves, the one of

living under the Nazi regime, can actually be just a misunderstanding. Truth is not what is presented to the characters as such, for their truth can be living in a world where Hitler has actually lost. The confusion created by the *mise en abime* is precisely what Dick depicts through the overlapping of reality and falsity. Here, as in many of his other novels, he presents his deep distrust of any one being able to ascertain reality.

This shift of realities within the plot is what the alternate history does when a point of divergence is placed at the outset of the story. The reader is faced with a world that has a different organization and set of values, a possibility that inverts the world order. What happens to the characters' emotions and values as they read *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* reflects what might happen to the readers of AH novels. Realities are shifted so that the truth can be questioned, false scenarios are created so that real life can be scrutinized and thus questioned. When there is questioning, there is also criticism, and this process can lead to positive changes. The novel shows that the characters' values and emotions combined with descriptions of time and space create the appropriate scenarios to depict the influence of the political power over the characters' lives and interactions.

There are many examples of the different attitudes of the Nazis and Japanese characters in the way they deal with the precedence given by political power over the American characters. The Japanese colonizers are depicted as morally correct, respectful and never abusive of Americans, even though they control the PSA. The Germans, on the other hand, are ruthless and disrespectful. They abide by the law only when they want to and believe that they should rule the whole world, not just parts of it. The dystopian reality is shown by the repressive social control systems used by the

Germans, the regime's unlimited and incoherent use of power.

4.4 Conspiracies

The Man in the High Castle has two major conspiracies. One is the Operation Dandelion, a nuclear attack on Japanese territory plotted by a faction of the Nazi Party. This attack is meant to diminish Japanese power so that German territory can be expanded. The Germans are about to break their political treaty by conspiring against their allies. They plan to do so is by attacking Japanese homeland and invading the land that once belonged to the United States but now is under Japanese rule. As Mr. Baynes explains, there is an incident bound to happen on the border of the German puppet nation of the United States and the buffer zone of the Rocky Mountains State; then there will be an invasion and the conflict starts. In the sequence, Germany will declare war because of the invasion of their controlled territory, all of this though is a camouflage of their real plan, as Mr. Baynes explains:

“The basic purpose of Operation Dandelion,” Mr. Baynes said, “is an enormous nuclear attack on the Home Islands, without advance warning of any kind.” He was silent then.

“With purpose of wiping out Royal Family, Home Defense Army, most of Imperial Navy, civil population, industries, resources,” General Tedeki said. “Leaving overseas possessions for absorption by the Reich.” (166)

This conspiracy shows that the Nazis are unscrupulous, greedy, and not trustworthy; they are unable to respect treaties and will do anything to conquer the whole world, not just parts of it. This is probably a critique against the contemporary actions of the

belligerent military politics adopted by the United States in the 1960s, the time when the novel was written.

The second conspiracy is against the author of the book *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*. The Germans are infuriated with Abendsen's book; they ban it, but also want to kill him as a punishment for writing such preposterous story. That storyline involves Joe and Juliana. After he seduced her and talked her into going to Abendsen's home to meet the great man in the high castle who wrote such an interesting novel, she finds out that Joe actually wants to kill Abendsen.

“You must be as SD man,” she said. “Posing as a wop truck driver. You never fought in North Africa, did you? You're supposed to come up here to kill Abendsen; isn't that so? I know it is. I guess I'm pretty dumb.” She felt dried up, withered. (184-85)

This revealing information infuriates and puzzles Juliana at the same time; she could not understand why he got her involved in the whole plan. Joe explains: “We have a folder on Abendsen and it seems he is attracted to a certain type of dark, libidinous girl. A specific Middle-Eastern or Mediterranean type.” (185). As Juliana uncovers the scheme to kill Abendsen, she feels sick and Joe starts to force her to get dressed so that they could leave the hotel to meet up with Abendsen. She refuses and they start a fight that ends up with her slitting his carotid artery with a razor blade.

Dick's novel focuses on different political organizations in the North American continent; the characters get involved in clashes that reveal their mindset, which is influenced by their lack of freedom in the totalitarian regime. The “subtle air of menace [that] lies over [Joe Cinnadella and Juliana Frink's] situation” (Mathers 1) results from the constant threat posed by the rulers, which influences the moral

standards of the characters. Dick uses the interconnections of history, truth, and creativity to weave an elaborate narrative in which relativism undermines truth. To give his idea a literary substratum, Dick has his characters constantly resorting to *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*. The appeal to the oracle highlights the belief that the past determines the present, and that present decisions influence the future, but most of all that life is always bound to change.

Dick uses history and creativity to expound on the value of truth; he also suggests that major changes are always possible, and in many cases, needed. Minor changes (in individual lives) are a consequence of major changes (in political regimes), they are interrelated and interconnected. The individual is always influenced by the whole. The novel instigates the readers to evaluate their present based on outcomes of the past. Reimagining how the present speculates on different possibilities for the future is the ultimate proposal of the AH genre.

