تخيل السلطوية الأمريكية: التاريخ البديل وهشاشة الديمقراطية في رواية *المؤامرة ضد أمريكا* لفيليب روث

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كيفية اقتباس البحث

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Imagining American Authoritarianisms: Alternate History and the Fragility of Democracy in Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America*

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المستخلص

الادب القائم على التاريخ الافتراضي المضاد للواقع اصبح نوعا ادبيا ذات انتشار واسع. اذ يقديم تصورات لمسارات تاريخية بديلة تقوم على نقاط تحول حاسمة فالعديد من الكتاب والمؤلفين قد وظفو هذا النوع الادبي في الحرب العالمية الثانية من اجل استكشاف الكيفية التي يمكن للعالم بها ان يتشكل لو لم تكن هنالك حرب او خسرها الحلفاء. في روايته *المؤامرة ضد امريكا* والتي صدرت في 2004 والتي تدور احداثها حول تخيلات الروائي فيليب روث وقائع تاريخية بديلة حيث تتحول فيه الولايات المتحدة الامريكية الى حليفة لألمانيا النازية تحت قيادة ادولف هتلر في ظل قيادة و ادارة الرئيس تشارلز ليندبيرج. عن طريق جعل ليندبيرغ رئيسا للولايات الامريكية المتحدة في فترة الحرب العالمية الثانية بدلا من فرانكلين ديلانو روزفلت اعاد روث تشكيل التاريخ الامريكي. حيث يؤدي هذا التغير الى نتائج وتداعيات مختلفة على المستوى الوطني ولاسيما فيما يتعلق باليهود والاقليات العرقية الاخرى والتي تعرضت الى الاظطهاد في ظل الايديولوجيا النازية. من خلال هذا التصور التاريخي، يهدف البحث لكشف التداعيات

الخطيرة للعنصرية وتبرز النتائج التي يمكن ان تودي بها النزاعات العنصرية الى انزلاق المجتمع نحو الهاوية والكراهية والفوضى امام تصاعد النزاعت الاقصائية والاستبدادية.

ماذا لو كان العالم مختلفًا بطريقة ما؟ هذا السؤال محوري في كلٍّ من الخيال العلمي والتاريخ البديل. إن الإجابة على هذا السؤال في النصوص الخيالية تُنتج الخيال العلمي أو غيره من النصوص الخيالية، بما في ذلك الفانتازيا والواقعية السحرية. ومن النقاط المهمة التي أود التأكيد عليها أن التاريخ البديل هو نوع فرعي من الخيال العلمي، الذي هو بدوره نوع فرعي من الأدب الخيالي

Abstract

Counterfactual literature has become a popular genre that gives a scenario for an alternate history with vital divergent points and missed chances. Different writers used this genre after World War II to reflect on how the world would be different if the war did not happen or if the Allies lost it. Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America* (2004) envisions a version of America that becomes an ally of Hitler's Germany under the administration of Charles Lindbergh. The author changes the American History by showing Lindbergh as leader of America during the War instead of Roosevelt. This change leads to different outcomes on national levels, especially with regards to the Jewish people and other races that are persecuted by Nazism. Through the alternate history, this paper shows the ramifications of racism and how it can lead the society to slip into hatred and chaos.

What if the world were somehow different?' This question is at the centre of both science fiction and the alternate history. Answering this question in fictive texts creates science fiction or other fantastic texts, including fantasy and magic realism. One important point I wish to stress is that the alternate history is a sub-genre of the genre of science fiction, which is itself a sub-genre of fantastic .

1.Introduction to the Theoretical Background

Historians have long used "counterfactuals" or "subjunctive conditionals" as thought experiments to understand cause and effect. Many science fiction writers are interested in it because it reflects the central question of the genre: "What if the world were different?", as it clarified by Riyukta Raghunath;

What if the world were somehow different?' This question is at the centre of both science fiction and the alternate history. Answering this question in fictive texts creates science fiction or other fantastic texts, including fantasy and magic realism. One important point I wish to stress is that the alternate history is a sub-genre of the genre of science fiction, which is

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itself a sub-genre of fantastic (that is, not realistic) literature. (Raghunath, 2020, p. 5)

In this type of fiction, a specific historical moment, often called a 'nexus point' or 'Jonbar hinge' or 'moment of divergence,' is changed and the writer explores what follows from this change (Hellekson, 2009, p. 453). According to *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2020) defines the word counterfactual as "[p]ertaining to, or expressing, what has not in fact happened, but might, could, or would, in different conditions". In other words, counterfactual express facts that might not happen or occur in real world, but it creating fictionally by the writer, or as Neal Roese and James Olson described it as a term that "literally, runs contrary to the facts" (1995, p. 1).

