

**A description and analysis of the dystopian vision of
Philip K. Dick, with reference to selected texts**

by

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Abstract

This dissertation considers Philip K. Dick's dystopian vision by discussing the dystopian elements that are present in three of his novels – *Martian Time-Slip*, *The Penultimate Truth*, and *A Scanner Darkly*. Dick is universally regarded as a science fiction writer, with critics giving little or no attention to the realist themes, which include dystopian elements, in his work. Through close readings of three novels, this study identifies and analyses Dick's use of the elements typical of dystopian novels: defamiliarization, oppression, and dehumanization. Dick's historical context – predominantly the social, political, and economic issues prevalent in 1960s California – is examined, to show his critique of contemporary society through the use of dystopian elements. A comparison is made between Dick's work and the classical dystopian novels *We* by Yevgeni Zamyatin, *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell. This comparison clearly shows that Dick's novels may be considered more realist than science fictional, in that they use the elements typical of classical dystopian writing. In fact, Dick goes further than Zamyatin, Orwell, and Huxley because he presents an *imminent* dismal future, one that is dominated by capitalism. Rather than trying to overthrow this system or seeking escape, which he implies are impossible, Dick suggests that it is better to resist the oppressive and dehumanizing effects of capitalism by attempting to somehow preserve one's humanity and liberty.

Key terms

Philip K. Dick, *Martian Time-Slip*, *The Penultimate Truth*, *A Scanner Darkly*, dystopian, realism, science fiction, defamiliarization, oppression, dehumanization

Contents

Declaration	i
Abstract.....	ii
Key terms.....	ii
Contents.....	iii
List of Abbreviations.....	iv
List of Diagrams.....	v
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
The conceptual and theoretical framework to be used	7
Literature review	29
Scope and outline of the study	33
Chapter 2: <i>Martian Time-Slip</i>.....	39
Mars: a new world, a defamiliarized world, and a <i>Brave New World</i>	41
Schizophrenia and dehumanization	54
Chapter 3: <i>The Penultimate Truth</i>	65
Levels of knowledge and the ultimate fakery	67
Oppression, dehumanization, and Dick's critique	79
Cold War hysteria and <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i>	86
Chapter 4: <i>A Scanner Darkly</i>	96
Substance D and America's drug culture	98
The Fascist police state	107
The divided self and the true enemy	114
Chapter 5: Conclusion	124
Bibliography	130

List of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used (in in-text references) for the novels referred to in this study.

<i>We</i>	<i>We</i> by Yevgeni Zamyatin
<i>BNW</i>	<i>Brave New World</i> by Aldous Huxley
<i>1984</i>	<i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> by George Orwell
<i>Time-Slip</i>	<i>Martian Time-Slip</i> by Philip K. Dick
<i>Truth</i>	<i>The Penultimate Truth</i> by Philip K. Dick
<i>Scanner</i>	<i>A Scanner Darkly</i> by Philip K. Dick

List of Diagrams

*Diagram 1: The social hierarchy in *The Penultimate Truth* (p. 74)*

Chapter 1: Introduction

Philip K. Dick (1928 – 1982) was an American science fiction writer whose short stories and novels were published between the 1950s and 1980s. His work was very strongly influenced by his odd and paranoid personality as well as by the socio-political conditions prevalent in West-Coast America during the mid-twentieth century. Dick led a troubled life characterized by his habitual abuse of prescription drugs, bouts of depression, and five failed marriages. He became increasingly paranoid and convinced that he was the target of a government conspiracy after a break-in at his home in 1972. These experiences are reflected in the pessimistic settings and extensive government surveillance depicted in his novels: in which his 'life experiences and personal feelings permeated his work; it is heavily autobiographical' (Mackey, 1988: Preface). A lot was happening in American politics in the 1950s – the decade in which Dick started to write. Years after World War II had ended, America continued to be involved in international conflict with the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War. These events heavily influenced Dick's writing as many of his stories encompass themes of war paranoia or portray the outcomes of destructive wars. He was inclined towards leftist politics that permeated Berkeley where he lived during the 1940s and 1950s, and the anti-war attitude that he adopted, as a result, is evident in some of his novels. Moreover, Dick lived through the post-World War II economic expansion in which the U.S. became the global leader of economic growth (Abramovitz, 1986: 385). I have observed that through many of his novels, however, Dick expresses a distaste for the capitalist values of American society by illustrating the multifarious, destructive effects of capitalism on the average citizen. I also noticed that some novels reflect the social issues prevalent in Dick's milieu by considering the encroaching forces of the security state, as well as the increase in drug abuse, which both infiltrated and wreaked destruction on the lives of countless Americans, including Dick's. Thus, I suggest that

in many of his stories, Dick created a world similar to that of his own times, set in the near or imminent future and incorporating what can be seen as typical dystopian themes: government conspiracies, totalitarian rulers, war paranoia, environmental ruin, commercial take-overs, oppression, and dehumanization.

A dystopia can be defined as failed utopia, which is '[a]n imagined society in which the social, economic, and political problems of our own world have been essentially solved, producing optimum life for all of the citizens of the society' (Booker and Thomas, 2009: 331). The dystopian society is thus the nightmare version of the dreamed up ideal society. Writers of dystopian fiction use this model in order to 'critique the potential negative implications of certain utopian thought' (Booker and Thomas, 2009: 324). Moreover, dystopian fiction tends to be satirical for the purpose of warning against 'the possible consequences of certain tendencies in the real world of the present' (Booker and Thomas, 2009: 324). The aim of this study is to critically examine selected texts by Philip K. Dick in order to identify and analyse elements of dystopianism present in these novels. This dissertation explores the dystopian themes in Dick's work in relation to the author's own social and political context and within the framework of the dystopian genre and dystopian classics of the twentieth century. To this end, I firstly explore what may be considered *typical* dystopian elements by looking at the ideas of some of the prominent theorists in this field, as well as some of the novels that are regarded as classical dystopian texts. Next, each of the selected texts by Dick is examined in order to identify which of the typical dystopian elements can be found in them. I look at how Dick employs these elements and in what ways they interweave with the main themes of each text. Moreover, I consider whether the dystopian elements found in Dick's novels relate to his milieu – and to what extent – by examining the historical context within which he wrote his novels. Finally, I compare Dick's use of the typical dystopian elements to their use by authors of

classical dystopian texts, and conclude that his novels should be considered as belonging to the genre of dystopian science fiction.

Early on in Dick's career as a writer, his work was placed in the genre of science fiction where it has remained. Booker and Thomas (2009: 7) note that 'science fiction as a selfconscious publishing category is generally considered to have begun in 1926, when editor Hugo Gernsback published the first issue of *Amazing Stories*, the first magazine devoted exclusively to science fiction'. Magazines such as *Amazing Stories* were considered pulp magazines: '[a]n inexpensive type of magazine that provided crucial venues for the circulation of certain forms of genre fiction (including science fiction) from the 1920s until the 1940s, especially in the US' (Booker and Thomas, 2009: 329). The rise in popularity of these pulp science fiction magazines connected the genre and medium together, but consequently 'created a wedge between the genre and the critic' (Thomas, 2013: 24). Science fiction as a genre was distinguished from canonical literary works:

[...] while the realist novel is a strongly individualist genre focusing on the attempts of strong individual protagonists to surmount personal difficulties, the science fiction novel often deals with the life-or-death fates of entire cultures or planets. As a result, science fiction tends to be weak on characterization in relation to the literary novel, but strong in its exploration of important social and political issues. (Booker and Thomas, 2009: 8)

Science fictional works were thus excluded from consideration as belonging to the Western canonical literary style or mainstream fiction – which focus on representing real-life situations, as opposed to the imaginary and alien subjects of science fiction, and which have 'something essential to say about [...] contemporary culture' (Kucukalic, 2008: 23).

Even though Philip K. Dick's work is generally placed within the genre of science fiction, many critics – such as Lejla Kucukalic, Tom Moylan, Kim Stanley Robinson, Umberto Rossi, Lawrence Sutin, Darko Suvin, and Patricia S. Warrick – point out the realist themes that pervade his work. Dick grew up enjoying the science fictional stories he read in the early pulp

magazines of the 1930s and 1940s, but when he began to write in the 1950s, 'he devoted the majority of his first efforts to realism, because he wanted to write about the society he lived in' (Robinson, 1984: 1). Unfortunately, the 'first seven of these novels were never published' (Robinson, 1984: 2) and Dick turned to producing science fictional work, since this was what sold. Dick, however, did not give up completely on his desire to produce social critiques and continued to publish works that combined both models of writing, which turned into what Robinson terms 'dystopian satire' (Robinson, 1984: 12). Moylan (2000: 168) writes that Dick was one of the science fiction authors of the 1950s and 60s who 'worked loosely with the spirit of the dystopia and produced tales of social nightmares'. Suvin (1975: 12) notes that 'the dystopian framework is developed' in Dick's 'early novels' and Rossi (2011: 175) considers some of Dick's 1970s novels as 'dystopias'. After the success of *The Man in the High Castle* (1962), for which Dick received 'the highest SF honor: the Hugo Award' (Sutin, 1994: 118), Dick hoped 'that he had bridged the gap between the experimental mainstream novel and science fiction' since many readers considered it a mainstream novel (Warrick, 1987: 62). Nevertheless, the 'strict categories' of literary genres 'worked against [him]' (Sutin, 1994: 5), since he was placed, at the beginning of his writing career, within the genre in which his work sold. Dick's short stories appeared in pulp magazines such as *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, *Amazing Stories*, and *Imagination* (Sutin, 1994: 67), and several novels were published 'in pulpy-looking paperback by bottom-of-the-line Ace Books' (Sutin, 1994: 4). This meant that his work would forever be branded as science fictional, despite the clear realist elements that it contained.

Another problem, however, is that dystopian literature is considered 'a branch of science fiction' (Claeys, 2017: 284). The reason for this is that science fiction became so popular by the late twentieth century that it swallowed up nearby genres, including both utopian and dystopian fiction, despite the fact that 'the utopian genre precedes that of science fiction by

some four centuries' (Claeys, 2017: 284–285). One result of this is that many 'studies of science fiction [...] explicitly ignore texts we would regard as dystopian' (Claeys, 2017: 285). For this reason, some commentators refer to a distinction between utopian and dystopian fiction, and science fiction – and look at whether or not they contain realist elements. A 'realist criterion of genre separation [that is] relative to time and place' (Claeys, 2017: 285) is indicated by Kingsley Amis's description of science fiction as 'that class of prose narrative treating of a situation that could *not* arise in the world we know, but which is hypothesised on the basis of some innovation in science or technology' (1963: 18, own emphasis). Science fictional settings are unrealistic in that they usually portray 'a world radically different from the present' with imaginary elements such as 'aliens and zombies' (Claeys, 2017: 286). Dystopias, on the other hand, do not focus on 'what science produces, but [rather on] its negative impact on humanity' (Claeys, 2017: 286). Even though both 'genres share some formal themes, such as appearing to extrapolate from the author's present into the future' (Claeys, 2017: 286), dystopias tend to portray these future visions realistically by relating them to the known.

With these definitions in mind, I have found that many of Dick's novels and stories contain more realist themes and elements than science-fictional ones. *The Man in the High Castle* (1962), for example, is situated in an alternative history to our own: the setting is America after a Second World War won by Japan and Germany, who control different parts of the former United States. Apart from the Lufthansa rocket traveling between Berlin and San Francisco in 45 minutes and an ancient oracle revealing the truth about who really won the war, no other significant science fictional elements stand out in the novel. The prevalent themes – totalitarian rule, Cold War paranoia, class struggle, and the loss of humanity – can be interpreted as more realist and dystopian than science fictional. Similarly, *A Scanner Darkly* (1977) is set in Dick's own 1960s America and deals with the real-life issues of drug abuse, paranoia, and government surveillance – rather than life on a futuristic and technologically advanced alien

planet. *Martian Time-Slip* (1964) and *The Penultimate Truth* (1964) both contain significant elements of science fiction, but also have equally dystopian and realist themes. In *Martian Time-Slip*, the Martian setting resembles the desert areas of California as both are desolate environments sustained by complex and precarious water systems (Rossi, 2011: 103). With its barren sandy landscape, Mars is depicted as a new, almost utopian, world, but is revealed to be anything but utopic. *The Penultimate Truth* mirrors some renowned features of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) – a classic dystopian novel – such as the figure of Big Brother, alterations of history, class struggle, and continuous war as a means of controlling populations through fear. The settings in many of Dick's novels thus reflect his own contemporary America, and thereby they address political and social problems faced in the real world, rather than the far-distant, futuristic worlds seen in typical science fictional novels.

Since Dick's work was placed within the genre of science fiction, the majority of critics of his work focus mainly on the employment of science fictional elements in his writings. Only a handful of critics mention the dystopian themes that run through his texts, most notably Suvin, Robinson, and Rossi. Suvin (1975: 12) states in his critique of Dick's *opus* that '[u]p to the mid-1960s Dick could be characterized as a writer of anti-utopian SF in the wake of Orwell's [*Nineteen Eighty-Four*]'. In the third chapter of his notable study of Dick's novels, Robinson (1984: 27) looks at the typical elements of science fiction and says that '[a] dystopia [...] is the most common element in all of Dick's work'. In a more recent study, Rossi (2011: 175) says that 'Dick's only fully-fledged dystopias [are] [*A Scanner [Darkly]*] and [*Radio Free] Albemuth*'. Rather than providing a detailed examination of the dystopian elements in Dick's work, these critics only briefly and generally relate some of Dick's texts to dystopianism. The present study will thus contribute to the field by considering in detail the dystopian elements that are indeed prevalent in Dick's writings.

Dick's *oeuvre* consists of around 44 novels and 121 short stories. I chose to select novels for analysis rather than the short stories, as the dystopian ideas are not very developed in the latter, which are sometimes as short as 15 pages, and because the dystopian classics providing the framework are also in novel form. Two of the three novels I chose for analysis – *Martian Time-Slip* and *The Penultimate Truth* – were produced in the 1960s, which was the period in which Dick thrived as a writer, producing about two novels a year. Dick progressed from his 'apprentice' period of the 1950s to produce mature novels and experiment with 'entropic' themes, which depict the progressive decline of reality into disorder (Warrick, 1987: 11–12). The two novels from the 1960s have thus been chosen due to their richness and for the array of dystopian content that is interwoven into science fictional backdrops. *A Scanner Darkly* comes from a later, more serious, decade in which Dick's own experiences with drug abuse and paranoia about government surveillance form the basis of the plot. This novel is considered, as we shall see, to be one of Dick's most dystopian works by critics such as Umberto Rossi and Darko Suvin. Drug abuse is one of themes that appears in many of Dick's novels, most notably *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (1965); *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said* (1974); and *A Scanner Darkly* (1977). The latter novel was chosen for scrutiny in this study because, unlike the former two, the topic of drug use directly interlinks with dystopian themes and the drug abuse situation becomes, in itself, a form of dystopia.

The conceptual and theoretical framework to be used

I make use of a theory of dystopianism in modern literature as the main framework for this study. The dystopian genre is derived from the term 'utopia', which was coined by Thomas More in his satirical fictional work *Utopia* (1516). Utopias are ideal states or, according to Kumar (1991: 24), 'far-reaching conception[s] of the possibilities of human and social transformations'. More's literary work came about at the beginning of the creation of the

modern world and is associated with the 'Renaissance, the Reformation and the European voyages of discovery' (Kumar, 1991: 23). America became an example of the ideal state in utopian fiction, which was associated with the discovery of new worlds and the possibilities they offered of a restructured and more just society. It was depicted as such in novels like *Looking Backward* (1888) by Edward Bellamy and *News From Nowhere* (1890) by William Morris. However, by the early twentieth century this genre had already started to take a radical turn. Kumar (1991: 224) refers to the first half of the twentieth century, in which the West experienced 'mass unemployment, mass persecution, brutal dictatorships and world war' as the 'classical era of the "utopia in the negative"'. These pessimistic and oppressive conditions were depicted in novels, such as *The Iron Heel* (1908) by Jack London and *It Can't Happen Here* (1935) by Sinclair Lewis, that stood in opposition to the idealistic settings of utopian societies in previous novelistic representations of new worlds. Bellamy and Morris's novels both portray a protagonist who sleeps for a century and wakes up to find the United States a transformed socialist utopia, whereas London's novel illustrates the emergence of an oligarchic tyranny and Lewis similarly depicts the transformations of the U.S. into a totalitarian state. The novels that emerged in the early twentieth century thus presented a pessimistic vision of the world in contrast to the optimism of the nineteenth century works.

According to critics, such as Booker, Kumar, and Moylan, the texts that 'came to typify the "classical" or canonical form of this inverted subgenre of utopia' (Moylan, 2000: 121) are *We* (1921) by Yevgeni Zamyatin, *Brave New World* (1932) by Aldous Huxley, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) by George Orwell. All three authors were greatly influenced by H. G. Wells, who is considered to be an author of mostly utopian science fiction. However, Kumar writes that these authors recognized the dystopian themes present in Wells and drew on these in their own work:

Themes and images from the early science fantasies, especially *The First Men in the Moon* and *When the Sleeper Wakes*, were taken over and elaborated to suit

the more deliberately anti-utopian purpose. The Selenite civilization of the moon was given a terrestrial home in *Brave New World*; Ostrog's socialist dictatorship in *When the Sleeper Wakes* reappeared magnified in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Some of the borrowing seems to have been largely unconscious, as with Huxley and Orwell; some was indirect, mediated particularly through Zamyatin's *We*, where the debt to Wells was explicit and acknowledged. But whichever way, the importance of Wells to both utopia and anti-utopia in the twentieth century is clear and undeniable. (Kumar, 1991: 225)

Wells' 1899 novella 'A Story of the Days to Come' and novel *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899) both portray oppressive totalitarian regimes set in futuristic societies and deal with the implications of scientific and technological developments, urbanization, class hierarchies, and socio-political reforms. Literature such as this embodies the seeds of the early forms of the negative utopian approach which developed into the dystopian genre that would soon become popular in the twentieth century.

One definite dystopian element that most texts in this genre have in common is that the plot is set in a future society that mirrors the author's present world – a literary technique identified by Russian Formalists which they termed *ostranenie*, 'defamiliarization' so that by 'focusing their critiques of society on spatially or temporally distant settings, dystopian fiction provides fresh perspectives on problematic social and political practices that might otherwise be taken for granted or considered natural and inevitable' (Booker, 1994: 19). Instead of the ideal society of utopian narratives, dystopian texts reveal a society that is worse off than the reader's in the sense that the characters fundamentally live in a state of oppression – the common denominator of all of these texts. The main oppressive force is usually a totalitarian government that holds a tight and inescapable grip on its dystopian society with the aim – ostensibly – of 'fundamentally [...] improving human existence' (Sisk, 1997: 2). The tyrannical regime typically exercises supreme control over society through relentless surveillance and by ruthlessly suppressing individual liberty. Another central theme of the dystopian genre is what Kumar (1991: 108) refers to as 'the progressive dehumanization and mechanization of man'. By exercising strict control over the lives of its people and suppressing important aspects of

culture – religion, art, intimate relationships, history, and language – the autocratic regime essentially dehumanizes its citizens in order to achieve social stability and retain power. Controlling states use science and technology – already present in Wells’ early science fictional novels – to spy on their populations and to suppress individual identity, thought and expression, which are seen as giving rise to dissent. Sisk (1997: 9) writes that both dystopian and science fictional novels ‘make extensive use of technological developments, whether actual or imagined’.

According to Keith Booker (1994: 20), another reason for the ‘modern turn to dystopian fiction is [...] [the] perceived inadequacies in existing social and political systems’, which includes two great social experiments of the early twentieth century – Nazi Germany and the Communist Soviet Union. This led some writers of dystopian texts to focus on anti-Fascist and anti-Communist themes, such as Katharine Burdekin’s *Swastika Night* (1937) – a speculative novel that explores a future where Germany emerges victorious from the Second World War – and Russian author Yevgeny Zamyatin’s novel *We*.¹ Zamyatin wrote *We* in response to the rising Soviet government, which he portrays as a potential abuser of power. The novel was consequently banned in the USSR, but was published internationally in 1924. In the fictional world of *We*, the One State is led by the Benefactor, who is in control of a society completely separated from nature and the outside world by the ‘Green Wall’ (*We*, 5). The urban environment is mostly made of glass structures, which allow hardly any privacy from the surveillant eyes of the ‘Guardians’. The story is recounted in diary form by the protagonist, D-503, who relates the events completely from his perspective, but also voices the general opinion of the citizens of the One State. D-503 praises the organized structures, perfect uniformity, and mathematical principles of the One State, which have revived man from the

¹ The following edition was used: Zamyatin, Yevgeny. [1921] 2007. *We*. Translated by Natasha Randall. London: Vintage. Where page references to *We* are given, for the sake of brevity, the novel is referred to simply as *We*, without a year.

apparently savage and disorganized conditions of freedom. His views start to change when he meets, and falls in love with, an unconventional woman, I-330, who later emerges as the leader of the rebellion attempting to overthrow the government. In the course of the novel, as D-503 gets pulled into the rebellion, he starts to become aware of his own self, whom he refers to as 'I' rather than the previously used pronoun 'We'.

Zamyatin was one of the first authors to recognize and tackle the potentially negative aspects of the rising Soviet government in *We*. He used the technique of defamiliarization to effectively highlight what could happen if the Soviet government were to abuse its power and introduce absolute control over the lives of its citizens – as indeed would soon happen under the tyranny of Stalin. Zamyatin wrote *We* between 1920 and 1921, during the Russian Civil War that followed the two revolutions of 1917. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union was the new ruling group that came to power after the war. This 'historical present' of political unrest is mirrored in *We* with the 'Two-Hundred-Year War' (*We*, 11), after which the ruling government of the One State assumed control. D-503 is the 'Builder of the Integral' (*We*, 4), which is a spacecraft designed to explore and establish new planetary societies. This echoes the establishment of the Red Army and predicts the later development of Soviet weapons with the objective of Communist expansion. Furthermore, D-503 describes the free-time activity of going for a walk as a patriotic march:

As usual, the Music Factory was singing the March of the One State with all its pipes. All ciphers [citizens of the One State] walked in measured rows, by fours, rapturously keeping step. Hundreds and thousands of ciphers, in pale bluish unifs [uniforms] [...]. (*We*, 6–7)

Zamyatin includes all these familiar aspects of early 1920s Russia, but he sets the novel 1000 years in the future to distance the reader from the present-world situation, to introduce a possible outcome after a millennium of Soviet rule, and possibly to deny any disparagement of the Soviet government.

Despite 1000 years having passed, the society of the One State has made relatively few scientific and technological advancements, most of which assist the State in surveillance and control. The massive Green Wall surrounding the city not only serves to protect those inside from the savage elements and creatures of the natural world, but also to keep its inhabitants locked in where they can devote their minds and energies to serving the One State. The glass structures of the city seem to add to the futuristic quality of the novel's setting, but essentially create transparent barriers around each citizen's life. This allows them hardly any privacy and serves as a tool for government surveillance. The Benefactor's 'Machine' (*We*, 42) is a technologically advanced version of the guillotine, which uses electric currents to execute those who have transgressed against the State. Similarly, the 'Gas Bell Jar' (*We*, 71) is a ruthless torture device used to extract information from rebels, but instead of seeing it as that, D-503 calls it a 'perfect apparatus' and recounts that it 'has a higher purpose: the matter of the security of the One State, in other words, the happiness of millions' (*We*, 72). This creates the premise that the happiness of the State's citizens is contingent on the government's absolute control of the State and its citizens. This premise echoes the Communist ideals held by Marx and Lenin.

Kumar (1991: 381) asserts that 'America and the Soviet Union are the two great utopian experiments of modern times'. The Communists' essential aim was to create universal happiness by giving power to the proletariat as the theories of Marx and Lenin posit that where there is a ruling class, the state becomes a vehicle for oppression (Harding, 1996: 154–155). Marx thus believed that the best option of ensuring the socialist defeat over capitalism was to form a dictatorship (Harding, 1996: 155). This early Soviet experiment of liberating the masses through totalitarian control could be seen as one of the root elements of typical dystopian novels. In *We*, it is evident that the government maintains physical control over society with the Green Wall, glass structures, and torture devices, as discussed above. The government

further exercises strict control with the 'Table of Hours' (*We*, 11), which is a timetable to be followed by every citizen and which dictates what activity they should do every hour:

[...] at the exact same hour, at the exact same minute, we, the millions, rise as one. At the exact same hour, we uni-millionly start work and uni-millionly stop work. And, merged into a single, million-handed body, at the exact same Table-appointed second, we bring spoons to our lips, we go out for our walk and go to the auditorium, to the Taylor Exercise Hall, go off to sleep.... (*We*, 12–13)

There are, however, two personal hours worked into this timetable in which ciphers can take part in an activity of their liking. Many choose the personal hour to copulate – a procedure that involves registering a mate and applying to get permission to lower the blinds of one's glass apartment for that hour – which is also the only time the ciphers have any privacy, albeit shared with another cipher. D-503 refers to this strict timetable with two hours of freedom worked into it as a mathematical solution to *near* perfect happiness, since the conviction is that freedom is 'the unorganised savage state' (*We*, 13) and degrades morality. D-503 thus believes that the complete absence of freedom – in other words, the citizens' activities being entirely controlled by the government – will ensure absolute happiness.

Within the first few chapters of the novel, D-503 praises the mathematical precision and perfection of the One State. He firmly believes that the lack of freedom and authoritarian rule of the Benefactor creates a kind of utopian society of order and happiness – something that his ancestors from 1000 years ago could not achieve. However, he begins to see things differently after he encounters the seductive and dangerous I-330 who is a rebellious woman who challenges everything the State condemns – she drinks alcohol, smokes, wears colourful clothing rather than the required pale uniform, and refrains from keeping to the schedule of the Table of Hours. As he gets pulled into her world, D-503 'develop[s] a soul' (*We*, 79) and starts finding happiness in the freedom (and rebelliousness) I-330 embodies. Even though D-503 does not admit or fully realize that the rule of the State is oppressive, this view can be gleaned from the thoughts and desires recounted in his diary. Zamyatin gradually exposes the

true nature of the supposedly utopian One State by showing how the strict control and oppressiveness of its citizens render it a dystopia – worse than the reader’s present world. As in most dystopias where the resistance fails, D-503 unknowingly betrays the plans of the rebellion to overthrow the government, resulting in the capture and execution of its members.

Zamyatin uses I-330’s rebellious activities mentioned above to place into contrast, and highlight, the monotonous, dehumanized aspects of life in the One State. Every cipher thinks the same, dresses the same, and even walks the same. D-503 remarks that ‘[they] are so identical’ (*We*, 8), and maintains this belief until I-330 questions it. The State has removed all uniqueness and individual identity by instilling the Table of Hours and using propaganda to stop people from thinking for themselves. Even names are removed as the ciphers (not *people*) are referred to by a single letter followed by digits rather than names. There is a sense of yearning to recapture that lost identity when D-503 links the initial letter of some ciphers to their physical appearance and notices the uniqueness of each:

She was on my right: thin, sharp, stubbornly supple, like a whip (I can now see her digits are I-330). On my left was O-90, totally different, made of circumferences, with the childlike little crease on her arm; and at the far right of our foursome was an unfamiliar male cipher, sort of twice-bent, a bit like the letter “S”. We were all different.... (*We*, 8)

The fact that D-503 only notices the differences of each cipher after I-330 points it out indicates that the general population in the One State tends to not think for themselves or of themselves as individuals, but rather as a collective. D-503 decides that the title of his writings should be ‘We’ since he is attempting to record ‘what we think’ (*We*, 4). The initial letter ‘I’ in I-330’s digits juxtaposes with D-503’s collective thinking and shows her as the embodiment of the self and identity. Later in the story, as D-503 starts to gain his personal sense of self, he writes about how fulfilled he is, becomes aware of his own ‘imagination’ (*We*, 73) – meaning that he can think for himself – and starts using the pronoun ‘I’ rather than ‘we’. The State, however, acts

to suppress the rebellion and awakening of imaginations by inducing citizens to undergo a kind of lobotomy:

You will be perfect, you will be machine-equal. The path to one-hundred-percent happiness is clear. Hurry, all of you – young and old – hurry to undergo the Great Operation. (*We*, 158)

The State asserts that complete happiness requires the elimination of an imagination – thinking for one’s self – and self-awareness, which are essentially the qualities that make us human. The State, thus, deems it necessary to dehumanize its citizens in order to avoid dissent.

In dystopian fiction, governments of dystopian states further dehumanize their citizens by banning and controlling cultural aspects of traditional societies, such as religion. The practice of traditional religions is usually banned and often replaced by something else. Booker writes:

To a certain extent, Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell all depict religion as inimical to the dystopian conditions depicted in their books, and it is significant that conventional organized religion is strictly forbidden in all three of the major defining texts of the dystopian tradition. But all three authors also draw significant parallels between their oppressive dystopian governments and the historical abuses of institutional religion; it is clear that one reason why religion has been banned in these dystopias is that it competes for the same space as the dystopian governments themselves. (Booker, 1994: 32)

In *We*, many aspects of traditional religion, or the worship of an ‘absurd, unknown God’ (*We*, 41), are mirrored by the One State to which ‘calm, carefully considered, reasonable sacrifices’ are made. The Benefactor is equated to Christ as he is described as having ‘superhuman might’, compared to ‘a high priest’, and referred to by the capitalized pronoun ‘Him’ (*We*, 44). The fact that the One State mirrors many aspects of traditional institutional religion reveals that it requires religious-like devotion from its citizens. There is thus no room for the worship of any other gods. Similarly, in the society of Huxley’s *Brave New World*,² ‘God isn’t compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness’ (*BNW*, 183) as the morals of

² The following edition was used: Huxley, Aldous. [1932] 1973. *Brave New World*. London: Penguin. Where page references to *Brave New World* are given, for the sake of brevity, the novel is referred to simply as *BNW*, without a year.