- *The Plot against America*

The Plot against America portrays an American family living in Newark, New Jersey in the 1930s and 1940s. Charles Lindbergh defeats Franklin Roosevelt in the presidential election, and the United States witness attacks against the Jews on various social spheres in the will to Americanize different ethnic groups, as well as to disestablish communities and diminish their electoral powers. Despite using Lindbergh as a strong character whose purpose is to reinforce prejudice against the Jewish people, *The Plot against America* unveils any demagogue's attacks against minority groups, be it due to their religion, gender, skin color, sexual preference or any other belief, orientation or status. The thought experiment proposed by Roth in the novel exposes issues of ethnic and cultural beliefs, one of which is whether a Jewish family or any other family that belongs to an ethnic group that differs from the majority of the population of a country should change their habits or beliefs and not to be forced to abandon their nation due to political disagreements. In an extremist political regime, the leader tries to suppress some ethnic habits, rituals and the public demonstrations of creeds. Roth expounds on this issue, depicting the unjust way the Jewish community starts being treated at the beginning of Lindbergh's presidency. In other words, should the Jewish characters accept being Americanized by the president to fit into his image of a quintessential nation and therefore abandon their ethnic principles?

The word "Americanize", which is intimately connected to the theme of the novel, is already devoid of sustainable basis in its denotation once one keeps in mind what was done to the original Native American population that inhabited the land

before the first intense immigration. The English and Dutch pilgrims that came aboard the Mayflower in 1620 were only the first of thousands of settlers who would quickly disembark on American territory in a relatively short period. Many nations and ethnic groups form the United States of America essentially. American culture is composed of mainly European immigrants; and yet, people from the other continents were also driven to the United States for various reasons throughout the last centuries.

The Plot against America turns the spotlight on an American family. The novel depicts the second generation born in the United States. The children study in a typical American school and the only nation they have known, respected, and loved is the United States of America. The father insists on showing his love and devotion for the American nation along with the citizenry of his community. He is respectful and devoted to making his life and his family's life a model of what it means to be a hardworking and law-abiding American citizen. The only difference they bear, which, according to the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, was supposed to be minor, becomes a major issue: their ethnicity.

The political orientation of a nation determines the way citizens live, from the chores of family life to social interaction. Philip Roth, the novelist, creates a fictional Roth family to show how different the United States of America would be for the Jewish families had a fascist been elected as its 33rd president. As Roth writes in a 2004 essay published in the *New York Times*, "To tell the story of Lindbergh's presidency from the point of view of my own family was a spontaneous choice. To alter the historical reality by making Lindbergh America's 33rd president while keeping everything else as close to factual truth as I could – that was the job as I saw it" (n.pag.). Roth creates his version of a turbulent historical moment, imagining the

anguish and despair the American-Jewish families would undergo mirrored in the experiences suffered by millions of Jewish families in Europe at the onset of World War II. The novel depicts how the Jewish-American community would probably react with the real pressure of anti-Semitic threat.

5.1 The Fictional Roth Family

The choice of creating characters that mirrored his own family allowed Philip Roth to show his parents' firm personality and strong moral principles, using them as examples of typical American-Jewish parents of the period he decided to portray. The novel is set in a historical moment that caused suffering not only for his but also for all Jewish families living in the United States. Although his family was not directly affected as the European families were, the war was very much present in their lives and in their community. As he writes in an essay, "The great world came into our house every day through the news reports on the radio that my father listened to regularly and the newspapers that he brought home with him at the end of the day and through his conversations with friends and family and their tremendous concern for what was going on in Europe and here in America" (n.pag.). Roth explains that children in those days learnt much about German and American anti-Semitism before going to school; likewise, children of non-Jewish parents were being taught to despise Jews.

In the essay mentioned above, Roth describes his father, "with all the vast energy he was able to pour into what I call his 'reforming instincts,' and [his] mother performing each day in methodical opposition to life's unruly flux'" (n.pag.). The description surely fits many other mothers and fathers of that period; the reactions his

family had to what was happening were probably very similar to many others in Europe. The fictional Roths depict how a crumbling social order disestablishes family life very quickly and most times in irreparable ways. Roth's older brother was an inspiring example both in life and for his fictional self in the novel. The narrator was Philip's fictional avatar as a seven-year-old child. "The story is narrated by me as an adult looking back 60-odd years at the experience of that child's family during the Lindbergh presidency, but nonetheless a child plays a role in this book comparable to the role generally played by adults in my other books" (Roth n.pag.). Young Philip, the narrator, guides the reader through the transformation and tension that creeps in the Jewish community, as what starts as slight prejudice against Jews quickly turns into national hatred.

5.2 The Fascist American President

In real history, along with the famous pilot Charles Lindbergh, other eminent Americans such as Henry Ford were isolationists and anti-Semitic. Roth's choice of an anti-Semitic American hero to become the president generates more impact in the eyes of a Jewish child than if he were an executive. The disillusion is greater because the child has to deal with the opposing stances between the American and the Jewish communities of iconic figures that are at heart. This gives the narration of this Jewish boy more punch because major sociopolitical changes occur in the plot and are explained through the eyes of a young and naïve character who sometimes is incapable of grasping how the changes will directly influence his home.

