Masculinity and Fascism in Three Dystopic American Novels

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Abstract:

Many American authors of the 20th century, concerned by their era's proclivity for idealization and archetypal behavior, published nightmare visions of America under Fascist rule. Three American dystopic novels, Sinclair Lewis' 'It Can't Happen Here', Philip K. Dick's 'The Man in the High Castle', and Philip Roth's 'The Plot Against America', all examine the ways in which a Fascist regime appropriates the masculine discourse to legitimize its hold over the people and justify repression against marginal groups. Government restriction of the access to masculinity marks those outside the "normal" system as subhuman and encourages violent repression, and constitutes the necessary mindset for mass slaughter. In all of these works, the regime firmly controls both access to and definition of normative male behavior, promotes traditional Victorian concepts of manhood, and alienates and marginalizes "other" men outside this homogeneous concept. These dystopic works illustrate the absolute necessity to construct gender expectations and ideals outside of Victorian criteria. Ultimately, each of the male protagonists finds a way to resist subjugation through alternative forms of masculinity based within a different, less Victorian concept of manhood.

1 The particular "voice" of a civilization is often represented in its conscious construction and articulation of normative gender roles. Gino Germani elaborates: "One of the characteristics of modern society is the substitution of deliberate, programmed behavior for that which in nonmodern societies occurs naturally and spontaneously" (245). So, if previously the "voice" of a particular element of culture was authentic, determined only by those individuals within that particular grouping, in modern societies this authentic voice has been usurped and silenced and in its place exists a fabricated, artificial voice that only broadcasts an agenda, not an experience. The volumes of discourse regarding idealized perceptions of American manhood in the late 19th and early 20th century aptly document the conscious attempt to define male function in society. With the closing of the American frontier in the 1890's and the devastating effects of The Great War still fresh in the minds of the populace, new ideas concerning the proper male role in society were being challenged and distorted. Michael Gordon succinctly defines the presiding gender expectations for the Victorian period, stating, "The husband was supposed to be dominant, the wife submissive; the husband was asked to provide for his family, his wife was called upon to care for the home and children. [. . .] ideals are doubly important as the standard to which many men held themselves, and as the standard by which deviance was defined" (145). This standard of

ideals[1] and corresponding definition of deviance played an instrumental role in shaping both the political and social structure of modern America.

2 In many ways, concern in early 20th century America regarding proper gender roles was only heightened by the looming cloud of Fascism which had begun to envelop Europe. The Fascist state stressed the importance of proper gender expectations, and carefully constructed normative behaviors to solidify and legitimize its hold on the populace. Germani notes that in many Fascist regimes, "there was a deliberate effort to socialize the youth according to values, attitudes, beliefs, and models of behavior considered essential to the preservation and the future of the system" (246). Many American authors of the 20th century, concerned by their era's proclivity for idealization and archetypal behavior, published nightmare visions of America under Fascist rule. These dystopic novels explore the American propensity for violence and repression of marginalized groups through their depiction of masculinity.[2] And yet Michael Kimmel observes that "interestingly enough, these common characteristics—violence, aggression, extreme competitiveness, a gnawing insecurity—are also the defining features of compulsive masculinity, a masculinity that must always prove itself and that is always in doubt" (93). Three American dystopic novels, Sinclair Lewis' *It Can't Happen Here*, Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*, and Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America*, all examine the ways in which a Fascist regime appropriates the masculine discourse to legitimize its hold over the people and justify repression against marginal groups. In all of these works, the regime firmly controls both access to and definition of normative male behavior, promotes traditional Victorian concepts of manhood, and alienates and marginalizes "other" men outside this homogeneous concept.

3 Published to wild critical and popular acclaim, Sinclair Lewis' dystopic novel, *It Can't Happen Here*, reestablished the author's reputation and defended his distinction as the first American ever awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature (in 1930). Although Lewis' emotional work contains many insights into American culture immediately preceding World War II and its perception of Fascism and Germany before the full horrors of totalitarian repression were widely acknowledged, it also aptly depicts the tension regarding new gender roles and attitudes in the Progressive era. In "Sinclair Lewis and Fascism," Stephen L. Tanner notes, "[Lewis] implies that in the bowels of every nation is a kind of archetypal pattern of

[1] For a comprehensive discussion of Victorian gender ideals and expectations, please see "Sexuality, Class, and Role in 19th-century America" by Charles E. Rosenberg in *American Man.* Eds. Elizabeth and Joseph Pleck. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980. 321-37.