Christianity stand in the way of the hedonistic principles of this world. The dystopian government's dehumanizing effects on its citizens are further explored by considering Aldous Huxley's classic dystopian work *Brave New World*.

Unlike the warnings against the dangers of a Communist dictatorship in *We*, the focus of Huxley's *Brave New World* is on the other end of the extreme: the capitalist state. Huxley wrote this dystopian classic in 1931 during the Great Depression, which severely affected the United Kingdom. After seeing the destructive effects the Depression was having on his country, Huxley's perspective was that 'stability was the "primal and the ultimate need" if civilisation was to survive the present crisis' (Bradshaw, 1993: xxii). The novel is set in the World State city of London, which is headed by Mustapha Mond, the resident Controller of Western Europe and one of the ten World Controllers. The populace is divided into five distinct hierarchical classes based on the type of genetic engineering and childhood conditioning they have received: at the top are intelligent Alphas working as scientists and engineers, while the simple-minded Epsilons are at the bottom of the hierarchy doing the manual labour. Due to the particular conditioning and indoctrination each person receives, the general populace is happy and content with its circumstances – a feature that forms the cornerstone of the State's social stability. The arrival of an outsider, the Savage, momentarily disrupts this seemingly utopian world as he questions the structural morals and principles of the World State.

One of the pressing questions that John, the Savage, raises with Mustapha Mond is the absence of books such as Shakespeare's plays. The Controller answers that 'our world is not the same as Othello's world [...] and you can't make tragedies without social instability' (*BNW*, 173). Booker (1994: 37) writes that the 'notion that art is somehow inimical to totalitarian authority is one of the energizing beliefs of dystopian fiction as a genre'. Art expresses individuality, freedom, and strong emotions such as love and hate – qualities which are

potentially harmful to the dystopian regime. Artistic works such as Shakespeare's plays invoke strong feelings and emotions within the reader – exemplified by John who is able to understand and express hatred after encountering this emotion in *Othello* (*BNW*, 108) – and this, according to Mond, makes a person unstable (*BNW*, 43). He argues that there can be 'no civilization without social stability' (*BNW*, 44) and therefore the experience of strong feelings and emotions needs to be eliminated. Huxley's World Controllers deem it necessary to prevent their citizens from having strong emotions and thus suppress anything that can prompt this: art, religion, intimate relationships, love of nature, history, and language. The governing body of the State essentially dehumanizes its citizens by suppressing human emotions and these expressive aspects of traditional culture.

Mond goes on to say that 'it isn't only art that's incompatible with happiness; it's also science' (*BNW*, 177). This statement seems paradoxical as scientific development forms the core of the genetic engineering and conditioning that structure the society of this world. Children are not born of mothers anymore, but are created in laboratories as part of a particular caste system and conditioned from birth with a set of beliefs and 'suggestions from the State' (*BNW*, 35). With the higher castes, Alphas and Betas, the decanting (i.e. scientific reproduction process) includes 'one egg, one embryo, one adult – normality' (*BNW*, 17), but with Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons, the 'Bokanovsky Process' is used:

But a bokanovskified egg will bud, will proliferate, will divide. From eight to ninety-six buds, and every bud will grow into a perfectly formed embryo, and every embryo into a full-sized adult. Making ninety-six human beings grow where only one grew before. Progress. (*BNW*, 17)

The multiplied beings of the lower castes do all the tedious, simple, and manual jobs, which would frustrate the more intelligent Alphas and Betas. However, due to their conditioning, the lower castes enjoy their work and are content with their lives and, therefore, 'Bokanovsky's Process is one of the major instruments of social stability' (*BNW*, 18). The major consequence of this social stability is, however, a lack of true individuality and independent thought. Just like

with the suppression of emotion, the State also dehumanizes its citizens using scientific methods. Nevertheless, Mond remarks that 'science is dangerous' and needs to be 'most carefully chained and muzzled' (*BNW*, 177). The Controllers limit scientific research and developments in order to keep the current order of society intact, since advanced developments would make the lower castes and their work redundant. Society cannot be stable when it is made up of only higher castes, a situation which has shown itself to result in war and destruction. Consequently, the decision has been made to sacrifice truth and beauty for universal happiness and comfort (*BNW*, 179).

This lack or limitation of scientific developments is similar to that found in *We*, where the State uses science and technology merely as instruments of control and stability. Just as Zamyatin does, Huxley sets his world far into the future, but includes elements of his own time. *Brave New World* is set in the year A.F. 632, which refers to the era after Henry Ford introduced the 'first T-model' (*BNW*, 51), which was manufactured by mass-production methods. In the novel, Ford is praised for revolutionizing the world to its current state, which is a world ruled by capitalism. The entire social structure of castes and conditioning works to sustain capitalism to such an extent that it becomes the religion of the State. Just as the Crucifixion represents the birth of Christianity, the introduction of Ford's T-model birthed the era of capitalism:

All crosses had their tops cut and became T's. There was also a thing called God [...] [but] [w]e have the World State now. And Ford's Day celebrations, and Community Sings, and Solidarity Services. (*BNW*, 52)

This representation of the extreme effects of capitalism is what Huxley attempts to headline by the use of defamiliarization. Indeed 'Huxley's projected dystopia of six hundred years in the future clearly grows from seeds that were already present in his contemporary world of the 1930s', according to Booker (1994: 52). This also links to what Kumar (1991: 381) says about America being one of the utopian experiments of modern times, since 'Huxley's *Brave New World* drew largely upon American practices for its picture of a benighted future world, sunk

in mindless consumerism'. At the beginning of the twentieth century, America was both the embodiment of a utopia and the forerunner of capitalist ideology. Huxley himself said that 'the future of America is the future of the world' (Bradshaw, 1993: xix) after he viewed the materialistic and demoralized conditions of California. Huxley predicts a disastrous outcome of this utopian experiment in this novel as he believes that utopian hopes are always going to end up in totalitarianism (Huxley, 1946: 14).

Huxley underlines the demoralized outcome of the ultra-capitalist World State by juxtaposing it with the character of the Savage, who was born and raised in a natural environment. Even though his upbringing appears savage and uncivilized, he is the character the reader relates to most in this novel, as his morals and beliefs are familiar: they are more human than those of the other characters in the novel. The Savage values everything that the State condemns:

'But I like the inconveniences.'
'We don't,' said the Controller. 'We prefer to do things comfortably.'
'But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin.'
'In fact,' said Mustapha Mond, 'you're claiming the right to be unhappy.'
'All right, then,' said the Savage defiantly, 'I'm claiming the right to be unhappy.' (BNW, 187)

The State advocates universal happiness, which comes at the cost of sacrificing traditional morals and values. As the Savage is the only person who is not conditioned according to the State's principles, he is the only one who realizes that what is ultimately being sacrificed is freedom. Part of the pessimistic outlook of dystopian fiction is the sense that there is no escape from these hellish societies, as seen in *We* and *Brave New World*. In the archetypal framework, the protagonist either becomes aware or learns the truth about the oppressive conditions he or she lives in – and starts or joins a resistance group. In this fashion, the Savage becomes aware of the oppressiveness of the civilized world and rebels against it. He attempts to escape from this society by living in isolation independent of the State and its corrupting norms.

However, as in most dystopias where there is no escape and resistance is doomed, the Savage finds in the end that the only escape is death.

The brief rebellion of the Savage in *Brave New World* is rather mild and tame compared to those depicted in *We* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Kumar (1991: 277) argues that ‘typically the strength of the dystopian society is demonstrated by pitting against it various antagonists’. Huxley’s World State does not exercise mass surveillance and palpable policing, nor are there physical barriers to keep its citizens confined. There is rather a much more tacit form of control: the social stability induced by decanting and conditioning. The Savage’s efforts to liberate the Gammas from their drug ration, his attempt at displaying chivalry to the woman he loves, and sharing his fondness of Shakespeare with his civilized friends, are ultimately all in vain as these characters simply cannot comprehend or share such ideas due to their innate conditioning. In a sense, there is no way for the Savage or anyone to topple the rooted structures of this world and, therefore, resistance is futile. In fact, life in the World State would have seemed quite utopic if the Savage had not been there to oppose its principles by pointing out the limitations and deficiencies of this not-fully-human society: the citizens believe that they are free to do whatever they like, but in reality, their conditioning limits their natural choices. Huxley’s novel is of a more comic and satirical nature, whereas Zamyatin and Orwell’s novels are essentially dark and serious with their evocations of ruthless and oppressive governments.

The dystopian feature of the totalitarian government’s ruthless oppression and control is most clearly and definitively displayed in the mid-twentieth century novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.³ Completed in 1948, Orwell’s novel is rooted in post-Second World War Britain with strong images and themes that suggest criticism of both Stalinism on the left and Nazism and Fascism

³ The following edition was used: Orwell, George. [1949] 2000. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. London: Penguin. Where page references to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are given, for the sake of brevity, the novel is referred to simply as *1984*, without a year.

on the right (Carter, 2000: viii). Orwell's imagined future takes place in Airstrip One, formerly Britain, which is part of the super state called Oceania. Life in Airstrip One is extremely regulated by pervasive forms of surveillance and propaganda. The society is hierarchically made up of the proletariat who form the masses, the Outer Party members making up the working class, the small circle of Inner Party executives, and finally Big Brother, the supreme leader. Among the Outer Party members is the protagonist Winston Smith, a diligent worker who furtively hates the ruling government. He records his true feelings in a diary and later he shares them with Julia, another member of the Outer Party with whom he forms a forbidden relationship. Winston later believes that he and Julia have joined a rebellion with Inner Party member O'Brien, however the latter has merely laid a trap for the dissidents and they are subsequently punished. In truth, as becomes clear by the end of the novel when both Winston and Julia are reintegrated into party-obedient life, there is no rebellion in existence and no means of escape from this brutally dismal dystopian world.

There are many similarities between Zamyatin's *We* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: both protagonists record their experiences in diary form and team up with a female in their rebellion against the State, both authors seek to reveal the negative aspects that the unbridled power of a totalitarian regime would produce, and in both worlds there are oppressive forces such as pervasive surveillance and rigorous control of every person's routine activities. Orwell and Zamyatin share the same obsession with the same kind of ruthless surveillance – 'the kind that looks into the souls of men and women, the kind that is designed to establish what they believe' (Self, 2007: viii). The members of the Outer Party are constantly reminded of the fact that they are being observed by the large omnipresent posters of Big Brother's face with the caption 'Big Brother is watching you' (1984, 5) beneath it. In each apartment there is a 'telescreen' which 'receive[s] and transmit[s] simultaneously' (1984, 6) and that can never be switched off. The telescreen picks up both sound 'above the level of a very low whisper' and any movement

'within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded' (1984, 6). There are also policemen patrolling with a helicopter 'snooping into people's windows' (1984, 6), but they are not nearly as frightening as the 'Thought Police' who seek out heretical thought. Even children are commissioned to spy on their parents and report any hint of dissent. The Outer Party members live in this state of knowing they are being watched all the time and thus obey the regulations of the Party in fear of being prosecuted. Winston notes that 'nothing is illegal, since there were no longer any laws, but if detected it was reasonably certain that [one] would be punished to death, or at least by twenty-five years in a forced-labour camp' (1984, 9).

Orwell's Party, however, differs from Zamyatin's One State in one very significant respect: universal happiness is not of any concern to the Party, as Winston had thought, but rather 'power entirely for its own sake':

We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. Not wealth or luxury or long life or happiness: only power, pure power. (1984, 238)

O'Brien explains that pure power is essentially 'power over human beings [-] [o]ver the body – but, above all, over the mind' (1984, 239). This realization is accordingly an enhancement of the methods that were used by the Russian Communists and German Nazis. O'Brien claims that the Party's methods are superior to these totalitarian regimes as they do not simply destroy dissidents, but instead ...

[w]e convert him, we capture his inner mind, we reshape him. [...] We make him one of ourselves before we kill him. It is intolerable to us that an erroneous thought should exist anywhere in the world, however secret or powerless it may be. (1984, 231)

This method ensures that the Party retains its power and that '[t]here is no way in which [it] can ever be overthrown' (1984, 237). Finally, this world that the Party has created 'is the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined' (1984, 241). Orwell thus warns the reader that once the fundamental aim of universal happiness is removed from totalitarian rule, what remains is a cruel and inexorable dictatorship.

The references O'Brien makes to the Communist and Nazi regimes are self-evident to the reader as the novel was published shortly after the Second World War, and in the early years of the Cold War. In the novel, Winston passes by bomb sites, which 'were a familiar feature of the British scenery in the late 1940s' (Carter, 2000: viii). The ubiquitous posters of Big Brother depict 'the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features' (1984, 5), which bring to mind the 1914 Lord Kitchener war recruitment posters, but also evoke an eerie resemblance to Stalin. Furthermore, the fluctuation between war and allegiance among the three super states of the novel prompts the reader to think of the Cold War with its shifting power blocs and alliances. The perpetual state of war in Oceania is not for the purpose of conquest, but to ensure that the Party members 'have the mentality appropriate to a state of war' (1984, 173) – which depends on feelings of fear, hatred and adulation – in order to keep 'the structure of society intact' (1984, 180). Booker (2005: 172) posits that in this way *Nineteen Eighty-Four* became one of the important cultural texts commenting on the Cold War and also 'set the stage for all future dystopian fiction'. Orwell succeeds in presenting a powerful commentary on totalitarianism by defamiliarizing these prevalent and familiar conditions of his time and setting the novel 35 years into the future. The author did not intend the novel to be a prediction of what, particularly, the year 1984 would look like, but rather as a realization that such events could occur in the *near* future. The immediacy that is created by the fact that such totalitarianism could occur within a few decades rather than centuries, adds to the compelling force and realism of this dystopian novel.

The strikingly oppressive forces in Orwell's novel, just as in Zamyatin's and Huxley's (to a lesser extent), dehumanize their subjects in order to control them. In all three novels, society is entirely devoid of intimate relations and people are forbidden to engage in them. There is no romantic love involved in the mere physical acts of copulation in the One State where it is

calculated into the 'Table of Hours' (*We*, 11), nor in the anti-monogamous World State where 'everyone belongs to everyone else' (*BNW*, 42). In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* physical intimacy is prohibited and discouraged by organizations such as the 'Junior Anti-Sex League which advocate[s] complete celibacy for both sexes' (1984, 61). The Party restrains sexual behaviour in order to 'control all aspects of the lives of its members, thus depriving them of any true individuality' (Booker, 1994: 77):

All marriages between Party members had to be approved by a committee appointed for the purpose, and – though the principle was never clearly stated – permission was always refused if the couple concerned gave the impression of being physically attracted to one another. The only recognised purpose of marriage was to beget children for the service of the Party. Sexual intercourse was to be looked on as a slightly disgusting minor operation, like having an enema. (1984, 61)

Winston thus rebels against the Party when he starts a physical relationship with Julia by calling it 'a political act' (1984, 116). In a sense he attempts to reclaim the freedom and humanity that the Party has deprived him of. When they are caught, the two lovers are physically tortured and brainwashed to the point where they betray each other and proclaim their loyalty to the Party. During this process, O'Brien explains to Winston how he will crush his soul by destroying the last humanity left in him:

Never again will you be capable of ordinary human feeling. Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves. (1984, 232)

The Party thus shows how it ruthlessly exercises control not only physically, but mentally and emotionally as well.

A common trope in dystopian fiction is the rejection of history and tradition in favour of the new systems and future endeavours of the state. The archetypal dystopian government believes that 'the study of history might potentially yield knowledge that would be liberating to their subjects' (Booker, 1994: 43). In the same way, the Party holds a tight grip on history by altering past records in order to suit its requirements. Winston works in the Records

Department of the 'Ministry of Truth' (1984, 7) where his tasks consist of re-adjusting various forms of written documents, such as books, pamphlets, and newspaper articles, which contradict the current standpoint of the Party in any way. He notes that there are hundreds of cubicles and departments in the building where people are working on similar tasks and '[d]ay by day and almost minute by minute the past was brought up to date' (1984, 38). In consequence, 'the past [...] had not merely been altered, it had been actually destroyed' (1984, 35). The Ministry of Truth, like the other ministries in Airstrip One, in fact does the opposite of what it stands for, and could be more truthfully described as the Ministry of Lies. The Party seeks to control history because 'who controls the past, [...] controls the future: who controls the present controls the past' (1984, 34). The Party imposes control, but also dehumanizes its members by rewriting history to remove the facts that are conducive to self-actualization, which would liberate the minds of its members.

Language seems to be the 'primary weapon with which to resist oppression' and is thus strictly controlled by 'repressive government structures to stifle dissent' (Sisk, 1997: 2). This is exemplified in Orwell's concept of 'Newspeak' (1984, 15), which aims to reduce the number of English words so that only basic things can be communicated, and the expression of ideas, thoughts, and feelings are severely limited:

The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to devotees of Ingsoc [i.e. English Socialist Party], but to make all other modes of thought impossible. It was intended that [...] a heretical thought – that is, a thought diverging from the principles of Ingsoc – should be literally unthinkable, at least so far as thought is dependent on words. (1984, 270)

The society is already devoid of freedom, especially freedom of speech, however, the Party has realized that it also needs to obstruct the freedom of the mind in order to maintain control over its members. The suppression of language, which entails personal thoughts, emotions, and opinions, is the greatest form of dehumanization imposed by the totalitarian regime, since nothing private and personal remains. For this reason, Winston's diary represents the only real

freedom and individuality that he has left, and it also becomes the symbol of his rebellion against the controlling regime. However, even the last bit of his identity is extinguished by the Party, which thirsts for absolute power and control over its subjects. By depicting this, Orwell again shows the reader that there is no humanity in, or escape from, totalitarian rule.

The three classical dystopian texts by Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell thus depict dystopian societies that are utterly and mercilessly controlled by totalitarian governments, as I showed above. These governments restrict not only the physical freedom of their citizens with walls and extensive surveillance methods, but also their emotional and intellectual freedoms. In each novel, there is a rebellion of sorts, but it is short-lived and hopelessly doomed. The totalitarian regime comes into existence – like the real-life social experiments of the twentieth century – as an apparent means to provide universal happiness, but then realizes the necessity of strictly controlling its citizens. The endeavours of a regime to retain power and control result in the complete dehumanization of its populace. Individuality and self-awareness are the enemies of the totalitarian, as these lead to dissent and therefore need to be suppressed. In order to effectively highlight and comment on these conditions, dystopian authors use the technique of defamiliarization by setting their novels in future societies, but still including elements of their present worlds. These dystopian themes form the framework of the argument in the rest of this dissertation, which shows again and again that Philip K. Dick's novels relate fundamentally and viscerally to the dystopian genre.

A key theorist in the field, Frederic Jameson, explores the historical development of the utopian genre as well as utopian thinking within society in his work *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (2017). Jameson (2017: xii) critically examines the utopian form rather than its content, and argues that the 'utopian form is itself a representational meditation on radical difference, radical otherness, and on the systematic

nature of the social totality'. Central to Jameson's discussion is the link between utopia and science fiction and its importance: he believes 'utopia to be a socio-economic sub-genre of that broader literary form' (2017: xiv). He goes on to examine the relationship between the two forms through a collection of essays based on various texts by authors who display the utopian form within their science fictional works, including those of Philip K. Dick.

Further theoretical standpoints that I observe in this study are those of Michel Foucault, especially his theory of power expounded in *Discipline and Punish* (1975). Foucault's work explores the history of the Western penal system. It famously exemplifies how disciplinary power is put into effect by considering Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, 'a circular prison that allows for permanent surveillance of prisoners' (Rivkin and Ryan, 2004: 549). The idea of this system is that each prisoner is isolated, but completely visible to the person observing from the central tower. However, the prisoners cannot see who is observing them, and this results in the major effect of the panopticon: 'to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power' (Foucault, 2004: 554). Foucault says that the panopticon is 'an important mechanism, for it automatizes and disindividualizes power' (2004: 555), which makes it an ideal method for controlling individuals not only within the penal system, but also within society. The panopticon prison model gives rise to the notions of discipline as a series of 'techniques for assuring the ordering of human multiplicities' (Foucault, 2004: 562). These techniques include 'overall methods known as timetables, collective training, exercises, total and detailed surveillance' (Foucault, 2004: 564), which can be observed in Zamyatin's *We* where power and control are exercised upon the individuals of the One State through similar techniques (see pp. 12–13). Foucault holds that it was the growth of capitalism that developed this specific method of disciplinary power and that the panopticon's general formulas and techniques 'could be operated in the most diverse

political regimes, apparatuses, or institutions' (2004: 565). Thus, the power and control exercised by dystopian regimes could be interpreted in terms of Foucault's ideas.

It is necessary to this study also to consider Jean Baudrillard's sociological theory as laid out in his work *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) where the relationship between reality and symbols within society is explored. Baudrillard essentially argues that contemporary society is 'pure simulation, [since] replications of reality that resemble it' have already disappeared (Rivkin and Ryan, 2004: 365). Simulation refers to things that mask the absence of basic reality, whereas pure simulation, or simulacra, obscures the fact that there is no original to begin with. Examples listed by Baudrillard include the creation of Disneyland, which is supposed to be a representation of American social values, but in actuality functions to hide the fact that these values do not really exist. Another is the Watergate scandal, which Baudrillard claims was not a scandal, but rather a distraction from the truth – the governing system as corrupt – by creating a fictional moral compass to determine who or what is corrupt, thus deferring attention from the truly corrupt. Moreover, money is used today not to conceal scandals, but to hide the fact that there are not any scandals being prosecuted. The way money is used stops people from realizing that capitalism is truly an immoral and exploitative system.

Capitalism was first critiqued as an immoral and exploitative system by Karl Marx in his distinguished work *Capital* (1867), which serves to elucidate some of the disparaging views of capitalism found in Dick's novels. Marx comments on the injustices of the capitalist system with his 'labor theory of value' (Rivkin and Ryan, 2004: 659) by pointing out that when the price of labour is lower than the value produced by the labour done, then capitalists enjoy the surplus value for their own gain and thus exploit the workers. Marx holds that these immoral practices further alienate the masses, since the workers become dehumanized by the monotonous, robot-like labour they engage in. People end up making decisions based on economic

considerations – commodities, losses and gains – rather than considering human worth and human needs. This system, controlled by the profit-seeking capitalists, ultimately alienates individuals from innovatively planning their own lives, which thus alters the fate of society. An example of this can be seen in Dick’s *Martian Time-Slip* where the actions of greedy capitalists directly affect the lives of other people in society.

Literature review

A review of the critical studies on Philip K. Dick’s work was conducted, but no significant and sustained discussions or analyses directly linking his novels to the dystopian genre were found. The published articles and chapters discussing Dick’s work focus on the various themes – mainly paranoia, schizophrenia, drug use and hallucinations, power struggles, and dualism – found throughout his *oeuvre*. Two comprehensive discussions of Dick’s work are Kim Stanley Robinson’s *The Novels of Philip K. Dick* (1984) and Patricia S. Warrick’s critical study titled *Mind in Motion: The Fiction of Philip K. Dick* (1987). Robinson’s study includes an introduction that looks at the conventional groupings of literary genre and how Dick challenged such groupings by including social criticism together with science fictional elements in his novels. Robinson (1984: xi) aims to ‘show how Dick’s work comments on the society they were written in’ by examining how ‘Dick’s fictional worlds are metaphors for our own culture’. Robinson (1984: xi) engages in ‘a close reading of a few of Dick’s most valuable novels’, which includes a lengthy discussion of *Martian Time-Slip* and *The Penultimate Truth*, as well as some pages dedicated to *A Scanner Darkly*, which are referred to in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation. Warrick’s (1987: 2–3) critical study examines how ‘Dick’s fiction captures the pattern and processes of the American collective psychology in the last thirty years’ as well as the ‘contradictory elements in his writing’. Warrick was in correspondence with Dick during the last few years of his life and was thus able to include some enlightening biographical

details, attitudes, and opinions of Dick in relation to her discussion of his novels. Warrick's critical analysis includes a consideration of most of Dick's novels – some receiving more attention than others – such as *Martian Time-Slip* and *A Scanner Darkly*, which are incorporated in the later discussions of this dissertation.

Lejla Kucukalic argues, in her literary study *Philip K. Dick: Canonical Writer of the Digital Age* (2008), against the stereotypes that overshadow Dick's novels. Kucukalic (2008: 23) states that Dick has earned a place as a 'canonical writer of the digital age [since] he had something essential to say about his contemporary culture and [...] he is still saying something about our culture today'. Since the genre of science fiction is often misunderstood as unrealistic, Dick's use of this genre has caused critics to assume that his work is unrealistic pulp. Dick's science fiction, however, 'is a constructed genre, intertwining scientific and social speculation, philosophical ideas, realism, experimental fiction, and the author's subjective ideologies' (Kucukalic, 2008: 19–20). Thus, it is argued, the critical reader 'should not look at the "pulp elements" in Dick's fiction', but rather see his work as 'a synthesis of elements that reflect or may reflect our reality' (Kucukalic, 2008: 20). Kucukalic examines some of Dick's major novels, including *Martian Time-Slip* and *A Scanner Darkly* to illustrate her position.

In the Philip K. Dick biography, *Divine Invasions* (1994), Lawrence Sutin provides an in-depth account of how the events and circumstances of Dick's life directly influenced the creation of his manifold plots. In the introductory chapter, Sutin (1994: 2) recounts how Dick yearned to become part of the 'higher realm' by publishing mainstream fiction, but was instead placed in the science fictional domain where he remains, despite the fact that novels such as *A Scanner Darkly* (1977) and *VALIS* (1981) contain hardly any science fictional elements (Sutin, 1994: 5). Sutin (1994: 75) quotes Dick giving a definition of science fiction as 'involv[ing] that which general opinion regards as possible under the right circumstances'. The 'what if?' premise lay

at the heart of science fiction for Dick (Sutin, 1994: 88): What if Mars becomes the new frontier? What if the government is really conspiring against its citizens on a mass scale? What if the third world war breaks out? The ‘what if?’ premise can also be seen in a dystopia, which explores the possibility of a dark and pessimistic near-future reality, such as depicted in the work of Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell.

Krishan Kumar’s *Utopia & Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* (1991) provides a comprehensive reference to the history and theory of dystopian literature. At the end of chapter 3, Kumar reveals the emergence of dystopian literature in America, which coincides with its counterpart in Europe and also exhibits the growth of literature as social critique that informed American writers such as Dick:

It was in this thoroughly modern world of organized capital and organized labour that [...] was also the setting for a new theme: America as *dystopia*. For the first time in history, America towards the end of the nineteenth century could present the image not only of utopia but also now of anti-utopia. [...] The American dream turned, for many writers and artists, into a nightmare of unbridled power and industrial alienation, of moral purposelessness and individual anomie. (Kumar, 1991: 97–98)

Chapter 4 of the book then explores how the concept of dystopia, or the anti-utopia, emerged from the utopian tradition in relation to contemporary events in society. The next five chapters look at distinctive utopian and anti-utopian novels of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which were greatly influenced by the social and political conditions of their times. These include Huxley’s *Brave New World* and Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which are referred to as examples of novels which set the ground for the dystopian genre. The final chapter looks at the transformations of utopia and anti-utopia in the twentieth century, such as how the “‘New Wave’” of science fiction writing developed [...] in[to] the anti-utopian mode of “‘near future’” satire’ (Kumar, 1991: 403). This is particularly applicable to Dick’s novels as his major writing developed during the science fictional New Wave era.

The concept of dystopia is thoroughly examined in Gregory Claeys's monograph entitled *Dystopia: A Natural History. A Study of Modern Despotism, Its Antecedents, and Its Literary Diffractions* (2017). In the study, Claeys offers detailed descriptions of the different definitions, uses, and types of dystopia throughout history, as well as in modern times. He notes the problematic task of determining the distinctiveness of the dystopian genre as a whole, and calls for the necessity to separate the dystopian genre from the larger genre of science fiction in order to truly refine the characteristics of the dystopian novel (Claeys, 2017: 270). A key point Claeys (2017: 289) makes is that dystopia 'is distinguished by the density of its socio-political narrative and its plausible relation to the period in which it appears' – unlike science fiction which presumes a more technologically distant and implausible future. Claeys (2017: 290) goes on to say that 'literary dystopias are understood as primarily concerned to portray societies where a substantial majority suffer slavery and/or oppression *as a result of human action*'. On this note, Claeys (2017: 465) briefly comments on Dick's work, stating that novels such as *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (1968) and *Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said* (1974) combine 'science fiction and dystopian narratives'. However, when considering what many critics describe as dystopian, Claeys (2017: 465) says that *A Scanner Darkly* (1977) 'is not a dystopia, just a magnification of crazed modernity' (465). I disagree with this statement and show in Chapter 4 of this study how *A Scanner Darkly* certainly is a dystopia.