The Republicans agreed that the war started with Europeans, who should deal with it. Due to the recent economic crisis generated by the Great Depression and the

First World War, most Americans did not want another war or any other episode that would drain an economy that was still recovering. The 1940 presidential election happened “when the country was angrily divided between the Republican isolationists and the Democratic interventionists, who didn’t necessarily want to go to war either but who believed that Hitler had to be stopped before he invaded and conquered England and Europe was entirely fascist and totally his” (Roth n.pag.). Historically speaking, this election had the Democrat Franklin Roosevelt reelected for the third term; his Republican opponent was Wendell Willkie, and not Charles Lindbergh. When questioned about the decision to make Lindbergh a candidate for the presidency, Roth replied:

I came upon a sentence in which Schlesinger notes that there were some Republican isolationists who wanted to run Lindbergh for president in 1940. That’s all there was, that one sentence with its reference to Lindbergh and to a fact about him I’d not known. It made me think, “What if they had?” (n.pag.)

This questioning is what leads to the main thought experiment developed in the novel. What would have happened to the Jewish people in the United States with a Republican isolationist in charge of the White House? The fictional world proposed by Roth shows one possibility. In the novel, when Lindbergh decides to run against Roosevelt in 1940, the tradition of presidents serving only two terms and the idea that “it can’t happen here,” espoused by Rabbi Bengelsdorf, helps propel Lindbergh into the White House on a peace platform. Once elected, Lindbergh begins to take anti-Semitic actions along with right wing political tendencies.

All changes regarding the political attitudes taken by the American president

toward the Jewish community are part of a well-elaborated Nazi plot against America that is unveiled in the last pages of the book. The author links the real story of the kidnapping of Charles Lindbergh's son, a 20-month-old toddler abducted from his crib in their New Jersey home on the night of March 1, 1932 and found dead eleven days later, to the fictional Nazi plot. Lindbergh Junior was flown to Germany to be taken care of by the Nazis. Charles and Anne Lindbergh were informed that their child had been smuggled to Germany and arrived safely. They were "assured that the best of care would be given him by a specially selected team of Nazi doctors, nurses, teachers, and military personnel – care merited by his status as firstborn son of the world's greatest aviator – provided that the Lindberghs cooperated fully with Berlin" (322). The parents were only allowed to see the boy years later, "by then a handsome fair-haired boy of almost eight who, from the day he'd arrived in Germany, had been raised as a model Hitler youth" (322). The boy was not informed who his parents were and the Lindberghs were not allowed either to speak to or to photograph him. The boy became the bargaining chip for the whole operation. "As a result of this threat, for the next ten years the lot of the Lindberghs and their kidnapped child – and gradually, the destiny of the United States of America – was determined by Adolf Hitler" (322). This episode is the fictional cause of the persecution imposed on the Jewish-Americans led by the American president.

Throughout the novel, Roth depicts situations in which thousands of American Jews suffer the consequences of persecution and hundreds are even murdered. All of this happens so that the president can preserve the physical integrity of his firstborn child. There is so much sacrifice and suffering to protect one life while thousands of others are humiliated, menaced, and left unprotected. Hitler used Lindbergh to start

the job of cleansing America of Jews before the Nazi Army could invade the United States and conquer the North American continent. As Lindbergh diligently promoted hatred against American Jews and kept the United States out of the war, he allowed the Nazi army to advance without having to fight against the powerful, massive American army. Roth shows that the White House was actively backing Hitler's cause and undermining the strongest of the national American values of liberty, freedom, and property promulgated by the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights ratified in 1791.

In Roth's novel, the focus is on a Jewish-American family who sees their rights as American citizens slowly stripped away by their own president. As the conflicts between the Jewish-American community and the anti-Semitic Americans fueled by the White House start brewing, the family structure, regarding respect and discipline, begins to fall apart. Philip Roth shows how media plays an important role in disseminating political propaganda that severely harms minority groups; the effects of the social burdens become evident as the reader sees the problems that start to arise within the narrator's family.

5.3 Fictional Mr. Roth's Authority at Stake

The thought experiment developed in the novel refers to the influence political changes have on family life. This is developed in the interactions among the characters of the fictional Roth family, their friends and the members of non-Jewish communities. Mr. Roth (the fictional father) has a nephew, Alvin, who became an orphan early in life and went to live with the Roths until he finished high school. He was twenty years old when the war started. At the time, he worked as a driver for Mr.

Steinheim, the richest Jew in town, and lived in a rented room upstairs from a shoeshine parlor. Alvin has a hard time putting up with his boss: “he’s a fake, he’s a bully, he’s a cheapskate, he’s a screamer, he’s a shouter, he’s a swindler, he’s a man without a friend in the world, people cannot stand to be anywhere near him, and I, said Alvin, have to chauffer him around” (47). Mr. Roth “called Alvin’s complaints kid’s stuff” (50) and told him to mind his own business while at work. He tried to show his nephew that he was privileged to be working for a rich and powerful Jew.

