

**Charles University in Prague**

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**Department of English Language and Literature**

**BACHELOR THESIS**

Alternate history novels - comparison of  
Harris's *Fatherland* and Dick's *The Man in a  
High Castle*

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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis is the result of my own work and that I have used only the cited sources. I further declare that this thesis was not used to obtain another or the same academic title.

Prague, 15th July 2016

Šimon Daněk

Signature: .....

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## **Abstract**

This bachelor thesis focuses on the comparison of two novels – *The Man in the High Castle* (1963) by Philip K. Dick and *Fatherland* (1992) by Robert Harris – within the framework of the genre of alternate history. The aim of the thesis is to put Alternate history into the wider context of fiction, show its main strategies and see how those strategies are manifested in two books widely regarded as typical examples of the Alternate history genre.

## **Key words**

Alternate history, novel, point of divergence, Philip K Dick, Robert Harris

## **Abstrakt**

Tato bakalářská práce zabývá srovnáním dvou románů – Muž z vysokého zámku (1963) od Philipa K. Dicka a Otčina (1992) od Roberta Harrise – v rámci literárního žánru alternativní historie. Cílem práce je zasadit žánr alternativní historie do širšího kontextu fikce, ukázat jeho hlavní strategie a zjistit jakým způsobem jsou použity ve dvou knihách, které jsou obecně považovány za typické příklady žánru alternativní historie.

## **Klíčová slova**

Alternativní historie, román, bod rozporu, Philip K Dick, Rober Harris

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## Introduction

The main focus of this thesis is a comparison of two novels – *The Man in the High Castle* (1963) by Philip K. Dick and *Fatherland* (1992) by Robert Harris – within the framework of the genre of alternate history.

I chose these two books mainly because they tackle the same issue (the Axis victory in WWII) and also because they both represent a certain milestone in the genre of alternate history. *The Man in the High Castle* was one of the first alternate history novels dealing with WWII to receive critical acclaim and *Fatherland* is the most successful alternate history novel to date, having sold over three million copies.

The theoretical part will deal with alternate history (also known as alternative history, allohistory, uchronia or what-if story) as a genre; its main tendencies, devices and themes; its position in relation to other related genres (science fiction, historical novel) and the difference between alternate history and counterfactual history. Aside from giving a broader view of the genre it will focus more closely on the theme of Axis victory in WWII as it is by far the most common theme in the alternate history genre (it even has its own entry in the Encyclopedia of Science Fiction under the entry “Hitler wins”) and also the theme of both books to be analyzed. The main source of information for this part will be the book *Alternate History: Playing with Contingency and Necessity* (2013) by Kathleen Singles together with *The World Hitler Never Made: Alternate History and the Memory of Nazism* (2005) by Gavriel Rosenfeld. Other sources will include *The Historical Novel* (2010) by Jerome de Groot, the online database of titles dealing with alternate and counterfactual history, *Uchronia*, and an academic paper *Why Do We Ask "What If?"* (2002) by Gavriel Rosenfeld.

The practical part consists of analysis of the two aforementioned books, assessing the common denominators and mainly concentrating on what devices the respective authors used and how they used them in order to create two books which explore a similar theme set in similar time within the realm of alternate history and yet are quite different in terms of both content and style.

The aim of the thesis is to put Alternate history into the wider context of fiction, show its main strategies and see how these strategies are manifested in two books widely regarded as typical examples of the Alternate history genre.



## Theoretical part

### Alternate history as a genre

Scholarly research of the genre of alternate history is relatively new and as such faces a few challenges which need to be addressed. The first issue is that although there is a corpus of works generally identifiable as Alternate Histories, there has never been a real genre tradition. The establishment of the genre is a matter of quite recent past after a surge of popularity of books dealing with the altered version of history which has led publishers to market works as alternate histories, critics to give recognition to the works, scholars of various disciplines to give attention to counterfactual history and literary theorists to become interested in these works. (Singles<sup>14</sup>) Thus, it could be said that the popularity of the genre has come from the bottom up; and from a peripheral (sub)genre associated mostly with science fiction and from a form of historical inquiry considered unscientific by many historians it has evolved into a subject which is researched and considered valid as a historical method.

One of the main consequences of the newness of the genre are the inconsistencies in the definition and terminology. Not even the term “alternate history” itself is a matter of consensus as different terms such as allohistory, alternative history, politique fiction, uchronia, parallel time novel, “what-if” story, quasi historical novel, historical might-have-been or “as-if” narrative have been used. However, alternate history seems to be the term used most widely. (Singles 17)

The problem with the definition and in/exclusion of certain titles as alternative history can be illustrated by the comparison of the definition by Robert B. Schmunk, an alternate history enthusiast, creator and operator of the website [uchronia.net](http://uchronia.net), which contains bibliography of over 3,000 alternate history works, and one by Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, who is a professor of history at Farfield University and author of several academic publications dealing with alternate history. Schmunk defines the genre thusly: “Whatever it is called, alternate history somehow involves one or more *past* events that “happened otherwise” and includes some amount of description of the subsequent effects on history.” He then goes on to stress the importance of the word “past” which he highlighted in the definition so as to justify his exclusion of works which were originally intended as future histories, i.e. works of speculative fiction which at the time of the publication were oriented into the future, and

became alternate histories retroactively. He also excludes works which are referred to as secret histories, where a known historical fact is shown to be untrue and which often include conspiracies about past events.

Rosenfeld, on the other hand, in his book *The World Hitler Never Made: Alternate History and the Memory of Nazism* uses this definition “At the most basic level (...) tales of alternate history (...) investigate the possible consequences of "what if" questions within specific historical contexts.” (Rosenfeld 4), and chooses to group both future histories and secret histories under the umbrella term “alternate history”. Perhaps the most interesting fact about the in/exclusion of these types of works with both authors is the seemingly ad-hoc nature of the reason to do so. Schmunk mentions that this deliberate limitation of works which are considered alternate histories by the website’s standards is there to prevent the impossible goal of including a significant fraction of all texts that have ever been published, whereas Rosenfeld states that the main reason for this broader specification of the genre was its analytical convenience.

In one of the more recent theoretical publications about alternate history, which benefited from extended research of previous studies of the genre, Kathleen Singles outlines the issues with the previous attempts to define the genre and suggests that for the sake of understanding alternate history as a whole it should be seen less as a homogenous corpus of texts but rather a family of historical fiction, each manifestation of which has a key characteristic – the point of divergence (Singles 22) i.e. the point at which the history in alternate history takes a different course compared to the real past.

Among the inconsistencies it is pleasing to see that most literary studies dealing with the genre of alternate history (though it may be under a different term) analyze a consistent corpus of texts and agree on works which are seen as paradigmatic (among them Robert Harris’ *Fatherland*, Philip K. Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle*, Philip Roth’s *The Plot Against America* (2004) or Keith Robert’s *Pavane* (1968)), and also there is a general agreement on texts which have served as precursors for the genre both from antiquity such as Livy’s *History of Rome* or the more recent specimens such as *Napoleon et la conquete du monde 1812-1832, Histoire de la monarchie universelle* by Louis Geoffroy from 19<sup>th</sup> century France or Murray Leinster’s science fiction short story from the 1930s *Sidewise in Time*, after which the Sidewise award for the best alternate history short story and novel was named.

## Themes

The fact that two of the four texts mentioned in the first chapter as paradigmatic deal with the theme of the Axis victory in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War (and another book from that list – *The Plot against America* – is closely related to it) makes the most popular theme in alternate history quite clear. It should come as no surprise that the most horrific and deadly conflict in the history of the mankind attracts counterfactual inquiry and as this theme is a phenomenon in itself within alternate history I will address it in its own chapter.

Despite having its modern origins in post-Napoleonic France, the genre was primarily developed in the Anglophone world in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Because of this the most popular themes, besides Germany's victory in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, are the Confederacy's victory in the American Civil War and the American Revolution failing to take place. (Rosenfeld 94) However, these themes are only a tiny fraction from a whole plethora of themes which are utilized in alternate history.