Booker and Thomas's *The Science Fiction Handbook* (2009) is another useful guide to exploring the key subgenres of science fiction. The authors chose to work with Darko Suvin's definition of science fiction as cognitive estrangement, which they argue is 'very similar to the phenomenon of defamiliarization' (Booker and Thomas, 2009: 4). Booker and Thomas explore the distinctions between key genres, such as science fiction and mainstream literature, as well as utopias and dystopias. They argue that 'there is a fine line between utopia and dystopia, and one person's dream society might be another person's nightmare', and point to the fact

that many science fictional texts contain characteristics of both (Booker and Thomas, 2009: 70). For example, Orwell's Inner Party members would certainly see society as utopian, since they have created and control an ideal society, whereas the Party members such as Winston Smith are miserably oppressed. The authors maintain that dystopian novels 'remain one of the most potentially useful forms of [science fiction]' and that since dystopian narratives suggest the possibility of viable preferable alternatives, 'dystopian fiction is not the opposite of utopian fiction but a kind of supplement to it' (Booker and Thomas, 2009: 72). There is an interesting study to note by P. L. Thomas titled *Science Fiction and Speculative Fiction: Challenging Genres* (2013) that often references Booker and Thomas's ideas on the subgenres of science fiction. Thomas notes various authors who have received the science fiction label, despite their novels not exactly adhering to the genre. Examples include Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami whose work seems science fictional, but which draws more on traditions of supernatural and magical realism (Thomas, 2013: 27). And authors like Margaret Atwood and Kurt Vonnegut 'spoke and wrote often about rejecting the SF label' placed on their work (Thomas, 2013: 189), which is often considered by readers as dystopian rather than science fictional. These comments relate to the work of Philip K. Dick and I will show that he, too, has been mislabelled as an author of exclusively science fictional narratives.

Scope and outline of the study

I examine each of the novels selected for this study in a separate chapter to carefully determine how Dick uses the typical dystopian elements in each text. Throughout the chapters, I examine the techniques that Dick uses to make his critique on society and I argue that these reveal his unique approach to the dystopian mode. In Chapter 2, I explore Dick's 1964 novel *Martian*

Time-Slip,⁴ set on the planet Mars, which is sparsely occupied by those who have escaped the over-populated conditions of Earth. The children on Mars attend public schools, which attempt to 'stabilize the values of society' (*Time-Slip*, 65). Rather than informing and educating, the Martian public schools mould the pupils along severely limited lines. The children who do not properly respond to this education system are assumed to be mentally ill and sent to Camp B-G, a facility for anomalies. This suppression of individuality and the dehumanization of the children are magnified by the fact that all of the teachers in the schools are 'simulacra'. Robinson (1984: 56) says 'if a machine can teach them, they are machinelike'. The children are dehumanized by being taught to think and act like machines rather than individuals, which is a common trope in the dystopian genre. The UN is the authority that imposes the dehumanizing public school system and also threatens to exterminate the degenerates on Mars in order to create a pure race. As ruthless as a Nazi-like totalitarian authority, I suggest that the UN is portrayed by Dick as the controller of a similar dystopian state.

In this chapter, I discuss how the planet Mars initially represents a New World or utopia in which the immigrants from Earth have tried to build a new life. In many ways the Martian landscape echoes Dick's California, especially in the light of John F. Kennedy's New Frontier speech of 1960. I argue that Dick employs the technique of defamiliarization to create a science-fictional setting that readers can relate to in order to highlight the potential dangers towards which society is heading. Robinson (1984: 55) notes that Dick simplifies Martian society and that 'this world reduction has excised everything but two facets of American life: business, and personal relationships'. By highlighting these two features, Mars essentially becomes a consumer society such as the one depicted in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*.

⁴ The following edition was used: Dick, Philip K. 1964. *Martian Time-Slip*. In: Lethem, Jonathan (ed.), 2008. *Philip K. Dick: Five Novels of the 1960s & 1970s* (pp. 3–231). New York, NY: Library of America. Where page references to *Martian Time-Slip* are given, for the sake of brevity, the novel is referred to simply as *Time-Slip*, without a year.

I make some other associations between this classical dystopian text and Dick's novel, such as the indoctrinations perceived in the Martian educational system, the use of scientific developments to exercise control, and references to the pervasive world-controlling UN. I finally show that both Dick and Huxley attempt to critique the Western values of capitalism by showing how the consumerist society is really a dystopian one.

In Chapter 3, I consider another 1964 novel, *The Penultimate Truth*,⁵ which recounts an apocalyptic future in which the majority of Americans live in underground tanks, in the belief that World War III is raging above-ground. Meanwhile on the surface, where the war has actually been over for 13 years, and in the present of the narrative, the ruling elite live like feudal lords in large 'demesnes' with robot servants manufactured by the 'tankers'. When a tanker risks coming to the surface in search of an 'artiforg', short for artificial organ (*Truth*, 10), he discovers not only how the elite have tricked the tankers into staying underground, but also that there is a power struggle among the elite themselves. Even after a member of the elite overthrows the dictatorship, the tankers are told only that the war has ended, not that they have been tricked into staying underground for over a decade. There is a sense that the tankers will learn the full truth at some point '[a]nd - ultimately there will be another war' (*Truth*, 48).

Through close examination of this text, I reveal how the tankers become oppressed and dehumanized by the cramped living conditions they endure out of fear of the non-existent war taking place in the world above them. I indicate that Dick offers a critique of the American government's involvement in the Cold War, as well as the government's use of war propaganda to instil fear in the nation. At the core of this novel there is the question of what is real or true,

⁵ The following edition was used: Dick, Philip K. [1964] 2005. *The Penultimate Truth*. London: Gollancz. Where page references to *The Penultimate Truth* are given, for the sake of brevity, the novel is referred to simply as *Truth*, without a year.

which goes unanswered as neither of the protagonists reaches ultimate enlightenment. I suggest that in this sense, the classical dystopian resistance fails, and no deep or structural improvements are ultimately made to the dystopian state. Critics such as Merritt Abrash and Suvin have noticed that the dystopian themes in *The Penultimate Truth* parallel George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. To this end, I examine how both novels depict a near-future totalitarian state in which some form of war propaganda is communicated to the masses by a leading figure. Moreover, there is tampering with history, a sense of yearning for freedom, visible class hierarchy, and a rebel figure who plans to overthrow the ruling state. I argue that these two novels are ultimately linked to the dystopian genre by the depiction of a nightmarish future that describes and comments on the author's current world and socio-political situations in order to warn readers of a possible future which might come about if such conditions persist. *The Penultimate Truth* is one of the strongest examples of how Dick comments on, and critiques, the American government's ongoing war enterprises during the mid-twentieth century.

In Chapter 4, I examine Dick's most realist and most dystopian novel, *A Scanner Darkly*.⁶ The novel is directly based on events of Dick's own drug experiences during the early 1970s and on Dick's own paranoia about police surveillance, which increased greatly during the early 70s as he expressed anxieties that his phone might be tapped and suspected that the authorities were behind a serious break-in at his home. Dick critiques the American government's intrusive spying by placing the characters of *A Scanner Darkly* in an inexorable Fascist police state where the authorities use a system of strict surveillance and control. The plot follows Fred, a police informant posing as a drug addict named Bob Arctor, who does in fact take the

⁶ The following edition was used: Dick, Philip K. 1977. *A Scanner Darkly*. In: Lethem, Jonathan (ed.), 2008. *Philip K. Dick: Five Novels of the 1960s & 1970s* (pp. 859–1096). New York, NY: Library of America. Where page references to *A Scanner Darkly* are given, for the sake of brevity, the novel is referred to simply as *Scanner*, without a year.

super drug called Substance D to avoid being suspected as a narc. The police informants wear 'scramble suits' (*Scanner*, 876) to hide their identities, even from one another. Fred is given the assignment of spying on Arctor (himself), and as the drugs progressively split and destroy his mind, he starts thinking that Fred and Arctor are two different people. When Fred/Arctor's mind is nearly completely destroyed, he ends up in New-Path, a rehabilitation centre where he is referred to as Bruce. In the end, the simple-minded Bruce discovers that New Path grows the flowers used to produce Substance D and depends on its rehabilitants to tend to these fields. By revealing the classical consumerist vicious cycle, Dick creates an inescapable dystopian world, which is metaphorically portrayed through the subject of drug addiction.

Apart from the dehumanizing effects of Substance D, the other major dystopian theme in this novel is the total police control over this society. Just as the powerful drug, Substance D, invades the minds of the addicts, the police invade their lives with random stops, undercover agents, and complete home surveillance. I indicate that just as Zamyatin's dystopian One State uses its advanced technology for constant surveillance rather than scientific achievement, the police force in *A Scanner Darkly* uses 'scramble suits' and advanced scanners to conduct its surveillance. Compared to the life-wrecking drugs, the police force almost seems like the moral party in trying to combat drug use. However, towards the end of the novel, we learn that having Fred/Arctor's mind destroyed by Substance D was actually part of the police's plan to get him into New-Path to investigate whether the drug is produced there. In keeping with the typical dystopian trope, the authorities are one step ahead, manipulating reality to suit themselves. I consider that Arctor has no true identity and merely becomes a tool used by the state to survey drug addicts, himself, and finally the origin of Substance D. I discuss how Dick ultimately reveals that the two dehumanizing forces of the novel, drug addiction and police control, are merely sequelae of the system of capitalism. I argue that the drug-rehabilitation facility, New-Path, represents the twisted cycle of capitalism as the facility uses the victims of Substance D

to perpetuate the system by growing the flowers used to produce this drug. By presenting a chillingly realistic and morbid account of the consequences of drug addiction, I assert that Dick makes ones of his most powerful realist critiques on American society and fully realizes his dystopian vision.

Chapter 2: *Martian Time-Slip*

Philip K. Dick first encountered and fell in love with the genre of science fiction when he was twelve years old and soon after started writing his own science fictional short stories. As he matured, however, his artistic focus started to shift to realism since he became 'highly critical of the values of postwar American society, and in his fiction he wanted to make a social critique' (Robinson, 1984: 1). After he produced a series of unsuccessful mainstream novels during the 1950s, he returned to science fiction, for which there was a market. Yet, he still maintained the desire to creatively produce a critique on society and was thus 'forced to make a choice' (Robinson, 1984: 1) between the two styles of writing since 'science fiction was regarded by most as a lowly, escapist paraliterature' (Robinson, 1984: 2) and would not be taken seriously. Realism, on the other hand, 'provided stronger examples of social criticism' and was 'what the Berkeley intellectual community was reading' (Robinson, 1984: 2). Dick ended up not choosing between the two literary styles, but rather combining them in the mode of the European classics – Zamyatin's *We* (1921), Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) – which 'were written by writers who turned to science fiction only when their artistic purposes made it necessary (Robinson, 1984: 7). This can be seen in his 1964 novel *Martian Time-Slip* which was written soon after the distinguished *The Man in the High Castle* (1962) and which, like this latter novel, employs a multi-foci plot. The Martian novel was written during what Patricia Warrick (1987: 12) refers to as Dick's 'Mature Period' in which 'he wrote some of his greatest novels, beginning with *The Man in the High Castle*, and including *Martian Time-Slip*, *Dr Bloodmoney*, and *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*'. Despite the novel's science fictional setting, the plot deals mainly with the emotional conditions of the ordinary people who have emigrated to this planet. Dick repeated the techniques of mainstream fiction for which he was praised in *The Man in the High Castle* and 'hope[d] that

he had bridged the gap between the experimental mainstream novel and science fiction' (Warrick, 1987: 62). The end product is what appears to be a work of science fiction, but which allows the reader to uncover, upon closer examination, themes more characteristic of realist and dystopian writing.

The setting of the novel is the planet Mars, sparsely occupied by those who have escaped the over-populated conditions of Earth. The planet's immigrants are subdivided into colonies based on their original Earth-nationality and are under the overall authority of the United Nations (UN), which not only enforces the law, but also controls the water rations of each household. Towns and colonies are built around water canals, which offer a limited amount of water and thus need to be regulated in order to prevent shortages. The environment is bleak and desert-like with its dusty landscapes and lack of vegetation. Life is also bleak for most of the settlers, who struggle to make a living and remain positive in their circumstances, except for Arnie Kott, the rich opportunistic head of the plumbers' union who wants to get ahead of everyone else with his schemes. One of these involves an attempt to take advantage of the autistic boy Manfred Steiner's precognition ability – which might allow him to determine in advance the success of a land investment opportunity. Kott recruits Jack Bohlen, a repairman with schizophrenic tendencies himself, to build a machine which allows communication with the unusual boy. Throughout the course of the novel, paranoia sets in as Manfred imposes his disturbed visions on Jack and later also on Arnie.

This chapter is divided into two sections, each of which focuses on and explores a particular dystopian element in *Martian Time-Slip*. In the first section, I look at the planet Mars and consider how it represents a new world with new possibilities similar to those to be found in classical utopian texts and stories. Even though the idea of utopia is attached to this new planet, it is soon revealed to be quite the opposite as the characters face various challenges in this

less-than-ideal world. I argue that Mars can also be seen as an anamorphic image of California in the 1960s in which Dick is using the dystopian technique of defamiliarization to critique the social practices of the West, in particular the system of capitalism. The planet's new world connotations and Dick's use of defamiliarization echo Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, in ways which I discuss later in this section. In the second part, I consider one of the main themes of the novel, schizophrenia, which is linked to dehumanization and is also shown as a vehicle for the critique Dick makes of society. Warrick (1987: 67) believes that the 'Martian landscape is a metaphor for the emotional and spiritual poverty of our contemporary world' and this notion ties in with Dick's critique revealed through defamiliarization in which, essentially, he considers the negative effects of Western economic practices on the emotional states of individuals. Through his depiction of Mars, and by considering the feelings of the people who inhabit this world, I propose that Dick eventually reveals a society in which there is exploitation, control, oppression, and little chance of escape – key ingredients of the classic dystopian society as expressed in key dystopian novels.

Mars: a new world, a defamiliarized world, and a *Brave New World*

The concept of the New World stems from the Renaissance, which was marked by voyages and discoveries of new continents. New worlds offered many possibilities, such as religious freedom, restructured societies, and wealth. At around the same time as these voyages, 'classic modern utopias', such as 'More's *Utopia*, Campanella's *City of the Sun*, Andreae's *Christianopolis*, [and] Bacon's *New Atlantis*' (Kumar, 1991: 23) emerged. The genre invented by More proclaims that 'Utopia is Nowhere' (Kumar, 1991: 23), meaning that it is a fictive place and space that does not exist in the real world. The Renaissance voyages and discoveries, however, influenced this conception as the newly discovered worlds offered in reality the kinds of possibilities that are indeed to be found in utopian fiction:

It had been standard literary practice since the time of Herodotus to use the customs and institutions of distant lands, real or invented, as a critical or satirical commentary on one's own age and people. The European voyages revived this practice by adding immeasurably to the store of knowledge of strange worlds – not to mention the sense of possibility they opened up with their vistas of vast spaces still to be explored and perhaps settled. [...] These travellers' tales were, many of them, the raw material of utopias – almost incipient utopias. (Kumar, 1991: 23)

The idea of the New World could thus be associated with the utopian genre, as these worlds deeply informed the settings of many utopian tales. The New World is utopic in that it offers new possibilities and the potential of an ideal society, and it creates a critical distance from contemporary society, which allows a viewpoint from which the latter may be commented on. The commentary is often a critique of society, which might be illustrated in a negative light. Yet, while being presented in such a manner, the utopic society is often revealed to be far less than ideal and as such becomes a dystopia. We can observe this in classic texts such as *Brave New World*, where there is an inversion of the new-world-discovery notion in the sense that it is the Savage who explores the new civilized world, rather than the civilized explorers seeking undiscovered, 'savage', worlds. Nevertheless, the brave new world that the Savage finds himself in seems at first utterly perfect with its sophisticated technological and scientific advancements. However, as he questions the customs of this cultivated society and compares them to his own, the oppressive and dehumanizing conditions of this apparent utopia are unveiled. In this sense, the initial discovery of the New World gives off a utopic impression, but a deeper investigation into it leads to a more negative and dystopian conception, which is a pattern detectable in Dick's *Martian Time-Slip*.

Throughout *Martian Time-Slip*, the planet Mars is referred to as the New World in contrast with Earth as 'an antiquated Old World' (*Time-Slip*, 181). We learn that the Martian settlers are the first generation to live on this planet as it has been only thirty years since the first rocket ships landed there. Each of the characters has a different reason for emigrating and a different view of what the planet has to offer: 'Mars, for Arnie, was a new place, and it meant a new life, lived

with a new style' (*Time-Slip*, 20). Indeed, Arnie Kott is a rich and powerful figure on Mars where he is used to getting his own way. Just as the historic pioneers travelled to America in search of riches, Arnie sees Mars as an untouched land to be explored and exploited. Moreover, Earth is overpopulated and the job-market is extremely competitive, which makes it hard 'for a person with only a master's degree to get a job on Earth, [but] on Mars there [are] good-paying jobs for people with only B.A.'s' (*Time-Slip*, 17). Arnie recalls how this had affected him:

He himself had emigrated due to his having only a B.A. Every door had been shut to him, and then he had come to Mars as nothing but a union plumber, and within a few short years, look at him. On Earth, a plumber with only a B.A. would be raking up dead locusts in Africa as part of a U.S. foreign aid gang. (*Time-Slip*, 17)

For others, such as Jack Bohlen, Mars is an escape from the smothering conditions of Earth where jobs are scarce and people are clustered together in high-rise condominium apartment buildings. On Mars, he works as a repairman, which is an indispensable job since 'the cost of shipping new units from Earth was great' and an 'old toaster, thoughtlessly scrapped on Earth, would have to be kept working on Mars' (*Time-Slip*, 8). However, to earn enough to support his family, Jack has to work long hours away from home. His wife, Silvia, takes drugs to cope with her bored and lonely life on this new planet where they 'were promised so much, in the beginning' (*Time-Slip*, 5). In a similar fashion, the desolate and hopeless aspects of his life catch up with Norbert Steiner, a fairly successful black-market goods salesman, and drive him to suicide early in the novel. Then there is Dr Glaub who, even though he is one of the most esteemed psychologists on Mars, takes on inferior jobs to try and pay off growing debt.

Mars is indeed a new place and offers a new life to its settlers, however, despite its new-world connotation linking it to a utopia, Mars as we are starting to see, turns out to be anything but utopic. The science fictional setting of this planet does not function as a fantasy either, but rather depicts the planet as a real place to which readers can relate:

This Mars is realistic in a way that no other Martian novel before it had been. Rather than use the name *Mars* to locate a fantasy setting of one sort or another, Dick

attempts to portray the harsh and boring colonial reality that might indeed come to pass. (Robinson, 1984: 54)

As a realistic setting, the new world of Mars instead functions to create critical distance from the contemporary known world and so becomes a vehicle for Dick to comment on his own society: 1960s California. This technique, as we have seen before, is known as defamiliarization and is commonly used by authors of dystopian fiction. Many critics of Dick's work are in agreement that the Martian setting of this novel functions as a commentary on the author's spatio-temporal setting. Suvin (1975: 8) comments that Dick's 'various alternative worlds [...] are analogous to the USA (or simply to California) in the 1950s and 60s'. Pagetti (1975: 27) writes that 'the planet of *Martian Time-Slip* is revealed as a replica of budding American society not only with its generous pioneers, but also with phenomena from the formulation of a capitalist society dominated by the inexorable law of profit and speculation'. Warrick (1987: 67) says that even though Dick 'moves from his usual West Coast setting to Mars [...], he still writes about contemporary culture'. Rossi (2011: 103) notes that 'the characters of *Time-Slip* [are] a fully persuading group of Americans displaced on the Red Planet, [...] [as well as a] depiction of California seen through a science-fictional mirror, darkly', which show us that Dick has created a critical distance to comment on his own society.

Despite the novel being set 30 years into the future on a distant, alien planet, there are numerous undeniable elements linking the setting to Dick's own society. Even though Mars is a new world, its habitable areas are divided into pre-existing terrestrial communities, such as the flourishing Jewish settlement called 'New Israel' (*Time-Slip*, 11), as well as 'the United Arab Republic' colony and the 'Italian colony' (*Time-Slip*, 56). 'The colonists', Aldiss (1975: 44) notes, 'use only the drugs available to us', which is exemplified by Silvia Bohlen who takes phenobarbital and Dexamyne in the opening pages of the novel and by Helio¹ prescribing

¹ Heliogabalus is a native Martian who lives among the human colonists and works as Arnie Kott's house-servant and cook.

Nembatal to Arnie towards the end. Science and technology have made it possible to travel to Mars and live on this planet, but there are no further scientific developments, such as advanced drugs and medicine, present here. Rossi (2011: 103) illustrates that the 'barren Martian landscape is quite similar to that of the state where Dick lived for most of his life':

Like California, Mars is a dry, desolate land, kept alive by complex and precarious water works, anamorphic images of complex system of aqueducts supervised by William Mulholland which allowed the fast growth of Los Angeles at the beginning of the Twentieth century; the real estate speculation organized by Jack Bohlen's father Leo [...] resembles [...] California, where real estate development has always played in important role. (Rossi, 2011: 103)

The colonists refer to the 'poverty-stricken, nomadic natives' of Mars as 'Bleekmen' (*Time-Slip*, 23), but Leo notes that they 'look more like aboriginal Negroes, like the African Bushmen' (*Time-Slip*, 124) than the alien beings one would expect to find on another planet. Rossi (2011: 103) equates Bleekmen to 'the Native Americans and Mexicans which lived on the west coast before it was colonized by European Americans'. Just as the Bleekmen are 'hunters and fruit-gatherers' (*Time-Slip*, 125), the early natives of California hunted animals and gathered 'sage seed and epos [of the parsley family] root in addition to the primary food of acorns' (Pritzker, 2000: 112). In the pre-colonial period, the largest number of Native Americans who resided north of Mexico could be found in the region of California, but after Europeans started to occupy the region, 'the population of Native Americans in the region fell by 90 percent' (Pritzker, 2000: 112). Similarly, the 'Bleekmen were dying out' and 'the remnants [were] getting more tattered and despairing every year' (*Time-Slip*, 24). The colonizers and future settlers of California were Europeans, just as the characters who occupy Mars are themselves Americans of European descent: Arnie Kott is 'a Swede or a Dane' (*Time-Slip*, 92), characters in the novel have German names such as Norbert Steiner and Otto Zitte, and descriptions of facial features such as Doreen Anderton's Mediterranean nose and Silvia's 'gay, turned-up Irish nose' (*Time-Slip*, 90) are also suggestive of Europeans immigrating to North America. There is thus no doubt that the Martian landscape, natives, and colonists mirror the region and inhabitants of West-Coast America, which certainly demonstrates Dick's use of defamiliarization. Rossi

(2011: 104) claims that Dick's California is a 'synecdoche of the United States' and this further indicates that it is American society as a whole that Dick is commenting on in this defamiliarized California-like world.

The next question to be asked is what aspects of contemporary American society is Dick commenting on or criticizing in the novel? Warrick (1987: 67) notes that Dick's preceding novel, *The Man in the High Castle*, is a commentary on 'the corruption and misuse of political power [whereas] *Martian Time-Slip* examines the misuse of economic power'. Robinson (1984: 55) states that '[b]oth characters and plot in *Martian Time-Slip* exist chiefly to articulate a setting: the harsh colony of [...] an American suburb of 1963'. In this discussion, he notes that Dick uses a similar technique to defamiliarization: the process of 'world reduction' (Robinson, 1984: 55) to use Frederic Jameson's term. This process entails the author constructing an abstract and simplified reality 'in order to make certain processes in it clearer' (Robinson, 1984: 55). In *Martian Time-Slip*, Dick simplifies and reduces numerous aspects of reality in order to highlight certain issues in American life:

Mars itself, with its desert landscape, and lack of primary resources, not to mention luxuries, has suggested the method, and Dick makes full use of it. There are no wild plants or animals in the environment. Within the society we see not a single example of recreation, or of local art. What culture we do see is imported from Earth. Mars thus becomes the ultimate consumer society, for nothing but production and consumption is left to it. (Robinson, 1984: 56)

As the leading exponent of capitalism, America benefited from massive economic development and wealth-creation during the twentieth century. However, capitalism has drawbacks, such as the unequal distribution of wealth and the exploitation of the working class. These are reflected in Dick's depiction of Arnie Kott, who exploits people like Jack, Dr Glaub, and Manfred in order to achieve great economic success with his money-making scheme. On Mars there are only a handful of well-off settlers like Arnie, such as the President of New Israel, Bosley Touvim; Mr Yee, the owner of one of the major repair companies and Jack's boss; and Ed Rockingham, Arnie's brother-in-law who has managed to acquire his own water canal. The

rest of the colonists do not share in this wealth and need to work hard to survive on what Jack refers to as 'habitable Mars, this almost-fertile spiderweb of [water canals], barely adequate to support life' (*Time-Slip*, 9). Kucukalic (2008: 48) comments that the 'scarcity of water becomes in Dick's hands a powerful metaphor for the iniquities of resources of power: the way people spend and withhold water indicates their moral character'. The well-off settlers mostly control the resources on Mars and the fact that they do not share their wealth with the rest of the settlers indicates their immorality. In a sense, these affluent settlers have already begun creating monopolies, which certainly suggests one of the fundamentals of capitalism. Karl Marx's critique against capitalism includes the creation of monopolies, which exploit both the worker and the consumer. Indeed, the capitalists on Mars, Arnie Kott, Mr Yee, and Leo Bohlen, exploit their workers who 'are treated and traded as private property' (Kucukalic, 2008: 156).

Central to the plot of the novel and the capitalist economic exploitation of certain characters is a piece of arid Martian land where the UN is rumoured to be planning the development of apartments. Arnie, who 'is still operating within the value system of Earth' (Strowa, 2008: 80), hears of these rumoured plans and sets out to buy the land at a low price in order to sell it at a hefty profit to the UN. In order to find out exactly where the piece of valuable land is located, Arnie employs Jack, who is a skilled repairman with schizophrenic tendencies, to build a device to communicate with Manfred Steiner, a young boy whom Arnie suspects of having precognitive abilities. Manfred is the autistic son of Norbert Steiner, who commits suicide early in the novel, and the boy lives at a special camp for anomalous children since he is unable to talk. As later seen through Manfred's precognitive drawings, the land will be used to construct massive apartment complexes, which will attract more settlers from Earth. At the same time, Jack's father Leo also gains inside information into the UN's development plans and travels all the way to Mars to carry out the same plan as Arnie. As Leo is preparing to acquire the sought-after land, he believes he is merely conducting business, but Jack sees the bigger picture:

You're gypping the entire population of Earth – they're the ones who'll have to put up all the money. You're increasing the costs of this project in order to make a killing. (*Time-Slip*, 122)

After Arnie finds out that Leo has already bought the land, he devises the absurd plan of trekking across the Martian desert with Manfred to a monument, which is believed by the Bleekmen to have mystical powers, in an attempt to use the boy's abilities to travel back in time to *before* Leo acquired the land. The Bleekmen's superstitious beliefs echo those of the Aboriginal Australians, whose concept of time exists 'independently of the linear time of everyday life and the temporal sequence of historical events' (Morphy, 1999: 265). This concept of time is known in English as 'Dreamtime' and 'from the viewpoint of the present, is as much a feature of the future as it is of the past' (Morphy, 1999: 266). It is likely that Dick is referring to the concept of the Aboriginal Dreamtime – which is also used in his later novel *VALIS* (1981) – in order to explain the possibility of Manfred's 'time-slips' that occur in the novel. Jack has no choice but to aid Arnie in exploiting the boy, since Arnie buys Jack's work contract. Both Leo and Arnie carelessly exploit others for their own financial gain and are thus embodiments of the economic exploitation prevalent in the values of capitalist American or Western society, which Dick is accentuating in the novel.

When Jack and Leo are out scouting the sought-after land, Manfred is with them and starts drawing the landscape around them, including buildings which seem like the apartment complexes the UN intends to build. Manfred's drawing of the future is significant since it already depicts the complex structures in a state of decay, as well as having the words 'AM-WEB' written on it. Jack recognizes it as 'a contraction of a co-op slogan "Alle Menschen werden Brüder" [-] [a]ll men become brothers' (*Time-Slip*, 127), which is the familiar slogan of the overcrowded apartment complexes on Earth that Jack had escaped from. The slogan thus suggests a replication of Earth: overcrowded, densely populated, and economically driven. Critics, such as Aldiss (1975), Rossi (2011), Strowa (2008), and Warrick (1987) point out that

the slogan might also be read as 'American Web'. In his essay on *Martian Time-Slip*, Aldiss (1975: 43) discusses the various webs within the novel and how they are all connected to the doomed AM-WEB complex structure 'and part of that doom may be decreed by the miserable political and financial maneuverings [sic] which form one of the minor themes of this intricately designed novel'. Rossi (2011: 104) also refers to the 'American Web' and says that the slogan can be read 'as both the dismal building and the socioeconomic wasteland which built it'. According to Strowa (2008: 81), the American Web refers to 'a paranoid network of Western values' and Warrick (1987: 69) similarly says that it 'represents the network of economic exploitation and corruption whose abusive power can destroy the network of cultural and human relationships assuring the reality necessary to human survival'. Through his precognitive talent, Manfred sees the future reality of Mars as being caught in the same web of corrupted Western practices as those on Earth. In one of his visions, Manfred sees himself as a very old man kept alive for over a century in the AM-WEB building by machines and artificial components:

He lay there for a hundred and twenty-three years and then his artificial liver gave out and he fainted and died. By that time they had removed both his arms and legs up to the pelvis because those parts of him had decayed. (*Time-Slip*, 129)

Manfred is doomed to live out his prolonged existence in a torpid state of slow decay and this horrifying vision of his being trapped inside the AM-WEB building while being kept alive artificially, suggests that there is no escape from the American Web.