Mr. Steinheim soon sees that Alvin is a smart boy and decides to send him for four years of college education at Rutgers with all expenses paid. The boy would graduate and start working in Mr. Steinheim’s business in a better position. Despite his boss’s offering him free education and a better job in the construction company, Alvin quits his job. He cannot cope with the way his boss treats people and runs his business. Mr. Roth is infuriated with his nephew’s decision:

“You really want to sit there and tell me that the worst human being ever born is a man who wants to make you an educated person and find you a place in his building company? No, no, the worst human being ever born is Hitler, and frankly I’d rather be fighting that son of a bitch than waste my time with a Jew like Steinheim, who only brings shame on the rest of us Jews by his goddamn – ” “Oh, don’t talk to me like a child – and the ‘goddamn’s I can live without too.” (51)

Alvin is unable to make his uncle understand that Mr. Steinheim is not just a terrible example of a Jewish-American. He lists cases of his bad attitude with his employees and with his own family. Alvin also tries to make a point saying that Steinheim is a dangerous person to work for due to all the hatred nurtured by his workers and

suppliers. In defiance of his uncle's opinion, and therefore his authority, Alvin decides to go to Canada to join the army against Hitler. As the narrator explains, "the boy whom my father had single-handedly changed from a callow good-for-nothing into the family's conscience" (52) picked up his last pay on a Friday evening, threw the car keys into the boss's face and left without saying good bye.

This disobedience was the first big blow on Mr. Roth's authority, and thus to his moral standards, and a strong example of insubordination especially for Sandy, Philip's older brother. A blow against the dignity of the family came next during the family's long planned trip to Washington DC. That was the beginning of the problems Mr. Roth would soon face with his eldest son's attitude problem.

5.4 Americanizing Jews

One of the president's actions was to create a program called Just Folks from the Office of American Absorption – OAA, which was apparently an exchange program between teenagers from minority groups and rural American families. This caused conflict between Sandy and their father because the boy saw the program as an opportunity to meet other people and see other places. Despite being American, Sandy knew that they had dissimilar habits from other American families because of their ethnicity, so in his eyes, it was really an exchange of knowledge and culture between him and a non-Jewish family. Mr. Roth soon noticed that the OAA office covered ulterior motives. As the narrator explains, it was supposedly for "encouraging America's religious and national minorities to become further incorporated into the larger society, though by the spring of 1941 the only minority the OAA appeared to take a serious interest in encouraging was ours" (85). In fact, the only ones who

traveled were Jewish teenage boys, they were sent to farms hundreds of miles away from their families to work the land along with farmers. Evelyn, Mrs. Roth's younger sister, who was directly involved in Just Folks, encouraged and stimulated Sandy to enroll. She and Mr. Roth had an argument in a family dinner about the possibility of Sandy participating.

[M]y father maintaining that Just Folks was the first step in a Lindbergh plan to separate Jewish children from their parents, to erode the solidarity of the Jewish family, and Aunt Evelyn intimating none too gently that the greatest fear of a Jew like her brother-in-law was that his children might escape winding up as narrow-minded and frightened as he was. (86)

The program was "described by Lindbergh's newly created Office of American Absorption as 'a volunteer work program introducing city youth to the traditional ways of heartland life' – my brother left on the last day of June 1941 for a summer 'apprenticeship' with a Kentucky tobacco farmer" (84). Sandy was overwhelmed with the summer job; it gave him the chance to have experiences he would not have had at home, especially ones that were forbidden by their creed, like eating pork meat.

His father was right in saying that it was an anti-Semitic program, for it instilled in Sandy doubt regarding their religious references and questions toward his father's authority. A few days after returning home from the exchange program, Sandy is invited to a dinner at the White House to meet the president and talk about his experience in the Just Folks program. Mr. Roth does not want him to go and this starts an argument between father and son. This dinner invitation creates a conflict between father's ideals and the son's determination to do what he thinks is right and wants and

not what his father demands. Sandy says that he must go to the White House because he cannot disappoint his aunt, but in his father's view, it was Evelyn who disappointed the family. The argument becomes a terrible discussion and ends up with mutual accusations.

Pointing his finger, my father said, "Don't mimic your stupid aunt. Don't talk back like that ever again."

"You're a dictator," Sandy said to him, "you're a dictator *worse* than Hitler." (193)

For Mr. Roth this was a proof that Lindbergh's Just Folks program was achieving its real goal, to disestablish Jewish-American families. After hearing his son's accusations, Mr. Roth turns his back in disgust and goes to work. Although the Roths do not approve of corporal punishment, Mrs. Roth smacks Sandy across the face and tells him he would come straight home after school.

"Your father laid down the law – you better obey it."