The novel *Bring the Jubilee* (1955), written by Ward Moore is perhaps the best known work dealing with an altered outcome of the American Civil War. The story takes place in the world where Southern victory does not lead to an obvious nightmare scenario but rather flips the script and portrays the South as a prosperous and enlightened place which frees the slaves of its own accord. Meanwhile the North remains under-industrialized and after having lost the war becomes hostile towards the Blacks.

The story itself is ambiguous as to whether it leads to an improvement of the country or not. According to Rosenfeld, this has much to do with the time the novel was published. The Civil Rights Movement having only just started, the ever-present social injustice and discrimination may have prompted Moore to submit his pessimistic allohistorical vision. (Rosenfeld 99)

Arguably the best known example of a work pondering the what-if of the American Revolution failing to take place is *For Want of a Nail* (1973), with the subtitle *If Burgoyne Had Won at Saratoga* written by Robert Sobel. The book is quite unique in that it is framed as a historical monograph, full of fictional footnotes and sources.

Another theme which is popular in Anglophone Alternate history is J. F. Kennedy's survival of his assassination. Among famous examples is the novel *Voyage* (1996) by Stephen Baxter, which won the Sidewise Award for the best Alternate history novel and was

nominated for the Arthur C. Clarke Award in 1997. A testament to the growing popularity of the genre, this theme is also the subject of the novel *11/22/63* (2011), written by one of the best-known and best-selling contemporary writers - Stephen King.

The Roman Empire which never ceased to exist is among other themes used more frequently in the writing of Alternate history. The better known are works such as *Roma Eterna* (2003) by Robert Silverberg or *Gunpowder Empire* (2003) by Harry Turtledove.

Harry Turtledove deserves to be mentioned separately as he is one of the best known and most prolific authors of Alternate history and in his works he has covered many major themes which are typical for this genre. Apart from the aforementioned alternate history of the Roman Empire, he has also penned an Alternate history of the American Civil War - *How Few Remain* (1996), World War II won by Germany – *In the Presence of Mine Enemies* (2003) or Britain which was conquered by the Spanish following the Spanish Armada's victory in 1588 in *Ruled Britannia* (2002), which is also the theme of *Pavane* by Keith Roberts, and many others. The website *Uchronia* lists over 100 entries under Turtledove's name.

## **The Axis Victory as the most popular theme of Alternate History**

The scenario of Germany winning the WWII and its consequences have been explored since before the WWII even started. As has already been established, the status of works which are intended as future histories and become alternate histories retroactively is somewhat problematic. However, as they are the beginning of exploration of the theme which would later become the most popular for Alternate history they deserve to be mentioned.

Works published pre-1945 share a dystopian view of the possible Nazi victory. Among the first and best-known accounts of the scenario is *Swastika Night* (1937) by Katharine Burdekin (written under the pseudonym Murray Constantine). The bleak depiction of a possible Nazi victory and its consequences was not without its message. As for Britain “these wartime tales hoped to foster national unity in the fight against the Germans by graphically depicting the high costs of defeat.” (Rosenfeld 37) In the USA these works sought to gain support of American intervention in the WWII. (Rosenfeld 95) Examples of these works include *I, James Blunt* (1942) by an English journalist H.V. Morton or *Lightning in the Night* (1940) by an American journalist Charles Frederick Allhoff.

Since 1945 alternate histories of the WWII have varied in terms of its function as well as the depiction of the Nazi-controlled World. Throughout this time they have served both as vindication of the past events and self-critique, and the created Nazi-ruled worlds ranged from bleakest dystopian visions to relatively normalized views of the ensuing world. According to Gavriel Rosenfeld, these functions and depictions coincide with the cultural and socio-economic state of the society at the time of writing where writers use alternate pasts “to expose the virtues and vices of the present.” (Rosenfeld 94) While this may generally be true, there are, as nearly always, exceptions to the rule and of course the position of the authors themselves is not to be underestimated.

Following the Allied victory in 1945 until the late 1950s the theme of the Axis victory is somewhat pushed aside by the Red Scare and as such relatively few works concerned with this theme are published. (Rosenfeld 376) However, those that are published are unambiguous in their vindication of the past and depicting the Nazi-controlled as a dystopian nightmare. Among the works published during this era are *The Sound of his Horn* (1952) by Sarban (the penname of the British writer/diplomat John William Wall) or the short story *Two Dooms* (1958) by American science fiction writer Cyril M. Kornbluth.

The events that transpired in the late 1950s and early 1960s such as the capture and the subsequent trial of Adolf Eichmann, the Berlin crisis or the upsurge of neo-Nazi activities (Rosenfeld 376) caused a renewed interest in the possible alternate outcomes of the WWII. Works published in the 1960s include those which may be considered revolutionary in terms of the genre. William Shirer’s allohistorical essay *If Hitler Had Won World War II* (1961) published in *Look* magazine (despite being a work of counterfactual history rather than alternate history), is a piece of great import as it was published in a magazine with a circulation of seven million readers. (Rosenfeld 116) It attracted considerable criticism which is understandable as it was one of the first manifestations of counterfactual thinking outside a special readership group. Another important work of this period is *The Man in the High Castle* by Phillip K. Dick, the winner of the 1963 Hugo award for the best novel and to this day considered one of the most important and paradigmatic titles of the genre of Alternate history. The works published throughout the 1960s, in their dystopian portrayal of the Nazi-controlled world, continued to serve to vindicate the past events.

This black and white depiction of the heroic British and American characters and archetypically evil Nazis would be contested in the 1970s. Works from this period often reflect the anxieties brought about by economic decline in the UK and the USA. (Rosenfeld

377) British writers, by blurring the lines and describing German characters as normal people and the British characters as susceptible to collaboration, use alternate history to disperse the myth of British moral superiority, channeling their disappointment about current situation and Britain's loss of its status as a global power. A good example of this shift towards normalization of the Nazi-controlled world is Len Deighton's novel *SS-GB*. (1978) American alternate history accounts from this period also often shift from the function of self-affirmation to self-critique. In light of the growing threat of the Soviet Union and communism during this time they use the idea of a post-war normalized Nazi society to question the previously unchallenged notion of the American intervention in the war suggesting that perhaps the US could have saved the cost of the post-war fight against communism had it kept its isolationist position, implying that communism is more dangerous than Nazism. (Rosenfeld 377) An example of such narrative is to be found in Brad Linaweaver's novella *Moon of Ice* (1982).

With the end of the Cold War the number of alternate histories concerned with an altered outcome of the WWII has kept growing. Despite the fact that the post-cold war alternate histories have been of great variance, a certain link can be found. Whereas in the case of the USA the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union meant the end to the threat of communism and the USA's emergence as the World's only remaining superpower, for Britain not so much changed. Therefore, most American post-cold war accounts of an alternate Nazi world once again serve to vindicate the past events. As for British alternate histories the self-critical function continues to be prevalent. (Rosenfeld 379)

Arguably the best known normalized account of the Nazi society as well as one of the best known alternate history novels is Robert Harris' *Fatherland*. An interesting example of a US alternate history from this time is the novel *1945* (1995) written by a republican politician (also a former republican candidate for presidential nomination) Newt Gingrich in cooperation with a historian William S. Fortschen. The novel serves as a critique of isolationism, vindicating the USA's role in the WWII.

## **Alternate History's position within Historical Fiction**

At first glance the relationship of alternate history and traditional (as opposed to post-modern) historical fiction seems quite clear-cut, both in their similarities and differences. Historical fiction as any fiction must by definition contain deviations from the real world.