[2] The categorization of these texts as dystopic is not novel to this study; for a comprehensive view of dystopic fiction, please reference John Joseph Adams' introduction to his *Brave New Worlds* (2010) anthology.

terror simply awaiting the proper impetus to articulate itself" (61). Certainly, there was a large segment of the population who desired to return to the Victorian ideals of previous decades which concretely ascribed specific and regimented social spheres to both men and women. This gender tension greatly informs every aspect of Lewis' text, especially in his representation of the American political capacity for Fascism.

4 When discussing the conscious attempt to dictate and determine the perception of male roles by a Fascist government in the dystopic novel, it is first necessary to look at the kinds of values revered and promoted to the public by the leader of the regime. In *It Can't Happen Here*, the American masses are spellbound by the simple and rustic rhetoric of Berzilius "Buzz" Windrip, who easily wins the popular election and then immediately secures a dictatorial role for the executive branch of government, imprisoning opposing legislators, judges, journalists, and, eventually, ordinary citizens in his quest to consolidate power. During his demagogic campaign, Windrip appeals to the traditional Victorian ideals of masculinity in order to mould public perception and craft a new ethos of normative behavior. In his memoir, *Zero Hour*,[3] Lewis' antagonist claims that his "one ambition is to get all Americans to realize that they are, and must continue to be, the greatest race on the face of this old Earth, and second to realize that...we are all brothers, bound together in the bonds of National Unity, for which we should all be very glad" (Lewis 69). Here, Windrip appeals to his audience's patriotism and isolation, while reminding them of the male bond of brotherhood and sacrifice. Carol Town notes, that "insecurity and nostalgia combine to make the lure of personal restoration and cultural hegemony impossible to resist" (195). However, this appeal to nationalism obviously excludes females; an observation which is further supported by Windrip's own "planks" or ambitions for his new government which include removing women's voting rights, participation in the workforce, and public presence (Lewis 61-62). The assertion of male superiority appropriates the masculine discourse of the Victorian era with its emphasis on separate spheres of existence and male social dominance (Gordon 145). Throughout the work this understanding of gender is consciously crafted to inspire males to support the regime and repress those "others" who fall outside of the normal male perceptions and are increasingly marginalized. Kimmel astutely notes that, "masculinity in the United States is certain only in its uncertainty; its stability and sense of well being depend on a frantic drive to control its environment" (96).

[3] In his introduction to the Signet Edition of *It Can't Happen Here* (2005), Michael Meyer explains the myriad cultural references throughout the novel. For example, Lewis' audience would have read the antagonist's memoir, *Zero Hour*, as a blatant reference to Hitler's manifesto, *Mein Kampf*.

5 Windrip's own personal paramilitary forces, the Minute Men (MMs), are constantly exhorted to accept traditional male virtues, behavior, and attitudes in defense of their own culture and regime. At the beginning of the novel, a general exclaims: "This gospel of clean and aggressive strength is spreading everywhere in this country among the finest type of youth...who themselves demand the *right* to be trained in warlike virtue and skill" (Lewis 8). These young men are encouraged to forgo academic learning for the benefits of real-life experience, with the American founding fathers as a somewhat dubious example. Other literature of the period also reflects a desire to turn young men away from education in favor of experiential action. "Indiana Senator Albert Beveridge's *Young Man and the World* (1906) counseled boys to 'avoid books, in fact avoid all artificial learning, for the forefathers put America on the right path by learning from completely natural experience.'" (qtd. in Kimmel 97). Certainly the Progressive age in general took great pride in "doing and accomplishing" as opposed to theory and philosophy.