He didn't flinch when she hit him, and now, all resistance, he undertook to enlarge his heroism by brazenly telling her, "I'm going to the White House with Aunt Evelyn. I don't care whether you Ghetto Jews like it or not." (193)

After this remark, Sandy receives a second blow from his mother and this time he bursts into tears. Had he reacted otherwise, explains the narrator, his caring and loving mother would have continued until she broke down her eldest son's defiance. This is a significant moment in the story because it shows that the son wants to change the family values and laws constructed over many years within the household to have the newly created interests (fomented by the OAA) take precedence. The unusual scene

and the attitude of his loving mother shock the narrator.

“She doesn’t know what she’s doing,” I thought, “she’s somebody else – *everybody* is”, and I grabbed my schoolbooks and ran down the back stairs to the alleyway and out to the street, and, as if the day weren’t already gruesome enough, there was Seldon waiting on the front stoop to walk me to school. (194)

Probably inspired by his cousin Alvin’s example of disrespect and insubordination to Mr. Roth, Sandy thinks he also does not have to abide by his father’s determinations anymore. Little by little, the peaceful, respectful, and harmonious Roth family starts crumbling, with disrespect and violence mirroring what is happening with the Jewish communities across the United States. The Roth family offers a stark reflection of what is happening in the country.

5.5 Young Roth, the Narrator

As Ron Charles notes in the review for *The Christian Science Monitor*, there is “the danger of making this 7-year-old boy look cloying or inappropriately sophisticated, but Roth keeps his bifocal vision in perfect focus.” However, Roth’s skill as a writer brings about “a profound examination of the way children negotiate their parents’ ideals and their culture’s prejudices along the way to developing not just a political consciousness but a sense of safety in the world.” Through the narrator’s naïve perception of world order and the shattering of the family ties, Roth depicts the horrors of ethnic persecution. As he explains, “At the center of this story is a child, myself at 7, 8 and 9 years of age” (n.pag.). There is a difference between the perspective of the boy and the adults’ in the story. America is crumbling from the serious and harsh consequences of the White House’s Republican orientation. The

narrator shows the fears and anxieties from the perspective of a child. He tries to escape the conflicts in his household by fleeing one night to a Christian orphanage. As he is escaping, he has an accident and is taken back home on the allegation of having sleepwalked.

The author clarifies that “the deepest reward in the writing and what lends the story its pathos wasn’t the resurrection of my family circa 1941 but the invention of the family downstairs, of the tragic Wishnows, on whom the full brunt of the anti-Semitism falls” (n.pag.). As he explains, Seldon, the only child of the Wishnows is, for young Philip “the responsibility that you can't get rid of. The more you want to get rid of him, the less you can, and the less you can, the more you want to get rid of him. And that the little Roth child wants to get rid of him is what leads to the tragedy of the book” (n.pag.). Not that young Philip had direct involvement in the tragic events of Seldon’s life, though he has his bit of guilt, it is just the selfish way that he wants to get rid of the boy all along the story despite the boy seeing him as a role model.

Mr. Wishnow commits suicide at home; Mrs. Wishnow takes on his job but has to move to Kentucky with the son, Seldon, because the insurance company she works for, Metropolitan Life, was among the corporations that decided to participate in the government relocation program. A few days after they arrive in Kentucky, she has to drive to Louisville, more than 100 miles away, to go the regional office of her employer and does not return home. Seldon makes a collect phone call to Mrs. Roth at ten o’clock p.m. saying that his mom left that morning and had not yet returned. He is hungry, desperate and keeps on saying that his mom did not return because she is dead and now both his parents are dead. Mrs. Roth calms him down and says that she might have just been caught in traffic. “But Seldon had it perfectly right: Mrs. Wishnow was

dead, though no one would know until the following day, when the burnt-out car containing his mother's remains was found smoldering in the drainage ditch... she had been beaten and robbed and the car set ablaze..." (331). Due to this painful situation, young Roth finally realizes what is happening around him. There was little security for Jews living in their own country, in their hometown. "Till Seldon's frantic phone call from Kentucky, I'd never totted up the cost to my mother and father of the Lindbergh presidency – till that moment, I'd been unable to add that high" (335). This epiphany is the heart of the book; the fear instilled in American Jews throughout their country becomes evident, even for a seven-year-old boy. This is announced in the first line of the novel, "[f]ear presides over these memories, a perpetual fear" (1). The narrator is able to notice how the apprehension that assailed the family in their visit to Washington developed into fear, when the candidate for the presidential elections against Lindbergh, Walter Winchell, was murdered during a speech and now was becoming terror with the riots that broke out throughout the nation resulting in the murder of hundreds of Jews, including Mrs. Wishnow.

Young Roth, the narrator, shows his regret for having suggested that his aunt, who works for the OAA, enroll the Wishnows in the Homestead 42, and send them to Kentucky instead of sending the Roths. The ordeal that befalls Seldon is that his mother is murdered in a riot only a few weeks after they are relocated. The narrator loses the infantile image of calm and peaceful life in his hometown and faces the harsh reality of fascist America when Mrs. Wishnow is assaulted and murdered leaving young Seldon Wishnow parentless.