A common trope in dystopian fiction, as we have seen in the novels of Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell, is of a future 'portrayed as a totalitarian hell in which all hope [is] extinguished and all exits closed' (Kumar, 1991: 225). There may be a rebellion against the oppressive forces, but this is usually doomed. In *Martian Time-Slip*, Manfred's dismal visions of his decaying future world create the sense that Mars, like planet Earth, is inevitably doomed. Aldiss (1975: 45) argues that rather than wondering whether there can be any escape from this society, the

'secret of survival in Dick's universe is not to attempt escape into any alternative version of reality but to see things through as best you can' and 'in that way, you may succeed if not actually triumphing'. Robinson (1984: 54) makes a similar point about this novel when he says that 'a dystopian world order has [already] been established, one that is impervious to the actions of the characters' and one that 'cannot be overthrown':

In *The Man in the High Castle*, the plot is generated by introducing the possibility of a change [...] that will intensify the dystopia. The most the characters can do is oppose this intensification. In *Martian Time-Slip* the same plot generation is used, but in this case the intensification itself is inevitable, so that the characters' power in their world is correspondingly reduced. The most they can accomplish is to resist the intensification's effect on their own lives. (Robinson, 1984: 54)

The novel ends with 'no world-toppling change [or] end to dystopia' (Robinson, 1984: 58), but it does not end in a pessimistic manner either. Characters such as Jack manage to see things through, and he is reunited with his wife Silvia in the final chapter. Manfred, in the ancient and advanced state he is perceived as reaching in his future visions, returns to the present to say goodbye to his mother and to thank Jack for trying to communicate with him when he was a boy. From this we learn that Manfred has escaped the dreaded AM-WEB and overcome his autism by living among the Bleekmen. Rossi (2011: 104) comments that there is a sense of salvation that 'can be reached if one can escape the American Web'. Frederic Jameson (2005: 383) comments on Manfred's escape from AM-WEB as 'the alternate dreamtime of another History and another present'. Manfred escapes the dreaded dystopian world represented by AM-WEB when he is saved by his helpers, 'the collective [and] primitive communism of the aboriginals' (Jameson, 2005: 383). Rossi (2011: 104) interprets Frederic Jameson's discussion of Manfred's salvation as 'a strong utopian element in *Martian Time-Slip*'. The characters certainly cannot stop the American Web from invading Mars, but they can resist the effects of it on their own lives. In this sense, Dick's novel progresses the dystopian notion of attempting an inevitably doomed rebellion, to accepting the doomed reality and trying to see things through in one's own life and personal reactions to external reality.

There is also a strong utopian element in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and, upon closer examination, one finds quite a few similarities between this classic dystopian novel and Dick's *Martian Time-Slip*. On the outside, Huxley's World State seems perfect and utopic:

People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get. They're well off; they're safe; they're never ill; they're not afraid of death; they are blissfully ignorant of passion and old age [...]. (*BNW*, 173)

Similarly, there are some utopic connotations to Mars as the new world which offers new possibilities, as discussed earlier in this section, and we have also established that the Martian landscape and people represent Dick's California. This American state's name was possibly coined by its Spanish settlers and its meaning can be translated as 'earthly paradise' (Crystal, 2002: 245) from the Spanish language. With its year-round fair climate, extensive coastline with beautiful beaches, and considerable economic prospects – during the 1960s the state of California became the sixth largest economy in the world – California does indeed seem like a kind of utopia. If California is an Earthly paradise then Dick's Mars, its mirror image, could be a Martian paradise. Even though life on Dick's Mars is anything but utopic, the idea still remains that it is intended to be a better place than Earth and offer new possibilities to its immigrants. It is interesting to note, moreover, that Huxley's critique of the Western consumerist ideal was inspired by a visit to California (Bradshaw, 1993: xix). In a sense, both authors saw beyond California's utopic appearance, which led them to focus their critique of capitalism on California. Robinson's description of Mars as the ultimate consumer society (see p. 46, above) echoes Kumar's (1991: 381) comment that 'Huxley's *Brave New World* drew largely upon American practices for its picture of a benighted future world, sunk in mindless consumerism'. We can see that both Huxley and Dick underscore the negative aspects of capitalism in their respective novels by defamiliarizing California, which epitomizes American and Western values.

Another similarity between Huxley and Dick can be seen in the role that science plays in their respective novels. As discussed in Chapter 1, science is limited in the World State and mainly used to suit the purpose of the Controllers – i.e. to control the population. The World State’s scientists have produced a drug called ‘soma’, which is described as having ‘[a]ll the advantages of Christianity and alcohol [but] none of their defects’ (*BNW*, 53). The populace of the World State uses this drug whenever it feels the need to escape any unpleasant circumstances. In a similar way we see Silvia Bohlen attempting to escape from the dreary Martian life by taking drugs. The opening sentence of the novel introduces Silvia as waking up ‘[f]rom the depths of phenobarbital slumber’ (*Time-Slip*, 3) and shortly after she realizes that ‘she needed a Dexamyne, or her eyes would never be open’ (*Time-Slip*, 5). These drugs are however not new or advanced developments. On Mars, there are very few scientific advancements and, according to Arnie, the ‘fault lay with the big powers back Home, China and the U.S. and Russia and West Germany’ (*Time-Slip*, 17). The following passage of free indirect discourse shows this attitude:

Instead of properly backing the development of the planets, they had turned their attention to further exploration. Their time and brains and money were all committed to the sidereal projects, such as that frigging flight to Centaurus, which had already wasted billions of dollars and man-hours. (*Time-Slip*, 17)

The point here is that the controlling powers on Earth seem to be more interested in imperial, or interstellar expansion, than in improving the living standards on Mars. It could be argued that the reason for this is to – in the style of a typical dystopian government – limit and contain the Martian colonists’ power lest they become more powerful and a threat to Earth. In a similar sense, scientific progress has to be limited in the World State since ‘[e]very discovery in pure science is potentially subversive’ (*BNW*, 176) and might upset the Controllers’ system of maintaining dominance.

The World State's scientific developments – those that are allowed and used for the purpose of control – enable it to create human beings predestined to particular caste systems, and use a complex system of childhood conditioning in order to control the way they think and behave:

And that [...] is the secret of happiness and virtue – liking what you've *got* to do. All conditioning aims at that: making people like their unescapable social destiny. (BNW, 24)

Similarly, there is also a form of indoctrination on Mars in the way in which mechanical teachers are used to educate the children at the public schools on this planet. Some teaching machines are replicas of different historical figures, such as Socrates, Mark Twain, and Thomas Edison, while others represent authority figures, such as the 'Angry Janitor' (*Time-Slip*, 63) and 'Kindly Dad' (*Time-Slip*, 72). When Jack gets called out to the 'Public School' to fix one of the machines, he considers how in their operation systems '[t]here was no room for a unique answer because the Teaching Machine could recognize only a limited number of categories' (*Time-Slip*, 63). The Public School and its teaching machines unnerves Jack not only because of the 'astonishing depth of the "artificial"' (*Time-Slip*, 63), but also because he believes that the system operates to indoctrinate the children with fixed and limited values of society:

The school was there not to inform or educate, but to mold, and along severely limited lines. It was the link to their inherited culture, in its entirety, to the young. It bent its pupils to it; perpetuation of the culture was the goal, and any special quirks in the children which might lead them in another direction had to be ironed out. (*Time-Slip*, 63)

The system attempts to mould the children to fit into the culture of their ancestral planet and does not allow them to develop identities outside of this culture. This ties in with the American Web of Western values that is perpetuated on Mars. Just as the World State carefully conditions the population to like its inescapable social destiny, the Martian public school system – which is essentially an extension of the power of the ruling class – indoctrinates the future generation with the same Western values that have corrupted the past. Robinson (1984: 56) draws the conclusion that since 'the values are taught by machines [...] [the children are] machinelike', which essentially dehumanizes them. Jack Bohlen is aware of this automated

indoctrination of values carried out by the Public School and is worried that his son, David 'could not be graded along the scale of achievement by which the teaching machines classified their pupils' (*Time-Slip*, 64). If children do not properly respond to the dehumanizing machines, they are ironically 'assumed to be autistic' and winds 'up being expelled from the school' (*Time-Slip*, 64). The choice for children thus lies between being dehumanized or being considered mentally ill, which leads to the next issue to be discussed in this chapter.

Schizophrenia and dehumanization

Mental illness, especially schizophrenia, appears in many of Philip K. Dick's novels, most notably in *The Man who Japed* (1956), in *Clans of the Alphane Moon* (1964), in *We Can Build You* (1972), and, of course, in *Martian Time-Slip*. It can be assumed that Dick's own experiences led to the inclusion of mental illness themes in his novels: critics such as Mackey, Sutin, and Warrick show that the author's work was greatly influenced by his personal life. Dick suffered from bouts of depression and from social anxiety disorders, survived two suicide attempts, regularly consulted psychiatrists, and even misdiagnosed himself as a schizophrenic (Sutin, 1994: 9). Warrick (1987: 64) writes that 'Dick once commented that going to an analyst is a way of life in California, that the psychologist has replaced the priest in contemporary culture'. She also notes that Dick extensively read literature in the field of psychology, especially Carl Jung and Ludwig van Binswangler. Dick was thus personally and theoretically familiar with the issues and views on mental illness. When taking into account the social circumstances and critiques of mental illness during Dick's time, the following observations made by Evan Lampe are particularly germane to our discussion:

The most profound critique of psychiatry during Dick's professional life was that mental illness was a product of a world turned insane. It was society itself that triggered insanity among some people. More radical voices argued that the mad were in open rebellion against a social order that was naturally oppressive and confining. Others suggested that the response to mental illness was a tool of social

order, policing and institutional confinement and “correction”, and thus was fundamentally similar in purpose and effect to prisons. (Lampe, 2015: 186–187)

The breakdown of the psyche as a result of social conditions is one of the main themes of *Martian Time-Slip* and also one of the main critiques that Dick makes of American society in this novel. The fact that the Public School deems those who do not respond to its system as mentally ill, suggests that mental illness is a tool of social order, as in Lampe’s observation, above. These two issues in Dick’s novel will be discussed in this section.

There are various causes for the onset of psychosis both on Earth and in the Martian colonies in *Martian Time-Slip*. Leo Bohlen claims that mental illness is ‘a sign of the times’ as there are ‘too many people [and] too much overcrowding’ (*Time-Slip*, 110) on Earth. He goes on to say that ‘everybody seems to have it nowadays; it’s common, like the flu and polio used to be’ (*Time-Slip*, 111). Mars, on the other hand, is desolate and its inhabitants find themselves isolated and cut off from the rest of the world: Silvia Bohlen, for example, whose husband, Jack, is away from home during the week. She takes strong drugs and even has a one-time affair in order to avoid ‘succumb[ing] to the schizophrenic process’ (*Time-Slip*, 3). Norbert Steiner suffers from loneliness as well as depression because of his son’s helpless autistic condition. Right before he commits suicide, he thinks to himself that ‘[he] [is] goddamn tired of being Norbert Steiner; [he] didn’t ask to be Norbert Steiner’ (*Time-Slip*, 42), which might indicate a wish to escape from the onset of psychosis that is caused by the negative feelings he experiences. Strowa (2008: 76) writes that these feelings ‘may well be a reflection of a general feeling of alienation, anxiety and the individual being cut off from society that emerged in the 50s and is hinted at by Jung and Riesman’.

In Dick’s novel, schizophrenia is very common as ‘it shows up in one out of every six people’, according to Jack Bohlen, who has experienced this ‘mysterious malady’ (*Time-Slip*, 74). He describes himself as an ex-schizophrenic to the people he meets around the beginning of the

novel and claims that it was the pressurized societal conditions on Earth that drove him to madness:

I emigrated to Mars because of my schizophrenic episode when I was twenty-two and worked for Corona Corporation. I was cracking up. I had to move out of a complex urban environment and into a simpler one, a primitive frontier environment with more freedom. The pressure was too great for me; it was emigrate or go mad. (*Time-Slip*, 74–75)

However, he later finds that the schizophrenic tendencies he thought he had left behind on Earth return to him on Mars as he experiences similar psychotic episodes, such as the hallucinations that overcome him when he visits the Public School with Manfred (*Time-Slip*, 160–161). Jack thinks that it was the complex urban environment that made him lose his mind and flee to Mars in order to escape this. Yet, the Martian colonies are sparsely populated in comparison with the densely populated terrestrial cities, which therefore indicates that there must be another factor present on both planets that triggers psychosis. When Jack takes us through the flashback of his psychotic episode on Earth, he describes what happened when he met the personnel manager of the corporation – an archetype of the capitalist system – he was working for:

And then the hallucination, if it was that, happened. He saw the personnel manager in a new light. The man was dead. He saw, through the man's skin, his skeleton. It had been wired together, the bones connected with fine copper wire. The organs, which had withered away, were replaced by artificial components, kidney, heart, lungs – everything was made of plastic and stainless steel, all working in unison but entirely without authentic life. (*Time-Slip*, 69–70)

A similar hallucination befalls Jack when he gets drawn into Arnie Kott's business deals – his perception of Dr Glaub starts to change: 'He saw the psychiatrist under the aspect of absolute reality: a thing composed of cold wires and switches, not a human at all, not made of flesh' (*Time-Slip*, 96). Both hallucinations occur in the setting of the corporate environment, which appears, thus, to be the link between the two episodes of psychotic breakdown. The corporate environment represents the economic system of the West – the American Web, the Western values that are associated with the ruthless economic exploitation Dick critiques in this novel. Moreover, the first episode of this kind is described as an assumed 'hallucination' (*Time-Slip*,

69), while the one with Dr Glaub is defined as 'absolute reality' (*Time-Slip*, 96), which indicates that what Jack sees is not imaginary, but real and true. Dick seems to be suggesting that Jack is able to see the American Web for what it really is.

Robinson's argument (see p. 46) that Dick reduces the Martian world to reveal certain aspects of its economy, ties in with the suggestion that schizophrenia is a product of the American Web. Robinson (1984: 56) says that '[i]n this reduced world everyone's hold on sanity is tested by economic pressure'. This particularly applies to Jack who is unable to escape 'the economic net' since he gets drawn into Arnie's business deals and finds himself 'again in the power of the force that on Earth was destroying him' and furthermore, the 'corrupt value system Arnie adheres to is perpetuated on Mars by the schools' (Robinson, 1984: 56). The Public School on Mars, as we have seen, uses mechanical teachers based on historical figures to educate children born on the planet. The problem with this, however, is that the machines 'are stripped of their historical characters and contexts, and are made to become spokesmen for values they would have despised, values that will make the young of Mars docile consumers' (Robinson, 1984: 56). The conclusion that critics such as Robinson, Mackey, and Strowa reach is that this perpetuation of the corrupt economic value system of Earth on the planet Mars is the major cause of psychotic breakdown:

The educational system has literalized its metaphorical mechanicalness. It is anti-intellectual and anti-individual. Subtly it splits the minds of its students, causing them to identify with the affectless machine and not the feeling organism. It in effect promotes the growth of schizophrenia, while teaching children to function in an insane society. (Mackey, 1988: 57)

As the children are being taught by machines and to identify with the machines, they themselves become 'machinelike' (Robinson, 1984: 56), which essentially dehumanizes them.

Mackey (1988: 57) observes that the schizophrenic epidemic in the novel is caused by the 'increased dehumanization of life: an overpopulated Earth, through crowded cooperative

apartment complexes and lack of freedom; on desolate Mars, through boredom and loneliness'. The increased dehumanization on both planets together with the corrupt value system of the American Web, which is also pervasive on both planets, thus seem to be the causes of the epidemic of psychosis. It is interesting to note that the children who do not respond to the anti-intellectual and anti-individual teachings from the machines are seen as anomalies and treated as mentally ill:

A child who did not properly respond was assumed to be autistic – that is, orientated according to a subjective factor that took precedence over his sense of objective reality. And that child wound up being expelled from the school; he went, after that, to another sort of school entirely, one designed to rehabilitate him: he went to Camp Ben-Gurion. He could not be taught; he could only be dealt with as *ill*. (*Time-Slip*, 64)

The irony in this fact that the children who do not respond to the schizophrenia-inducing machines get ostracized from the Public School, shows that there is something odd about this system. Dick seems to be illustrating the theory mentioned earlier and quoted by Lampe (see pp. 54–55) by implying that the Public School's draconian response to mental illness is a tool used by the government to establish social order. By allowing only two options – dehumanized education or being confined to a mental institution – the government controls the education and upbringing of children, who will themselves perpetuate the machinelike values as adults or be forever excluded from society. Indeed, the special Camp Ben-Gurion serves as a prison for the young who show signs of defying the social order by refusing to be dehumanized by the teaching machines or the corrupt economic value system.

This is the case with Manfred, who has been living in the special camp for three years where 'the instructor of the camp had been working with him, trying to bring him into communication with the human culture into which he was born' (*Time-Slip*, 31). In a sense, Manfred is rebelling against a culture which is trying to consume him and make him a part of it. However, society and his parents do not see this. Norbert Steiner is ashamed of his son's condition 'because

the psychologists believed that the condition came from a defect in the parents, usually a schizoid temperament' (*Time-Slip*, 31):

In his own mind, Steiner blamed it all on his wife; when Manfred was a baby, she had never talked to him or shown him any affection. Having been trained as a chemist, she had an intellectual, matter-of-fact attitude, inappropriate in a mother. She had bathed and fed the baby as if he were a laboratory animal like a white rat. She kept him clean and healthy but she had never sung to him, laughed with him, had not really used language to or with him. So naturally he had become autistic; what else could he do? (*Time-Slip*, 31)

What Steiner does not consider is that his three other children, who are all girls, do not show any signs of mental illness. Neither does he consider the fact that it could be society, the system of values and corrupt practices, that caused his son's mental condition and his wife's schizoid temperament.

Lampe (2015: 216) writes that 'Dick believed that modern society itself was the real patient' rather than the ostensibly insane, and that it was society that caused people to experience agonizing conditions, which could have been mistaken for mental illness:

Most often, insanity emerged from social conditions that were unbearable. The drudgery of the workplace, the anxieties of family life, the paranoia inspired by surveillance, and anxieties about the global political and economic system were creating worlds gone insane. Dick's analysis of mental illness was both social and institutional. (Lampe, 2015: 216)

This attitude can be clearly seen in the novel under consideration, as the social conditions on both Mars and Earth cause massive numbers of cases of mental illness. However, mental illness is not only a product of society, but also a tool used to control society, as mentioned before. The ruling class labels social dissidents as mentally ill in order to ensure social stability. When Jack thinks about Camp Ben-Gurion as the only alternative to the Public School he distrusts, he realizes that autism 'had become a self-serving concept for the authorities who governed Mars' (*Time-Slip*, 64). This suggests that the ruling UN has been using false diagnoses of autism to separate the potential dissidents from the rest of society, which shows how they are using mental illness as a tool for social order. Jack further reflects that the term

autism had replaced the previous diagnoses 'psychopath', 'moral imbecile', and 'criminally insane', and states that autism is 'a childhood form of schizophrenia' (*Time-Slip*, 64). The latter observation stems from the same mid-twentieth century belief, which Dick must have adopted since he 'often see[s] autism and schizophrenia as interchangeable disorders' (Lampe, 2015: 194). The similarity between the two disorders also serves to create a link between Jack and Manfred. Jack is commissioned to try to communicate with the boy, which he does manage to an extent, and his reflections on his own and Manfred's mental conditions lead him to a deeper understanding of the nature of autism/schizophrenia.

After reflecting for some time, Jack comes to the insight that true autism 'was in the last analysis an apathy toward public endeavor' (*Time-Slip*, 65):

[I]t was a private existence carried on as if the individual person were the creator of all value, rather than merely the repository of inherited values. And Jack Bohlen, for the life of him, could not accept the Public School with its teaching machines as the sole arbiter of what was and what wasn't of value. For the values of a society were in ceaseless flux, and the Public School was an attempt to stabilize those values, to jell them at a fixed point – to embalm them. (*Time-Slip*, 65)

Since Jack sees autism and schizophrenia as interlinked, this observation is not only about mentally ill children, but also about adults, including himself. Later in the novel when Jack discusses his mental condition with Doreen – Arnie Kott's mistress and later also Jack's – he says that 'schizophrenics pick up other people's unconscious hostility' (*Time-Slip*, 100). Jack might be talking about his hallucinations of seeing people as mechanical entities, especially since he experiences another such hallucination just before this conversation with Doreen where he sees Dr Glaub 'under the aspect of absolute reality' (*Time-Slip*, 96). In this sense, just as Jack sees the American Web for what it really is, his schizophrenic induced hallucinations enable him to see beyond the false outer layer and into the true inner values and motives of others.

This premise is confirmed by the observation made by one of the silent, wise characters of the novel: Heliogabalus, the tamed Bleekman employed as Arnie's manservant. When Arnie talks about acquiring a schizophrenic for his new project, since it is believed that such people possess precognitive talents, Heliogabalus shares his aboriginal wisdom and proclaims that he 'know[s] schizophrenia; it is the savage within the man' (*Time-Slip*, 81):

Purpose of life is unknown, and hence way to be is hidden from the eyes of living critters. Who can say if perhaps the schizophrenics are not correct? Mister, they take a brave journey. They turn away from mere things, which one may handle and turn to practical use; they turn inward to *meaning*. There, the black-night-without-bottom lies, the pit. Who can say if they will return? And if so, what will they be like, having glimpsed meaning? I admire them. (*Time-Slip*, 82)

Heliogabalus's perspective is unique in the sense that he is unschooled – which can be seen here in his untrained language reflected in the free indirect discourse of the passage – in the ways of the Earthlings. He has not been indoctrinated with the Western value system and therefore presents the outside view of the Other, such as the Savage in *Brave New World*. Just as the Savage is able to see through the ideal appearance of the civilized world, Heliogabalus is able to see the mentally ill for who they really are. Further along in the novel, it turns out that Heliogabalus is able to communicate with Manfred. When asked how this is possible, Heliogabalus answers that they 'are both prisoners [...] in a hostile land' (*Time-Slip*, 188). The Bleekmen come to Manfred's salvation by helping him to escape his doomed fate of slow decay in the AM-WEB building as we see at the end of the novel when Manfred visits the present as his future self in an ancient state proclaiming that '[he] is with [his] friends' (*Time-Slip*, 230). It is thus shown that the Bleekmen are more than an inferior colonized race, but according to Strowa (2008: 79), Dick considers them 'the superior race':

In *Martian Time-Slip*, this superiority consists of the religion of the Bleekmen in which every object of nature is believed to have a life of its own, such as the talisman that Jack receives. Thus, the Bleekmen are immune to the schizophrenic breakdown of modern society. (Strowa, 2008: 79)

The Bleekmen are the ones whose values and morals exist separate from society's – as with Huxley's Savage – and can therefore be immune to the corrupt practices of the dystopia in

question. However, unlike the Savage's doomed fate of finding the only escape to be in death, the Bleekmen provide salvation in the form of an escape from the American Web.

From a young age, Philip K. Dick started to question the 'nature of reality' (Rickman, 1989: 201) and went on to play with this idea in his novels. Very often 'Dick questions the validity of the concept of objective reality through portraying altered states of consciousness' (Mackey, 1988: 58) which are either drug-induced – most notably in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (1965) and *A Scanner Darkly* (1977) – or schizophrenic, such as in *Martian Time-Slip*. In the latter novel, Dick especially 'plays with the possibility that the psychotic may sometimes glimpse reality more fully than "normal" people can' (Mackey, 1988: 58). This is what Heliogabalus suggests earlier when he considers that schizophrenics are able to glimpse meaning when they turn inward. Warrick (1987: 63) notices the same thing about Jack Bohlen when stating that everyone in the novel calls him 'crazy or nuts or insane'. She quotes Dick who commented in the novel's introduction that Jack survives while 'all the normal human beings, the sane and educated and balanced ones, destroy themselves in truly dreadful ways' (Warrick, 1987: 63). What Dick does in this novel, Warrick (1987: 63) goes on to say, is to tie the question of sanity 'to the questions of reality' and 'those who share the same reality tend to call themselves sane and to label anyone who deviates from their view as crazy'.

The idea that schizophrenics like Jack and Manfred see the world as it truly is could be another method Dick uses to reveal and critique the true corrupt state of Western society. Those deemed mentally ill are the ones who cannot cope with the corrupt practices of society and refuse to accept the social values imposed upon them. The fact that mental illness has become very common in the society the novel describes shows that more people are refusing to accept these values. The method the authorities – the 'UN' in this novel – use to deal with this refusal is to create a new society on Mars, separated from the old one on Earth, which they are able

to more easily control. The UN enforces control over Martian society by ensuring that those who refuse to be dehumanized by its value system – the Public School’s mechanical teachings – are ostracized from society and considered mentally ill. The fact that the UN is considering eradicating the anomalous children on Mars further supports this premise:

They’re afraid – well, they don’t want to see what they call ‘defective stock’ appearing on the colonial planets. They want to keep the race pure. [...] They’re not worried about the anomalous children at Home, because they don’t have the aspirations for themselves that they do for us. You have to understand the idealism and anxiety which they have about us [...]. Back Home they see the existence of anomalous children on Mars as a sign that one of Earth’s major problems has been transplanted into the future, because we *are* the future, to them. (*Time-Slip*, 35)

In a sense, the authorities aim to create a perfect society on Mars – a utopia – but this carefully controlled society turns out to be oppressive and dehumanizing to its citizens. Those who resist the societal values pose a threat to the UN’s objective and are thus deemed mentally ill. However, the ostensibly mentally ill are the ones who are able to see that society’s values – the American Web, the corrupt value system of the West – are oppressive and dehumanizing. They are the ones who unmask the seemingly ideal society on Mars to reveal a dystopia.

* * *

The planet Mars is intended to be a new world, a new beginning, and a new way of life for its immigrants, who at the outset sincerely believe this. However, the stark reality of this world reveals loneliness, oppression, economic inequality, entrapment, and hopelessness. Through the careful construction of a plot which showcases the everyday struggles of average individuals and through the use of literary techniques such as defamiliarization and world reduction, I believe that Dick reveals a distant world which resembles his own in various undeniable ways. He uncovers the American Web, the Western socio-economic practices of corrupt values and exploitation. He shows us the effects of the American Web on a small community of individuals, who represent the average individual of Western societies. Through the process of world reduction, pointed out by Robinson, Dick strips society down to two

facets: economic and emotional poverty, both of which are consequences of the American Web.

On Mars there is an unequal distribution of wealth, as well as exploitation as the basis of financial gain. The presence of these issues in the novel echoes the capitalist ideology prevalent in America, specifically the state of California, which Dick reproduces on Mars through the technique of defamiliarization. I have argued that Dick is telling us that this corrupt economic value system of the West, which characters like Jack thought he had escaped from, is perpetuated on Mars. This creates the typically dystopian sense of a doomed society from which there is no escape. However, as critics like Aldiss and Robinson point out, rather than trying to find an escape, the individual's best option is to see things through as best he or she can. Indeed, we see characters like Jack and Manfred find a way to bear with their social situations by resisting the dehumanizing forces imposed upon them by the authorities. However, they are branded as 'anomalous' since they do not adhere to the values that the rest of society observes. I maintain that Dick illustrates that the authorities' branding of individuals as anomalous is a means to create social stability and to ensure that society remains under the control of the government, which echoes the classical dystopian trope of the totalitarian order suppressing the resistance. In a work of science fiction, Dick subtly presents to us the same and very real issues we are confronted with in novels such as *We*, *Brave New World*, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: rulers who, in an attempt to create an ideal society, exercise control, oppression, and dehumanization on a society in which a small group of individuals futilely – yet fruitfully – resist. I explore this point further in the following chapter where Dick's dystopian vision is more fully revealed.

Chapter 3: *The Penultimate Truth*

Even though *The Penultimate Truth* (1964) comes from Dick's mature period in which he produced some of his most successful work, it is one of his lesser-known novels and it generally enjoys far less critical attention than some of the other novels written in the same decade. The critics who discuss Dick's work extensively – Mackey, Robinson, Rossi, and Warrick – include very brief discussions of this novel in their commentaries, while full chapters are dedicated to what are considered major Dickian novels. Merrit Abrash (1995: 157), whose article on *The Penultimate Truth* appears in a critical anthology focused on Dick's work, states that the novel is dismissed as a minor work due to its various 'deficiencies [which] include an excess of subplots, a confusing and unconvincing major character, and some convoluted and ultimately absurd time travel gimmickry'. It appears that Dick wrote this novel 'under contract, at great speed, and simultaneously with *The Zap Gun*' (Abrash, 1995: 166) and therefore he drew from the plots and ideas that already existed in some of his short stories, including 'The Defenders' (1953), 'Adjustment Team' (1954), 'The Mold of Yancy' (1955), and 'The Unreconstructed M' (1957). Despite these deficiencies, the novel still carries strong ideas and weighty implications, stemming from Dick's social and political examination of America and its involvement in the Cold War. These points are worth being taken seriously and should be considered from a critical standpoint.