6 This aggressive sentiment clearly echoes the common rhetoric concerning the virtues of violence and war in shaping the male character of the Progressive era. Peter Filene states,

> Whether any of these experiences produced "finer" and "cleaner" men is dubious. Yet Americans insisted vehemently that the war purified the young men who took part. War produced not simply stronger, more courageous, more honorable men, but purer men. Indeed, many Americans made it an extension of the purity crusade that Victorian reformers had been directing for half a century against vice. (330)

This extension of Victorian morality also ennobled deeds of action, for these contained the spirit of the country's foundations. This association between violent action and male development was obviously a close one and Lewis uses this same sentiment in his description of Windrip's exhortations to his private army:

> I am addressing my own boys, the Minute Men, everywhere in America! To you and you only I look for help to make America a proud, rich land again. You have been scorned. They thought you were the 'lower classes.' They wouldn't give you jobs. ...I tell you that you are, ever since yesterday afternoon, the highest lords of the land—the aristocracy—the makers of the new America of freedom and justice. Boys! I need you! Help me—help me to help you! Stand fast! Anybody tries to block you—give the swine the point of your bayonet!" (Lewis 136-37)

Here the ideal of violence is directly asserted by the Fascist leader, not merely by the system itself. Windrip orders his men to fire on a crowd of protesters and later executes those few men who refuse to slaughter innocent civilians. These young men are pushed to act out with violence against the demonstrators and rebuked for their idle tolerance. The more noble masculine virtues of duty, loyalty, obedience, and patriotism are associated with repressive

violence in the Fascist regime of the American dystopic novel. By distorting the gender discourse of the era towards his own goals, Windrip is able to equate sadistic violence with traditional Victorian male roles, an extension of logic which was supported from historical experience. Filene notes, "In war Americans found, for the time being, peace of mind about their national morality—in large part because men were manly again" (333). By applying a familiar mentality concerning military, state-sanctioned violence, Windrip is able to mould a large segment of the population into the willing agents of political and social repression. This scenario aptly illustrates the ultimate function of the Fascist appropriation and perversion of traditional male gender expectations; in firmly controlling both the attitudes about and access to masculinity, they are able to legitimize their rule among the majority and violently alienate and suppress other subversive or minority groups. Interestingly, the repressive and marginalizing role of Fascist masculinity in dystopic American fiction is also illuminated in a much more recent novel, Philip Roth's totalitarian nightmare, *The Plot Against America.*

7 Philip Roth's dystopic novel, *The Plot Against America*, originates from much the same premise as *It Can't Happen Here*. Published in 2004, this recent addition to Roth's influential body of work imagines that Americans, caught up in an isolationist and ethnocentric fervor in the years immediately after the Great Depression, elect Charles Lindbergh on the Republican ticket in 1938 over Franklin D. Roosevelt. History illuminates Lindbergh's Fascist ideals through his own diaries, and Roth combines these intimate reflections with the popular hero worship surrounding the Lindberghs' personal triumphs and the family's heartbreaking loss of a kidnapped child to color his portrait of the famous aviator. From the first pages of the novel, Lindbergh is portrayed as a masculine archetype whose daring adventures place him within the triumphant ranks of the divine (Roth 5). While the American people hail Lindbergh as a savior and immediately forget about the struggles of the Great Depression and reforms of FDR's New Deal, the Jewish communities fear the ultimate outcome of his anti-Semitic rhetoric. Herman, the narrator's father states: "They live in a dream, and we live in a nightmare" (76). In "Philip Roth's Populist Nightmare," Matthew S. Schweber notes that "above all, the Lindbergh presidency haunts because it taps a durable paranoid undercurrent in American politics visible even today" (129-130). Roth, who places his boyhood persona in this story as both a character and primary narrator, describes the populace's emotional response to the barnstorming pilot:

> It was Lindy all over again, straight-talking Lindy, who had never to look or sound superior, who simply was superior – fearless Lindy, at once youthful and gravely mature, the rugged individualist, the legendary American man's man who gets the impossible done by relying solely on himself. (Roth 30)

A majority of the American public epitomizes the traditional Victorian gender constructs of courage, vitality, honesty, and rugged individualism through this heroic and paranoid figure.