Barney Warf (2002) explores this science fiction approach to history in more detail. He explains that counterfactuals in science fiction are often seen as "alternate histories," such as imagining if the Victorians had invented the computer or if World War II had ended differently. However, it is not only time that changes in these scenarios, space and geography are also manipulated because alternate histories are naturally connected to place.Thus, the genre raises questions about time, causality, and whether history follows a fixed path. Also, it studies the relationship between past and present. Counterfactual looks at the role of individuals in making history and shows how the past can be told as a narrative. In some cases, writers create entirely different worlds or set the story so far in the past or future that it becomes difficult to follow that change (Hellekson, 2009, p. 453). *In the Plot Against America*, the writer explores a possible history of Nazism in America. All histories, in fact, unfold in space that led to different patterns of human behavior (p. 32). Although alternate history is a literary genre that focuses on questioning what might happen if a historical event had a different outcome, it was not clearly defined until the mid-1990s. The question of 'what if' is something that people have been doing since the dawn of history. It only became widely popular in the second decade of the 21st century mainly because of television adaptations based on alternate history stories. These novels and their adaptations show how historical events could be changed and understood in collective memory (Gutiérrez, 2021, p. 3).

In his original (1994) article, Paul Alkon explains that alternate histories are "essays or narratives exploring the consequences of an imagined divergence from specific historical events" (p. 68). This idea of "imagined divergence" comes from a decisive moment that the author chooses to change in his book and build the imaginative consequences around it. As for example, published in 1836, Louis-Napoléon Geoffroy-

Chateau's *Napoleon and the Conquest of the World* is considered the first novel of alternate history. However, even though some essays and novels appeared in the years that followed, alternate history did not become a major literary genre until the second half of the twentieth century. It achieved recognition after World War II, specifically from the 1960s onward (Gutiérrez, 2021, p. 7). Some scholars like Schneider-Mayerson argue that 1995 should be seen as the starting point of the genre because of the creation of the Sidewise Awards for Alternate History. This award "defined the alternate history as a literary category and became a mechanism to draw and control the boundaries of the genre" (Schneider-Mayerson, 2006, p. 64).

For Duncan (2003) counterfactual historical fiction is "not […] history at all, but a work of fiction in which history as we know it is changed for dramatic and often ironic effect" (209). To clarify the matter, Raghunath differentiates between the real world and the real world of the narrative, the textual actual world. The actual world is not the world of the text, the textual actual world is the reality that is narrated in the text. Readers receive the same history but with different knowledge. Raghunath writes by the word "reader knowledge world" or "RK-world". An RK-world is not another physical reality, but a part of or a large portion of the reader's history. It specifies which changes constitute counterfactual changes. So, the text offers an alternative, and the reader's history knowledge identifies its contradiction to reality. The two worlds are not connected, but are ontologically superimposed in one's mind. This maintains the contrast between what is and what is not: the reader believes the world in the story to be the real world today, and the real history to be the backdrop for the changes that are apparent in the story. The flow between these worlds generates reciprocal feedback, the heart of the analytical claim of the framework, as following;

A reciprocal feedback in this case is the process of using the actual world we inhabit to understand the counterfactual textual actual world and similarly, using the textual actual world that presents a 'what could have happened' to understand the importance of what happened in the actual world. (Raghunath, 2020, p. 87)

The reason for the importance of alternate history is reciprocal, in that the imaginary history makes actual history seem as if it were possible. The real world is the source of reference, the textual world is different, and the reader's comparison makes it a historical criticism. Hence, Counterfactual historical fiction can be defined as a genre of fiction that is rich in possibilities. In other words, all types of fictional narrative offer what-if scenario in a way that visualize a world that is full with a series of

events and a large number of possibilities. As in the words of Ryan (2006), in that"[a]lternate […] history fiction creates a world whose evolution, following a certain event, diverges from what we regard as actual history" (657). In other words, as in *Possible worlds, artificial intelligence, and narrative theory* is a book by Marie-Laure Ryan (1991) that further develops possible-worlds theory in the fields of narrative cognition and narrative story worlds. Ryan's goal is to demonstrate the potential of using insights from artificial intelligence, modal logic and possible worlds semantics to elucidate the organization and interpretation of narrative. She employs a theoretical framework that is interdisciplinary, using formal concepts of world, accessibility, knowledge, desire, obligation and belief to theorize literary narratives.