The novel is set in a near-future post-apocalyptic America, fifteen years after the third world war has broken out. The majority of the population live underground in tanks in order to survive the nuclear destruction caused by the war raging above, and occupy themselves with building and repairing automated soldiers, which are used to fight the ongoing war. The only communication that the subterranean people have with the rest of the world is one-way

television news broadcasts, which update them every now and then on the progress and state of the conflict above ground. These updates also inform the subterraneans that the Earth's surface is extremely hazardous owing to radioactivity, horrible plagues, and patrols by aggressive automated soldier robots. Meanwhile above ground, the war actually ended thirteen years previously, and the army cadets and military personnel who remained above-ground to fight the two-year war have become the ruling elite. They enjoy the vast spaces of the land which they have divided up among themselves, and live in colossal demesnes with large groups of automated servants called 'leadies'— mechanical soldiers built by the subterraneans to (as they *think*) aid the war effort. The people living below in the tanks are oblivious to the fakery going on above ground, while each member of the elite has a job that contributes to the construction of the forged news broadcast below. Such a figure is Joseph Adams, who writes speeches and articles. This elaborate construct, however, is threatened when Nicholas St. James, the president of one of the tanks, risks going to the surface in order to find an artificial pancreas for the tank's chief mechanic, who is on the brink of death. Upon reaching the surface, Nicholas learns the truth about the war, but discovers later on that this is only the penultimate truth: there are so many intricate layers of fabrications and schemes by the elite, and factions within that elite, which go back, in the world of the novel, all the way to the Second World War. Fabrications are constantly covered up by more lies and deceit, as will become clear, which makes it nearly impossible to reach the full truth of what really happened and what is actually true.

In the first part of the discussion in this chapter, I explore in detail the different literal and metaphorical layers that exist in this fictional society, as these form both the core of Dick's critique and are the vehicle used to introduce his dystopian vision. At the top of the societal hierarchy in the novel is the top controller and de facto world dictator, Stanton Brose, and at the bottom are the masses who live below ground and are deprived of the Earth's resources.

In the second section, I look at the consequences of this structuring of society and the fabrications on which it is built. The consequences are predominantly oppression and dehumanization, not only of the masses, but also of the elite by the tyrannical Brose at the apex of this structure. I argue that Dick uses such typically dystopian tropes to make a negative judgement of America's social system and the government's use of the media to manipulate people. In the third section of the chapter, I discuss the theme of war in the novel, and show that this relates to both the Cold War and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. With this theme Dick levels a powerful critique at America's war enterprises and illustrates, just as Orwell does, that governments use war to scare people and, thus, control them.

Levels of knowledge and the ultimate fakery

The theme 'What is Real?' appears in numerous short stories and novels by Dick, since this question 'obsessed him', according to Sutin (1994: 90). Dick's 'first novel to pose successfully' (Sutin, 1994: 90) this theme is *Eye in the Sky* (1957) which recounts the story of eight people caught in different unreal universes. This theme is also prevalent in *The Man in the High Castle* (1962) which is set in an alternative history that is revealed at the end of the novel to be false. In the acclaimed *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), Dick extensively explores the 'What is Real?' theme and joins it with another constant theme of his, 'What is Human?' (Sutin, 1994: 235). Dick felt that it is kindness which makes us human, but 'he never made up his mind' as to what is real (Sutin, 1994: 235). This unanswered question is also pervasive in *The Penultimate Truth* where Dick questions what is true, and how truth can be obtained. However, rather than revealing the truth, Dick takes us through a labyrinth where he instead reveals what is false and where the truth, which is ultimately unattainable, always seems to be within reach. There are various falsities in the novel, some of which are obvious and others which are revealed at different levels – or never revealed at all. In a sense, information – the truth – is

coupled with the social hierarchy: the higher up in the hierarchy you are, the more information is available to you, which includes knowing what is, in reality, false.

Robinson (1984: 68) notes that very often in his novels 'Dick is giving fictional reality to metaphors that already exist in our world'. Specifically in *The Penultimate Truth*, the metaphor 'the ruling class keeps the workers underfoot' (Robinson, 1984: 68) becomes the reality of this world as the elite does indeed keep the workers underfoot by keeping them literally underground in their tanks through a series of intricately constructed lies, such as the terrifying ideas of what would happen to them if they encountered the radioactivity and diseases on the surface of Earth:

Two weeks: death by destruction of the red bloodcell-making capacity of the bone marrow. One week: the Bag Plague or the Stink of Shrink or Raw-Claw-Paw and he already felt germophobic; already, a few moments ago, he had quaked with the trauma of it. (*Truth*, 10)

These perceptions are from one of the protagonists, Nicholas St. James, who is the president of his 'ant tank', the Tom Mix, and who shares the same fears as the rest of the 'tankers' (*Truth*, 10). As we have seen, Nicholas is deliberating going to the surface to try to obtain an artificial pancreas, or 'artiforg' (*Truth*, 10), for their tank's chief mechanic who is dying of pancreatitis. Without the chief mechanic, the Tom Mix would not be able to meet the required monthly quota of fifteen leadies (*Truth*, 10), which would result, they are told, in their tank's food rations being reduced at first – and eventually in their elimination (*Truth*, 26). This is one of the main lies the ruling class uses to keep the tankers underground and working hard to produce machines for the elite.

The main fabrication that the ruling class employs to keep the tankers in the dark is the news bulletins that get broadcast underground and which contain fake visuals of the destruction and terror of the war supposedly going on above ground:

On the screen a stopped-tape: buildings caught and suspended in half-disintegration. And then the tape travelled on. And the buildings, with a roar like the odious tap-tap-tapping of distant, alien drums, pitched into dust and rained down, dissolved; smoke took their place, and, like ants, countless leadies who had inhabited Detroit spilled out and ran, as if from a tipped-over quart jar. They were squashed systematically by invisible forces. (*Truth*, 13)

Together with these newsreels, the tankers view inspiring speeches by a figure whom they believe to be their all-encompassing ‘spir-pol-mil’ – possibly spiritual, political, and military – ‘leader’ and ‘Protector’ (*Truth*, 14), Talbot Yancy. When Yancy starts his patriotic address with ‘My fellow Americans’, Nicholas is ‘startled by the vigor’ (*Truth*, 14) in his voice:

Yancy seemed almost unaffected, to have remained true to the *stoa*, to his West Point heritage; he viewed it all, accepted and understood, but no emotion unhinged his calm reason. [...] Yancy continued in his low, late middle-age voice, that of a seasoned old warrior, ramrod in body, clear in mind; good for a few more years.... (*Truth*, 14)

This vigorous address seems utterly convincing at first, but a few chapters later we come to see Yancy in his true state – from the viewpoint of Joseph Adams, who is a member of the elite tasked with writing the speeches read by ‘Yancy’:

There it sat. Solely, at its large oak desk, with the American flag behind it. In Moscow another identical sim sat, [...] the clothes, the gray hair, the competent fatherly, mature but soldierly features, the strong chin – it was the same sim all over again, both having been built simultaneously in Germany [...].

“My fellow Americans,” the sim said in its firm, familiar, near-hoarse but utterly controlled voice. (*Truth*, 51–52)

Within this context, the commencing words of Yancy’s familiar addresses take on a completely different aspect to how they appear the first time we hear them, which is from the point of view of the tankers underground (*Truth*, 14). Nicholas describes Yancy as calm and emotionless after receiving the news of the destruction of Detroit and this presents him as having characteristics of a strong leader, however, the ‘utterly controlled voice’ and infallible preciseness that Joseph observes stem from the fact that this is a lifeless simulacrum. With this revelation, Dick seems to be making the point that even the strongest beacon of hope that the tankers have is a carefully manufactured fabrication, whose sole purpose is to keep them underground.

This is not the first time Dick refers to a simulacrum, but he was quite familiar with the term since he used it in other novels written around the same time: *We Can Build You* (1972), which was written in 1962 albeit published much later, and *The Simulacra* (1964). Dick seems to have preceded Jean Baudrillard, whose ideas on reality being replaced by simulations were only published in 1981. Nevertheless, Baudrillard's theory concerning simulacra certainly reinforces Dick's concept of them in *The Penultimate Truth*. Tying in with the novel's theme of questioning what is true, Baudrillard (1994: 3) says that 'simulation threatens the difference between the "true" and the "false", the "real" and the "imaginary"'. Dick's Talbot Yancy is not only called a simulacrum by the privileged surface dwellers, but also epitomizes the concept of simulation within the novel. As Baudrillard (1994: 5) explains that 'perfect simulacra' hide the fact that there is no original to begin with, as with the constructed faux military leader who never existed in the first place. The subterraneans believe every word coming from the simulated Yancy and almost see him as their saviour and God who will end the war and restore their freedom. However, Baudrillard (1994: 5–6) says that if God can be simulated, then the whole system of faith and belief becomes weightless, and thus an endless cycle of simulacra. The creation and use of Yancy thus implies that the entire post-war society in Dick's novel is a 'gigantic simulacrum' (Baudrillard, 1994: 6).

Apart from the endless cycle of simulacra, the importance of information and the control thereof is stressed as a key idea in this novel. A parallel can be drawn between the social hierarchy and the conditions of the ruled society in this novel: the people who physically live underground and escape to the surface could be said to 'get above the "poverty level"', while those living in the apartment complexes ('conapts') represent the 'middle class' (Robinson, 1984: 68). The level of information available to the characters in this novel – their knowing what is fabricated, what is not – correlates to their position in the social hierarchy. It seems to

Nicholas, when deliberating whether or not to risk going to the surface, that he will face suffering and death either by staying in his tank – since they will not be able to meet the production quota without the chief mechanic – or by going to the surface where he would encounter horrible diseases. This indicates a bleak situation from which there seems to be no escape. Since he is living below ground, which metaphorically suggests his being below the poverty level and at the bottom of the hierarchy, he believes what he is told as he is not privy to the true conditions above ground. The only things known by the subterraneans to be fake are the artificial organs above ground and the various synthetic products – such as the ‘standard issue synthetic wubfur-fuzz slippers’ (*Truth*, 8) and ‘ersatz [coffee] beans’ (*Truth*, 23) – that they have to be content with below ground.

When Nicholas breaks through to the surface and meets some ‘ex-tankers’ (*Truth*, 83) – tankers who have surfaced and live in the cellars of ruined cities – he literally reaches a higher level by going up to the surface and, in a sense, he reaches the poverty line. With this newly attained level comes newly obtained information: ‘there is no Talbot Yancy’ (*Truth*, 97) and the war ended ‘[t]hirteen years ago’ (*Truth*, 102). One of the ex-tankers tells Nicholas that most tankers who surface end up being ‘prisoners above ground’ (*Truth*, 104), which refers to the apartment complexes built by one of the elite, Luis Runcible, to house such people:

[T]he tankers living in Runcible’s conapts are prisoners and the conapts constitute reservations – or, as the more modern word has it, concentration camps. Preferable to the ant tanks underground, but still camps from which they cannot, even briefly, leave – legally. (*Truth*, 43)

The ex-tankers living in these apartment complexes make up the ‘middle class’ as Robinson puts it, since they live fairly comfortable lives with ‘their swimming pools and 3-D TV and wall-to-wall wubfur carpeted conapts’ (*Truth*, 43), and they ‘work for Runcible’ (*Truth*, 105) by making the components used below ground to build the leadies. These people cannot physically escape the apartment complexes, as mentioned above, just as they can never escape their middle-class lives to become part of the elite group. The ex-tankers whom

Nicholas meets have chosen to be 'squatting [t]here in [those] ruins instead of lounging at a swimming pool' since they 'like to be free' (*Truth*, 104), which seems to be the trade-off for being homeless. Both groups of ex-tankers – those who live in the conapt prisons and those who squat in cellars – share the same level of information, i.e. everything they were told below ground has turned out to be false.

Among the things Nicholas learns from the ex-tankers is that there is a different kind of hierarchy that makes up the ruling elite above ground than the one he and the other tankers imagined, with Yancy as the brave leader of the military fighting the war. The 'young Air Arm cadets' – the men who served in the air force – remained 'on the surface during the war' (*Truth*, 104) and after it ended, 'made the world into a great park and it's split up into their demesnes, their estates' (*Truth*, 98). This elite group is known as 'Yance-men' each of whom has a big staff, or even a 'whole army', made up of 'leadies' (*Truth*, 100). Joseph Adams, another protagonist in this novel, is a Yance-man who lives a lonely existence on his large property:

By direct radio contact the leady passes on his command and he felt the building stir, through the villa's fifty-odd rooms, his staff moving into activity from the spot where each had halted after its last task. He, the dominus [master], sensed, with the soles of his feet, the burgeoning life of his building and some of the inside fog went away, even though they were only what the Czechs had called *robots*, their crazy word for *workers*. (*Truth*, 5)

Since the elite's 'workers' are the leadies, they are on a lower level in the hierarchy than the Yance-men. However, they are also an 'army of very skilled, veteran leadies' (*Truth*, 43) who are programmed to track down and apprehend any tankers who surface or who escape from the conapt buildings. They obey only the elite, and function to police the ex-tankers and are therefore superior to them in the hierarchy. The Yance-men are, however, not at the top of the hierarchy as there are the two military commanders: Marshal Harenzany who is a 'Red Army officer' (*Truth*, 34) and who owns the 'second largest demesne on Earth' (*Truth*, 130), and General Holt in the West who can 'supersede the orders of any Yance-man, any dominus of a demesne, and call for its leadies' (*Truth*, 100). Both commanders are, however, 'under the

yoke of [Stanton] Brose' who 'has ruled since the termination of the war' and 'usurped ultimate authority' (*Truth*, 131). Brose has 'ten or eleven thousand' leadies (*Truth*, 100), owns the largest demesne (*Truth*, 130), and is 'the only one who has access to the weapons archives' (*Truth*, 100), which all indicate that he is at the very top of the hierarchy (see *Diagram 1*, below).

The Yance-men, who exist at the elite level in the hierarchy, have a lot more information available to them than the ex-tankers, not only because they have been in on the war-fabrication story from the beginning, but also because they are, for the most part, the constructors of the fabrications. Joseph Adams, for example, 'is in Ideas' (*Truth*, 92) where he is mostly appointed to write the speeches read by the simulacrum, and his friend, Verne Lindblom 'is in Construct, that is, a builder for Eisenbludt' (*Truth*, 92). Eisenbludt is the Russian film producer who does 'the faking of the war scenes for the tankers [...], the visual "confirmation" of the lies that comprised Yancy's speeches' (*Truth*, 102). Yance-men like Joseph are also aware of the origin of the habitual fabrications, which consists of the 'two documentaries of 1982' (*Truth*, 62) based on World War II made by the visionary German filmmaker, Gottlieb Fischer, who was 'the first Yance-man' and the person who 'dreamed up the idea of Talbot Yancy' (*Truth*, 72):

For the fabric of Yancy, what he was and how he had come into being – and hence their existence, the hive of Yancy-men such as himself and Verne Lindblom and Lantano, even horrible, powerful old Brose himself – all this rested on documentaries A and B. [...] Beyond these, one could not go. (*Truth*, 62)

Joseph gets sent to an archive to rewatch documentary A, which was shown to the West, and notes that it falsely reveals that 'Franklin Roosevelt, President of the United States, was – a Communist agent' (*Truth*, 68). He goes on to surmise that it was created for a very specific purpose:

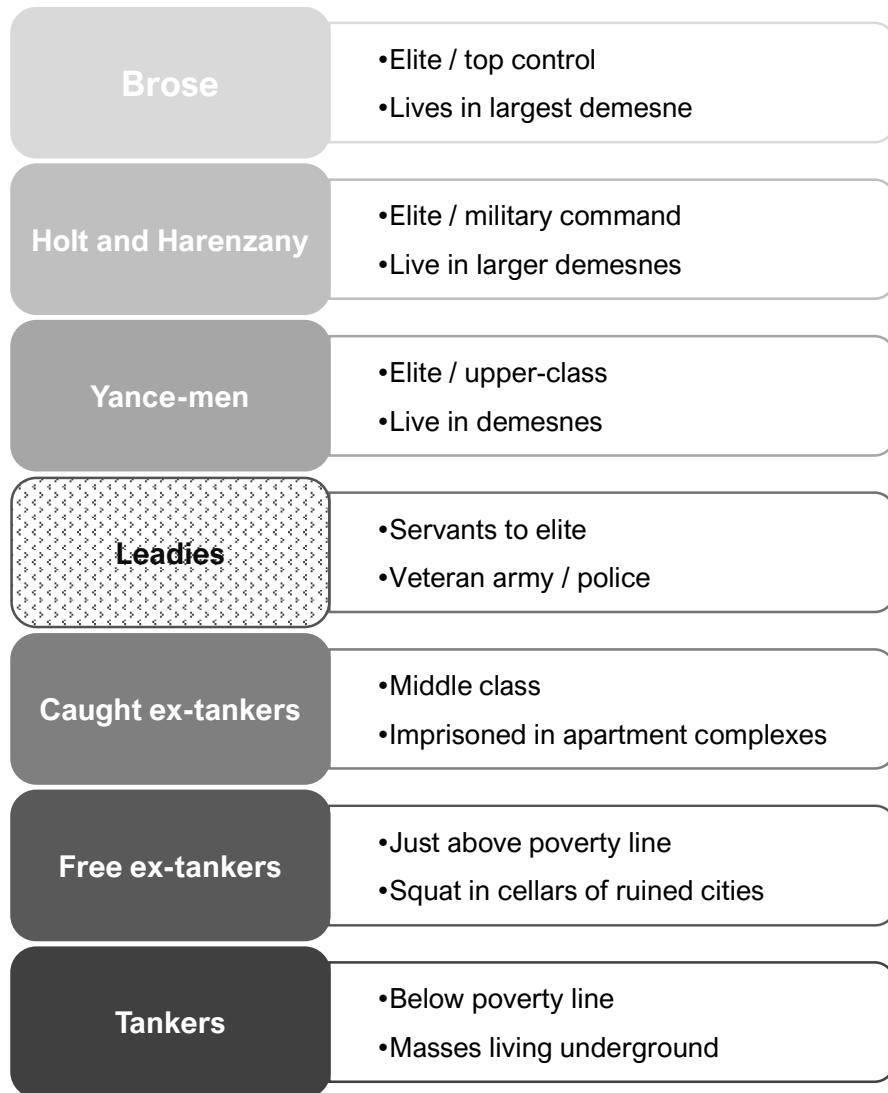


Diagram 1: The social hierarchy in *The Penultimate Truth*

A deliberate, carefully manufactured fraud, constructed for the purpose of getting Germany off the hook in regard to the deeds done, the decision taken, in World War Two. Because in 1982, Germany was once again a world power, and most important, a major shareholder in the community of nations titling itself “The Western Democracies”, or more simply, Wes-Dem, the UN having disintegrated during the Latin American war of 1977, leaving in its place a power vacuum into which the Germans had expertly, eagerly rushed. (*Truth*, 69)

Joseph further notes that version B of the Fischer documentary was ‘for the Communist world of 1982’ and depicts the USSR and Japan as the saviours of civilization, while ‘England and the U.S. are secret allies of the Nazis, of Hitler’, whom they brought into ‘power for the sole purpose of attacking the Eastern countries’ and ‘preserving the status quo against the new rising nations of the East’ (*Truth*, 70). Both documentaries manipulate historical events in order to influence the mindsets of their viewers: the Western Democracies are made to believe that the Communists, not the Nazis, are to blame for the outbreak of the Second World War, whereas the Eastern countries are told that the Western Democracies used the Nazis to start the War. As Joseph is watching these documentaries, he reflects on their history and from this we learn that the fabricated constructs of this society had already been put in place long before the occurrence of the Third World War, which initiated the current system of rule. In a sense, these documentaries serve as the foundation upon which the elite society started to build this tradition of carefully constructing fabrications in order to exercise control over the masses. The creation of these documentaries also reinforces Baudrillard’s notion that the entire system is an endless cycle of simulacra.

Brose, who is at the top of the hierarchy, not only exercises control over the masses, but also over the Yance-men. Brose tries to ‘destroy Runcible’ (*Truth*,43), whom he believes ‘is systematically tipping off one ant tank after another [...] to the fact that the war is over’ (*Truth*, 44), by devising a secret project involving Joseph, Lindblom, and Robert Hig, an engineer placed by Brose on Runcible’s construction team. This project entails the creation of supposed historical artifacts that will be placed on the new site where Runcible is developing more

conapts, and then sent into the past via a pre-war ‘time scoop’ that ‘can move objects into the past’ (*Truth*, 88) to make them seem authentic. When these artifacts are dug up by Runcible’s men, ‘Robert Hig would “reluctantly” leak the discovery of the artifacts to the Estes Park Government’ (*Truth*, 42). In effect, Runcible would ‘lose his land’ and be imprisoned ‘for forty to fifty years’ for failing to report the discovery of artifacts of ‘archaeological worth’ (*Truth*, 42). Joseph is meant ‘to do the reading matter on it’, which entails writing fake ‘historical’ articles, and Lindblom ‘will build the artifacts’ (*Truth*, 37). Yet again the elite construct pure simulacra as these artifacts bear ‘no relation to any reality whatsoever’ (Baudrillard, 1994: 6).

Brose is the one who often commissions the fabrication of information and events and has also taken over ‘the studios and instruments that had been Fischer’s [:] the fakes-factory *sine qua non*’ (*Truth*, 131). Brose is not only in control of all the fabrication, but is also kept alive by multiple artificial organs:

Brose at eighty-two weighed a ton, waddled and rolled, pitched, with this mouth drizzling and his nose as well ... and yet the heart still beat, because of course it was an artiforg heart, and an artiforg spleen and an artiforg and so on. (*Truth*, 33)

The only authentic organ of Brose that remains is ‘his elderly brain’ (*Truth*, 34), since this is the only organ that cannot be reproduced. When Nicholas tells the ex-tankers that he meets above ground that he ‘came up [...] to buy an artificial pancreas’, the men inform him that:

There aren’t any! Nowhere! Even the Yance-men can’t get them; Brose has them attached; he owns them all, legally. (*Truth*, 103)

It seems, thus, that Brose is the most powerful person in this world since he controls all the information and resources, including the fabrication of information and the ability to get rid of people. This, however, changes with the murder of Robert Hig moments before he is able to leak the discovery of the so-called artifacts, and the assassination of Lindblom by a sophisticated ‘wartime’ machine, the ‘German Gestalt-macher’ (*Truth*, 129). The machine lays down false clues to indict the apparent murderer – Brose – but ‘this was what the killer wanted;

and Brose was innocent' (*Truth*, 155). One of the mysterious characters in this novel, David Lantano, says that this theory is '[t]oo convoluted':

A machine that kills, that also lays down false clues; only in this case the false clues are authentic. We have here, Adams, *the ultimate in fakery*, the last stage in the evolution of an organization created for the purpose of manufacturing hoaxes. (*Truth*, 155)

Lantano brings up this idea, but soon after admits that he was the one who 'programmed the macher' and 'killed Hig' (*Truth*, 165), which thus seems to indicate that it is not only Brose who can orchestrate the 'quagmire of fakes' (*Truth*, 164).

Lantano is first introduced as 'a relatively new Yance-man, not yet fully established in the hierarchy' (*Truth*, 53–54) who has recently staked his claim to a piece of land which still contains a lot of radioactivity. Joseph is amazed that a young man like Lantano can write 'clever' speeches with 'real wisdom' that enable 'the illusion of Yancy's reality [to be] heightened' (*Truth*, 55). Joseph notes, moreover, that Lantano's speeches 'discuss the fact that those tankers down there are *systematically deprived of what they're entitled to*' (*Truth*, 58). Moreover, Lantano supports the ex-tankers in various ways, which can be seen in what the ex-tankers tell Nicholas just after he has surfaced:

See, the new dominus who's starting his demesne here, this David Lantano, he's not a bad guy. He sort of, like I said, holds his leadies back, when he's around to do it, so they don't wipe us out or get us into one of those conapts; he sort of looks out for us. He gives us food. [...] And cigarettes. Yeah, he's really trying to help us. (*Truth*, 100)

Lantano thus seems to be the good guy not only because he identifies with the tankers in his speeches and helps them physically, but also because he intends to free the tankers by destroying Brose. Mackey (1988: 81) writes that 'Lantano is a kind of messiah figure' since he 'is immortal, [...] has the best interests of the tankers at heart, and aims to release them from this oppression and to lift the veil of lies'.

Indeed, Lantano is revealed to have ‘lived six hundred years’, since he got hold of the time-travelling device Brose had planted in the past in his secret project, and claims to ‘know when it is and isn’t necessary to kill’ (*Truth*, 167). He admits to Webster Foote, head of the ‘private police corporation’ (*Truth*, 45), that killing Lindblom was part of the plan to finally destroy Brose. Foote, however, reflects on the implication of Lantano’s use of the word ‘necessary’:

A favorite word, Foote reflected, of those driven by a yearning for power. The only necessity was an internal one, that of fulfilling their drives. Brose had it; Lantano had it; countless little Yance-men and would-be Yance-men had it; hundreds if not thousands of pol-coms [political commissioners] down in the ant tanks below, Foote realized, are ruling as true tyrants, through their link with the surface, through their possession of the *gnosis*, the secret knowledge of the actual state of affairs that obtain here. (*Truth*, 167)

Foote thus equates Lantano with the power-hungry tyrant Brose: they both use the people as ‘instruments’ of their ‘grand design’ (*Truth*, 168). Foote’s instincts prove to be correct when, at the end of the novel, Lantano successfully defeats Brose and announces to the tankers that ‘the war [...] is over’ (*Truth*, 187) and that they would all be able to gradually emerge to the surface. Nicholas then realizes that ‘the biggest lie is still to come’ (*Truth*, 189), since Lantano only shares the penultimate truth with the tankers: he refrains from telling the tankers that they have been lied to about the raging war for the past thirteen years. Lantano therefore needs to construct more lies to ‘explain those thousands of miles of grass and trees [...] instead of an endless waste surface of radioactive rubble’ (*Truth*, 188). Brose has been defeated and the tankers will be freed, but it seems that the fabrications will still be perpetuated and the ultimate truth – that people have been deceived on a grand scale to advance the interests of one all-powerful man – will never be attained, since one tyrant has been replaced by another. The implications and consequences of the perpetual fakery coupled with the ruling system of this society are the ideas that Dick accentuates in this novel. These ideas are further discussed – together with the critique Dick makes of society – in the next section of this chapter.

Oppression, dehumanization, and Dick's critique

A society generally becomes oppressed when its government has enough power to exercise total control over citizens' lives, which allows the government to serve its own interests. This can be seen in Zamyatin's *We* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* where ideas and physical mechanisms such as uniformity, surveillance, propaganda, and fear are used to exercise control over the masses, and in Huxley's *Brave New World* where, more subtly, genetically engineered attributes and childhood indoctrination are used to keep citizens in place. Such forms of control echo Foucault's ideas on discipline, especially the implementation of the panopticon, which 'automizes and disindividualizes power' (Foucault, 2004: 555). One of the major implications of such absolute control over people's lives is that they become dehumanized: the things that make them human are systematically removed in order to stop them from thinking for themselves and defying the oppressive conditions in which they live. These classical dystopian writers often exaggerate the oppressive and dehumanizing conditions of their fictional societies to critique the systems or values of their own or another existing society. This same can be said of *The Penultimate Truth* where Dick presents to us an oppressed and dehumanized society in order to critique his own.

The first and most obvious form of oppression in Dick's novel is that the masses are being manipulated with false information into staying underground. At first, they went underground voluntarily and for their own protection as there really was a dangerous nuclear war being fought on Earth's surface. The war, however, 'lasted only two years' (*Truth*, 102), but the tankers have been living underground for an additional thirteen years. The physical conditions underground are uncomfortable as the tankers stay as couples in 'small cubb[ies]' (*Truth*, 25) with shared bathrooms (*Truth*, 23), and where they have 'severe water ration[s]' (*Truth*, 7). The tankers need to work hard to build and repair leadies for fear of having their rations reduced even further, or even 'abolished' (*Truth*, 26). The tankers are made to fear the ostensibly

disease-infested, war-torn, and radioactive conditions above ground – which are, as mentioned before, all made up. The elite oppresses the tankers by making them believe that there is no other alternative to survival than remaining in the crowded underground hovels.

The conditions underground represent a kind of panopticon in the sense that a mass of people can be disciplined and controlled by a small group of people (the elite above ground). Foucault (2004: 555) writes that the panopticon is a system used for ‘creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers’. Thus, the subterraneans might not know who hands out their rations and checks their quarterly production of leadies, but they can be certain that these things are being done. They are moreover unaware of Brose, the true leader and wielder of power and control. Brose and his elite force maintain this panopticon method of control with all the fabricated constructions that the masses underground are subjected to. Foucault (2004: 556) says that power can only be strengthened and maintained if ‘it can be exercised continuously in the very foundations of society, in the subtlest possible way’. The simulated structures – the Fischer documentaries, the destructive reels, Yancy and his speeches – serve this very purpose by subtly ingraining these fabrications within the foundations of society. Brose thus uses a panopticon-like system together with a series of simulacra in order to exercise total control over society.

The masses who live in oppressed conditions and are below the poverty line, and the elite who live like ‘Medieval kings’ (*Truth*, 98) echo the historic feudal system in a sense where masters (Latin: *domini*) owned all the wealth and peasants lived in poverty. History shows us that such feudal systems were eventually abolished, often with a violent struggle. Just as the prolonged oppression of the French peasantry eventually led to the French Revolution, the Yance-men are aware that ‘ultimately there would be another war’ (*Truth*, 48) when the tankers learn the

true reason for their oppression. The Yance-men, such as Joseph, realize that they need to work hard in order to keep the ‘fake-producing factory’ (*Truth*, 87) going, and avoid a violent class struggle.