(Singles 104) The deviations from the real world constitute one of the common principles of the two genres. “Essentially all historical fiction is to some degree What if? writing, particularly if it concerns actual figures”. (De Groot 173) The most obvious difference which could be claimed is that whereas historical fiction is set against the backdrop of what is considered the real past (or the normalized narrative of the real past) alternate history takes liberties with the real past and changes it to create an alternate past in which its story takes place. Although this claim appears logical it becomes a little problematic with relation to which definition of alternate history we choose to employ. While the wider definition of alternate history would allow for such a claim, the narrower and more specific definition used by Schmunk or Singles which draws a stricter distinction between alternate history and its neighboring genres (mainly secret histories) would contest this claim as not being exclusive to alternate histories and pertaining to other forms of historical fiction.

A good example, among others, is the secret history *Young Adolf* (1978) by Beryl Bainbridge, which tells the story of Adolf Hitler who at young age travels to Liverpool to stay with his brother and his subsequent problems with his own relatives and the English.

The history in the book is definitely not what we could consider the real past. Hitler never visited Liverpool and despite the fact that in addition to purely fictional ones there are characters in the novel who correspond to real people of that time, the novel’s deviation from the real past goes beyond the scope of traditional historical fiction. On the other hand, the story is missing an element which is required under the narrower definition of alternate history – consequentiality provided by the point of divergence. There is nothing which would lead to an altered history, where Hitler - for example - becomes successful in England and never becomes the Chancellor of Germany. It is a fictional account of a period which does not drastically alter the real past but merely provides an alternative explanation of Hitler’s psyche leading to a point of convergence, linking the story with the real past. As such, there is no point of divergence to speak of but rather diversions. (Singles 78) These diversions change the past in the respect that it is not objectively historically accurate but ultimately fall short of being consequential.

Apart from traditional historical fiction, Alternate history is also often aligned with Post-modernist fiction, especially with another corpus of texts identified by Linda Hutcheon as “Historiographic metafiction”. (Singles 58) This corpus of texts draws upon the theories of post-modern historiography, particularly that what we call ‘History’ “is a narrative form itself rather than an account of historical ‘truth’”. (De Groot 111) “Historiographic metafiction

works to situate itself within historical discourse without surrendering its autonomy as fiction” (Hutcheon 4), and in this respect shows resemblance to Alternate history.

Alternate histories admit their own fictionality; however, it should be noted that they differ from historiographic metafiction in their relationship to history. Whereas historiographic metafiction can be seen as an epistemological challenge to history, addressing questions such as “How does history writing differ from any other form of narrative that is subject to its author’s interpretation?” or “Is the past knowable?”, Alternate history works with a much more straightforward concept of history.

Alternate histories, in writing not about the past but on the contrary about a “non-past” create a world which is objectively different from what is considered the real past. This counter-relationship of what is portrayed in an alternate history and what is considered the real past is one of the central features of the genre. Therefore it could be said that unlike historiographic metafiction which strives to question our ability to know the real past, alternate history relies on a straightforward or even simplified concept of history and that “neither the existence of a real past nor our ability to know it through history are called into question in alternate history.” (Singles 61)

While there are similarities, namely the ironic admitting of their own fictionality and striving for authenticity through the use of fake historical documents at the same time. (Singles 61) Ultimately, the claim that alternate histories are essentially postmodern can be contested on the grounds of their respective relation to history and if anything the assertion of history as exemplified in the works of historiographic metafiction, which questions our ability to know the history, aligns them more closely with secret histories rather than alternate history in general.

Thus it could be said that while there are similarities in historiographic metafiction and alternate history, their different approach to history renders them unfit to be regarded as related genres and places alternate histories alongside traditional historical fiction rather than post-modern.

## **Alternate History’s position in relation to Science Fiction**

With science fiction we come to another genre with which alternate history has a close but problematic relationship. Some scholars choose to subsume alternate history under science fiction completely, as does for example Karen Hellekson: “The practical reason that



alternate history is classified as science fiction is simply that the authors of alternate histories tend to be established science fiction writers. (There are, of course, numerous exceptions.) These works are thus classified and shelved with science fiction, because the writer has already been categorized as a science fiction writer.” (Hellekson 19) Other scholars, such as Widmann and Salewski, dispute this classification, putting forward a counter-notion that there can be no overlap as alternate history has a dominant reference to the past and science fiction is a genre which imagines the future. (Singles 105)

Conclusions can be drawn from both sides of the spectrum. There can be speculations about either of these genre specifications. The word “numerous” in Hellekson’s remark suggests that this number will be rather large and broad classifications are definitely convenient, however, they are not very accurate.

The same problem arises when applying Widdmann and Salewski’s rule, as for instance *The Sound of His Horn* by Sarban would no longer be classified as an alternate history, even though it is generally regarded as such.

It should be noted that while generally alternate history does not automatically equal science fiction, there are certain concepts which are shared by both science fiction and alternate history. It is therefore understandable that somebody might dub an alternate history text science-fiction if it contains time-travel. However, if somebody was to call *Fatherland* a work of science fiction it would be genuinely strange.

“Science fiction, like alternate history, is a highly self-reflexive genre.” (Singles 105) What the two genres have in common is their yearning for plausibility while at the same time making it obvious. Alternate histories try to create a past which diverged from the real past somewhere along the way without making the transition (= point of divergence) too cumbersome and the ensuing history too unconvincing, all the while admitting that it is actually a what-if fictional scenario. In the same way science-fiction strives to create a plausible world, if only scientifically.

### **Alternate history vs. Counterfactual history**

Although the nearly identical names could lead one to believe that they are synonyms, each of these terms actually represents a slightly different discipline. They both share a critical feature and that is divergence from what Singles dubs “the normalized narrative of the real past”. (Singles 7) The main difference between the two genres is that

whereas alternate histories are written by authors of fiction, counterfactual histories are written by historians. Then again in certain aspects it would be difficult to tell them apart. They both use the point of divergence as their principal device, the points of divergence tend to be the very same events in both cases and they are not constructed any differently either.

The main difference is mostly in the approach towards depicting the ensuing world. In counterfactual history the historian is bound by the conventions of historical writing and is limited to investigate the new chain of events. In alternate history the author is not bound by anything, he has a creative license and can therefore portray the resulting world in any way. Therefore, alternate history tends to go much further in its depiction of the resulting world. Whereas counterfactual history describes the differences which sprang from the different course of history, the alternate history can create a world which will be based on these differences.

Another key difference is that, unlike alternate histories which solely take place within the alternative world created by the author and as such take a form of narration where the indicative mood is used, counterfactual histories make use of conditional sentences which serve as a reminder that the author/historian is situated in the world outside of the text.

## **Literary devices used in Alternate History**

### **Point of divergence**

The point of divergence is a plot device used in alternate history in order to create an alternate past. In short, the point of divergence is the moment at which the story in alternate history derails from what is considered the real past. The name of this device is not used consistently; Karen Hellekson for instance uses the term “nexus point/story” while some other critics use the term “Jonbar Hinge”. (Hellekson 6)

The previous assertion that alternate histories rely on a straightforward concept of history also holds true in relation to the point of divergence. In fact, it could be said that in order to create an alternate history that will be recognized as such, it is necessary to ignore the historiographic shift in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and go back to Rankean paradigm of historiography which is based on the following postulates – “1. Human actions and intentions create and shape history; history is the sum of great men and events. 2. Time is one-dimensional and sequential and 3. History portrays truth, or history is an accurate reflection of the real past.”

(Singles 28) Most points of divergence follow these (in modern historiography considered outdated) principles as well as Thomas Carlyle's theory that "history of the world is but the biography of great men." (Singles 57)

Decisive battles and assassinations (or their avoidance) of prominent historical figures are thereby the most common points of divergence. The reason for this is precisely because alternate history works with the concept of "simplified" history. "The normalized narrative of the real past is a culture and time-specific construct. Thus the events foiled, represented, and made the focus of alternate histories are most often the events that (are assumed to) belong to the historical consciousness of a popular audience in the place of and at the time of publication." (Singles 55) Economic, cultural or societal changes as well as series of events are therefore deemed too complex to be made the point of divergence. (Singles 56) As the tension between what is considered the real past and the past in alternate history is one of its central features it could be argued that the authors choose such points of divergence in order to make clear the intention of their work as alternate history. Moreover, in choosing as a point of divergence an event which belongs to "the historical consciousness of a popular audience" the text can possibly attract larger readership or retain long-term relevance.