Possible Worlds Theory is a means of comprehending fiction as the making of an intelligible alternative world. The theory is devoid of any fictional world; there is no need for a material world to be real. Instead, it poses how a story creates a world, what things and events are in it, what rules control how it works, and how it connects with the real world that the reader enters from when reading the story. The main thesis of this approach is that the purpose of counterfactual historical fiction is to construct a coherent textual world by altering actual history, and that the significance of the text relies upon the reader's knowledge of actuality and possibility. The main lens is Raghunath's *Possible Worlds Theory and Counterfactual Historical Fiction* (2020) since this theory is difficult to explain without referring to fictional-world construction and historical knowledge. The alternative world is not a fantasy or a false record but makes sense when juxtaposed to the real world.

Ruth Ronen (1994) separates "possible worlds" theory into different main branches. She contrasts "modal realism," and "moderate realism." She connects the first one to the work of philosopher David Lewis (1973, 1986). Lewis suggests that all possible worlds exist equally in a logical space where they have a kind of physical presence parallel to our own world (pp. 21-2). Lewis' idea of counterfactuals can be seen as close to science fiction because it explores the idea of parallel or multiple worlds. On the other hand, "moderate realists" do not see these alternative worlds as actually existing somewhere else. Instead, they understand them as abstract and hypothetical ideas within our real world. In this case, possible worlds do not truly exist, but they can still be imagined, created, and thought about which is more suitable approach to think about counterfactual fiction (Hills, 2009, p. 433). *The Plot Against America* draws attention to the power of fiction itself in building counterfactual worlds. It questions history as one constructed version among many

possible others. This sort of literature makes history seen with uncertainty and doubt (p. 436). In other words, Possible Worlds Theory has evolved from the philosophical discussion of modality to a light and flexible narratological approach to the explanation of the construction, organisation and relation of the literary world to the real one in literary texts. In the case of the present study of Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America*, three foundational studies offer assistance in presenting the ontological autonomy of fictional worlds, the reader's navigation from one fictional world to another, and the literary fiction's productivity in the creation of worlds. Together, they offer the conceptual underpinning for the study of the alternate U.S. presented by Roth and, at the same time, highlight the necessity for a more historical and cognitive accurate model of alternate history reading.

Theoretically, the study is not empirical but model-building; the ways in which narrative operators are used and their value for explanation, is demonstrated in close discussions with literary situations and fictional propositions. It's primary thesis that a text creates a World-system, not a simple series of events, and that the reader is constructing the 'World-system' of the text by changing only what the text changes so as to use the real world as a cognitive basis. It's a concept of minimal departure which is especially relevant to this kind of writing (alternate history): a reader is more likely to see Charles Lindbergh in a novel when he is the historical Lindbergh, than when he is presented as an alternate president. The textually actual world is also separated from characters' personal knowledge, wishes, obligations and beliefs in Ryan's model, allowing for a study of the dissemination of narrative information. The problem with this is that it generalizes information about the reader's knowledge of the world in his/her real life and doesn't take into account readers' unequal historical knowledge sufficiently. It also does not fully describe the mental activity of the reader who make a comparison between a fictional world in the text and a historical one. For the purposes of the present research, however, it is Ryan who provides the needed link between construction of the text and a reader's interpretation. Her model allows for an examination of the ways in which *The Plot Against America* can be said to document familiar American politics in the process of changing its one pivotal election result, thus bringing democratic fragility into focus as a controlled deviation from history.