The Yance-men are themselves oppressed by Brose, whose orders they need to obey and who can easily destroy them if they defy him or threaten the system, as Runcible is suspected of doing. Joseph ‘had a dreadful intuition that it’ – the elaborate falsification of the secret project to take out Runcible – ‘was all a mistake’:

But suppose it were not Runcible. Suppose it were someone else. Then this entire project, the faked artifacts, the articles in *Natural World*, the “leak” of the find, the litigation before the Recon Dis-In Council [the high court of the world], the destruction of Runcible’s economic empire and his imprisonment: It was all for nothing. (*Truth*, 44)

Joseph feels immensely guilty because the selfish Yance-men ‘confronted Runcible as an antagonist’ even though ‘they knew, deep down inside, [Runcible] was morally in the right’ (*Truth*, 50). He momentarily considers convincing Lindblom to help Runcible, but realizes that his friend might report him and the ‘agents of Brose would, then, within minutes, show up at [his] demesne and kill him’ (*Truth*, 45). Later Joseph makes another attempt to warn Runcible by phoning his villa, but before talking to Runcible, he realizes that ‘the line [might be] tapped’ and ends the call ‘in fear’ (*Truth*, 113). Earlier in the novel, Joseph also ends an innocuous call with Lindblom ‘just in case Brose was monitoring’ (*Truth*, 32), which further indicates his fear of this tyrant. Brose thus uses his power and influence over the surveillance network of Webster Foote’s private corporation to exercise complete control over the Yance-men. Just as the tankers are kept underground through the fake news bulletins that instil fear, the Yance-men are coerced through fear to continue producing fake material. Both groups are thus manipulated through lies and fear – and are thus oppressed.

The persistent fakery can be seen as a direct consequence of Brose's lust for power and control. The effects of this have led the different groups within the hierarchy to become dehumanized. Suvin (1975: 18) notes a common thread in Dick's novels is that 'social class' often functions to determine 'the humanity of the characters: the more powerful one is, the more dehumanized one becomes'. This observation certainly applies to Brose, who, as seen before, is *physically* inhuman as he is synthetically kept alive by various artificial organs. Moreover, Joseph refers to Brose when he reflects that the 'man with the most power and responsibility feels the least – if he feels any – weight' (*Truth*, 60). Joseph is referring to the guilt that Yance-men such as himself feel towards the injustices they are committing against the tankers. Brose, however, feels no guilt or empathy, which indicates that he is deprived of these emotions and thus, dehumanized. The Yance-men are lower down in the hierarchy, but also deprived in the sense that they experience guilt as well as loneliness:

Joseph Adams pondered, watched the fog, that of the Pacific. And because this was evening and the world was darkening, this fog scared him as much as that other fog, the one inside which did not invade but stretched and stirred and filled the empty portions of the body. Usually the latter fog is called loneliness. (*Truth*, 1)

Dick never describes any Yance-man's demesne as a *home*, but rather as 'an Ozymandiasian structure' (*Truth*, 1) with 'mighty and palacelike, look-on-my-works-ye-mighty-and-despair' (*Truth*, 130) central buildings. Even the apartment complexes built by Runcible are described as 'a manmade focus of upright, hard structures' and 'the Ozymandias-who-he? great conapt dwellings' (*Truth*, 32). These references refer to Percy Bysshe Shelly's 1818 sonnet 'Ozymandias', which tells of the ruins of the huge statue that the Egyptian monarch, Rameses II, erected of himself in the thirteenth century B.C.E. (Ferguson, *et al*, 2005: 870). Dick possibly included these references in order to illustrate the enormity of the 'colossal' (l.13) structures that the elites have built for themselves, to comment on the ancient ruling system that Brose – the 'king of kings' (l.10) who has a 'cold command' (l.5) – has instituted, and, finally, to indicate that this ruling system is itself destructible – 'the decay / Of that colossal wreck' (ll. 12–13) – and 'lone[ly]' (l.14). Indeed, Joseph reflects that the Yance-men feel guilty for making 'the world

into their deer park at the expense of the millions of tankers below' and this guilt makes 'their late evenings a thrashing agony of loneliness, emptiness, and their nights impossible' (*Truth*, 49).

The 'fifty-thousand-acre demesne[s]' (*Truth*, 104) of Earth are entirely lifeless, apart from the Yance-men who occupy them, since the animals are 'all dead' (*Truth*, 3) from the radioactivity of the war. The radioactivity has also caused the elite to be 'sterile' and therefore there are 'no families' and 'no children' (*Truth*, 104). Joseph admits to Lantano upon their first meeting that he feels 'scared' and 'alone' (*Truth*, 56) when he is at his villa even though he is surrounded by his staff of leadies. Lantano reasons that the leadies are 'cold' (*Truth*, 56), which indicates that they are lifeless and cannot provide the warmth and companionship of fellow human beings. Joseph is so unhappy on the lonely surface that he asks Nicholas if he can go along with him when he returns to his tank. He describes the deprivation of human company as 'hell' and decides that an overcrowded hovel would be 'good enough' for him:

He would agree to anything, give up his last leady, be stripped of that, too, and gladly. And – he would be more than willing to share the bathroom with those inhabiting the adjoining room. He would not endure it; he would thrive. Because it would make up for the loneliness of his years as dominus of his vast, silent, forest-surrounded demesne, with its ocean fog; the gruesome, empty Pacific fog. (*Truth*, 179)

The elite's selfishness of occupying the Earth while the tankers remain below ground has thus caused them to be isolated and deprived of companionship. The tankers, however, do not suffer from a lack of human company as the Yance-men do, but are, nevertheless deprived of essential things, such as information, freedom, and the land to which they are entitled:

[Their] lives are incomplete, in the sense that Rousseau had meant when he talked of man having been born in one condition, born brought into the light free, and everywhere was now in chains. Only here, in this day and age, [...] they had been born unto the surface of a world and now that surface with its air and sunlight and hills, its oceans, its streams, its colors and textures, its very smells, had been swiped from them and they were left with tin-can submarine – figuratively – dwelling boxes in which they were squeezed, under a false light, to breathe repurified stale air, to listen to wired obligatory music and sit daylong at workbenches making leadies [...]. (*Truth*, 58)

The above excerpt comes from Lantano's speech that deals with deprivations and which Joseph strongly admires, since he realizes that he could never capture the essence of the tankers' condition that well (*Truth*, 55). Lantano is actually a 'Cherokee' Indian from the 'fifteenth century' (*Truth*, 163) who has used a time-travelling device to reach the present time of the novel. He is thus an outsider and, in a sense, a savage such as Huxley's Savage or the Martian Bleekmen, who are able to see the true state of civilization and, therefore, can comment on society.

Merrit Abrash (1995: 157–158), who discusses Dick's references to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's writings in *The Penultimate Truth*, states that the above excerpt from Lantano's speech refers to the 'opening [lines of] Chapter 1 of the *Social Contract*, [which] are among the most famous in Western thought':

Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains. One thinks himself the master of others, and still remains a greater slave than they. (Rousseau, 1920: 5)

Abrash (1995: 158) explains that 'Rousseau did not mean "in chains" literally, but [...] was referring to a humanity-wide condition of deprivation and restraint', which is what Lantano metaphorically refers to in his speech to the tankers, who are the ones in chains. Rousseau's idea of man being in chains captures the essence of the tankers' deprivation and, consequently, their dehumanization. Moreover, the second sentence about the 'master' who 'remains a greater slave' (Rousseau, 1920: 5) refers to the elite class which needs to work tirelessly 'to maintain a flawless deception' (Abrash, 1995: 162). The Yance-men, as mentioned before, are deprived of human company, or a sense of community, which is 'what Rousseau posits as the necessary condition for the fulfilment of an individual's humanity' (Abrash, 1995: 162). The Yance-men are thus dehumanized, since they lack this essential condition of satisfied humanity.

Dick, however, alludes to the metaphors of Rousseau not solely to express the deprivation of the tankers and the elite, but, in a larger sense – and according to Abrash – he does so to critique the government’s deception of the mass of humanity:

Rousseau [...] insists that authentic popular sovereignty demands full and correct information for the citizens in their collective capacity of sovereign. A government which withholds or falsifies information is striking at the people’s ability to govern themselves, and this cannot be morally compensated by any amount of practical benefit. Hence, the *Social Contract* is uncompromising on the issue of full information, and it is within a framework of Rousseau’s ideas and no other that the governmental policies in *The Penultimate Truth* – for which Dick feels obvious repugnance – can be condemned regardless of motives or consequences. (Abrash, 1995: 160)

The fabrications that Yance-men such as Joseph and Lindblom create, are news bulletins and newsreels, which are shown to the masses and accepted as the truth. These fabrications are thus, essentially mass media and the Yance-men who produce them could be called ‘media people’ (Abrash, 1995: 162). Rossi (2011: 122) writes that the ‘issue of history-manufacturing [...] is coupled in this novel with the issue of one-way communication, of the modality of the circulation of historical discourses and consciousness in the U.S. mass-media civilization of the sixties’. It thus seems that Dick is making ‘a remarkable negative judgement on America’ by showing how the government is essentially telling a lie, or ‘an irredeemably penultimate truth’ (Rossi, 2011: 122). Just as Brose controls the Yance-men and what they produce, the U.S. government controls mass media and uses this to deceive society. Abrash (1995: 165) concludes that Dick shows us in the novel that the ‘[penultimate] truth in the title undoubtedly refers to the actual state of affairs on the earth’s surface’, whereas the ultimate truth is perhaps ‘that the novel is a metaphor for the way *our* world actually works’. This metaphor would then relate to the socio-economic hierarchy of the novel that is discussed in the first section of this chapter: just as the masses underground spend their time ‘making objects which go directly to a political and technical elite’ in the futile hope that it would aid termination of the war, upon which they can come up to the surface, ‘human beings spend their lives [futilely] creating wealth – much of which is expropriated [...] by those who control capital’ (Abrash, 1995: 166).

Such a reading 'makes *The Penultimate Truth* the weightiest social and political statement among Dick's novels', according to Abrash (1995: 166). This, however, is not the only strong statement Dick makes in this novel. He includes another weighty critique of society with the theme of war that pervades the novel.

Cold War hysteria and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Tom Moylan (2000: xi) writes that '[d]ystopian narrative is largely the product of the terrors of the twentieth century', which include a 'hundred years of exploitation, repression, state violence, [and] war' among other things. He goes on to say that a crucial element to the dystopian vision is the 'ability to register the impact of an unseen and unexamined social system on the everyday lives of everyday people' by having the dystopian text open 'in the midst of a social "elsewhere" that appears to be far worse than any in the "real" world' (Moylan, 2000: xiii). This refers to the technique of defamiliarization, which, as previously discussed (see p. 9), is typically used by authors of classical dystopian texts. Moylan's observations of the dystopian narrative can indeed be seen in the works of Dick, and especially in *The Penultimate Truth*, which 'has been labelled as depicting a post-apocalyptic dystopian vision of the world' (Gawronska, 2013: 50). In the previous section, I looked at Dick's critique of the various fabrications used by the elite to keep the masses underground, which, as we have seen, could function as a metaphor for how power in the real world works. The other important element in this novel that needs to be considered is the prevailing presence of war, which, firstly, forms part of the critique Dick makes of American society and, secondly, links the novel to the dystopian classic, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This section will look at each of these in turn.

The social *elsewhere* in which the plot of *The Penultimate Truth* is set, occurs in the near future – the 'year of God 2025' (*Truth*, 13) – and a post-apocalyptic United States, which is evident

from the cities mentioned in the novel, such as ‘the former city of San Francisco’ (*Truth*, 1), and from the newsreel showing the destruction of Detroit (*Truth*, 13), and descriptions of the ‘ruins of Cheyenne’ (*Truth*, 77). However, Dick is clearly writing about his own time when he mentions the ‘Com mies and U.S. citizens’, the opposing blocs, ‘Wes-Dem [and] Pac-Peop’, and the ‘Supreme Soviet’ (*Truth*, 13), which are all suggestive of the Cold War period that was so central to Dick’s life and thought. Dick’s Wes-Dem, short for Western Democracies, refers to the ‘USA and its Western Allies’, while Pac-Peop, which suggests Pacific People, represents the ‘USSR and the Warsaw Pact’ (Rossi, 2011: 137). Gawronska (2013: 51) confirms that Dick was writing about his own time when he states that the ‘political division on two superpowers evokes the contemporaneous deadlock of the Cold War era’. Moreover, Rossi (2011: 121) quotes Andrew Butler summarizing the novel as ‘Cold War paranoia at its height’. Booker (2005: 171) writes that ‘the looming threat of nuclear holocaust or other dire consequences of the Cold War was a dominant factor in the science fiction imagination’ between the 1940s and 1990s and that ‘many dystopian visions of the future were strongly informed by Cold War pessimism’. Dick indeed followed this trend in *The Penultimate Truth* – and in other novels such as *The World Jones Made* (1956), *The Man Who Japed* (1956), *Vulcan’s Hammer* (1960), and *Dr. Bloodmoney* (1965) – by essentially depicting what most Americans were fearing at the height of the Cold War era: that it would eventually escalate into a destructive nuclear ‘World War III’ (*Truth*, 28). Booker (2005: 181) goes on to call Dick ‘the quintessential Cold War writer’ as he often writes ‘satirical fictions that use their post-apocalypse setting [...] to provide a fresh perspective from which to critique the already dystopian character of contemporary American capitalist society’. A parallel can thus be seen between the elite’s fabricated war horrors that instil fear into the tankers so that they remain below ground and the ‘Cold War [which] is a useful threat which may scare Americans and force them to accept whatever is convenient to the industrial-military complex’ (Rossi, 2011: 122).

Dick's depiction and critique of the Cold War horrors in *The Penultimate Truth* stem not only from the twentieth-century science fictional trend, but also from his personal views and experiences. In the late 1940s, Dick lived in Berkeley, California, which 'was a scene of considerable political activity' (Rickman, 1989: 192), and was subsequently influenced by its 'leftist politics' (Rickman, 1989: 193). Dick identified as a 'left-liberal anti-authoritarian', which, according to Rickman (1989: 193), 'meant he was opposed to the national political establishment [that was then] just embarking on the Cold War military build-up'. Dick enrolled at the University of California Berkeley in September 1949, but dropped out after two months (Sutin, 1994: 62) because of his 'unwillingness' (Rickman, 1989: 194) to partake in the institution's compulsory military training:

At Berkeley my anti-war convictions were actually the reason I had to drop out. It was just before [the] Korea[n] [war], you had to belong to the military training corps. I disassembled my M-1 rifle and refused to reassemble it – it's probably in pieces to this day because I dropped one small piece inside so no one could get it out. (Rickman, 1989: 194)

This powerful anti-war statement by Dick is representative of his lifelong stance against the American government's involvement in the Cold War and its associated war enterprises and institutions. This can also be seen years later when he signed a 'Writers and Editors War Tax Protest' petition in 1968, which was specifically 'in opposition to the Vietnam War' (Sutin, 1994: 160). This petition protested 'any war-designated tax increase' and the '23% [...] income tax which [was] being used to finance the war in Vietnam' (Sutin, 1994: 160).

By protesting compulsory military training and war-funding taxes, Dick expressed his disapproval of his country's involvement in the various wars related to the Cold War. It could thus reasonably be argued that he is critiquing the government's war enterprises by presenting an exaggerated depiction of their consequences in *The Penultimate Truth*, specifically the fact that 'there would [ultimately] be another war' (*Truth*, 48), which suggests that such vastly destructive war is recurrent. This continuous cycle of struggle seems to be a consequence of

the hierarchical system of society in which the ruling government oppresses the masses, who subsequently retaliate, overthrow the ruling class, and set in place a system of governance similar to the one that initially oppressed them. This can be seen with the character of Lantano, who seems to be redeemer of the people by overthrowing the tyrant Brose and lifting the ‘veil of lies’ (Mackey, 1988: 81) – only to become corrupted by power in the end. Abrash (1995: 163) writes that the ‘elite and Lantano become indistinguishable in their insistence upon imposing grand designs for personal power on humanity; only the means differ’. Thus, no solution or change for the better is presented, but rather an extremely pessimistic – and typically dystopian – outlook of ‘the future is portrayed as a totalitarian hell in which all hope was extinguished and all exits closed’ (Kumar, 1991: 225), such as the one in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Booker (2005: 172) points out that ‘Western science fiction during the Cold War tended to have a dystopian inclination’ as Orwell’s famous novel, which was published in 1949, ‘set the stage for all future dystopian fiction and went on to become one of the most important cultural texts of the Cold War’:

Indeed, though only vaguely science fictional in itself, Orwell’s novel would become a powerful influence on the science fiction imagination, exercising a gravitational pull that would help warp imaginative visions of the future toward the dystopian pole for more than half a century. [...] Later writers of dystopian science fiction [...] continued very much in the Orwellian vein, imagining grim futures in which the Cold War continues to function as a background to or even cause of dystopian oppression. (Booker, 2005: 172)

Quite a few critics notice that there are many similarities between Dick’s *The Penultimate Truth* and Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Suvin (1975: 12) states that ‘[u]p to the mid-60’s [sic] Dick could be characterized as a writer of anti-utopian SF in the wake of Orwell’s [*Nineteen Eighty-Four*]’, and, similarly, Moylan (2000: 174) explains that ‘Dick’s dystopian sf, like Orwell’s, often ends in a pessimistic rush’. According to Rossi (2011: 122), the ‘scientifically organized and “authorized” forging of historical evidences’ in Dick’s novel ‘clearly derives from Orwell’s

Nineteen Eighty-Four. Rossi (2011: 137–138) explains that ‘the two fake documentaries shot by Gottlieb Fischer’ in Dick’s novel ‘are aimed at discrediting the enemy of each bloc, and both are as bogus as the issue of *The Times* that Winston Smith rewrites in Orwell’s novel’ (see pp. 24–25). However, Rossi (2011: 137) goes on to say that ‘Dick goes well beyond what we may find in Orwell’: when Brose orders Joseph and Lindblom to produce historical articles and artifacts in order to frame Runcible, they are ‘not produc[ing] fake evidence [but rather] *authenticity* [that] allows the *direct* manipulation of the past, which is the ultimate form of power and control’ (Rossi, 2011: 138).

Indeed, the driving force behind tyrannical rulers such as Brose and Orwell’s Party is ‘only power, pure power’ (1984, 238). Dick’s hierarchical system of classes, which is explained earlier in this chapter, mirrors the pyramid class system seen in Orwell’s novel: Big Brother is the supreme leader, the Inner Party members carry out his commands, the Outer Party members form the middle class, and finally the proletariat makes up the masses. The Party, as we saw in Chapter 1 of this study, is not concerned with universal happiness, but rather with maintaining its iron grip over the populace, just as Brose does whatever it takes to keep the masses underground. Outer Party members, Winston and Julia, work to serve the purposes of the Party, but secretly and futilely try to rebel against this system just as Yance-men such as Joseph and Lantano consider going against Brose. The sense that ‘there would [ultimately] be another war’ (*Truth*, 48) due to the same oppressive ruling systems being perpetuated also appears in Orwell’s text:

The aim of the High is to remain where they are. The aim of the Middle is to change places with the High. The aim of the Low, when they have an aim [...] is to abolish all distinctions and create a society in which all men shall be equal. Thus throughout history a struggle which is the same in its main outlines recurs over and over again. [The High] are overthrown by the Middle, who enlist the Low on their side by pretending to them that they are fighting for liberty and justice. As soon as they have reached their objective, the Middle group splits off from one of the other groups, or from both of them, and the struggle begins over again. [...] It would be an exaggeration to say that throughout history there has been no progress of a material kind. (1984, 182)

Orwell's dystopian classic presents a very cynical view of society and government by illustrating that mankind has never progressed beyond the same oppressive systems and offers no hope for future change either. Dick parallels this by creating one of the 'richest metaphors for political exploitation and ruthless use of power' (Warrick, 1987: 59) in the similarly pessimistic future presented in *The Penultimate Truth*.

In both novels it is evident that the 'Cold War continues to function as a background [...] or even cause of dystopian oppression' (Booker, 2005: 172). As we have seen before, in Dick's post-apocalyptic plot, the masses are kept underground and subsequently oppressed by the false news that a nuclear war has been taking place for the past thirteen years on the Earth's surface. The elite uses inspiring speeches carried out by the sim, Talbot Yancy, as propaganda to both scare the tankers into remaining below ground and to remind them that they are serving the cause of the war by building and repairing the leadies. In Orwell's novel, the 'three super-states' have been at war 'for the past twenty-five years', but this war 'is no longer the desperate, annihilating struggle that it was in the early decades of the twentieth century' (1984, 168). Rather, the fear of war is used to oppress the people, 'to keep the wheels of the industry turning without increasing the real wealth of the world', and to avoid the masses becoming 'too comfortable' and 'too intelligent' (1984, 172). Furthermore, the continuous war enables the Party members to have the 'necessary [...] mentality appropriate to a state of war' (1984, 173):

It does not matter whether war is actually happening, and since no decisive victory is possible, it does not matter whether the war is going well or badly. All that is needed is that a state of war should exist. The splitting of the intelligence which the Party requires of its members, and which is more easily achieved in an atmosphere of war, is now almost universal, but the higher up the ranks one goes, the more marked it becomes. It is precisely in the Inner Party that war hysteria and hatred of the enemy are strongest. In his capacity as an administrator, it is often necessary for a member of the Inner Party to know that this or that item of war news is untruthful, and he may often be aware that the entire war is spurious and is either not happening or is being waged for purposes quite other than the declared ones. (1984, 174)

In Orwell's novel, thus, there is the same sense that the war is fabricated, and war propaganda is used to keep the oppressive systems of power intact. The higher ups know that the war might be spurious, just as the elite in Dick's novel are privy to the true state of affairs.

Information is essentially manipulated in both novels to make the masses believe that a war is being fought and, moreover, to exercise control over them. Dick's elite fabricates the news, creates false historical documentaries, and even tries to alter history by sending false artifacts into the past. Orwell's Ministry of Truth keeps a tight grip on information and alters historical documents to suit the Party's purposes. Moreover, a new kind of language, 'Newspeak' [is] devised to meet the [Party's] ideological needs' (1984, 270), which is essentially to limit the people's capabilities to think for themselves and express themselves. Words and phrases are often abbreviated in Newspeak, such as 'Ingsoc, or English Socialism' (1984, 270) and 'Minitrue, Minipax and Miniluv' (1984, 274), which are short for Ministry of Truth, Ministry of Plenty, and Ministry of Love, respectively. Dick imitates this discourse with his own inclusion of abbreviations, such as 'artiforg' (*Truth*, 10) for artificial organ, 'syn-cof-bnz' (*Truth*, 12) for synthetic coffee beans, 'pol-com' (*Truth*, 12) for political commissioner, 'Recon Dis-In Council' that refers to the 'high court of the world' (*Truth*, 41), as well as 'Wes-Dem [and] Pac-Peop' (*Truth*, 13). Dick was well aware of the fact that language is a tool that can be used to control people, as evident in a speech he gave in 1978:

The basic tool for the manipulation of reality is the manipulation of words. If you can control the meaning of words, you can control the people who must use the words. George Orwell made this clear in his novel [*Nineteen Eighty-Four*]. But another way to control the minds of people is to control their perceptions. If you can get them to see the world as you do, they will think as you do. Comprehension follows perception. How do you get them to see reality as you see? [...] Images are a basic constituent: pictures. That is why the power of TV to influence young minds is so staggeringly vast. (Dick, 1978: 264)

Dick most likely refers here to one of the famous quotes from Orwell's novel that reads: 'Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past' (1984, 34). The use of images to control people's perceptions can be seen in Dick's depiction of Fischer's

World War II documentaries that alter the past as well as the elaborate fabricated newsreel showing the destruction of Detroit that is considered earlier in this chapter (see p. 69). It is thus evident that both novelists critique the method used by the ruling class to control society through the manipulation of information. Dick was certainly influenced by Orwell's dystopian novel since he uses similar devices to present his own dystopian vision.

* * *

With *The Penultimate Truth*, Dick seems to suggest that in the real world there are decades and centuries worth of fabrications that have formed endless layers of deceit upon which the structures of power are built. Every generation of governance piles more lies on top of the existing heap of historical fabrications, which makes it virtually impossible to know what is true anymore. Indeed, Dick's favourite theme is the question 'What is Real?', which in this case is equivalent to the question 'What is True?', and in this work it remains unanswered as he pessimistically tells us that we will never know. Just as the classic dystopian society, especially the one presented by Orwell, presents no escape, no solution, and no hope, Dick's fictional world, which represents his own, offers none of these possibilities either. Dick does offer us some truth, however, when he reveals how our world actually works with the metaphors he borrows from Rousseau, as well as in the allusions to Orwell's classic. The hierarchical structure of society allows the ruling elite to control the masses through deception, fear, and propaganda. The effects of this are essentially oppression and dehumanization, which inevitably lead to a class struggle as shown throughout history. After the successful overthrow of tyranny, the new rulers end up setting in place a similar system of oppressive governance by perpetuating the same hierarchical system as they have toppled. This self-propagating cycle means that there will be a perpetual class struggle, or even war, and society thus becomes accustomed to these. The ruling elite exploits this familiarity with war to further

support its cause of maintaining power and control, as we have seen in both Dick's and Orwell's novels. Neither author offers a solution to this truth of the human condition, but rather makes readers aware of it through their critique of society.

Even though Dick uses extensive metaphors and practiced techniques in the manner of classic novelists such as Orwell, *The Penultimate Truth* is considered a minor work and does not enjoy the universality of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The powerful critiques and dystopian elements present in Dick's novel certainly mirror those seen in Orwell's dystopian vision, but the novel is still labelled as simply a work of science fiction. Dick was an established and experienced writer at the time he produced *The Penultimate Truth*, which was during his 'Mature Period' in which 'he wrote some of his greatest novels' (Warrick, 1987: 12) and which was soon after he wrote the award-winning *The Man in the High Castle*. Considering all of these factors, one cannot help questioning the reason for this novel not enjoying canonical status. Of course, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Dick's novel was written in a hasty fashion and he included ideas and plots that had already existed in some of his short stories from the 1950s. Evidently Dick had the experience of producing (unsuccessful) realist novels and in many of his stories he showcases ideas of the true downfalls of society. Moreover, he was familiar with the typical elements found in dystopian fiction, such as tyrannical governments, dehumanized conditions, oppressive control, and futile rebellions.

Perhaps, then, the haste under which he produced *The Penultimate Truth* inhibited him from refining the novel into a more sophisticated piece of writing that might have garnered more attention. However, even if the novel contains no science fictional elements, it would still be considered science fiction, since the 'strict categories worked against Phil' (Sutin, 1994: 5), as we saw in Chapter 1 (see p. 4). Moreover, one could argue that Dick was one of the authors who was influenced by the Cold War and Orwell's depiction of it and followed the trend of

weaving dystopian Orwellianism and chilling realism into his work of science fiction. The discussion in this chapter, however, shows that Dick does more than just weave in dystopian elements: he establishes his own dystopian vision instead. Dick's dystopian vision is further discussed in the next novel to be looked at in this study, *A Scanner Darkly*, which is one of the strongest examples of a work by Dick that is predominantly dystopian rather than merely science fictional.

Chapter 4: *A Scanner Darkly*

Written between 1973 and 1975, and finally published in 1977, *A Scanner Darkly* is known as a gritty and realist novel portraying the dark sides of drug abuse and the security state. The novel is part of what Suvin (2002: 373) brands Dick's 'crisis decade' that occurred between 1966 and 1976 and in which he produced only five novels. This quiet period followed directly on from Dick's prolific period, starting in 1960, in which he rapidly produced novels that 'had a similarity of style and method' (Robinson, 1984: 100). In the 1970s, however, 'each novel is in one way or another a formal experiment' that Dick played around with to expand and challenge the categorization of genre (Robinson, 1984: 100). Indeed, this novel 'raises the question of genre, for there is little that separates it from realism', however Dick was unfortunately 'already placed in the publisher's category of science fiction (which is more rigid and arbitrary than the literary genre), and these late, ambiguous shifts toward a kind of absurdist realism would do nothing to dislodge him from his category' (Robinson, 1984: 109). After completing the novel in 1975, Dick wrote to the editor of Doubleday publishing house, Lawrence Ashmead, 'pleading for the house to treat *Scanner* as mainstream' since the novel 'has few SF trappings and its 1994 Los Angeles is recognizably our own' (Sutin, 1994: 202). Ashmead tried to help Dick, but realized that 'there was just no way' since science fiction was 'gutterized as pulp' at that time and people simply 'didn't take the genre seriously' (Sutin, 1994: 202). The novel does indeed contain a few science fictional elements, mainly the drug Substance D and the undercover police scramble suit, but for the rest it presents a very real and darkly dystopian society dealing with issues of oppression, control, and dehumanization.

The plot is set in the near-future California of 1994 where drug addiction and trafficking have spiralled out of control. The federal drug unit is spending a lot of resources on trying to find

the manufacturers of a new super drug called Substance D, which is responsible for the gradual split and decay of its user's brain and has destroyed the lives of countless addicts. Central to this investigation are extensive sophisticated surveillance systems and undercover agents, who pose as drug users themselves. The protagonist, Robert Arctor, spends most of his time dropping Substance D and hanging out with his fellow drug-using friends, but is secretly an undercover agent who periodically goes into the agency to report his findings. When Arctor meets with his superior, both their identities are hidden from the other and they use codenames – Arctor is 'Fred' and his superior is referred to as 'Hank'. After an anonymous tip is phoned into the agency indicting Arctor for suspicious behaviour, Hank, who is unaware that Fred is really Arctor, assigns Fred to spy on Arctor. Holo-scanners, state-of-the-art surveillance technology, are secretly installed in Arctor's house and this allows Fred to fully observe Arctor and his circle of friends. At first, Fred finds the idea of spying on himself distasteful and pointless, but is intrigued to learn what his roommates are up to when he is not around and also to perhaps learn who has tampered with his record player and his car.