8 Lindbergh's personal ideal of manhood seems the most realistic and perhaps benign of the dystopic novels examined in this discourse, and they are certainly the most uniquely American. These idyllic male traits are grounded in the Victorian American desire to achieve self-reliance and a patriotic isolation from the world outside one's chosen community.[4] These qualities, fully articulated in Roth's dystopic vision/nightmare, seem to be a violent and distorted extension of the American Romanticism embodied by many Victorian writers, such as Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau, with a hefty sprinkling of the cynical resistance found in myriad of figures of the period, including Hemmingway, Teddy Roosevelt, and even John Steinbeck[5]. Schweber observes that, "President Lindbergh and his administration's ethos—the heartland isolationism; rugged frontier individualism; plain-spoken, agrarian folk idolatry, anti-intellectualism [. . .] comes straight out of our Romantic populist heritage" (133). In the novel, many Americans seem to become enamored with this masculine myth and find its manifestation in their new hero. Roth states:

> what Charles A. Lindbergh represented was normalcy raised to epic proportions, a decent man with an honest face and an undistinguished voice who had resoundingly demonstrated to the entire planet the courage to take charge and the fortitude to shape history and, of course, the power to transcend personal tragedy. (Roth 53)

However, it is not the masculine ideals which Lindbergh represents which become particularly menacing as this text unfolds; rather it is the assertion by the increasingly Fascist government that these constructed masculine characteristics are required criteria of good, decent, "normal" citizens which grows to be so frightening later on.

9 As witnessed in the previous dystopic novels, *The Plot Against America* also portrays a conscious attempt by a totalitarian state to influence and pervert male development to reflect traditional masculine expectations. Lindbergh's government creates the Office of American Absorption in order to assimilate and forcibly relocate local ethnic majority groups to areas comprised of "average" white Christian Americans, such as the Midwest (Roth 85).

[4] The Progressive era's obsession with "rugged individualism" is very well documented and shapes most historical surveys of the period, as well as much of the criticism concerning the Naturalist writers of the era, and is aptly discussed in "The Mountain Man as Western Hero: Kit Carson" (1980) by Henry Nash Smith. For comprehensive discussion of Teddy Roosevelt's personification of this virtue and its relationship to popular gender reforms in the Progressive era, see Joe L. Dubbert's *Progressivism and the Masculinity Crisis* (1978) or the chapter entitled "The Cult of Masculinity," in Kimmel's *History of Men* (2005).

[5] For more associations between American Romanticism and Victorian masculinity refer to Kimmel's *History of Men* (2005) or the *Closing of the Frontier: Naturalism and the Environment* (2002).

One of these assimilation programs is called “Just Folks”, and is “described by Lindbergh’s newly created Office of American Absorption as ‘a volunteer work program introducing city youth to the traditional ways of heartland life’” (Roth 84). However, this program only includes the boys of racial and religious minorities and is a thinly-veiled attempt to remove these males from their parents in order to instill traditional Victorian principles of white masculinity and replace existing cultural values and hegemony. An example of this same policy occurred under German Fascism, where “a court deprived one German mother of custody of her 15-year-old son in February of 1937, on the grounds that the boy was not being brought up in a properly ‘manly’ way” (Deuel 147). Roth echoes this sentiment, stating: “It was the intention of Just Folks to remove hundreds of Jewish boys between the ages of twelve and eighteen from the cites where they lived and attended school and put them to work for eight weeks as field hands and day laborers with farm families hundreds of miles from their homes” (85). This sinister plot to remove Jewish boys from their communities and encourage them to adopt new perceptions about manhood directly affects the narrator’s own family and illustrates the damage wrought by such blatant gender construction. Herman, Philip’s father, maintains, “that Just Folks was the first step in a Lindbergh plan to separate Jewish children from their parents, to erode the solidarity of the Jewish family” (Roth 86). The ultimate goal of this nefarious project is eventually witnessed through Herman’s own son and serves as a startling illustration of the Fascist regime’s consistent success in transforming gender discourse and construction to secure their hold on political power.