The writer explains that "[i]t's the children in the book who join the trivial to the tragic; far from constraining me, their presence was what allowed me my latitude"

(n.pag.). The American Jewish experience with anti-Semitism in *The Plot against America* is far less harsh in terms of suffering, losses, and number of casualties than that of the European Jewish communities. In real life, American Jews were living in a safe haven during World War II and they did not suffer any of the harassment and humiliation depicted in the novel. Nonetheless, the writer suggests that such dramatic change in their life condition could well have occurred in the United States. The likelihood, though scant and terrifying, remains a possibility, and that is the crux of the alternative history genre.

The narrator feels that the world as he has known it up to that point in his life has ended. He sees this each time his parents bid farewell to the families they have known all their lives and who were now relocating to the heartland of the United States for the Homestead 42 program.

These were their dearest friends, and the hot Saturday afternoons with the tearful adults embracing out on the street while all the children forlornly looked on – afternoons that ended with the four of us who were remaining behind waving goodbye from the curb as my mother called after the departing car, “Don’t forget to write!” – were the most harrowing moments so far, when our defenselessness became real to me and I sensed the beginning of the destruction of our world.” (254-55)

The narrator notices that the safety of their life is compromised and there is no turning point, nor anything that could be done about it any longer.

5.6 History and Fiction

The author depicts his perspective of the fictional historical moments in a novelistic manner, not as a didactic historical report. “Another problem was to keep the adult’s narrating voice explicit without its sounding didactic in recounting the imaginary historical events. After all, my reader can’t know anything of the history I’m inventing” (n.pag.). *The Plot against America* refers to some events that belong to the documented history with records and annotations that proved the facts; nevertheless, there are international treaties signed between Hitler and Lindbergh and other historical events that obviously did not occur. Roth explains that “[t]he book began inadvertently, as a thought experiment. I had no such book in mind nor was it a book of a kind I was looking to write. The subject, let alone the method, would never have occurred to me on its own” (n.pag.). A careful mixture of real and fictional events makes the fictional world happenings seem real, which, according to Roth, was his intention from the start. To accomplish this task, he filled the plot with real characters, dates, events and places.

During the war, some groups of people had distaste for Jews, while others had a repellent discrimination that eventually turned to hatred. The situations in the book never happened in the United States, but did happen in many places in Europe. “The ‘what if’ in America was somebody else’s reality. All I do is defatalize the past – if such a word exists – showing how it might have been different and might have happened here” (n.pag.). The novel is about situations that did not happen in America, but could have. American Jews never saw anything close to what European Jews suffered, had anything of the kind actually happened in America, history would have a completely different twist for them. “*The Plot against America* is an exercise in historical imagination. But history has the final say. And history did it otherwise”

(n.pag.). There was exclusion against Jews in America and as with other minority groups such as Asians, Communists, and Negroes; they were deprived of some advantages and rights. Every time there is exclusion or deprivation of rights, there is also humiliation and it is difficult to keep respect and authority within a household when the law is not equal for all citizens. It is more difficult for children to learn to respect parents who are constantly being disrespected by other members of the city they live in; even worse, when the government institutionalizes the lack of respect. How can a parent claim respect when the offspring see them treated with disrespect outside family life? “In this book it’s the humiliation that helps to tear apart and very nearly disable the family, inasmuch as each person in the family responds to it differently. What is it to be a man, to be a woman, to be a child, and not be humiliated? How do you try to remain strong when you are not welcome?” (n.pag.). The sense of authority comes to a child as constant and wholesome, not a fragmented concept that can be overruled by the government, but maintained intact at home.

At a point in the plot, Lindbergh disappears and is suspected to be dead. The narrator thinks then that all problems have vanished along with the disappearance of the president, though he is aware that the scars will always remain. “The nightmare was over. Lindbergh was gone and we were safe, though never would I be able to revive that unfazed sense of security first fostered in a little child by a big, protective republic and his ferociously responsible parents” (301). The generation of American Jews that came after the end of World War II probably does not realize how lucky they were that the seeds of hatred in the United States never grew to proportions that caused murders among civilians, executions by the government, and destruction of cities as in Europe.

The story is set between 1940 and 1942 because, as the author mentions, these years were extremely hard on the European Jews. He adverts that some readers might be tempted to compare the events to present day America, but that is not what the story is trying to show.

I am not pretending to be interested in those two years – I am interested in those two years. They were turbulent in America because they were catastrophic in Europe. My every imaginative effort was directed toward making the effect of that reality as strong as I could, and not so as to illuminate the present through the past but to illuminate the past through the past. (n.pag.)

The actions and reactions of the fictionalized members of the Roth family were imagined according to those two years and the situations posed for them regarding the right political force that instilled in the common American citizen their precedence over the Jewish minority.

The book has a long and detailed postscript containing the figures used in the plot. The author explains that it “is intended as a reference for readers interested in tracking where historical fact ends and historical imagining begins” (364). The names, dates, and events are from recognized and respected sources of documented history.