A prominent placement of the point of divergence within the text can also be used to bring attention to the fact that an altered version of history is being narrated. Moreover, the amount of time that passes between the point of divergence and the time in which the plotline is set is another aspect to take into consideration. While these two may follow one another in short succession, as is usual in most works of Counterfactual history, there may also be a gap of over one hundred years as in *The Sound of His Horn*. Regardless of the time that passes the text is labeled as alternate history, however, it would be naïve to think that the texts would not exhibit many differences.

## Paratext

Another device used to highlight the fact that the reader is engaging with an altered version of history is paratext, i.e. textual and visual elements surrounding the main text. There are two types of paratext to be found in alternate history. The first type simulating history writing (fake historical documents and sources) is not exclusive to alternate history and can be found in many works of historiographic metafiction. (Singles 62) The other type is quite unique in its function, and it is not used outside the genre of alternate history (Singles 113), in the form of acknowledgements, introductions or author's notes which often list events as they

really happened or in another way allude or even directly state that what you are reading is and account of alternate history.

As for the first type of paratext it is of great curiosity that many works of alternate history strive for authenticity and credibility while admitting their own fictionality. This type of paratext can be found in both novels and short stories of alternate history. Although on the edge between alternate and counterfactual history, Squire's volume of essays/short stories *If It Happened Otherwise* (1931) containing stories of what-if narratives is a prime example of using fake historical documents such as a passage from a travel guide or newspaper articles from *The Times* (Singles 62) to bring a sense of authenticity to the accounts. Another popular strategy to achieve the illusion of credibility is the use of maps. An example of this strategy can be found in *The Two Georges* (1995) written by Harry Turtledove and Richard Dreyfuss as well as in *Fatherland*.

The second kind of paratext, despite being in its function exclusive to works of alternate history, serves very much the same purpose as the first one – making the counter-factuality of the respective work obvious. Often we get the warning right on the cover. This is the case with Ward Moore's *Bring the Jubilee* as even on the cover of the original edition published by Ballantine Books in 1953 we can find the caption "A realistic novel of an America in which the South won the Civil War."

The already mentioned Squire's volume also shows the use of this type of paratext as each of the texts begins with a brief consensual historical account of the history about to be altered. Furthermore, this type of paratext can also be found in more recent "paradigmatic" works of alternate history such as *The Plot Against America* by Philip Roth or *Then Everything Changed* (2011) by Jeff Greenfield. (Singles 113)

### Alternate history within alternate history

Another strategy to alert the reader to the fact that an alternate version of history is being presented are allusions to the real past within the alternate history. The most extreme versions of these allusions would be alternate histories which "narrate linearly multiple versions of history". (Singles 114) Works such as *Making History* (1996) by Stephen Fry feature reference to both the real past and the alternate history both of which are treated as the

real world within the novel. This discrepancy is caused by employing a type of time travel which enables such strategy to function.

The more usual strategy is to make references to the real past within the narrative of the respective alternate history. It could be said that this arrangement poses more challenges on the reader as some external knowledge concerning culture and history is expected of them. (Singles 114) This strategy is utilized in *Napoléon et la conquête du monde, 1812–1823* by Louis Geoffroy, generally considered one of the earliest manifestations of alternate history. The fictional past, in which Napoleon is celebrated as a glorious leader who defeated Russia and England, is treated as the real one and within the narrative the author stops “to express his “indignation” for the novelists guilty of “insulting” Napoleon.” (Singles 115) This excerpt, besides drawing attention to the alternativeness of the narration, serves as a disguised critique of Napoleon in the juxtaposition of the ideal version of him and the figure that is known from history. As Singles puts it, “this interlude has helped to put a sharpened, politically-charged focus on the variance between history and the alternative version.” (Singles 115)

“Dressing” history as alternate history can be found in a wide range of works of alternate history. One of the more curious examples, mostly because of its authorship, is a counterfactual essay from Squire’s aforementioned volume *If It Had Happened Otherwise - If Lee Had Not Won the Battle of Gettysburg* written by Winston Churchill. Churchill wrote this essay from a position of a historian living in a world where the Confederate army won the American Civil War. The counter-factual nature of the text can be spotted immediately upon reading the title of the essay as Churchill used a what-if premise which is actually historically correct. The implicit irony in narrating a might-have-been version of history within the realm of alternate history (which is fictitious in the reader’s world) and presenting it as alternate history while it is apparently derived from the real course of events in the past creates a strange paradox which is not at all unusual in the genre.

Other works making use of this strategy include Gardner Dozois’ *Counterfactual* (2006), where the main protagonist works on an “alternate history” where Robert E. Lee surrenders to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox (Singles 115), *Bring the Jubilee* where the main protagonist, a time-travelling historian, causes the loss of the Confederate army at Gettysburg thereby altering the alternate history of the novel, and to some degree *The Man in the High Castle* which contains the “novel within the novel” *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*.

Perhaps most advanced in terms of referentiality to history and also in its self-reflection as a work of alternate history is Kingsley Amis’s *The Alteration* (1976). (Singles

116-117) Protestant reformation never takes place in the novel's world and centuries later the Roman Catholic Church still holds a leading political role. In the novel there is a reference to texts analogous to alternate history called "Time Romance" or "Counterfeit World". (Singles 117) Among the texts that are discussed in the novel is *The Man in the High Castle* by Philip K. Dick, however, it is not *The Man in the High Castle* of our world but an alternate history of the reality of *The Alteration*. This again is a way to bring attention to its historical fictionality while leaving the interpretation of many of these references to the readers and their knowledge.

## **Philip K Dick and The Man in the High Castle**

### **Brief introduction of Philip K Dick**

In the Encyclopedia of Science Fiction Philip K. Dick is regarded as "one of the most important figures in twentieth-century Science Fiction and an author of general significance." Many of his works are well-known and many have been adapted for the screen, among them the novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (1968) which was turned into the film *Blade Runner* (1982), a short story *We Can Remember it For You Wholesale* (1966) made into the film *Total Recall* first in 1990 and for the second time in 2012. The short story *The Minority Report* (1956) ended up as a movie of the same name in 2002 directed by Steven Spielberg and most recently it was the novel with which this thesis is concerned *The Man in the High Castle* serving as the basis for a TV series of the same name (2015).

In Dick's oeuvre dominated by science fiction *The Man in the High Castle* stands out as his only work of alternate history and also as one of his best-known works. The novel takes place in the Axis-occupied United States, primarily on the western Japanese-occupied coast.

### **The point of divergence**

The story takes place in 1962 which is fifteen years after the Japanese and Germans win the WWII in 1947. (Dick 15) The world portrayed in the novel is clearly different from the real world and from the beginning the reader can pick up on these differences as we get the point of view of different characters describing their reality. The references to the "Pacific States of America" – the western part of the United States controlled by the Japanese, the

American antique seller Robert Childan's submissive behavior to the Japanese or another American character Frank Frink mentioning Nazi experiments in Africa or the German colonization of the solar system let the readers know that they have found themselves in a world where history has taken a different course by the end of the first chapter.

However, the reason as to why the world is different, i.e. the point of divergence, is not revealed until the chapter five and only with reference to *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* the alternate history within alternate history, which will be discussed in the next chapter. The point of divergence is revealed to be the assassination of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Although the year is not explicitly mentioned it can be assumed as the year 1933, since the place of the assassination and the name of the assassin are both revealed - Joe Zangara is said to have assassinated F. D. Roosevelt in Miami.