10 Sandy, the character/narrator Philip Roth’s older brother, is particularly enamored with the idea of seeing another part of the country and experiencing farm life. With the help of his Aunt Evelyn, the firebrand mistress of Rabbi Bengelsdorf, Sandy manages to receive permission to participate in the program from his doting mother and suspicious, reluctant father. The results of this experience are exactly what Herman had predicted and aptly demonstrate the Fascist government’s conscious attempt to assimilate and divide Jews by appropriating both the access to and experience of manhood. Philip describes his brother’s return from the Kentucky farm:

> At the station, Aunt Evelyn was the first of us to recognize Sandy when he stepped from the train to the platform, some ten pounds heavier than when he’d left and his brown hair blondish from his working in the fields under the summer sun. He’d grown a couple of inches as well, so that his pants were now nowhere near his shoe tops, and altogether my impression was of my brother in disguise [. . .] He flexed his biceps so I could feel them. In the car, when he began answering our questions, we heard how husky his voice had become, and we heard for the first time the drawl and the twang. (Roth 91)

Sandy is a new man, indoctrinated into the Protestant work ethic, and self-sufficient lifestyle of a farmer and nearly unrecognizable by his own family. The conscious attempt to forge and shape the masculinity of the Just Folks programs is illustrated by Sandy's physical transformation from a boy into a young man in the mere two month spent in Just Folks. His voice is beginning to change, and he has developed the muscular physique of a man. His speech has altered to imitate that of the white Christian farmers who have spent the summer ushering him into their idealized brand of masculinity. His Jewish identity and appearance have been "disguised" and this metamorphosis is so complete that his hair color has begun to lighten, perhaps symbolizing his Aryan indoctrination.

11 Sandy's new assimilated value system is concretely articulated in his description and adoration of Mr. Mawhinney, the Kentucky farm owner and surrogate father for the summer. The comparison between this "all-American" archetype and their Jewish father signifies the sharp contrast between those "normal" men who embody the Fascist construction of masculinity and those "other" men who are marginalized and humiliated by that very system, such as Herman, the boys' father. Philip recalls:

> my father was stymied, said almost nothing, and at the dinner table that evening looked especially glum when Sandy go around to reporting on what a paragon Mr. Mawhinney was. [. . .] Mr. Mawhinney owned not just one farm but three…and my father owned nothing more impressive than a six-year-old car [. . .] Mr. Mawhinney was able to make a living right out of the earth and then at Sunday dinner [. . .] eat only food that he himself has raised, and all my father could do was sell insurance. It went without saying that Mr. Mawhinney was[. . .]one of the good, clean, hard-working Christian millions who settled the frontier, tilled the farms, built the cities, governed the states, sat in Congress, occupied the White House, amassed the wealth, possessed the land, owned the steel mills and the ball clubs and the railroads and the banks, even owned and oversaw the language, one of those unassailable Nordic and Anglo-Saxon Protestants who ran America and would always run it – generals, dignitaries, magnates, tycoons, the men who laid down the law and called the shots and read the riot act when they chose to - while my father, of course, was only a Jew. (Roth 93-94)

The stark contrast between Mr. Mawhinney and Herman distinctly illuminates the ultimate goal of the Fascist state in their appropriation of masculine discourse. After his participation in Just Folks, the relationship between Sandy and his father Herman rapidly deteriorates. Sandy yearns to escape back to the farm in Kentucky and his father practically forbids him to mention the experience. Sandy continues his initiation into manhood alone, spending more and more time with young women and away from his distressed family and impressionable younger brother. Philip notes, "a new life began for me. I'd watched my father fall apart, and

I would never return to the same childhood…. [I experienced] a sense that my family was slipping away from me right along with my own country" (qtd. in Schweber 127). Sandy and his father barely even speak to one another as the novel reaches its climax, signifying the Fascist regime's success in using access to masculinity to shape minds through their idealized perceptions of what it means to be a man. By resisting the state's appropriation of the male discourse and opportunity, Herman loses influence over his son and becomes disconnected from his own family.