I don't want any confusion in the mind of the reader about where historical fact ends and historical imagining begins, and so, in the postscript, I give a brief survey of that era as it really was. I want to make clear that I haven't dragged real historical figures bearing their own names into my story by attributing points of view to them gratuitously or by forcing them to behave implausibly – unexpectedly,

surprisingly, beautifully, shockingly, but not implausibly. (n.pag.)

The chronology of the facts and figures comes from newspaper reports, journal entries, diary entries, public addresses, national acts, military announces, among other sources. The postscript can assist the reader avid for real history; nevertheless, it is not essential for understanding the plot and the suffering proposed by the author. For AH novels, the point of divergence is the most important connection between real and fictional worlds. Allohistorical fiction runs parallel to real history; they are separated by the tenuous line that divides real historical events and fictional imaginings.

Another important point made by the author's thought experiment is that every individual is directly involved in the construction of historical moments and historical memory. "History is everything that happens everywhere. Even here in Newark. Even here on Summit Avenue. Even what happens in his house to an ordinary man – that'll be history too some day" (180). This notion of how history is constructed in the actions of every single individual is another striking trace that guides Mr. Roth's conduct throughout the novel. He is so eager to show in all his actions the notion of what it means to be an American citizen that he becomes blind to the evidence around him that fascism has taken control of the United States. This is what impedes him not to submit to his wife's constant pleas of fleeing to Canada to start a new life away from the constant fear of persecution. He cannot admit that his own homeland, his country is not a safe place for him to live with his family anymore.

- Conclusion

The Man in the High Castle and *The Plot against America* are exercises on the reevaluation of civil rights, and the way that prejudice and lack of respect can disrupt relations among community and family members. The thought experiments proposed by Philip K. Dick and Philip Roth focus on the change of attitude that happens with individuals of any society whenever a major inversion of political power takes place. Deprivation of rights and down ranking of social status due to political overthrow causes social unsettlement and the effect can be devastating for the new political leaders and for a great number of citizens. When families are disestablished, the nation is in a dangerous position, civil disobedience and rebellions can come about; national unrest can lead to unimaginable consequences for many communities.

Literary aspects of the works analyzed in this study helped to highlight the consequences the shift in political power could generate within communities, families, and citizens. The chronotopes used in the novels helped to show the authors' points of view in creating a fictional United States of America that had actual menace from Hitler's powerful Nazi Army. By turning him into the victor of World War II and putting American citizens to their knees against the Axis Powers, the novels make a strong point in terms of showing how the American military actions affect some nations invaded by the military forces of the United States. Readers can imagine what actually happens in places where military power is used to disestablish the political party in command thus turning the social order upside down. The novels show that a democracy is similar to a plutocracy when the leaders are arbitrary and take political decisions to focus mainly on individual interests.

The relation between time and space delineated the scenarios to depict the individual dramas. These plights reflected the social problems caused by the inversion of moral values because of the overturn of political power. The progression of time in *The Plot against America* shows the loss of discipline and harmony in the Roth family. First, Mr. Roth loses authority with his nephew, and then with his elder son. The lack of authority serves as a bad example for the narrator, the younger child. As the story advances, readers can notice how grim the situation becomes for the family and for the Jewish-American community. Mr. Roth is the example of the rightful citizen who is trying to continue living with his family according to what was established as moral precepts of the United States despite the changes and the new order proposed by Lindbergh. He is unsuccessfully trying not to allow the negative political transformations to invade his household.

In *The Man in the High Castle*, the United States is controlled by Japanese and Germans, along with the Jewish people, even non-Jewish American citizens are treated with disrespect. The characters' values and emotions described show some of the burdens brought on individuals who are placed in situations where their lives are constantly menaced by military forces. American citizens have been stripped of their civil rights and they have less economic strength and practically no political influence. Dick uses this scenario to show how fragile social organizations are; today's reality can be completely twisted tomorrow and life has to be reevaluated.

Dick's technique of constantly shifting between reality and falsity enables readers to imagine alternative outcomes in contemporary real life situations. He questions what is real and false to show the relative meaning of events in one's life. The concept of what is right and wrong varies greatly among individuals depending

on how events influence their lives. Cultural clashes are common among community members in any nation; nevertheless, the American people have always taken pride in respecting difference due to their socio-political organization. The notion of right and wrong varies among ethnic groups, but all are respected in the United States if they abide by the federal laws and the American constitution.

The Man in the High Castle shows that the alternate result of the Second World War would have subverted the most important social values of the American citizens. In this fictional society, permeated by constant apprehension and horror inflicted by the Nazis, freedom is compromised. German and Japanese economic hegemony tear apart the American superpower, thus creating other social roles among Arians, Japanese, Americans, and Jews. In Dick's novel, the Germans are not to be trusted even by their allies; Nazis are planning to dominate the Japanese motherland and their colonies. According to their determinations, all Jews are to be exterminated. The Japanese are more respectful to the Americans, who submitted to them due to their military defeat and to the Nippon-Nazi political alliance. They do not intend to break their agreement with Nazis and treat the Americans with respect. Despite the privileged political situation, the Japanese do not lose the moral beliefs that are intrinsic to their conduct with others and with nature. Dick shows the influence of the social turnabout in individual's lives that stand for ethnic groups.