In reality Zangara shot the Chicago Mayor, Antonin Cermak who was in Roosevelt's close proximity at the time of his public address in Miami. (Chicago Tribune) The fact that Zangara had intended to assassinate Roosevelt makes this point of divergence cleverly believable and ultimately confirms 1933 as the year it took place as there is too much evidence to claim that the real event and the event in the book are simply coincidental.

The assassination of Roosevelt changes the political situation in the alternate United States thusly – John Nance Garner, Roosevelt's vice president, assumes the presidency instead, however, he is a weak president. He fails to pull the United States out of the depression and in 1940 he is replaced by a republican president John W. Bricker who supports the isolationist position of the US. The isolationist position together with weak economy caused by the ongoing depression does not allow for the US' support to the Allies. In 1941, presumably after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japan takes Hawaii and in 1947, after failing to stop the victorious progress of the Axis, the United States are forced to capitulate, surrendering to the superior military power of Germany and Japan.

The altered history as described in the book following the point of divergence is in line with a straightforward interpretation of history and it could be said to pay homage to the Rankean view of history and the "Great Men" theory as devised by Carlyle. The death of one "great man" - T. D. Roosevelt - completely changes the course of history.

## The Grasshopper Lies Heavy – Alternate history within alternate history

Alternate history within alternate history is a device which Dick makes heavy use of in *The Man in the High Castle* through *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* – an alternate history novel within the text written by the character Hawthorne Abendsen who is also the character who gives the novel its name since he is known as the man in the high castle.

It is used as a point of reference throughout the novel contrasting the reality of *The Man in the High Castle* with a different version of the world where the WWII was not won by the Axis powers. It is also a plot-driving force showing the characters' attitudes towards the reality of *The Man in the High Castle* as it shows certain character's inclinations to collaborate, racist tendencies or their fascination with questioning the status quo.

The history as it is represented in *The Grasshopper* is definitely closer to our view of the real past, although saying that it matches our view of history would be oversimplification, rather it depicts another possible scenario of how the history might have been. In *The Grasshopper*, F. D. Roosevelt is not assassinated in 1933 and assumes the presidency. He is reelected in 1936 and is still the president when the war breaks out in Europe and starts to prepare the US for a possible war situation. However, this is the place where the history of *The Grasshopper* takes a different course. In 1940 Rexford Tugwell, who is known in our history as being part of Roosevelt's "Brain trust" – advisors on policies intended to get the country out of the Great Depression, is elected as his successor. He continues Roosevelt's anti-Nazi policies and essentially manages to avoid Pearl Harbor as he has the forethought to send the US fleet out on the sea so only a few boats are actually destroyed. (Although it is not possible to establish a direct relationship between this moment in *The Grasshopper* and the real past outside the world of *The Man in the High Castle* because of insufficient information, this situation remotely resembles the real past and as such constitutes a certain type of convergence with it.) The whole conflict ends with the Allied victory. However, again there is a discrepancy as the other world power which emerges alongside the USA is not the Soviet Union but rather the United Kingdom and over time animosities as we know them from the Cold War start to develop between the UK and the US.

The novel within the novel, aside from providing a text-internal point of reference against which the alternate history of *The Man in the High Castle* may be read, also allows for the characters' reflection of alternate history, therefore creating a sort of meta-alternate history, sometimes with rather ironic results. The Japanese couple – the Kasouras thoroughly



enjoy the book, the German consul in San Francisco - Hugo Reiss is infuriated by the book, yet at the same time he finds it intriguing. Meanwhile the characters one would expect to marvel at the premise of the book, (some of) the Americans, refuse it completely. The industrialist Wyndam-Matson argues that the Japanese would have been victorious whether the attack on Pearl Harbor had been successful or not. In his words: "They would have taken them [the Philippines and Australia] anyhow; their fleet was superior. I know the Japanese fairly well, and it was their destiny to assume dominance in the Pacific." (Dick 69) This is where the irony starts to emerge, assuming the reader is familiar with the real past. Wyndam-Matson also scoffs at another idea presented in *The Grasshopper*, the defeat of Erwin Rommel by Winston Churchill.

The other American character "unamused" by the alternate history is Robert Childan. When presented with the main idea of the book, the Allies winning the WWII, he reacts thusly: "I have strong convictions on the subject. [...] I have frequently thought it over. The world would be much worse." (Dick 111) He justifies his reasoning as fear of communism overtaking the world, however, later we find him mulling over the scenario again, this time with a racist subtext: "Only the white races endowed with creativity [...] Think how it would have been had we won! Would have crushed them out of existence. No Japan today, and the U.S.A. gleaming great sole power in entire wide world. He thought: I must read that Grasshopper book. Patriotic duty, from the sound of it." (Dick 113)

Aside from *The Grasshopper* there is one more instance of alternate history within alternate history in the novel. It appears in a vision of Mr. Tagomi, a high-ranking Japanese official in San Francisco. Tagomi in depression after having killed two men in defense, tries to find a peace of mind and after concentrating on a piece of jewelry which was made by another character, Frank Frink, he finds himself in a world which resembles the real world outside the novel. Instead of pedecabs there are actual cars on the road, a freeway, which does not exist in the world of the novel, is running through the middle of the city and white Americans refuse to give up their seat for him in a café.

## Perception of Nazism in *The Man in the High Castle*

When it comes to the portrayal of Nazism in *The Man in the High Castle*, the novel can be read as a vindication of the USA's acts in the WWII as the victory of the Axis is blamed first and foremost on the American isolationist position and the Nazis who become

the global power in the world are seen as the representation of the utmost evil present in the world of the novel.

The bulk of the novel takes place in the Japanese-controlled Pacific States of America. The Japanese are put in sharp contrast with the Nazis. While the Japanese are generally resented by the Americans they are seen as civilized colonizers, ironic though it may sound. Against the atrocities committed by the Germans as they are presented in the novel it is easy to describe the Japanese as the lesser of two evils. The first instance of this contrast is presented by the recollections of Frank Frink, whose original name was Frank Fink and who hides his Jewish origin. Since the time that he buried his service weapons in the basement after the lost war, swearing to retaliate, his plans have cooled off. Although reluctantly, he accepts the Japanese rule of the P.S. A. and even admits that in certain aspects the Japanese possess admirable traits as is presented in his thoughts concerning his upcoming appearance in front of the Laborers' Justification Commission:

And nowadays such a violation of the harsh, rigid, but just Japanese civil law was unheard of. It was a credit to the incorruptibility of the Jap occupation officials, especially those who had come in after the War Cabinet had fallen. Recalling the rugged, stoic honesty of the Trade Missions, Frink felt reassured. (Dick 16)

The Japanese treatment of the people they subjugated is then put into perspective by recollections of the "experiments" the Nazis conducted in Africa: "Christ on the crapper, he thought. Africa. For the ghosts of dead tribes. Wiped out to make a land of – what? Who knew? Maybe even the master architects in Berlin did not know." (Dick 17) Upon this recollection Frink realizes that he needs to stay in the Japanese-controlled territory considering what fate would await him in the hands of the Nazis, thus reinforcing the idea of the primary evil they portray.

Another aspect in which the novel touches upon the evil of the Nazi regime are the implications of their victory. Not only does it manifest itself physically through the heinous acts the Nazis perpetrated, they were also victorious mentally. This is shown through the particular characters who not merely tolerate but outright embrace the Nazi ideals, perhaps the worst of all Robert Childan whose anti-semitic views as well as his admiration of the Nazis are presented to the reader. In his reminiscence of virtually the same horrors as Frink, the reader can see just how deeply the Nazi values are rooted in him:

And after all, They [the Nazis] had been successful with the Jews and Gypsies and Bible Students. And the Slavs had been rolled back two thousand years' worth, to their heartland in Asia. Out of Europe entirely, to everyone's relief. Back to riding yaks and hunting with bow and arrow. [...]