12 Herman also feels his access to traditional forms of masculinity cut off by the Fascist Lindbergh government in myriad other ways. Jeffrey P. Hantover states, that "masculinity is a cultural construct and adult men need the opportunity to perform normatively appropriate male behaviors. [. . .] Masculine anxiety can arise when adult men know the script and wish to act but are denied opportunity to act" (288). Herman desperately attempts to hang on to his own sense of importance and masculinity, increasingly at his own peril. He refuses to move his family to Canada, against the wishes of his terrified wife, because he does not want to admit that his beloved country has rejected him. As a result of this, he unwittingly submits his family to an American *Kristallnacht* and is nearly beaten to death by his own nephew. He is singled out for relocation by the OAA as a result of banishing Aunt Evelyn from his house for undermining his authority. However, when he attempts to stand up against the state's new policy and refuses to go, he is fired from his insurance job. He then humbles himself and takes a job driving a produce truck at night for his domineering brother, who barely pays him enough to survive. Throughout the work, Herman tries to resist and oppose anti-Semitism and emasculation with words and intellect, but his raging diatribes are met with social humiliation, threats, jeers, and physical violence. Schweber notes, "Suddenly, Philip's father is no longer the 'indestructible bulwark'" (131). The state's control of the access to traditional forms of masculinity is so complete that the marginalized male figuratively castrates himself in the attempt to gain some semblance of agency. Resistance only serves as a painful reminder of one's social impotence and engenders even more persecution from the state. This crushing effect of gender and social marginalization on the psyche of the modern male is especially well documented in Philip Dick's seminal work, *The Man in the High Castle*.

13 Philip K. Dick's dystopic vision, *The Man in the High Castle* (1962), directly illustrates the idealization of masculinity through its portrayal of the men who make up the German fascist regime which controls the eastern half of the United States in post-World War II America. Childan, a subjugated male character, marvels at the German's, "science and

technology and that fabulous talent for hard work; the Germans never stopped applying themselves. And when they did a task, they did it *right*" (Dick 25). The fascists also embody other intangible virtues: "What the Nazis have which we lack is–nobility. Admire them for their love of work or their efficiency [. . .] but it's the dream that stirs one; if that isn't the oldest yearning of mankind, our finest hope for glory" (Dick 25). In vast contrast to the subjugated male characters in the novel, the Germans contain an access of confidence. A Jewish man masquerading as a German observes,

> They want to be the agents, not the victims, of history. They identify with God's power and believe they are godlike. That is their basic madness. They are overcome by some archetype; their egos have expanded psychotically so that they cannot tell where they begin and where the godhead leaves off. It is not hubris, not pride; it is inflation of the ego to it ultimate – confusion between him who worships and that which is worshiped. Man has not eaten God; God has eaten Man. (Dick 41-42)

Again, the Fascist regime in *The Man in the High Castle* attempts, and largely succeeds, to promote an idealized form of masculinity. The dominated men in this novel honestly believe that the Germans are "real men" and inherently superior to themselves. In fact, Star notes that this type of acceptance may be seen as a metaphor for Dick's own post war generation: "Dick was already proposing that the 50's themselves were a kind of pacifying fantasy available for the nostalgia of future generations" (37). This assertion further illuminates the ultimate function of male idealization; even if this nightmare fails to pacify, it sends a clear message about which groups have access to normative gender behavior. The Fascist men in the novel embody traditional masculine characteristics, which are portrayed in sharp contrast to the "other" subjugated American men in the work.

14 Joe Cinnadella, the Swiss Fascist assassin, embodies many of the masculine stereotypes appropriated by the German fascist regime which controls the eastern half of the United States in this post-World War II dystopic book. He is sexually experienced, virile, and a mysterious danger and power smolders behind his pale eyes. Juliana, Frank Fink's estranged wife, is instantly attracted to Joe's primal masculinity: "The intensity all around him disturbed her judgment. [. . .] There's something special about this man, she thought. He breathes – death. It upset her, and yet attracted her" (Dick 37). This unsettling power continues to define Joe and becomes a focal point of their sexual relationship. Joe is so sexually experienced that he claims that he can cure Juliana's fear of men. He states, "'But I know I'm right. Listen; I'll never hurt you, Juliana. On my mother's body – I give you my word. I'll be specially considerate, and if you want to make an issue out of my experience – I'll give you the advantage of that. You'll lose your jitters; I can relax and improve you, in