Roth creates his fictional world focusing directly on how the progression of the social change affects the Jewish-Americans from within their household; in his novel the plot underscores the effects of social shift directly from the core of family life. *The Plot against America* shows how family bonds can be fragile if disrespected by leaders and communities of any nation; diverging points of view can lead to disastrous

consequences for family ties that will definitely reflect on social life.

The consequences of war have different effects on different generations, even those directly affected by war. A child will perceive the effects of deprivation and humiliation differently from adults. Young Roth shows this in the way he deals with the Washington trip problem of being expelled from a hotel with his family. He narrates the scene with detachment, in opposition to his parents, who are emotionally charged. It is as if he were disconnected from the scene, simply explaining or narrating what was happening. The impact of the scene arises from the arbitrary treatment the police officer gives Mr. Roth. It shows the lack of respect from the ruling system against a common law-abiding citizen right in front of his family with devastating impact on family hierarchy.

Nevertheless, the thought experiment developed by Roth goes beyond the suffering and horror inflicted on Jewish-American citizens during the Second World War. It shows that the United States is not insulated against extremist ideas that threaten ethnic groups supposedly protected by the First Amendment. Prejudice is still present in America despite what the Bill of Rights declares; the novel alerts readers against the possibility of a national nightmare becoming reality. *The Plot against America* is a clear portrayal of the desperate situation that the government of the nation that proclaims itself the pillar of modern democracy can unleash on its population due to private interests. These national horrors are a reality that occurs repeatedly in many nations. The fictional events created in the novels of Dick and Roth highlight the influence exerted on individuals and groups due to the shift of political control in any nation.

Rosenfeld's study helped to elucidate aspects of the described period through

the lenses of an analytical historical approach to art works. He showed the consequences of the meaningful real life events used in literary works that speculated alternative possibilities for the war over the decades that followed the war. One of the important issues that a society has to deal with after major historical events is how to understand and elaborate them in a way that helps the population to cope with the memory and consequences. The populace must take traumatic events and transform them into narratives that are less harmful for the social memory; the future is influenced by the memory of the past. History must be written and remembered in a way that will help those directly affected by the event to cure their wounds or polish their trophies (depending on the results). The elders must elaborate the answers to the “whats”, “whys”, “whos” and “hows” of the major episodes that influenced the way they live. History is an important feature of the character and personality of an individual and of the collective consciousness of a nation.

Historicization of major events is a complicated issue for any nation because it deals with factual evidence counterpointed by individual values and emotions. All this is influenced by the leading political party’s interests, objectives, and subjective aspects. Novelists try to imprint their opinions regarding social conditions of a given place so that they influence readers toward what they consider necessary to promote in terms of positive changes. Allohistorical novels show very clearly the link between historical and behavioral changes and they are definitely not apolitical. AH genre is used to show how reversible and malleable the political orientation of a nation is by taking the readers momentarily from the concreteness of their view of the real world and taking them to the possibility of a complete reversal.

Rosenfeld’s research contributed to this study by showing the consequences of

AH works in the process of moralizing, normalizing, and criticizing the memory of the events generated by the anti-Semitic movement institutionalized by Hitler in Nazi Germany. He also showed the importance of literature in the process of historicizing major historical events while aiding in the construction of the memory of war. AH novelists encourage readers to evaluate how living conditions, moral standards, use of power and national political orientations affect family and community life by defamiliarizing their realities.

Bakhtin's concept of chronotopes highlighted the guidelines that allowed this study to describe the importance of time, space, values, and emotions in the analysis of the interactions among characters. The AH genre is an influential way of criticizing and analyzing the actions taken by the leaders of nations and what consequences these actions are bound to cause. The different chronotopes mentioned serve to make this study pinpoint the literary aspects that had more importance in the novels, especially regarding the characters' attitudes toward events before them.

One of the scopes of reevaluating conditions is to reflect upon the changes derived from events that caused them. AH novels deal with present situations and what might future progressions lead to while distorting the past. Fiction helps to analyze the social and economic implications of the real world based on the outcomes of major historical events. The literary contribution to historical facts are meaningful in the process of understanding the cause and effect relation of social change and social values established after change.

This study shows that alternate history novels have much to contribute to the studies of literature when it comes to evaluating the sense of purpose of fiction in the real world. They serve as tools for questioning past and present, and therefore aiding

in promoting changes for a better future and this is part of what art forms propose. Besides being an entertaining art form, allohistorical works can show the readers that speculating on other versions of the real world can also be beneficial for promoting positive changes or at least for coping with past events that cannot be changed. The dual theoretical approach (the literary and historical theories) helped to unveil peculiarities of the genre showing the importance of the collaboration of ideas between historians and literary theoreticians in analyzing a genre that has a strong historical appeal. Overall, World War II allohistorical novels were more than an artistic phenomenon, they were an important social tool in the historical sedimentation of the memory of the Second World War.

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