*As to the Final Solution of the African Problem, we have almost achieved our objectives. Unfortunately, however –*

Still, it had taken two hundred years to dispose of the American aborigines, and Germany had almost done it in Africa in fifteen years [...] the Germans never stopped applying themselves. And when they did a task, they did it right. (Dick 29-30)

Childan's attitude towards the Japanese is more complicated. On the one hand it is obvious from his inner monologue that he despises the Japanese: "They are - let's face it - Orientals. Yellow people. We whites have to bow to them because they hold the power. But we watch Germany; we see what can be done where whites have conquered, and it's quite different." (Dick 30) On the other one, despite the obvious racist implications of his thoughts, he seems to be quite eager to meet and socialize with a young Japanese couple – the Kasouras – and to be accepted by them. However, his racist remarks throughout the evening and especially his final exclamation: "If Germany and Japan had lost the war, the Jews would be running the world today. Through Moscow and Wall Street." (Dick 114) somewhat shock the Kasouras and distance him from the couple and further underscore the evil nature of Nazi ideology he chose to adapt. The fact that Childan admires Seyss-Inquart, i.e. the man who in the novel is responsible for the "holocaust of African continent" (Dick 96), is only the proverbial icing on the cake.

Against the backdrop of the selection of the new führer, many other deplorable acts of the high-ranking Nazis are presented. The first one among them were "vicious policies of racial extermination in the Slavic lands in early 'fifties." (Dick 95) And when they were mitigated it was arranged, "for remnant of Slavic peoples to exist on reservation-like closed regions in Heartland area." (Dick 96) Most of the atrocities are attributed to Doctor Seyss-Inquart called "possibly most hated man in Reich territory." (96) He is "said to have instigated most if not all repressive measures dealing with conquered peoples." (96) Which apart from the already mentioned "holocaust of Africa" includes "attempt to sterilize entire Russian population remaining after close of hostilities". (96) The Nazis in the novel are seen

as the epitome of evil, not only in their acts but also through their doctrine, without hardly any redeeming qualities.

## **Richard Harris and *Fatherland***

### **Brief introduction**

Robert Harris started his career as a journalist at the BBC and later wrote for the *Observer*, the *Sunday Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*. In 1986 he published a non-fiction book *Selling Hitler* about the forged Hitler diaries. The research he conducted for this book inspired him to write his first novel *Fatherland* which remains his best-known work to date. He has also penned other best-selling novels including *Archangel* (1998) or *Pompeii* (2003). Many of his works have also been adapted for the screen such as his 1995 novel *Enigma* which was turned into a film of the same name in 2001 with a screenplay by Tom Stoppard or his political thriller *The Ghost* (2007) which was made into a film in 2010 and was directed by Roman Polanski.

*Fatherland* was a major success. As Harris himself admits, “I have written seven other novels in the twenty years since this book appeared – better novels, I hope, at least some of them – but none has had quite the impact of my first.” (Harris xi) The book has been translated into twenty five languages and has sold over three million copies (Rosenfeld 87), as such it is generally regarded as the most successful alternate history to date.

*Fatherland* uses the form of the police procedural for its narrative. It is set in the year 1964 in a world where Germany won WWII. The main protagonist Xavier March is a detective who is brought in to investigate a death of a man who turns out to be a former high-ranking Nazi. When March starts to suspect that the death was not a coincidence he starts investigating on his own with the help of an American journalist Charlie Maguire. Eventually they uncover a government conspiracy to eliminate all participants of the Wannsee Conference so that the planned détente with the USA cannot be jeopardized by anyone who knows about the Holocaust.

In the novel Harris uses fictional characters as well as real historical figures. Among the historical figures who personally feature in the book are the chief of the Kriminalpolizei Arthur Nebe or Odilo Globocnik. Reinhard Heydrich, despite being a central antagonist in the

novel, never features personally and nor do other high-ranking Nazis including Hitler. Among the non-Germans that are mentioned in the novel there are Winston Churchill who fled to Canada upon British surrender and Joseph P. Kennedy Sr. who is portrayed as the current president of the US.

### The point of divergence

The setting of the Nazi-dominated Europe of 1964 leaves the reader in an unfamiliar territory where he/she is forced to pick up the pieces of how history allowed for such development once more. The point at which the novel breaks from history comes in the year 1942. The attempted assassination of Reinhard Heydrich takes place, however, unlike in the text-external reality he does not die in *Fatherland*.

Although this fact is the first departure from the real past, it is not given much prominence in the narrative. The reader is made aware of Heydrich's existence in the story quite early in the text. It is in the second chapter of the first part of the book that he is first introduced as "the Head of the Reich Main Security Office." (Harris 15) It is only much later in the book that a more specific profile of Heydrich is provided; namely that, "the press portrayed him as Nietzsche's Superhuman sprung to life" and that he assumed the position of Reichsführer-SS "when the aircraft carrying Heinrich Himmler had blown up mid-air two years ago." (Harris 177) At this point the reader also learns of his violent tendencies: "The whisper around the Kripo was that the Reich's chief policeman liked beating up prostitutes." and that, "he was said to be in line to succeed the Führer." (Harris 177)

The placement of the point of divergence itself is rather inconspicuous. It is only presented rather briefly amidst a series of events in March's attempt to straighten out the facts concerning the case he is investigating. "JULY 1942. On the eastern front, the Wehrmacht has launched Operation "Blue": the offensive that will eventually win Germany the war. [...] In Prague, Reinhard Heydrich is recovering from an assassination attempt." (Harris 305-306) It may be said that unless the reader is perfectly acquainted with Heydrich's fate, it may even escape him/her that the point of divergence is being depicted as in the real past only a month earlier Heydrich actually seemed to be recovering before succumbing to blood infection on June 4<sup>th</sup>. (Gerwarth 13) In this way, the point of divergence is constructed very craftily; the departure from the real past is quite believable as a what-if scenario since it has been claimed that "had penicillin been available in Germany in 1942, Heydrich would have survived." (Gerwarth 13)

By contrast, there are other turning points which are placed much more prominently in the narrative. March's recollection of wartime milestones as they were presented by the government's statements being the prime example.

Victory over Russia in the spring of '43 – a triumph for the Führer's strategic genius! The Wehrmacht summer offensive of the year before had cut off Moscow off from the Caucasus, separating the Red armies from the Baku oilfields. Stalin's war machine had simply ground to a halt for want of fuel.

Peace with the British in '44 – a triumph for the Führer's counter-intelligence genius! March [...] England was starved into submission. Churchill and his gang of war-mongers had fled to Canada.

Peace with the Americans in '46 – a triumph for the Führer's scientific genius! When America defeated Japan by detonating an atomic bomb, the Führer had sent a V-3 rocket to explode in the skies over New York to prove he could retaliate in kind if struck. (Harris 112)

These events are presented much earlier in the novel than the actual point of divergence and as they are introduced in anticipation of an announcement by the government (which turns out to be a visit of the US president – Joseph Kennedy) and in succession they seem to be more obvious points of reference for the reader. Arguably, these events are also easier to interpret as fictitious without deeper knowledge of the history of the WWII.

The portrayal of the alternate history in the novel definitely observes the Rankean paradigms of historiography and could be said to subscribe to the "Great men" theory as it is the fortune of one individual – Reinhard Heydrich, who sets the history on a different course. The question arises whether such a development is believable. While one could argue that there were more prominent Nazis and Heydrich's survival would not have made any difference, his role in the Holocaust is undeniable (and central to the plot of *Fatherland*), his reputation as "an appalling figure even within the context of the Nazi elite" (Gerwarth xiii) preceded him and even one of the highest ranking Nazi officials - Joseph Goebbels, wrote in his diary as Heydrich's condition worsened that his loss would be disastrous. (Gerwarth 13) It is therefore not too far-fetched to assume that had Heydrich survived, history may have well taken a different course.

## Paratext

The paratext in *Fatherland* is of both forms which were outlined in the theoretical part. Harris uses the author's note at the end of the book to set the history straight and explain how the fate of the historical figures present in the narrative differed in the real past. It is the main device he employs to convey that the history in the novel is fictitious. It is in the author's note that the less careful readers who might have missed the clues in the text of the novel are informed about when the point of divergence occurred.