Fred fervently watches the surveillance tapes in order to find the source of the sabotage that was previously executed against Arctor. However, a sense of paranoia starts to set in with the continued drug use, which is gradually splitting the two hemispheres of Arctor's brain. Fred starts to see Arctor as a completely different individual and genuinely believes that he is spying on another person. The paranoia increases as strange things happen to both Fred and Arctor, whose mind has evidently become completely deranged as a result of using Substance D. After the police agency conducts some routine tests on Fred/Arctor, he learns that the drugs have indeed caused damage to his brain by splitting the two hemispheres. Consequently, Fred/Arctor is taken to a rehabilitation centre called New Path where he is given a new name, Bruce, as a means to cut him off from his drug-using identity. Bruce's brain damage seems to be irreversible and he thus gets sent to the centre's agricultural fields to tend to the crops.

Among the corn fields Bruce notices peculiar blue flowers growing underneath the crops and somehow recognizes that these flowers are the ones used to produce Substance D. The novel ends with Bruce picking one of these flowers and putting it in his shoe to show his friends at New Path.

In this chapter, I look at each of the main themes, drug addiction and police control, which turn the society of this novel into a dystopian one. The first section starts off with the role of the super drug, Substance D, and how it affects the lives of the characters in the novel. This is tied in with Dick's own experiences with drugs and the American drug subculture to show how Dick moved from depicting drugs as recreational and enhancing in his earlier novels, to absolutely destructive and abhorrent in this novel. I argue that Dick's account of narcotics abuse reflects in many ways the history of America's war on drugs that eventually led to the creation of a security state. In the second section, I explore the attributes of the police force depicted in the novel and how these attributes also have a negative effect on the characters. In the final section, I look at the duality of the two forces, drugs and police, and how Dick uses this duality to show that these forces are both good and bad. I contend that Dick ultimately reveals that narcotics abuse and the counter-narcotic strategies employed to fight this are both parts of the malevolent cycle of capitalism.

Substance D and America's drug culture

Dick's writing often depicts instances of drug usage or general drug-using themes, which seems fitting considering that he was surrounded by, and single-handedly experienced, the American 1960s drug subculture. However, '[d]rugs first appear in his writing in *The World Jones Made*, published in 1956, long before a popular drug subculture existed' (Warrick, 1987: 155), which indicates that Dick had peculiar, or even 'prophetic' (Warrick, 1987: 156) ideas about drug usage. In this early novel, one of the characters often visits a bar where drugs like

heroin are served in capsule form. The fact that drug-taking becomes as commonplace as ordering a drink from a bar, and in addition the refined form in which it is taken – swallowing a capsule seems more sophisticated than sniffing powdered narcotics or injecting fluids into one’s veins – indicates, somewhat prophetically, that the use of powerful narcotics could easily become a widespread recreational activity. Indeed, in novels such as *The Game-Players of Titan* (1963) and *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (1966) drug usage appears as a common leisure activity and, moreover, as a creativity enhancer in *The Zap Gun* (1967). After the 60s, however, Dick turned to the dark side of drug usage and considered its nightmarish effects in *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said* (1974) in which a famous television personality’s life is turned upside down when he goes on an extended hallucinatory trip where no one recognizes him and he gets blamed for a murder. Written soon after this, *A Scanner Darkly* takes the darkest turn by exploring in raw detail the devastating effects of widespread narcotics abuse. For this reason, it is regarded by many readers – and critics such as Suvin, Robinson, Mackey, and Warrick alike – as Dick’s most powerful novel.

In *A Scanner Darkly*, Dick does not start off introducing the super drug, Substance D, itself, but rather the distressing effects it has on the personal lives of two of the novel’s characters. The novel opens with an unsettlingly sensory description of Jerry Fabin spending ‘all day shaking bugs from his hair’ (*Scanner*, 861):

The doctor told him there were no bugs in his hair. After he had taken a shower for eight hours, standing under hot water hour after hour suffering the pain of the bugs, he got out and dried himself, and he still had bugs in his hair; in fact, he had bugs all over him. A month later he had bugs in his lungs. (*Scanner*, 861)

This frantic, yet comic, account of Fabin’s bug problem goes on for the next four pages in which his friend, Charles Freck, helps him to catch some of the so-called ‘aphids’ (*Scanner*, 863) in his house and then put them in jars for analysis. Later it is revealed that Fabin was taken to a rehabilitation clinic with ‘irreversible’ damage to ‘the receptor sites in his brain’ (*Scanner*, 873). It is assumed, when reading further, that Fabin is a regular user of Substance

D, which pervades the plot and is one of the ‘villainous forces in the book’ (Suvin, 2002: 376).

The realization that this drug has damaged his brain and caused him to feel the non-existent aphids permanently crawling all over his body,¹ adds a chillingly realistic tone to the novel.

After Fabin’s aphid account, Freck leaves his friend’s house and drives around town looking to score some Substance D, since ‘he only had three hundred tabs of slow death left in his stash’, which amounts to ‘a week’s supply’ (*Scanner*, 865). Freck’s gloomy thoughts reveal a burdening paranoia about running out of his drug supply and having to go into the painful, even lethal, process of withdrawal. However, once he finds a potential supplier, his mood changes:

Happiness, he thought, is knowing you got some pills. [...] What more could he ask out of life? He could probably now count on two weeks lying ahead of him, nearly *half a month*, before he croaked or nearly croaked – withdrawing from Substance D made the two the same. Two weeks! His heart soared, and he smelled, for a moment, coming in from the open windows of the car, the brief excitement of spring. (*Scanner*, 872)

It is not the drug itself or its effect that brings joy to its users anymore, but rather the prospect of not having to suffer the horrible course of withdrawal from it. The blissful prospect of living for another two weeks – which seems like a long time to a burnt-out drug addict – without going into withdrawal creates the stark awareness of exactly how pervasively and deeply this drug has invaded the lives of its users. The users are dependent on this drug for their physical and mental survival, but, ironically, their physical and mental capacities, their brains, are gradually damaged beyond repair by the very same substance. Freck, however, is aware of the destructive effects of the drug, which can be seen in his retelling of the aphid account:

I was up two nights and two days counting bugs. Counting them and putting them in bottles. And finally when we crashed and got up and got ready the next morning to put the bottles in the car, to take to the doctor to show him, there was nothing

¹ Rusyniak (2011: 266) writes that: ‘One interesting aspect of chronic methamphetamine psychosis is the delusion of parasitosis or formication (the thought that one is infested with and being bitten by bugs). Commonly known as *meth mites*, this is a frequent complaint in heavy daily users of methamphetamine’.

in the bottles. Empty. [...] The air no longer smelled of spring and he thought, abruptly, that he urgently needed a hit of Substance D. (*Scanner*, 874).

Freck knows what the drug has done to Fabin's brain and what it is doing to his own, yet he continues to take it. In a sense, he does not see any other option or any escape from his drug dependency. Thus, the opening chapter immediately – even before the protagonist is introduced – sets the novel up to be somewhat uncomfortable and with a very pessimistic outlook: a dystopia from which there is no escape; a darkness into which the characters get drawn ever deeper.

In the next chapter of the novel, more information is learned about the drug Substance D and its attributes. The narcotics division of the police force, the 'S.D. Agency', believes that it apparently has 'only one source' and that it is 'synthetic, not organic', which means that it comes 'from a lab' (*Scanner*, 886). Neither the source nor any of the labs that manufacture it have been found by the police even though the drug is widely distributed across North America (*Scanner*, 886). Bob Arctor, the protagonist, is an agent working for the narcotics division who poses as a drug user in order to gain information that might lead the police to the main supplier of Substance D. When Arctor, disguised as Fred, addresses the audience at a local anti-drug rally, he tries to give a simple breakdown of the super drug:

D, he said aloud to his audience, is for Substance D. Which is for Dumbness and Despair and Desertion, the desertion of your friends from you, you from them, everyone from everyone, isolation and loneliness and hating and suspecting each other. D, he said then, is finally for Death. Slow Death. (*Scanner*, 881)

Suvin (2002: 376) talks about the symbolism attached to the name of this drug and notes that the name can also be an acronym for 'Spiritual Death', as well as the title, 'Scanner Darkly'.

The drug thus symbolizes a slow, or spiritual, death as it gradually destroys the mind:

In many of those taking Substance D, a split between the right hemisphere and the left hemisphere of the brain occurs. There is a loss of proper gestalting, which is a defect within both the percept and cognitive systems, although *apparently* the cognitive system continues to function normally. But what is now received from the percept system is contaminated by being split, so it too, therefore, fails gradually to function, progressively deteriorating. (*Scanner*, 954)

This is essentially what happens to Arctor through the course of the novel; his mind gradually splits and deteriorates beyond repair. This is indeed a super drug, as it 'stands for the bad effects of every single recreational drug, combined and then multiplied' (Robinson, 1984: 109).

Towards the end of the novel, we learn that the senior officials of the S.D. Agency have known that Substance D is organic and not manufactured in a lab. The plant that it is grown from is called '*Mors ontologica*', which means '[d]eath of the spirit' (*Scanner*, 1079). Warrick (1987: 161) writes that the 'name gives the clue to the novel's meaning – the death of being', which is what happens to Arctor as his mind gradually deteriorates. Warrick goes on to say:

For Dick, to exist is to think. When one can no longer think, he no longer exists. Thus, *A Scanner Darkly* is the ultimate novel about death since it pictures the death of the human spirit. No matter that the body survives if the brain cannot function. Reality exists because the human mind constructs it and Substance D has the power to destroy the function of the mind. Substance D is the drug of death. (Warrick, 1987: 161)

We see this very starkly demonstrated in the change in Arctor's identity: at first, Fred is his undercover name, but then he becomes Fred, separated and a different person to Arctor, and finally he altogether loses his identity when he is named Bruce at the rehabilitation facility. In this sense, Dick illustrates that spiritual death is almost worse than physical death as there is no purpose to the existence of the body without the mind. This 'dark, destructive world of drugs pictured in *A Scanner Darkly* marks it as one of the great antidrug novels' (Warrick, 1987: 154) and certainly one of the bleakest, yet realistic novels written by Dick. This makes one wonder why he moved from presenting drugs as a recreational activity in his earlier novels to this gloomy depiction. The answer lies in Dick's own experiences with narcotics and the American drug subculture of the 1960s.

Dick had a lifelong relationship with narcotics as he abused various prescription drugs and occasionally experimented with recreational drugs. Warrick (1987: 155) writes that 'Dick's personal drug history echoes that of the drug culture in the United States':

His mother used prescription drugs continually, a practice that he followed all his life. He began taking drugs in high school for his allergies. He used amphetamines during the 1958–64 period as an aid to writing productively. He also began to take medication for this arrhythmic [sic] tachycardia. Not until the next period, 1964–72, did he use recreational drugs [...]. He experimented on some occasions with LSD [...] [and he] also explored mescaline. [...] Although he occasionally smoked marijuana, amphetamines remained his preferred drug. During this period he took large doses of methadrine, as much as 1,000 pills a week. (Warrick, 1987: 155)

Warrick (1987: 155) further notes that ‘[i]n the 1960s [Dick] was fascinated with the reality-altering possibilities of drugs’, but by the early 70s he was experiencing ‘the darkest [period] of his entire life’ and ‘[m]any of the episodes in *A Scanner Darkly* are literal transcriptions of his experiences during this period’ (Warrick, 1987: 153). Dick’s wife, Nancy, left him in 1970 and took their young daughter with her, which set off a lengthy interval of depression and drug abuse. He experienced bouts of intense paranoia, which is a common side-effect of amphetamine abuse (Sutin, 1994: 169). This eventually led to Dick attempting suicide in 1972, after which he spent some time at a rehabilitation clinic called X-Kalay (Warrick, 1987: 152). Here Dick ‘developed close friendships’ with the community and the ‘agony of the young heroin addicts – who seemed to have aged decades, with bleak pallors and glazed eyes – lingered nightmarishly in [his] memory’ (Sutin, 1994: 193). X-Kalay thus ‘succeeded in making Phil realize the deadly folly of his amphetamine usage’ and after this ordeal he never again took ‘speed on a regular basis’ (Sutin, 1994: 194). It was soon after this ordeal that Dick started writing *A Scanner Darkly* which carries over snippets of these dark times in his life, as well as his views of ‘violently oppos[ing] recreational drugs, insisting that they destroyed, not enhanced, reality’ (Warrick, 1987: 155). Dick openly supported what was then termed ‘the war against illegal drugs’ by writing to the ‘Department of Justice to offer his assistance’ and expressing the hope to ‘accomplish something in this novel in the fight against it’ (Sutin, 1994: 204). Indeed, the novel not only contains elements of Dick’s own negative experience with drugs, but also illustrates the larger societal issues surrounding drug abuse in the United States.

Dick's America, more specifically Dick's California, is often defamiliarized in the plots of his novels, such as those examined in the previous chapters: the planet Mars is realized as a mirror image of California in *Martian Time-Slip* and the post-apocalyptic world in *The Penultimate Truth* represents America during the Cold War years. *A Scanner Darkly* is no different, albeit more realistic and closer to its mirrored image than Dick's earlier novels. The novel is set in 1994, only two decades into the future (as the novel was written between 1973 and 1975), and this 'moves us even closer to the present' (Robinson, 1984: 108):

Essentially the action takes place in a day-after-tomorrow future in which very little has changed in Orange County, Dick's residence of the 1970s. The huge city/suburbia that is Orange County resembles in many ways the common setting of Dick's future Americas, and here it is faithfully rendered as is, without estrangements – so much so that if the text mentions a restaurant on Katella Avenue in Anaheim, you could walk down Katella (better to drive) and find that very restaurant. The text is filled with these objects from our real landscape. (Robinson, 1984: 108)

Indeed, when Arctor walks down 'one of the commercial streets of Anaheim' (*Scanner*, 882) he comments that there will always be 'the same McDonaldburger place over and over' wherever you are in 'Southern California' (*Scanner*, 884). The 'Soviets' (*Scanner*, 877) are mentioned within the context of scientific development and an enthusiastic voice yells: 'Get the commies!' (*Scanner*, 880) at an anti-narcotics rally. This is an indication of the typical anti-communist attitude within America during the Cold War era, which pervaded Dick's life and writing. Another issue that developed during the Cold War was America's war on drugs:

One was born of international political, economic, and ideological competition, the other of domestic social and cultural anxieties. Both sprang from the loins of American identity and, as a result, were shaped by certain notions of American exceptionalism – which is to say that how Americans saw and thought about themselves shaped the way the country confronted communist expansion and the spectre of a global dope menace. (Pembleton, 2017: 41)

Indeed, the 'awful tyranny of drug addiction' was viewed as a 'national security' issue (Pembleton, 2017: 42) by the early anti-narcotics division, and is reflected in the 'Get the commies!' (*Scanner*, 880) exclamation. Towards the end of the novel, one of the narcotics agents mentions 'the dreadful war we've gone through' (*Scanner*, 1083), which refers to the

war on drugs and indicates that the novel echoes the historical events which surrounded America's war on drugs in its early years.

It was in 1971 when U.S. President Nixon 'identified drug abuse as "America's public enemy number one" and declared that the country must "wage a new, all-out offensive"' (Pembleton, 2107: 288) that the war on drugs is said to have officially started in America. However, it was during the 1920s that legal frameworks concerning drug control were already put in place and it 'became routine to see drug control described as a drug war in the press' (Pembleton, 2017: 27). By 1930 the government had set up an independent drug control division called the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, or FBN (Pembleton, 2017: 27), which was the start of various efforts initiated by the authorities in an attempt to subdue narcotics abuse. Central to the FBN's counter-narcotic strategy was the idea that 'narcotics usurped the free will of their users' and that 'addiction was a nigh inevitable consequence of exposure' (Pembleton, 2017: 30). The FBN, however, failed to 'identify the real source of the American market' (Pembleton, 2017: 52), just as Dick's S.D. Agency is unable to find the origins of Substance D. The most menacing drugs and 'the FBN's public enemy number one' (Pembleton, 2017: 29), morphine and heroin, are derived from the opium poppy, which was seen as 'the symbol of sleep and death' (Pembleton, 2017: 30). The narcotics officials, moreover, described addiction to these drugs as a 'living' or 'slow death' (Pembleton, 2017: 37). Such descriptions are reflected in Dick's novel where, as shown above, Substance D is also known as slow death or spiritual death. At the end of the novel when Bruce notices the peculiar blue flowers growing in the fields he is tending to, he says 'I saw death rising from the earth, from the ground itself' (*Scanner*, 1096), which indicates his realization that Substance D is derived from these flowers. There is thus a parallel between the menacing opium poppy and Dick's own reimagining of it as *Mors Ontologica*.

When Bruce is in the rehabilitation clinic, he is described by an official as someone whose head has been eaten:

You have been sprayed, Mike thought as he glanced at the man, so that now you've become a bug. Spray a bug with a toxin and it dies; spray a man, spray his brain, and he becomes an insect that clacks and vibrates about in a closed circle forever. A reflex machine, like an ant. Repeating his last instruction. Nothing new will ever enter his brain, Mike thought, because that brain is gone. And with it, the person who once gazed out. (*Scanner*, 1087)

This image of a living person with a dead brain was one of the common depictions of drug addicts during the operations of the FBN. In anti-narcotics pamphlets distributed by the Bureau, drug addiction was equated with 'the living dead' and 'conjured images of addicts as zombies', since it was stated that 'addicts were technically alive but lived only for their next fix' (Pembleton, 2017: 37) – just as drug users such as Freck only live for their next fix in *A Scanner Darkly*. With these parallel images, Dick's novel thus echoes many of the events and images that formed part of America's war on drugs during the period in which the novel was written. In a sense Dick's novel is set in the midst of a 'failed war on drugs' even though he wrote the novel 'before the "War on Drugs" was in full force' (Lampe, 2015: 84) in the United States. Lampe (2015: 84) writes that Dick 'seems to have predicted that the security state, no matter how powerful, could not hold back the powers of [the] organization represented by the society of drug users and drug dealers'. Nevertheless, the authorities never seem to give up and keep fighting narcotics abuse with increasing force and infiltrating tactics. In an attempt to control narcotics abuse, the security state under Nixon's rule 'acquired unique and wide-ranging authority' (Pembleton, 2017: 294):

It would conduct wiretaps, initiate tax audits, and make warrantless searches and seizures; most controversially, it also had the legal authority to kick in any door that might hide drugs or drug users. (Pembleton, 2017: 294–5)

Nixon's narcotic division, ODALE, carried out 1,439 'military-style police raids' between April 1972 and May 1973 (Pembleton, 2017: 295). Years after Nixon's resignation in 1974, Reagan redeclared the war on drugs in 1982 (Pembleton, 2017: 299). This was, however, 'a tool to reshape the American social contract and carry out Reagan's larger political and cultural

objectives’ (Pembleton, 2017: 300). Part of these objectives included a ‘counter-narcotic strategy [...] pared down to its hardest elements: aggressive confrontation, strong cultural taboos, punitive policing, and source control’ (Pembleton, 2017: 302). This kind of paramilitary security state is presciently represented in *A Scanner Darkly*, alongside the drug abuse with which it is so malignantly intertwined, and will be the topic of discussion of the next section.

The Fascist police state

Dick had a lifelong distrust, even fear, of the authorities that started during the McCarthy witch hunts in the 1950s where ‘FBI surveillance and questioning were not unusual’ (Sutin, 1994: 83). In 1953 Dick and Kleo, his wife at the time, were visited by two FBI agents, who were at first ‘just fishing’, but eventually offered the couple ‘the opportunity to study at the University of Mexico, all expenses paid, if they would spy upon student activities there’ (Sutin, 1994: 83–84). Such visits were frequent during this time and led Dick to later ‘believe himself to be under FBI or other agency surveillance’ (Sutin, 1994: 84). In the early 70s when Dick took up his recreational drug habits, ‘[h]e was fearful of [getting raided by] the police’ and also ‘worried over communists, Nazis, the FBI, and the CIA’ (Sutin, 1994: 169). The ‘bouts of intense paranoia’ that he experienced at this time were ‘a common side effect of amphetamine abuse’, in which he had been engaged (Sutin, 1994: 169). Part of this paranoia was the belief that ‘the FBI and CIA were tapping his phone [and] breaking into his house when he was out and [they were] stealing his papers’ (Sutin, 1994: 179). These experiences and beliefs shaped Dick’s ideas about the authorities and the large-scale surveillance they were apparently implementing, and such ideas were carried over into his writing. In *A Scanner Darkly*, the security state emerges as one of the other main themes, or ‘villainous forces’, of the novel as it exerts ‘total police control over [the] characters’ lives’ (Sutin, 2002: 376).

One of the devices that the S.D. Agency employs in Dick's novel in order to carry out its undercover work is the 'scramble suit' (*Scanner*, 876). The wearer of this suit is unrecognizable and appears as 'a vague blur' since the technology consists of 'a multifaced quartz lens' that projects a combination of fragments of the physiognomic features of over a million people in randomized sequences (*Scanner*, 877). When the scramble suit is put on, its wearer 'cannot be identified by voice, or even by technological voiceprint, or by appearance' (*Scanner*, 876), which are necessary components when doing undercover work:

You see, there is a dire risk for these police officers because the forces of dope, as we know, have penetrated with amazing skill into the various law-enforcement apparatuses throughout our nation, or may well have, according to most informed experts. So for the protection of these dedicated men, this scramble suit is necessary. (*Scanner*, 878)

Arctor is first introduced in the novel wearing his scramble suit when he addresses the crowd at an anti-narcotics rally. The host of the rally introduces him as 'Fred, because this is the code name under which he reports the information he gathers' (*Scanner*, 876). When Fred goes into the agency to meet with his superior, he is faced with 'another nebulous blur representing himself as Hank' (*Scanner*, 905). During this time and especially when they are discussing heavy subjects, which often involve other drug users that include Arctor's circle of friends, Fred's responses are completely emotionless, not because of the 'toneless and artificial' (*Scanner*, 878) voice of the scramble suit, but because of the nature of the situation itself. Of the emotionlessness of these situations he comments as follows:

At first he had believed it to be the scramble suits that both of them wore; they could not physically sense each other. Later on he conjectured that the suits made no actual difference; it was the situation itself. Hank, for professional reasons, purposefully played down the usual warmth, the usual arousal in all directions; no anger, no love, no strong emotions of any sort would help either of them. How could intense natural involvement be of use when they were discussing crimes, serious crimes, committed by persons close to Fred and even, as in the case of Luckman and Donna, dear to him? He had to neutralize himself; they both did, him more so than Hank. (*Scanner*, 907)

However, after the meeting is over and 'Fred evolved into Bob Arctor [...], the terrible colors seeped back into him whether he liked it or not' (*Scanner*, 908). When assuming his

undercover persona, Arctor thus becomes physically dehumanized, since 'the wearer of a scramble suit was Everyman' (*Scanner*, 877) and has no identity, as well as emotionally dehumanized since he is forced to suppress his natural feelings.

The police state, in order to carry out its function to serve and protect, is known to employ surveillance systems in both public and private spaces. Indeed, Foucault (2004: 553) says that a society 'traversed throughout with hierarchy, surveillance, observation, [and] writing [...] is the utopia of a perfectly governed city'. Extensive surveillance systems are in place in the fictional worlds of Zamyatin's *We* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* where they function to control the populace, but ultimately oppress them. Zamyatin's D-503 mentions that any letter being sent has to 'pass through the Bureau of Guardians' (*We*, 45) and he notices that there are 'elegantly decorated diaphragms on every avenue, recording street conversations for the Bureau of Guardians' (*We*, 48). Winston Smith comments on the oppressive surveillance systems of the Party by saying that you 'had to live – did live, from habit that became instinct – in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized' (1984, 6). The surveillance systems function not only to recognise defiant behaviour, but also to instil the sense in people that someone could be watching or listening to them at any given moment. Since the 'power relation [is] independent of the person who exercises it, [...] the inmates [...] are themselves the bearers' (Foucault, 2004: 555), meaning that the government does not have to exercise discipline directly, but that the population discipline themselves due to the knowledge and fear of being watched. As such, the situation is ideal for the government, but oppressive for the masses.

In *A Scanner Darkly*, the police force similarly employs extensive surveillance systems in an attempt to prevent the distribution and abuse of narcotics. There are frequent references made to these surveillance systems throughout the novel and, moreover, the characters are acutely

aware that they are being observed. When Freck is driving in his car and notices a 'black-and-white [...] moving along behind him in traffic' (*Scanner*, 866), he immediately assumes that the policeman is tailing him with the intent of questioning him once he has pulled over. Freck then conjures a 'horror-fantasy number' in which he is unable to identify himself to the policeman – since he forgot his own name – who threatens to shoot him because he 'is really spaced' (*Scanner*, 966). Freck thinks to himself that one has to be able to come up with one's name in order to 'survive in a fascist police state' (*Scanner*, 866). This fantasy number indicates the terrifying fear that drug users have of the police as well as the seriousness of the crimes involving narcotics abuse, since Freck believes that he would get shot on the spot when he is caught. Later on in the novel when Freck is heading over to Arctor's house, 'he skillfully avoid[s] the radar traps that the police kept everywhere (the police radar vans checking out drivers usually took the disguise of old raunchy VW vans, painted dull brown, driven by bearded freaks; when he saw such vans he slowed)' (*Scanner*, 965). Moreover, when Freck heads into a convenience store, he notices the customary surveillance:

As usual, a huge dumb cop stood pretending to read a stroke-book magazine at the front counter; in actuality, Charles Freck knew, he was checking out everyone who entered, to see if they were intending to hit the place. (*Scanner*, 894)

Even though Freck is an exceptionally paranoid drug user, his observances function as an indicator of the widespread presence of the police in this fictional world. In some ways, Freck's paranoia echoes that of Dick, who experienced the same distrust and fear of the authorities.

Freck's observances of an extensive police presence seem somewhat unbelievable as many of these are fantasies of a paranoid drug user. However, the police surveillance tactics are experienced first-hand by Arctor, who is a credible observer, since he himself is an undercover agent. His personal and professional experiences thus confirm Freck's distrust of the police, as does his awareness of the surveillance systems. While Arctor is walking down a commercial

street in his guise of drug addict, he knows that he might easily be harassed by the police, and he then thinks about times when that had happened to him:

[T]he cop would yell at him, “Ever been ARRESTED?” Or, as a variant on that, adding, “BEFORE?” As if he were about to go into the bucket right then.

“What’s the beef?” he usually said, if he said anything at all. A crowd naturally gathered. Most of them assumed he’d been nailed dealing on the corner. They grinned uneasily and waited to see what happened, although some of them, usually Chicanos or blacks or obvious heads, looked angry. And those that looked angry began after a short interval to be aware that they looked angry, and they changed that swiftly to impassive. Because everybody knew that anyone looking angry or uneasy – it didn’t matter which – around cops must have something to hide. The cops especially knew that, legend had it, and they hassled such persons automatically. (*Scanner*, 883)

As an undercover agent, Arctor’s function is to survey the drug scene and therefore he is familiar with the devices used to do this. Two of the main methods are tapping phones and having camera feeds in public places, such as the ‘automatic holo-scanners [...] in the parking of the 7-11 store’ (*Scanner*, 885). When Arctor uses a phone booth to make a phone call to Donna, a known drug dealer and his unofficial girlfriend, he knowingly reflects that ‘[e]very pay phone in the world [is] tapped [and] if it wasn’t, some crew somewhere just hadn’t gotten around to it’ (*Scanner*, 887). He then explains the process of this:

The taps fed electronically onto storage reels at a central point, and about once every second day a print-out was obtained by an officer who listened to many phones without having to leave his office. He merely rang up the storage drums and, on signal, they played back, skipping all dead tape. Most calls were harmless. The officer could identify ones that weren’t fairly [harmless] readily. That was his skill. That was what he got paid for. (*Scanner*, 887)

These surveillance devices appear extensively in public spaces, however, the police do not stop here as they employ surveillance devices within private spaces – people’s houses and cars – as well.

Arctor himself becomes a victim of the infiltrating surveillance devices placed in his own house, however, unlike most victims, he knows about it and will be the person in charge of spying on his own house and himself. This is put in motion when during one of Fred’s briefing sessions

at the agency, his superior, Hank – who is unaware that Fred is really Arctor – assigns Fred to ‘observe Bob Arctor’ (*Scanner*, 910) by means of ‘the new holographic system’ (*Scanner*, 911). This means that ‘a constant monitoring system of the latest design’ (*Scanner*, 911) will be placed in Arctor’s house and car. Naturally, Fred keeps his pose, but thinks to himself that ‘[t]his is terrible’ (*Scanner*, 910). Yet, he complies with this assignment and arranges for his house to be empty ‘for a period of time in order that it be properly bugged’ (*Scanner*, 921). Arctor ‘obligingly’ leaves his house, knowing that the authorities will ‘do a little illegal searching above and beyond what their undercover people did when no one was looking’ (*Scanner*, 921). From then on, Arctor regularly puts on his scramble suit and goes to the surveillance hub near his house where he can access and watch the live or recorded feeds of his house. He scrutinizes his roommates, Barris and Luckman, to see what they are up to when he is not around, but also goes through the recordings in which he himself appears. However, after a while, Arctor starts to become paranoid with the knowledge of being watched as soon as he enters his house:

Immediately he felt something watching: the holo-scanners on him. As soon as he crossed his own threshold. Alone – no one but him in the house. Untrue! Him and the scanners, insidious and invisible, that watched him and recorded. Everything he did. Everything he uttered. (*Scanner*, 1018)

Arctor’s paranoia starts to show as he questions who the people, or ‘they’, are that are watching him. He decides that ‘[w]hatever it is that’s watching, it is not human’ and considers it the ‘depersonalized *it*’ (*Scanner*, 1019). It is almost as if he has forgotten that *he* is the one, who as his undercover persona, Fred, watches his own house. Or, perhaps he considers this inhuman persona as an extension of the security state rather than part of himself. Nevertheless, at this point in the novel Arctor’s identity and mind start to split in two owing to his continued usage of Substance D.