Concluding that, Literature is not only a document of history, it is also a critique of how history is chosen, remembered and interpreted. In alternate history stories, where the events in history are altered to reveal the consequences that may be covered up in official history, this

argument will have greater significance. The present study combines the theory of alternate history, possible worlds and cultural pride to explore the connection between historical possibility and cultural identity. The central thesis is that it is most politically and culturally empowering when the different events of the alternate history change the mundane circumstances in which a community defines itself. As that in the novel, the location of Holocaust and ethnic purification happens in the united states instead of Germany. It could be said that, Counterfactual scenarios are powerful not only because they show attitudes, but also because they often present near misses, missed chances, and possibilities that never happened. Because of this, they are meaningful in situations like interviews, rhetorical speech, and literary works. However, people also think and talk about counterfactual situations in everyday life, for example, if I had remembered to buy a new printer cartridge, I would have printed my lesson plan before class. These simple everyday cases are usually not part of creative imagination. Even so, both ordinary and literary examples can be studied using the same theoretical and methodological approach (Harding, 2007, p. 264). The aim here is to offer a clear theory of how people evaluate counterfactuals that can be applied to different types of discourse.

2.Literature Review

Since its publishing in 2004, Roth's novel was studied by different academics and literary critics. One of the important articles that studied *The Plot Against America* is "It is happening here: *The Plot Against America and the political moment*" by Steven G Kellman (2008). The paper explains that Philip Roth insisted his book was fiction and not a direct comment on modern repression, even though he criticized the Bush presidency. The novel is set sixty years earlier during the war and time of national crisis. Yet, many readers saw it as a reflection of recent events. They read the story as if T*he plot against America* was really about Bush's use and expansion of power in the early twenty first century. Roth's version of Lindbergh, like Bush, is shown as a Republican outsider who comes to power without clearly stating his position. Many critics from different political views still read The Plot Against America as a hidden comment on modern political problems.

Another important article is "*The Plot Against America*": Philip Roth's Counter-Plot to American History" by Jason Siegel (2012). This article uses Linda Hutcheon's idea of historiographic metafiction to study how Roth rethinks the way we understand and represent history. It argues that Roth presents his alternative history not as a biased comment on real life,

but as a form of history that questions and adds to our idea of American identity.

Also, there is "*The Plot Against America* and History Post-9/11" by Dan Shiffman (2009). While *The Plot Against America* invites comparisons to 9/11 and to George W Bush, the novel focuses on a lost and imagined sense of patriotic belief. Roth looks at a form of patriotism that values the right to disagree and speak freely. This paper argues that the novel presents civil values and critical patriotism. At the same time, the novel studies politics from the viewpoint of family relationships and social life.

Timothy Parrish's "*The Plot Against America* (2005) tackles the ideas of historiography in the novel. In Philip Roth's novel *The Plot Against America*, the author does not clearly explain how America changes so fast into a fearful and anti-Semitic society. Part of the power of the novel comes from how strange and unsettling Lindbergh's rise feels. Roth also points out that Lindbergh supported white supremacist ideas and had negative views about Jews and other races and ethnicities. These ideas were also supported by Henry Ford, who funded anti-Semitic newspapers and spread harmful myths.

Also, "The Sense of an Ending: Alternative History in Philip Roth's The Plot Against America" by Ginevra Geraci (2011) discusses an important side of the novel which is the availability of two endings. In today's world, the idea of utopia does not seem realistic. Instead, dystopia, or a form of alternative history with dystopian elements, becomes a useful way to tell broad historical narratives. Roth looks back at an imagined past. He uses this method to better understand how history works and to connect past and present. In this way he offers a postmodern view of time and history.

Finally, there is *The plot against American* foreign policy: *Can the liberal order survive* by G John Ikenberry (2017). Roth looks back at the past in order to investigate the history in different way. The paper studies how a hostile power always invites enmity and death. It is doomed to fail in one way or the other, if it is not self-orchestrated destruction it will be destruction at the hands of others.

So the topic and analysis of this paper will be unique since it does not focus on the political aspects of the novel that makes it counterfactual, but rather envisions how these political changes might impact human rights, freedom, and the rights of minorities. Thus, the focus is not on counterfactual government but rather on counterfactual reality that show the alternative of freedom and equality to be an inescapable darkness.

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3.Representations of Cultural Pride in Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America*

The Plot Against America received mixed reviews when it was first published in 2004. The counterfactual history is usually associated most often with popular writing rather than literary merit, the novel was seen by many as less serious than Roth's other work (Boese, 2014, p. 271). The novel is set in the1940s. it imagines a fascist takeover of the United States. The story follows Charles Lindbergh who is elected instead of President Roosevelt to become the thirty-third president of the United States.