Many of the characters whose names are used in this novel actually existed. Their biographical details are correct up to 1942. Their subsequent fates, of course, were different.

[...]

Reinhard Heydrich was assassinated in Prague by Czech agents in the summer of 1942. (Harris 503-504)

When it comes to the other type of paratext, i.e. the use of fake historical documents and sources, *Fatherland* starts becoming more problematic. Owing to its form of the police procedural Harris makes use of many supporting documents to build the plot. The detective Xavier March and the American journalist Charlie Maguire go through heaps of documents – minutes, letters, timetables or maps in their attempts to link the murders of the former high-ranking Nazis to the Holocaust. Harris in painting the portrait of the world as it actually might have been strives for authenticity. He therefore created “fake” documents, however, he also used authentic ones. List of the authentic documents together with Harris's reasoning for creating the “fake” ones is provided in the author's note.

Those named as having attended the Wannsee Conference all did so. [...]

The following documents quoted in the text are authentic: Heydrich's invitation to the Wannsee Conference; Goering's order to Heydrich of 31 July 1941; the dispatches of the German Ambassador describing the comments of Joseph P. Kennedy; the order from the Auschwitz Central Construction Office; the railway timetable (abridged); the extracts from the Wannsee Conference Minutes; the memorandum on the use of prisoner's hair.

Where I have created documents, I have tried to do so on the basis of fact – for example, the Wannsee Conference *was* postponed, its minutes *were* written up in a

much fuller form by Eichmann and subsequently edited by Heydrich; Hitler did – notoriously – avoid putting his name to anything like a direct order for the Final solution, but most certainly issued a verbal instruction in the summer of 1941. (Harris 504-505)

In striving for authenticity while admitting its status as a work of fiction *Fatherland* stands alongside many other works of alternate history. However, as the events with which most of the documents are concerned refer back to the pre-altered history which coincides with the real past the novel allows for certain blurring of the boundaries between alternate history and traditional historical fiction with regards to the use of documents.

The use of the maps in the book also deserves to be mentioned as it is interesting in its own right. Of particular interest are the two illustrations presented at the very onset of the book. Both of them are from the year when the narrative takes place – 1964, one is the map of the Greater German Reich and the other the visualization of Berlin. Although they are both fictitious Harris managed to link them with the real past once more as “the Berlin of this book is the Berlin that Albert Speer planned to build.” (Harris 505) As for the map of the Greater German Reich, it matches Hitler’s plan to conquer Eurasia stretching from the river Rhine to the Ural Mountains. (Piatti and Hurni 335)

### Normalization of Nazism?

The depiction of Nazism in *Fatherland* invites many interpretations, sometimes contradictory. Harris, unlike many other Anglophone writers of alternate history, chose Germany or The Greater German Reich of 1964 as its setting as well as a German main protagonist - Xavier March. The story takes place in a week leading up to Hitler’s 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, he is still the Führer but he has not been seen in public for months preceding the celebration.

The narrative of the novel can be seen as a portrayal of normalized Nazism; however, not without its limitations. The story takes place in what is described in the novel as “the permissive 1960s” (Harris 127) which allow for the emergence of counter-culture among young people. These young people are described as “rebellious against their parents. Questioning the state. Listening to American radio stations. Circulating their crudely printed copies of proscribed books – Günter Grass and Graham Greene, George Orwell and J. D. Salinger.” (Harris 22-23) It also manifests itself in the occasional graffiti, as for instance: “ANYONE FOUND NOT ENJOYING THEMSELVES WILL BE SHOT [sic]” (Harris 314)



painted onto a wall in proximity of the scene of the Führer's upcoming birthday celebration. Another sign of liberation within the society is the reemergence of the White Rose – "the student resistance movement that had flowered briefly in the 1940s until its leaders were executed. [...] Members grumbled about conscription, listened to banned music, circulated seditious magazines, were harassed by Gestapo." (Harris 204) Among the references which stem from the text-external world as it is known from our history, besides the existence of the White rose and its revival or the popularity of works by prohibited writers, perhaps the most interesting one is the allusion to the single best-known band of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – The Beatles. Although denounced by the regime, as is obvious from a piece published by a music critic in a newspaper who describes their music as "'pernicious Negroid wailings' of a group of young Englishmen from Liverpool who were playing to packed audiences of German youths in Hamburg" (Harris 51), apparently tolerated.

Looking at the depiction of the subversive actions of the youth in the Nazi Germany of the 1960s, it does not seem at all dissimilar to the subversive behavior of the youth behind the Iron Curtain in the 1960s. The parallel does not end there. The Reich's policy concerning its citizens travelling abroad is also highly reminiscent of the former Eastern bloc as it is described in the book with relation to the main protagonist: "The duration of the exit visa was in direct ratio to the applicant's political reliability. Party bosses got ten years; party members, five; citizens with unblemished records, one; the dregs of the camps naturally got nothing at all. March had been given a day-pass to the outside world." (Harris 244) The likeness of the novel's reality and our real past as regards the relationship of the two superpower rivals is only underscored when the nuclear stalemate between the Reich and the US and the ensuing Cold war are mentioned as well as both sides' attempts to improve their relations with one another.

Another sign of the normalization of Nazism can be observed in the demeanor of the ordinary Germans. The quote by Adolf Hitler, "People sometimes say to me: 'Be careful! You will have twenty years of guerilla warfare on your hands!' I am delighted at the prospect...Germany will remain in a state of perpetual alertness." (Harris 1) which is placed at the beginning of *Fatherland* shows to be rather stale in the novel's present. People have grown tired of war. It is not just the German youth who "protested against the war – the seemingly endless struggle against the American-backed guerillas, which had been grinding on east of the Urals for twenty years." (Harris 23) but also ordinary people who "had grown

soft. What else was the point of victory? [...] Having tasted the comforts of peace they had lost their appetite for war.” (Harris 216)

The portrayal of Xavier March, the good and honest policeman working for the Nazi regime might be interpreted as another sign of the normalization of Nazism in the novel. However, there is a problem. March is not really a good Nazi; he is merely a good person in a Nazi uniform. His disregard for the Nazi party is obvious from his personal file.

Joined the navy, 1939; transferred to the U-boat service, 1940; decorated for bravery and promoted, 1943; given command of your own boat, 1946 – one of the youngest U-boat commanders in the Reich. A glittering career. And then it all starts going wrong. [...] No police promotions for ten years. Divorced, 1957. And then reports start. Bockwart: persistent refusal to contribute to Winter Relief. Party officials at Werderscher-Markt: persistent refusal to join the NSDAP. Overheard in the canteen making disparaging comments about Himmler. Overheard in bars, overheard in restaurants, overheard in corridors... (Harris 197)

He is a misfit in the society. While there are references to the defiance against the regime among the German youth within the text, March is the only specifically mentioned character who actually acts against the system in accordance with what the reader would consider moral. His positive portrayal is overshadowed by the rest of the Germans in the novel who are still described in an extremely unfavorable light one associates with the Nazis. March then, is not really an attempt to rehabilitate Nazism. On the contrary, the good man trying to bring to light the horrific crimes of Nazism is betrayed by everyone, denounced by his own indoctrinated son and his tragic fate only underlines the evil nature of the regime.

This is therefore where the concept of *Fatherland* as a depiction of a normalized Nazi society somewhat breaks down breaks down in the eyes of the reader. At its core Nazism is still perceived as an evil ideology which should not be shown in good light. However, this portrayal of the 1964 Reich as a less severe form of totalitarianism which is still evil at its roots but relatively mild when it comes to lighter matters also has other underlying implications.