not very much time, either'" (Dick 89-90). Joe's virility gives him the confidence to claim that he can unlock a women's latent sexual desire, and this boast can be interpreted as the ultimate representation of idealized masculinity in this Fascist character. What man would not desire the opportunity and ability to teach any woman he meets to release her sensual potential? Joe also appropriates the exact same masculine principles as Indiana Senator Beveridge when he states: "Listen, I'm not an intellectual – Fascism has no need of that. What is wanted is the deed. Theory derives from action" (Dick 161). This assertion solidifies Dick's ironic portrayal of traditional manhood through Fascist characters. Joe's overwhelming sexuality, physical power, and mysterious mental domination illustrate his representation of the masculine ideal and function as a distinct contrast to Frank, Juliana's alienated, pathetic, and emasculated husband.

15 Juliana's husband, Frank Fink, the Jewish industrial craftsman, serves as the complete antithesis to the fascist male ideal embodied by Joe. He is painfully aware of his physical weakness, ugly appearance, and indecisive self-loathing. "[Juliana] had always told Frank that he was ugly. Large pores. Big nose" (Dick 33). Fink's social isolation and personal failures are magnified by his inability to satisfy Juliana, his estranged wife. "Juliana, Frink thought. Are you as alone as I am?" (Dick 136). His emasculation is so pronounced that it informs nearly all of Juliana's recollections of her husband. She wonders: "Did he fall dead without me? A fink is a finch, a form of bird. And they say birds die" (Dick 33). Later, comparing Joe's behavior to her husband, she remembers, "that's Frank who's afraid" (Dick 79). This failure to provide for Juliana's needs humiliates Frank and he obsesses over the possibilities of her finding gratification in the arms of another man. "I know she's living with some guy, Frank said to himself. Sleeping with him. [. . .] I hope to hell she's not with some older guy. That's what I couldn't stand. Some experienced mean guy with a toothpick sticking out of the side of his mouth, pushing her around" (Dick 135). Of course, the reader knows that this is precisely the type of man that Juliana is currently sleeping with, an irony which only accentuates the difference between Frank and Joe.

16 Fink's lack of confidence and emotional despair are the direct result of his social marginalization and emasculation at the hands of the fascist oppressors. The narrator notes, that "he felt defeated and hopeless" (Dick 46). Frank's lack of "place" status triggers a deep sense of failure, which only serves to further distance him from the established ideals of masculinity embodied in the German characters. "Fear, he thought. This whole jewelry venture. *What if it should fail? What if it should fail?*[. . .] I'm scared, he realized. [. . .] Suppose they laugh at us. What then?"(Dick 137). In his article, "Men and Jobs," Elliot

Liebow notes the destructive cycle of insecure masculinity, stating that: "the man's low self-esteem generates a fear of being tested and prevents him from accepting a job with responsibilities or, once in a job, from staying with it if responsibilities are thrust on him, even if the wages are commensurately higher" (370). Fink's lack of confidence and self-doubt are not realistic conclusions concerning his skill or abilities; rather they are an ingrained response to his lack of access to masculine feelings and, as such, will probably continue under state's carefully constructed repression. Frank's unconscious musings link his lack of economic, professional, and marital success to his alienation from traditional forms of manhood. He states: "Right now I'm nothing, but if I can swing this, then maybe I can get Juliana back. [. . .] she deserves to be married to a man who matters, an important person in the community, not some *meshuggener* ['crazy fool']. Men used to be men, in the old days; before the war for instance. But all that's gone now" (Dick 53). Fink verbalizes the established mores of the male social role through his assertion that achieving professional success in his independent jewelry business will allow him to regain the manhood that has been usurped by the fascist regime and, consequently, the affections of his beautiful wife.