Roth's novel focuses on the idea that an American Holocaust was possible with a government under the control of Germany. The Republican Party chooses Lindbergh as its candidate instead of Roosevelt. In the novel, Lindbergh is shown as a supporter of Hitler because he refuses to return a medal given to him by Nazi officials. The Nazism is known to pursue an approach of ethnic cleansing where black people, Jewish, and queer individuals are considered inferior human beings that are not worthy of the same level of services and rights as the Aryan race. Lindbergh shows a similar approach in a country that is known for its racism against people of color. Yet, Lindbergh increases the tension among races in the novel by including anti-Jewish tone in his speeches. After becoming president, he makes an agreements with Germany and Japan. The novel creates an image where the United States is distanced from its allies and about to join the axis power of Germany (Graham, 2007, p. 120).

Roth is not the only writer who has imagined a situation where the United States is ruled by fascism and goes to commit genocide against its people. Dark and disturbing images of a Nazi-controlled America appeared even during World War II. These images and imagined scenarios often explored the possibility of Hitler carrying out a plans of racial purification in the United States if he had the chance. Thus, the narrative returns to the past in order to focus on what is labeled a "nexus event," which is the specific moment of history that is changed in the novel. This moment is the election of Lindbergh and possible alliance between America and Germany. This event starts a new timeline that is different from the one we already know. (Boese 2014 p. 273).

In the case of counterfactual narrative, even a small or forgotten detail can grow and lead to completely different worlds. The novel opens with a discussion of a program called Just Folks. It is a youth program similar to Germany's Hitler Youth but it is created in America. Philip Roth names the fictional family in the novel after his family name, and names

his child main character after himself, Philip Roth. This program is seen as a way to turn the children against their parents by making them obedient followers of the state. Through this program, Philip's older brother Sandy spends a summer with the Mawhinneys, a Christian family that owns a tobacco farm in Kentucky. When he returns to Newark, everyone notices that he is tanned, he becomes stronger and speaks with a Kentucky accent. These changes reflect his growing distance from his parents and from his community.

Through the novel, Roth tries to question American history by discussing different aspects of the past. In the story, history is always being reflected on. The writer refers to actual historical incidents while he weaves his plot around it. References to places like Louisville, Kentucky, and to the American Constitution bring up historical and literary ideas about the racism and marginalization of minority groups. In a realistic incident, "Hitler himself gave a speech at a Nazi convention praising the way Americans had "gunned down the millions of Redskins to a few hundred thousand, and now keep the modest remnant under observation in a cage"" (Busch, 2002, p. 160). Thus, extremism and racism is something that was strongly present in the establishment of American colonies which developed to be part of the culture. The Lindbergh administration tries to continue a heritage of exclusion by spreading the Jewish population across the country and move them away from highly urban and ethnically concentrated areas like Newark, in order to weaken their political influence.

Nine-year-old Philip reacts strongly when he hears that the government might force him to move from Newark to Kentucky. His biggest fear is that in the new place he will have to befriend 'losers' from his community like Seldon. This idea outrage him enough to escape at night to join an orphanage. However, his attempt to escape fails. He is injured after being thrown by a horse. The author does not allow Phil to escape. He forces his young character to return home and take part in his family's history. Sokoloff (2006) argues that through this storyline, Roth connects with a modern Jewish literary tradition that focuses on orphans. A well-known example is Sholem Aleichem's *Mottel, the Cantor's Son*. In this novel, the young character celebrates being an orphan as a chance for freedom and a new beginning in America. In such novels, orphanhood can mean choosing a new identity and new opportunities. Roth, however, rejects this idea. For Philip, the better choice is not to escape but stay home with his parents and identity (p. 308). While the country itself wrongly turns to Lindbergh as a father-like leader, Roth strengthens the

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idea of returning to roots and committing to one's identity and being true to one's ethnicity.