As one of the central events mentioned in the novel is the visit of the US president and a possible détente between the US a Nazi Germany and the spotlight is rather on the US than on the Reich. Would the US be willing to cooperate with Nazi Germany even if it had the

evidence of the vilest deed right in front of its eyes? If the secretary at the Embassy of the United States Henry Nightingale is any indication, probably not.

Let's suppose Luther has got something. Let's say it stirs everybody up – speeches in congress, demonstrations, editorials – this is election year, remember? So suddenly the White House is in trouble over the summit. What do you think they're going to do?

[...]

They're going to tip a truckful of shit over your head, Charlie, and over this old Nazi of yours. They'll say: what's he got that's new? The same old story we've heard for twenty years, plus a few documents, probably forged by the communists. Kennedy'll go on TV and he'll say: "My fellow Americans, ask yourselves: why has all this come up now? In whose interest is it to disrupt the summit?" (Harris 364)

With a happily collaborating pro-Nazi puppet government in Britain and a pro-German anti-Semitic president in the US, the idea of the Anglo-Saxon moral superiority is challenged as the novel poses the question "Would it have been possible?"

## Comparison

Both the novels display a straightforward concept of history as both of them present a reality where the fate of one man changes the entire course of history. The different realities that ensue in the respective works are then merely a choice of what the writer chooses as the point of divergence. In the case of *The Man in the High Castle*, Philip K. Dick gives a more coherent set of events which lead to the altered reality. The assassination of F. D. Roosevelt causes his Vice-president to assume the position of the US president. His incompetence in turn drives the US into the hands of an Isolationist who underestimates the Nazi threat and in the end loses the War because of it. In *Fatherland* the causality is much less clear. Although we learn that Heydrich's survival is the first point where history takes a different course, we are never told how exactly it translates into the success of the operation "Blue" which leads to Germany's victory over Russia in 1943, unlike in the real past where the operation is unsuccessful.

As regards the novels' strategies in order to be reflected as alternate histories they both use a different one. *The Man in the High Castle* uses the alternate history within alternate history - *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*, whereas in *Fatherland* the contrast to the altered

history of the novel is provided by the paratext. Although they both represent a point of reference they are used quite differently in the respective works. *The Grasshopper* allows for the events that happened differently in the alternate history of the novel to be put into perspective and therefore draw attention to them. The reader is introduced to *The Grasshopper* through excerpts and recounting by different characters. Since *The Grasshopper* is a part of the text-internal reality it serves not only as a background against which the alternate history of *The Man in the High Castle* can be introduced but it also functions as a plot-device, allowing the characters to express their views on the nature of the alternate history presented to them. This strategy allows for more creativity, however, it also requires certain knowledge of history as in the case of *The Grasshopper* the history in it which is used as the foil for the alternate history of *The Man in the High Castle* does not match the real past.

By comparison the author's note used as the paratext in *Fatherland*, which is used for a similar purpose as *The Grasshopper*, seems almost technical. It is text-external and therefore only for the reader to access. It serves no other literary purpose than to familiarize the reader with the real past so that he/she can contrast it with the alternate history of *Fatherland*. It also contains the list of authentic historical documents and Harris' justification for his creation of "fake" historical documents, the other type of paratext which is text-internal and is made extensive use of in the novel, as it complements the police procedural form of the novel.

The perception of Nazism is quite different in both the novels. *The Man in the High Castle* is a typical example of the unambiguous portrayal of Nazism as the utmost evil. In *Fatherland* Nazism is still evil at its core, however, it has grown into something a little softer, still totalitarianism however much more permissive and normalized in everyday matters.

How did this difference come about? *The Man in the High Castle* was published in 1963, nearly 30 years before *Fatherland* was written; however, their stories are set only two years apart from one another. 18 years from the end of the WWII, in 1960 the influential chronicle *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, A History of Nazi Germany* by William L. Shirer is published, of which Dick "had made much use." (Dick 7), Adolf Eichmann had been put on trial for War crimes in 1961 and the US economy was doing very well at that time. All of these events contributed to *The Man in the High Castle*.

On the other hand *Fatherland* was published in 1992. It had been distant 47 years since the WW II ended and Great Britain had been on the economic decline since. The world had just gone through mighty turbulences. The dissolution of the Soviet Union meant the end

of the Cold War and Germany had just reunified. It was following all this that the book was published.

Both Dick's and Harris's portrayals of the Nazis were proportional to the time they were written in. Dick was writing from the interventionist position, vindicating what the US had done in the WWII and therefore he describes the Nazis as absolute monsters. Harris having witnessed the totalitarianism of USSR slowly falling apart, started to entertain a counter-factual question, whether the Nazis would have ended up the same way.

However, there was still no getting around the fact that they were writing about Nazis. One example of the difference between the depiction of the Nazis in *The Man in the High Castle* and *Fatherland* is the treatment of the subjugated. If one compares Dick's Nazis "Vicious policies of racial extermination in the Slavic lands in early 'fifties. [...] [ It was arranged ] for remnant of Slavic peoples to exist on reservation-like closed regions in Heartland area." (Dick 96) who first try to eliminate Slavs and then send them to reservations and Harris's Nazis who instead let them work be it at menial positions "They had Poles to dig their gardens and Ukrainians to sweep their streets, French to cook their food and English maids to serve it. Having tasted the comforts of peace, they had lost their appetite for war." (Harris 216)

However, one aspect which is very intriguing in both books is the collaboration with the Nazis. In *The Man in the High Castle* the main two collaborators are Wyndam-Matson and Robert Childan, in the novel they are the broken spirit, they are the minds infected with the Nazi disease and the fact they are a kind of a warning of what might have happened. In *Fatherland*, the chief collaborator is the US president and a confirmed anti-Semite Joseph Kennedy Sr. and together with him Edward VIII of Great Britain who assumed the throne after George VI fled to Canada together with Princess Elizabeth and Winston Churchill. Whereas Dick only seems to be pointing from the distance at what might have been, Harris seems to be addressing concern over the Anglo-Saxon moral superiority saying: "Yes, We Might Well Have."

## Conclusion

In the theoretical part I have outlined the main genre specifics of alternate history. The problems concerning its definition, lack of consensus concerning the terminology and

paradigmatic texts of the genre. I have gone over the most typical themes covered in the genre as well as most popular one – the Axis victory in WWII.

Later I focused on the bordering genres of the alternate history; namely Historical fiction, Science fiction and Counterfactual history. Especially the chapter on Historical fiction proved really useful as it enabled me to better understand historiography which helped me to make further progress in the thesis.

The last part of my theoretical part was establishing a few literary devices which I could use for the practical analysis. These included the point of divergence i.e. the point at which the history in the novel breaks from the real past, alternate history within alternate history i.e. a text within the text which provides a text-internal alternate history - used as a point of reference and paratext i.e. textual and visual elements surrounding the main text – another point of reference.

In the practical part I focused on the analysis and comparison of the two alternate history novels – Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* and Robert Harris's *Fatherland* to find out what strategies they use and how they use them.

It was interesting to find out that they both subscribe to the Rankean paradigm of historiography and Carlyle's "Great Men" theory as they both use the fate of one individual to change the course of history.

Next I examined which devices the respective authors used to create a point of reference in the novel. Here the two novels differed greatly. As *Fatherland* is what we might call a criminal thriller or a police procedural. As such it used a lot of paratext - documents which were both fake and authentic in order to bring authenticity to the story. As for the point of reference for the history in the novel, the real fortunes of the historical figures who featured in the novel are all presented in the Author's note whereas *The Man in the High Castle* features the novel within the novel (or alternate history within alternate history) as its point of reference.

Perhaps the most interesting was the novels' different approach to the portrayal of Nazism. *The Man in the High Castle* was written 1963 and serves as a vindication of the Americans' involvement in the WWII and portrays the Nazis as extremely evil, whereas Harris wrote *Fatherland* in 1992 and had had the benefit of having seen a totalitarian state fall to pieces under its own weight and therefore he portrayed the Nazis in a normalized way, not too dissimilar to the former Eastern bloc.



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