17 Fink is marginalized as a result of his ethnic heritage and he is unable to participate in his own life because he must hide his Jewish identity, which he attempts to do by modifying his surname, among other things. Towards the end of the novel, Frank Fink (aka Frink) is identified by the police and arrested because of his ethnic status. Dick writes,

> As [the cops] got out of the car, one of them said to Frink, 'Is your real name Fink?' Frink felt terror. 'Fink,' the cop repeated. 'You're a kike.' He exhibited a large grey folder. 'Refugee from Europe.' 'I was born in New York,' Frank Frink said. 'You're an escapee from the Nazis.' The cop said. 'You know that that means?'…'Back to Germany,' one of the cops said, surveying him. 'I'm an American,' Frank Frink said. 'You're a Jew,' the cop said. (195)

Frank's exclusion from masculinity is symbolized by his Jewish ethnicity. He must constantly assert another identity in order to stay alive, just as the emasculated male under fascist rule must not act according to traditional male roles if he expects to live; to do otherwise would comprise a direct threat to the totalitarian regime.

18 These three dystopic novels, written in vastly different eras of American history with unique social concerns and cultural influences, all display a hauntingly similar vision of gender roles under a Fascist regime. These novels illustrate the conscious reversion back towards idealized Victorian attitudes and expectations of masculinity which devalue women, promote repressive violence, and alienate and persecute those "other" groups and persons who refuse to swallow the rhetoric. The male protagonists ultimately resist the state's

construction of penultimate male behavior, but they do so at their own peril: Doremus is placed in a concentration camp, Frank is arrested and suffers economic and emotional humiliation, and Herman loses parental influence over his sons and must live through American pogroms. This portrayal of the appropriation of traditional masculine discourse by a Fascist regime in works by different American authors from diverse ethnic backgrounds and separate periods of culture suggests a sobering warning concerning gender conflict in the modern world. It seems quite apparent that these writers see something very dangerous in any one group asserting superiority over another, whether it be in the form of race, religion, or gender. These dystopic works illustrate the need to transcend the types of ethnocentric thinking that lead to terrible atrocities, both in the imaginary realm of the texts themselves and in the real life Jewish Holocaust and other, more recent, genocides. Certainly the Nazis could not have perpetrated the Holocaust on such a wide scale without first implementing a system which clearly defined male roles and expectations and marginalized other groups. Government restriction of the access to masculinity marks those outside the "normal" system as subhuman and encourages violent repression, and constitutes the necessary mindset for mass slaughter. These dystopic works illustrate the absolute necessity to construct gender expectations and ideals outside of Victorian criteria. This new conception of constructed manhood may be witness through the endings of these dystopic visions.

19 Each of these men ultimately finds a way to resist subjugation through alternative forms of masculinity based within a different, less Victorian concept of manhood: work. Doremus is displaced from his beloved newspaper and forced to instruct the enemy in churning out propaganda; he quits and begins an underground resistance newspaper. Frank finds renewal and hope by making his own "hand wrought" jewelry, asserting the value of craftsmanship and unique expression over the faceless conformity of Fascist oppression.[6] Herman reasserts control over his own family through the help of his marginalized community and his own labor. He defends his family from anti-Semitic violence and undertakes a journey across the Midwest to save another child. These men are also aided by women, creating the emotional partnership, community, and respect necessary to resist coordinated repression. Doremus escapes with the help of his daughter and romantic interest. Joe is killed by Juliana in a hysterical frenzy. Herman's wife stoically manages to support the household by going into the workforce, saves and plans for their escape to Canada, and

[6] For more information on this topic refer to Andrew P. Hobrerek's fascinating study on the value and role of work in the stories of Philip K. Dick, "The 'Work' of Science Fiction: Philip K. Dick and Occupational Masculinity in the Post-World War II United States (1997)".

ultimately functions to hold the family together emotionally. These endings all hint at a new society in which masculine value is ascribed by merit and utility of labor, where men and women work together towards the common good, and where relationships between gender groups can finally be devoid of fear, oppression, and domination. Although this viewpoint may seem a bit optimistic for the dystopic genre, it also reminds humanity of the necessity for tolerance and respect.

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