Lindbergh policy in limiting and controlling Jewish people reflects his sympathies with Hitler's administration. The United States is built originally as a colony that is separated into different areas depending on ethnicity, race, colors, etc. Thus, Lindbergh's policy brings up earlier practices from the nineteenth century when separating people into groups was the norm (Wirth-Nesher, 1998, p. 169). It is clarified that distributing minorities across the country and drafting children in government programs was aimed to wipe out any ethnic or racial power that minorities may have. Thus, little Philip narrates

It went without saying that Mr. Mawhinney was a Christian, a long-standing member of the great overpowering majority that […] conquered the wilderness and subjugated the Indian, […] one of those unassailable Nordic and Anglo-Saxon Protestants who ran America and would always run it […] while my father, of course, was only a Jew" (Roth, 2005, pp. 93-94).

The ironic narration here is not meant to clarify the power ratio between Christians and Jews in America but to refer to the fact that a country that is built on the superiority of race will always be capable of repeating the genocide of Indian-Americans with other minorities. The dismissive "only a Jew" seems an implications that Sandy's admiring of Mr. Mawhinney contrasts with his view of his father Herman. By adopting the language, diet, and general cultural praxis of the Mawhinneys, Sandy virtually becomes one himself. He finds himself, for the moment, alienated from his belittled Jewish family and all but totally absorbed into the "great overpowering majority."

"Are you crazy," my father whispered, peering furiously down at him over his neck brace, "are you nuts, drawing her? […] You never heard of Leo Frank? You never heard of the Jew they lynched in Georgia because of that little factory girl? Stop drawing her, damn it! Stop drawing any of them! *These people don'tlike being drawn*—can't you see that? We came out to Kentucky to get this boy because they have burned his mother to death in her car!" (Roth, 2005, p 359)

Herman refers to an incident that happened with a whit German-American man named Leo Frank. He was Jewish man that worked in a factory where a 13 years old girl died. He was killed by a mob of people who believed that he was responsible of her death. However, it turned out that he was innocent of that murder. In the novel, Herman fears the same future for his sons. Because he knows that no matter how hard Sandy tries

to shed his Jewish skin and mingle with white people, he will not be one of them.

The southern states of the U.S. are known for having carried a long history of racism and hate against the nonwhite people. In fact, it was considered extremely dangerous to break racial taboos in the South, especially those related to interactions between nonwhite men and white women. This moment in the narrative, like much of *The Plot Against America*, brings up the history of racism in the United States by placing Jews in the position of possible victims. The kind of violence that has usually affected other minority groups, especially African Americans and Native Americans, is attributed in the novel to the white against Jewish American as well.

The point of Divergence that Philip Roth chooses leads to a series of events that changed the lives of minorities and different ethnicities. Suddenly he country is swarmed with Anti-Jewish riots. The rights of land ownership change, and the possession of individuals are not safe due to continually changed laws. One character wonders: ""And who's next, Mr. and Mrs. America, now that the Bill of Rights is no longer the law of the land and the racial haters are running the show? […]Who else among us is no longer welcome in Adolf Lindbergh's Aryan America?" (Roth, 2005, p. 229). The child narrator keeps reporting and commenting on these ideas without fully understanding them, yet he is awa that the hate towards his family is not only political but also social. The society supports the policies of Lindbergh in one way or another:

At home the biggest threat came from the Americans who opposed or resisted us—or condescended to us or rigorously excluded us—[…]. Though I knew that we were tolerated and accepted as well—in publicized individual cases, even specially esteemed—and though I never doubted that this country was mine (and New Jersey and Newark as well), I was not unaware of the power to intimidate that emanated from the highest and lowest reaches of gentile America. (Roth, 2005, p. 20)

The sixth chapter of *The Plot Against America* is titled 'Their Country.' This Chapter shows the moment when the Roth family realizes that America no longer feels like their homeland. The novel's alternate history does not completely change real history, but shows concealed social tensions among American races and ethnicities. At the same time, the idea that "Christian character is the true basis of real Americanism," shows that everyone else besides white Christians may not necessarily find a space in the American society. This idea is expressed by Reverend Gerald L. K. Smith who emphasizes Christianity as a permanent part of American identity (Roth, 2005, p. 265). Thus, the child narrator describes

his fear at the beginning of the novel because the hatred and racism created by Lindbergh may remain after his rule ends (Siegel, 2012, p. 138).

The National Guard units enforcing the nationwide curfew report no incidents of violence prompted by the president's disappearance. Under martial law, America remains calm, though the Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan and the leader of the American Nazi Party have jointly called upon the acting president "to implement extreme measures to protect America from a Jewish coup d'état." (Roth, 2005, p. 310)

The ramification of having a racist power leading the country is thoroughly explored in the novel. The country is shown to be falling apart and people are distancing from each other. Not only do people become increasingly racist and hate spread against nonwhite and non-Christian people, but also the entire state seems to collapse. The soldiers begin to force curfew and citizens started to retreat to the indoor life instead of being able to socialize and mingle as they used to before the Nazi influence over the country. amid this chaos, people are shocked with the news of the disappearance of the president. The First Lady addresses the nation and puts so much hope into finding her husband plane which does not happen for months. She eventually gives up and compares the case of her husband to that of Emilia Earhart: "the tragic plight of Amelia Earhart, the greatest of woman aviators, who, following the lead of President Lindbergh, made her heralded solo flight across the Atlantic in 1932, only to disappear without a trace in 1937" (Roth, 2005, p. 314). Unlike the counterfactual narrative that Philip Roth makes, the case and tragic disappearance of Emilia Earhart is realistic and know worldwide. She uses this comparison to create a sense of heroism around her husband's disappearance due to the fact that Emilia Earhart is a nationally celebrated hero, yet that does not work. The ramification of the disappearance of the president's plane only increase and become more complicated. The writer shows that the nation cannot be the same after a racist control because there was "climate of hate" emanating from the White House" (Roth, 2005, p. 267).

The novel does not place all the blame on Lindbergh's government alone. Lindbergh was responsible for relocating people and forcing surveillance. The Roth family are damaged by the change in the ordinary Americans. The possibility of an American Holocaust becomes reality when citizens start to follow the government and support it. Racism and Anti-Jewish oppression become stronger. This includes insults and violent protests in the South and Midwest that demand regional separation and more. These events are described as the worst anti-Semitic violence outside Nazi

Germany. The message is that Americans can also be violent like other nations. This idea is similar to the argument that the Holocaust in Europe depended not only on government but also on the support of ordinary people. After all, genocide and political violence cannot be placed only on governments, even highly authoritarian ones (Graham, 2007, p. 121).

The Plot Against America presents two different endings. The first one explains the historical outcome. By page 327, the reader knows that Roosevelt is reelected after the disappearance of Lindbergh. Thus, the progress towards another Holocaust stopped. With this ending the path of History is restored and World War II continues. The narrator describes the events of October 16, 1942 by summarizing that the nation started to recover and the country returned to its former Western Allies and left its older sympathies with the Germans and Nazism.

However, in the second ending, the narrator provides the story of the Roth family. Here, the narrative goes back to the previous day of October 15, 1942. It shows a different perspective. In this second ending, Philip's father and brother travel to Kentucky to bring back the orphan boy Seldon after the death of his family in a riot against the Jew people. The days were heavy on little Philip and his family as they closed the schools and he feared that they might never open again or that his father and brother were going to die brutally like Sandy's family. The child and is family feared that "have been imposed by the Nazis on the Jewish children of Germany. A political catastrophe of unimaginable proportions was transforming a free society into a police state," (Roth, 2005, p. 354). However, his father and brother manage to find Seldon and as they bring him they follow their journey across America using a map "My mother tracked their trip on my encyclopedia's foldout map of the forty-eight states and the ten Canadian provinces," (p. 359). In this final chapter the reader sees that the family and their friends struggle to reconcile their sense of the national and cultural identity with that of the pain that accompanied racist attacks on them. Thus, even when history return to its well-known course and moment of divergence ends with the disappearance of Lindbergh, personal lives and struggle remain caught in the impact of his old policies that are not yet fully changed or fixed.

Conclusion

The two endings of the novel confirm its main thesis, which is even when the leader that believes in racism and bigotry is removed, the outcomes of his administration can last for long after. While the first ending shows that the state is now under new and better leadership, the second ending shows the consequences of racism on individual level. Thus, while the state can recover easily with a group of new laws, people cannot leave

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their personal views easily to acquire new ones. The author uses the counterfactual to imagine another ethnicity that is being persecuted besides the African and Asian American which is the Jewish ethnicity. He constructs his novel in a way that shows that a country that is capable of violence against one group can extend the persecution and oppression to include other groups as well.

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