Towards the end of the novel, it turns out that Mike, an official from the rehabilitation centre, and Donna, a supposed drug dealer, are also undercover agents as they are seen meeting up

in a burger joint discussing Bruce's – Arctor's new persona at the rehabilitation centre – progress. From this conversation we learn that the S.D. Agency has purposefully allowed Arctor to become addicted to Substance D in order for him to eventually end up in a rehabilitation centre called New Path. The agency suspects that New Path is the producer of Substance D, but has not been able to infiltrate this organization yet, as New Path would 'only let a burned-out husk like Bruce in' (*Scanner*, 1079). Mike and Donna are thus trying to arrange for Bruce to get sent to New Path's agricultural fields where Substance D, *Mors Ontologica*, is suspected of being grown. However, they fear that his brain might be too damaged to recognize the plant and somehow report back with evidence of it. Mike feels guilty about doing this, but concludes that '[t]he dead [...] who can still see, even if they can't understand: they are our camera' (*Scanner*, 1089). In this sense, Arctor ultimately becomes a 'total symbol of the logic of the surveillance state' (Lampe, 2015: 86) as the government uses him as a surveillance instrument at the cost of his destroyed mental capacity. Donna remarks that '[t]he government asks an awful lot' (*Scanner*, 1079) and continues to express the guilt she feels over what is being done to Arctor:

I think, really, there is nothing more terrible than the sacrifice of someone or something, a living thing, without its ever knowing. If it *knew*. If it understood and volunteered. But [...] he doesn't know; he never did know. He didn't volunteer. (*Scanner*, 1080)

Earlier when Donna takes Arctor, who has started to withdraw from Substance D, to the rehabilitation clinic, she hears the sirens of a police car in pursuit and remarks that it 'sound[s] like a deranged animal, greedy to kill' (*Scanner*, 1063). Donna then compares herself to the deranged police sirens by asking herself:

Do I emit that greedy kind of noise? [...] Am I that thing? Closing in, or having closed in? Having caught? [...] Below them, the noise of the police car had abruptly ceased; it had stopped its quarry. Its job was done. Holding Bob Arctor against her, she thought, Mine is done, too. (*Scanner*, 1064)

Dick produces a negative image of the police state by depicting the liberties it takes in infiltrating the lives of citizens through extensive surveillance systems. Donna herself has

become an agent of this infiltration by tricking Arctor, through her undercover identity as a drug dealer and his almost-lover, into unknowingly becoming a surveillance tool used by the police. In a sense, there is a parallel between the two villainous forces, Substance D and the Fascist police, as both of them infiltrate people's lives and cause Arctor to lose his identity. The duality of these two forces as well as the divide within Arctor's self are discussed next.

The divided self and the true enemy

Dick had a twin sister, Jane, who died a few weeks after their birth in 1929 and the 'trauma of [her] death remained the central event of [his] psychic life' (Sutin, 1994: 12). He continuously obsessed over his departed twin from a young age and the 'torment extended throughout his life, manifesting itself in difficult relations with women and a fascination with resolving dualist (twin-poled) dilemmas' (Sutin, 1994: 12). Sutin goes on to say:

The obsession, found in twins, with dualities – as complementary and conflicting at once – has been termed *twinning* by Dr. George Engel ("The drive is always to be two, yet unique from all others"). This "twinning" motif found expression in a number of Phil's stories and novels, notably *Dr. Bloodmoney* (1965), *Flow My Tears*, *The Policeman Said* (1974), *A Scanner Darkly* (1977), *Valis* (1981), and *The Divine Invasion* (1981). (Sutin, 1994: 17–18)

Indeed, in *Flow My Tears*, Dick uses the twinning motif by having literal twins as main characters of the novel. Felix Buckman is a police general who represents 'law and order' and is 'countered by Alys', his twin sister and 'a hedonistic, destructive individual' (Warrick, 1987: 159). In *A Scanner Darkly*, Dick 'incorporates these contrasting elements in a single character' (Warrick, 1987: 159), Arctor/Fred. As Fred, he is a policeman like Buckman and as Arctor he is 'an addict in the world of street drugs who lives only for sensual pleasure, as did Alys' (Warrick, 1987: 159). Dick manages to evoke empathy for both the policeman and the drug addict in these two novels as at 'this point in his career, his sympathies are divided' (Lampe. 2015: 84):

He clearly hates drugs and sees their use as damaging. He long since abandoned the idea that drugs could in themselves be a path to understanding the truth. But,

at the same time, his political sympathies are with the bottom, thus the drug addicts and those consumed by poverty, drug use, and police repression. (Lampe, 2015: 84)

Furthermore, Dick alternates between depicting policemen as oppressors and guarantors of law and order (Warrick, 1987: 165), which indicates the duality embodied in these authority figures. Warrick (1987: 165) explains this duality by saying that for Dick, the ‘policeman must always be an inner one’, because if ‘the police control is external, it is oppressive’.

Suvin (2002: 376) writes that ‘the omnipresent image of the novel is the materialized metaphor of a man divided against himself’: as an undercover agent, Fred has to spy on himself whilst keeping his identity as Arctor a secret. Together with this, the ‘two villainous forces in the book’, Substance D and police control, both ‘scramble Fred’s mind’ (Suvin, 2002: 376). After Arctor speaks at the anti-narcotics rally as Fred, wearing the scramble suit, he starts to question his identity by asking things like ‘What is identity?’ and ‘What am I actually?’ (*Scanner*, 883). Soon after Arctor is assigned to observe himself, and while he is on a drug trip with his roommates who are talking mostly nonsense, he thinks to himself:

How many Bob Arctors are there? [...] Two that I can think of, he thought. The one called Fred, who will be watching the other one, called Bob. The same person. Or is it? Is Fred actually the same as Bob? Does anybody know? I would know, if anyone did, because I’m the only person in the world that knows that Fred is Bob Arctor. But, he thought, who am I? Which of them is me? (Scanner, 942)

Arctor tries to answer these questions when, as Fred, he starts to watch the recorded tapes of the holo-scanners in his house. In a sense, the holo-scanners function as a tool of self-awareness in Arctor/Fred’s case:

What does a scanner see? [...] Into the head? Down into the heart? Does a passive infrared scanner [...] see into me – into us – clearly or darkly? I hope it does, he thought, see clearly, because I can’t any longer these days see into myself. (Scanner, 1019)

However, while watching himself on the tapes, ‘his mind [...] split[s] in half (*Scanner*, 1005), which causes him to see ‘more and more “in part,” or only partially’ (Mackey, 1986: 110). The observing ego has thus turned on itself to reveal only fragments:

Arctor is unable to see himself except as an object. In doing so he loses coordination between the rational, linear consciousness of his left brain and the spatial, intuitive right brain. Left-brained Fred splits off altogether from right-brained Arctor. Then, both “die” because they cannot exist independently. (Mackey, 1986: 110–111)

Consequently, Arctor, assuming his police persona, starts a series of speculations in his head about himself in the third person: ‘Arctor himself wrote this check’ (*Scanner*, 1013), ‘Arctor has not been very responsible’ (*Scanner*, 1015), ‘Arctor is no longer keeping his vehicle in safe condition’ (*Scanner*, 1016), and ‘I know Bob Arctor; he’s a good person’ (*Scanner*, 1017).

A few pages on, Fred is again watching the holo-scanners, but this time he is watching Arctor’s movements carefully and suspiciously. He reflects on Arctor’s recent changed behaviour and considers that this suspect might be fooling the authorities:

What is Arctor doing? Fred wondered, and noted the ident code for these sections. He’s becoming more and more strange. [...] Unless he is shucking me, Fred thought with uneasiness. In some fashion figured out that he’s being monitored and is...covering up what he’s actually doing? Or just playing head games with us? (*Scanner*, 1023–24)

This scene indicates the definite split between the two personas of the protagonist as he firmly believes here that he is Fred and that Arctor is another person altogether. However, the self-monitoring or identity crisis brought on by the double life he leads is not the true cause of this split, but rather exacerbates it. In truth, ‘Arctor is an addict, addicted to Substance D, and his mind is deranged now’ (*Scanner*, 1038). This is confirmed by officials from the police psychology testing lab after Fred’s test results reveal that the ‘two hemispheres of [his] brain are competing’ (*Scanner*, 1041) and Substance D has caused it:

This is what we expected; this is what the tests confirm. Damage having taken place in the normally dominant left hemisphere, the right hemisphere is attempting to compensate for the impairment. But the twin functions do not fuse, because this is an abnormal condition the body isn’t prepared for. It should never happen. *Cross-cuing*, we call it. Related to split-brain phenomena. (*Scanner*, 1041)

The psychologists go on to explain that it ‘is as if one hemisphere of [Fred’s] brain is perceiving the world as reflected in a mirror’ (*Scanner*, 1042). When hearing this Fred starts to ponder

what it means to see the world through a 'darkened mirror'² or 'a darkened scanner' (*Scanner*, 1042) and he concludes that he has been looking at himself 'backward' (*Scanner*, 1043). However, he still fails to realize the split in his own person and is shocked when Hank reveals that he has figured out that Fred is really Arctor:

"I'm *who*?" he said, staring at Hank, the scramble suit facing him. "I'm Bob Arctor?" He could not believe it. It made no sense to him. It did not fit anything he had done or thought; it was grotesque. (*Scanner*, 1056)

This devastating realization, together with the subsequent drug withdrawal that he goes through, destroys both Fred and Arctor, since they cannot exist independently. Mackey (1986: 111) says that the 'only thing left to do at [this] point is to start over, and Bruce is the reborn child'.

Suvin (2002: 376) argues that the duality of the 'two villainous forces [...] introduces a basic confusion of values'. Firstly, the 'police control which is ostensibly there to combat drugs is shown as not only abhorrent, but totally counterproductive' by having their undercover agents become addicted to drugs (Suvin, 2002: 376). On the other hand, while 'Dick's animus is clearly against the drug culture', he implies in the Author's Note, added on to the novel, that his sympathies lie with 'the naïve and wiped-out drug-taking generation' (Suvin, 2002: 376–377). However, if one considers the fact that 'drugs are supremely bad, then the bad and grotesque police fighting it is in a way good' (Suvin, 2002: 377), since the police authorities are trying to stop the production and spread of this powerful drug. This contradiction is exemplified by the character of Donna who seems sweet and innocent to Arctor and his friends, and is furthermore described at the beginning of the novel as having 'lovely large dark warm eyes' (*Scanner*, 870). However, towards the end of the novel when it is revealed that Donna is an undercover agent whose job was to get Arctor addicted to Substance D so that

² Arctor here refers to a passage from the Bible that reads: 'For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known' (1 Corinthians 13:12, American Standard Version).

he would eventually get sent to rehabilitation, she guiltily admits that the police are ‘colder than [t]he adversary’:

I am warm on the outside, what people see. Warm eyes, warm face, warm [...] fake smile, but inside I am cold all the time, and full of lies. I am not what I seem to be; I am awful. (*Scanner*, 1081)

In a sense, Donna, who is a representative of the police force, knows that what she has done to Arctor is not morally right, but still she does it in the hope of finding the source of Substance D and being able to stop the distribution of this destructive drug.

The drug users are themselves not bad people, but merely those who ‘wanted to keep on having a good time forever, and were punished for that’ (*Scanner*, 1098). The police invade people’s lives and even destroy lives, such as the case of Arctor/Bruce, but federal agents, such as Donna, knowingly do it in order to take down the larger enemy. In truth, Substance D and the police force are not the real villains of this novel, but are rather manifestations of the true enemy: capitalism. Suvin (2002: 377) writes that ‘there is also a hint that there has been a total take-over by commercial interests’ in this novel. This can be seen in the following reflection of Arctor:

Life in Anaheim, California, was a commercial for itself, endlessly replayed. Nothing changed; it just spread out farther and farther in the form of neon ooze. What there was always more of had been congealed into permanence long ago, as if the automatic factory that cranked out these objects had jammed in the *on* position. How the land became plastic, he thought, remembering the fairy tale “How the Sea Became Salt”. Someday, he thought, it’ll be mandatory that we all sell the McDonald’s hamburger as well as buy it; we’ll sell it back and forth to each other forever from our living rooms. (*Scanner*, 884)

This reflection by Arctor somewhat foreshadows his own situation, as by the end of the novel, it is suggested that ‘New-Path [...] did this to him’ by creating the deadly substance ‘to make him this way so they would ultimately receive him back’ (*Scanner*, 1088). The rehabilitation centre where he ends up is suspected of growing the flowers used to make Substance D and eventually this is confirmed when at the end of the novel Bruce sees the blue flowers growing beneath the crops in the agricultural fields of New-Path. The distribution and addiction to drugs

leads people to seek rehabilitation at New-Path, which then uses the ex-addicts to tend to their fields and finally produce more drugs. As more drugs are released into the market, the narcotics agency comes up with new ways, such as employing undercover agents and using invasive surveillance systems, to futilely track down the drug manufacturers. In that sense, there is the never-ending cycle of people selling the product back and forth to one another: supply and demand, the cycle of capitalism.

This cycle of capitalism was already identified as immoral by Karl Marx during the nineteenth century. Marx notices that businesses operating within the capitalist system exploit their workers by paying them less than the value of the products they manufacture. As such, these employers gain extra money, which they use to expand their business ventures rather than seeing to the well-being of their employees. The capitalists keep on expanding their business in a very competitive way and this eventually results in the formation of monopolies, which further exploit workers and extend to consumers as well. In Dick's novel, *Substance D* is an acute example of this immoral cycle. The realization that New-Path secretly produces the same drug that it publicly fights against not only creates an inescapably doomed society, but also shows the rooted evils of capitalism. Dick sees the workings of capitalism – where people spend most of their lives working hard to produce goods only to consume these goods themselves and so be deceived into thinking that this lifestyle makes them happy – as profoundly bad, and shows us this by illustrating a society from which 'there is no way out: a tight circle of death imprisons people and forces them back to feed on themselves' (Mackey, 1986: 110).

New-Path becomes the metaphor for this circle of death imposed by capitalism since 'Dick viewed drug rehabilitation centres as one of the many manifestations of the totalitarian state' (Mackey, 1986: 111). Robinson (1984: 109) adds that Bruce is staying in a 'Synanon-style drug

rehabilitation centre which turns out to be a little dystopia'. Dick himself experienced a Synanon-style centre when he stayed at X-Kalay in 1970. One of the key approaches of these centres is 'attack-therapy' in which 'residents and staff confronted each other' in an extremely abusive way (Sutin, 1994: 193). Bruce also experiences these so-called therapy sessions: 'He sat in the Game and they screamed at him. Faces, all over, screaming; he gazed down' (*Scanner*, 1075). Mackey (1986: 111) explains that 'New-Path uses group attack therapy to break down the subject's ego', which causes the 'personality [to be] relentlessly reprogrammed to obey authority'. The centre thus removes the last bit of identity left to these burnt-out drug addicts – totally dehumanizing them. These residents' cognitive functions are severely damaged and their personalities are reprogrammed, which means that they can be entirely controlled and will not show any dissent. This happens to Bruce who is an empty shell or 'a burned-out husk' (*Scanner*, 1079) with no ideas of his own. He becomes entirely dehumanized as he has lost his identity, self-awareness, and a great deal of his mental capacity – that which would make him a free agent with a will of his own. This echoes Zamyatin's One State that wishes to destroy the identity and free will of its citizens by means of 'the Great Operation' (*We*, 158), which is a kind of lobotomy. The One State's motive for the elimination of its citizens' self-awareness is to avoid dissent and ultimately to exercise total control over the nation. In *A Scanner Darkly*, the final motive, then, is something similar where New-Path 'uses its victims to help perpetuate itself' (Mackey, 1986: 111). New-Path thus represents the capitalist system, which, in the same sense, uses its victims – the workforce – to perpetuate itself.

New-Path is an example of a capitalist monopoly as it is the only manufacturer of Substance D. Earlier in the novel when Arctor and Donna are talking to each other, Donna expresses her hate of the Coca-Cola Company, which is the archetypal capitalist monopoly, since '[n]o one can make Coke but them, like the phone company does when you want to phone someone'

(*Scanner*, 987). Donna voices Dick's adverse attitude towards capitalist monopolies as well as his detestation of drugs, since 'Coke' can also refer to the street name of the common drug, cocaine. Suvin (2002: 378) writes that Donna is 'both a federal agent and the member of a resistance movement [...] dreaming of killing the whole class of her oppressors'. At the end of the novel, Donna 'ram[s] her old enemy, her ancient foe, the Coca-Cola truck', but her car spins around and the truck drives on undented (*Scanner*, 1065). She ponders the consequences:

Well, it was bound to happen sooner or later, her war, her taking on a symbol and a reality that outweighed her. Now my insurance rates will go up, she realized as she climbed from her car. In this world you pay for tilting with evil in cold, hard cash. (*Scanner*, 1065)

Donna's war is also Dick's war against both drugs and capitalism. As previously mentioned, in 1973 Dick expressed in a letter to the U.S. Department of Justice that he wrote *A Scanner Darkly* with the hope 'to accomplish something [...] in the fight against [drug-abuse]' (Sutin, 1994: 204). In the Author's Note attached to the novel, he writes that: 'I am not a character in this novel; I am the novel' (*Scanner*, 1098). Thus, with this novel, Dick attempted to take on a symbol and reality – drug addiction and capitalism – that outweighed him. He depicts a fictional world, based on his own world, in which '[t]here is no exit [and] the finality is terrible' (Mackey, 1986: 111), but still offers 'a little undying spark of hope amid the overwhelming gloom' (Suvin, 2002: 378):

"I saw," Bruce said. He thought, I knew. That was it: I saw Substance D growing. I saw death rising from the earth, from the ground itself, in one blue field, in stubbled color. [...] Stooping down, Bruce picked one of the stubbled blue plants, then placed it in his right shoe, slipping it down out of sight. A present for my friends, he thought, and looked forward inside his mind, where no one could see, to Thanksgiving. (*Scanner*, 1096)

There is thus the hope that Bruce will return the flower to New-Path and Mike, who will hand it over to Donna and the police. All the undercover work that they have done and the sacrifices they have made would thus be justifiable in a sense. This final moment in the novel offers the

same hope of combating drug addiction that Dick hoped for when writing the novel as a means to accomplish something to aid America's war on drugs.

* * *

A Scanner Darkly is like no other novel or short story produced by Dick, though it contains some of his favourite elements: anti-authoritarian sentiments, the twinning motif, a critique on capitalism, and overwhelming forces that cause oppression and dehumanization. Dick's ambitions of becoming an author of mainstream novels as well as his experimentation with realist themes certainly helped to shape the structure of this novel. Moreover, his personal experiences, with drug abuse, rehabilitation, paranoia, and police interference, fill in the details of the novel's plot. The novel is not strictly speaking autobiographical, but it does reflect the social and political milieu of Dick's time as well as his own personal experiences and attitudes toward drug abuse, police control, and capitalism. The novel has many functions: as Dick proclaims in the Author's Note, he himself is the novel, but he also says there that the novel is a eulogy of sorts to the people he had personally known who succumbed to the consequences of drug abuse.³ Moreover, Dick uses the novel to express his aversion to both drug abuse and capitalist practices; perhaps he even tries to convey that drug abuse – addiction, the craving to consume – is a consequence of capitalism. In this sense, it seems that according to Dick, capitalism is the true enemy of the modern world. It puts in place a ruthless cycle that keeps those in the slums from rising above their poverty, and makes the middle class eternal slaves to the elite. In the novel, the poor keep returning to narcotics as a means of escaping their menial lives, but the addiction just pushes them further down the food-chain by extorting all of their money and finally claiming their lives when they end up as burnt-out husks in

³ In the Author's Note, Dick writes: 'In Memoriam. These were the comrades whom I had; there are no better. They remain in my mind, and the enemy will never be forgiven. The "enemy" was their mistake in playing. Let them all play again, in some other way, and let them be happy' (*Scanner*, 1098).

rehabilitation clinics. The middle-class characters, such as the ones who attend the anti-narcotics rally in *A Scanner Darkly*, support the security state with their tax payments which are used to fund the surveillance systems and undercover agents' salaries. Then, monopolies like New-Path who claim to rehabilitate the drug addicts, use the labour of the ex-addicts to produce more of the product that got them addicted in the first place – which brings this capitalist process full-cycle. The directors and CEOs of these monopolies are the only ones who benefit from capitalism, while the rest of society toils away, just as Marx explains in *Capital*.

In order to present the true enemy of society, Dick uses elements typical of dystopian writing to show how his own society has become a dystopic one. As with many of his other novels, and in particular the ones looked at in this study, Dick uses the technique of defamiliarization to separate his fictional world from his contemporary world. The place that the novel is set in remains California, but the time is set two decades into the future to create a sense of defamiliarization that allows Dick to critique his own society. The novel is somewhat prophetic as it foresees the failure of America's war on drugs at the very moment it was being declared. The effects of this war on drugs – a mind-destructive drug and the attributes used by the police to combat it, such as the scramble suit and holo-scanners – totally dehumanize the characters of the novel. Moreover, the characters are oppressed by the widespread police presence that monitors their every movement publicly and even privately. Such elements are characteristic of the dystopian novels of Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell. Dick, however, seems to stretch his dystopian vision further by finally expressing that it is not a totalitarian government or tyrannical leader who controls and oppresses society, but rather the system of capitalism itself.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This dissertation has shown that even though Dick's novels are placed in the category of science fiction writing, his work speaks of very real issues present in society. Moreover, he uses realism in order to convey such issues as well as to critique them. Critics such as Robinson, Sutin, and Warrick talk about Dick's yearning to produce and publish mainstream fiction rather than what was considered at the time to be 'lowly, escapist paraliterature' (Robinson, 1984: 2). Unfortunately, Dick could not find a publisher for his early realist novels, which he wrote hoping 'to contribute something important to the literature of his time' (Robinson, 1984: 1) and had to produce science-fictional stories and novels in order to make a living. Nevertheless, he continued, as I have shown, to interweave realist themes into his writing, since he 'wanted to write about the society he lived in [as well as] to make a social critique' (Robinson, 1984: 1). Throughout his writing career, Dick experimented with the science-fictional genre and realist themes, which resulted in novels that appear to be science fictional – since the covers often depict scenes of interstellar battles and frontiers of alien worlds – but are in fact realist novels that reflect on the lives of average working-class people who face the same social issues as the books' readers. I have thus argued that Dick employs dystopian elements – defamiliarization, dehumanization, oppression, scientific advancements, technologically advanced surveillance methods, and doomed societies – in his novels in order to reveal and critique the real evils present in his society.

In chapter 2, I argued that the premise of *Martian Time-Slip* certainly seems science-fictional, since this novel is set on Mars, a new colony to which a group of Earthlings have emigrated. However, through the use of defamiliarization, Dick shows us that Mars is really a reflection or representation of life in 1960s California, his home state. The characters in the novel represent

a group of average working-class Americans, who face common social issues: economic oppression, as they have escaped the overcrowded Earth in order to futilely make a better living on Mars; government control, as the UN ensures that water rationing takes place and determines the educational syllabi in the public school system; and mental illness, which is one of the main themes of the novel, as schizophrenia and autism are disorders common amongst its characters. The indoctrination lessons given by the teaching machines of the Public School and the widespread incidence of mental disorders cause many of the characters in the novel to become dehumanized. I argued that instead of a fruitless attempt at rebellion or escape from this doomed society, Dick's characters resist the oppressive and dehumanizing forces by trying their best to persevere in this dystopian world, which is a mirror-image of Dick's own contemporary surroundings. Dick thus suggests that we need to try to preserve some sense of human dignity and freedom in order to resist the ever-encroaching dehumanizing forces of the real world. Moreover, I argued that Dick illustrates his aversion to the capitalist system in *Martian Time-Slip*, where the main focus is the corrupt system of economic values that the U.S., especially the state of California, adhered to in the 1960s. By spatially distancing the setting of the novel from his own, Dick is able to critique the system of capitalism by showing how it affects the lives of the Martian settlers.

Chapter 3 focused on *The Penultimate Truth*, which shows the aftermath of the third world war – an acknowledged possibility during the Cold War period. The main theme of this novel is that the masses who live underground are led to believe, by the use of various fabrications by the elite, that the war has not ended, when in fact there is peace above ground. These lies oppress and dehumanise not only the masses, but ironically *also* the members of the elite who are telling them. There are numerous scientific and technological advancements in this society, but these have either been destroyed in the war or are used to perpetuate the deception and exercise of control, rather than liberate the masses – as is typical in the classical dystopian

novels. The faked World War II documentaries that Joseph watches (see pp. 73, 75) indicate that the lies and fakery of the novel's present are nothing new and that this society has been built on decades of fabrications. With this, Dick suggests to us that what we know of the events of the last century, especially the two world wars, could very well be twisted and fabricated. Dick urges readers to question what is real, but at the same time he says that we may never know, as modern society has been built on layers and layers of fabrications, which makes it nearly impossible to reach the ultimate truth. Additionally, the novel is heavily informed by the Cold War paranoia that reached its height in the 1960s in America, as well as America's involvement in many of the Cold War's proxy wars abroad. Dick was clearly against the government's efforts to involve American citizens in these wars, which included mandatory army reserve training and additional tax surcharges, and he critiques the government in this novel. Dick furthermore uses two metaphors to illustrate how the pyramid class structure in the novel represents the same hierarchical structure present in the U.S. and that it is used by the elite to 'keep the workers underfoot' (Robinson, 1984: 68). This structure is essentially part of the capitalist system, which Dick also critiques in this novel.

In Chapter 4, I showed that Dick's characters attempt to survive in a world dominated by drugs, police control, and capitalism in *A Scanner Darkly*. There seems to be no escape from a system where the game is rigged – and the same rehabilitation centre that purports to support drug addicts is found to be the manufacturer of the destructive drug, Substance D, and that furthermore uses the ex-addicts to work in the fields and grow the plant from which the drug is produced. Consumers are oppressed by a system that pushes drugs onto them – after which they inevitably become addicted – and then by the police force, which, in an attempt to control and combat drug addiction, causes very oppressive and dehumanizing conditions for drug users. This includes widespread surveillance, such as police patrols, undercover agents, phone taps, and holo-scanners (cameras) installed extensively in both public and private

spaces. The only science fictional elements in this novel are the super drug, Substance D, and the advanced surveillance systems: the holo-scanners and the scramble suit. The novel's setting, once again, is an authentic and very near-future version of Orange County, California, which indicates that the horrifying reality of the novel is imminent. I suggested that Dick is saying that it is too late to move away from this reality, as it has already taken shape in contemporary society. Dick also demonstrates the effects of capitalism on lower class citizens in a dark vision of the horrific consequences of drug abuse and police control. Although the focus of *A Scanner Darkly* is not a critique of capitalism itself, Dick reveals that the outcome of the destructive forces of the novel, drug abuse and police control, is capitalist control. Dick was against both drug abuse and fascist police control, which he powerfully critiques in the novel, but he ultimately believed that – as is shown in the novel – these two forces are merely by-products of capitalism.

All three novels examined in this study thus offer a critique of capitalism, which Dick viewed as the true adversary of society – the tyrannical force that oppresses and dehumanizes the lives of citizens. The big corporations and monopolies are the ones who benefit most from the capitalist system and can thus be seen as the ultimate rulers of society, since the philosophy of consumerism – the more you spend the better off you are – signifies that the consumer is controlled by this system. Dick makes his readers aware of the oppressiveness of this system that exists in the West by presenting doomed fictional societies that represent his own. However, he encourages readers not to give up hope: at the end of *A Scanner Darkly*, Bruce picks up the fateful flower and hides it in his shoe, which indicates that there is a possibility of the society overcoming at least one of the prevailing destructive forces.

The implication of this study is that Dick should be considered as a writer of dystopian fiction rather than being limited solely to the genre of science fiction. Dick, as in the style of the typical

dystopian novel, distances readers from their spatio-temporal settings in order to illustrate the evils hidden in contemporary society. Dystopian novels typically present pessimistic imaginary societies that are usually doomed with no hope of escape or change offered, in order to warn readers of the distant, but conceivable, conditions that may arise out of present conditions. Dick's dystopian vision, however, moves further in this regard by making his characters starkly aware of the fact that they are living in a doomed society. Rather than ineffectively trying to overthrow the system, they accept their reality and try to resist the oppressive and dehumanizing forces of the ruling regime. Furthermore, Dick's bleak future societies are starkly realistic and imminent. Rather than warning readers of a nightmarish future, he is saying that we are already living in it; it is too late and cannot be avoided. Like his characters, we must see things through as best we can in order to survive the encroaching forces of our dystopian world. Since Dick critiques the capitalist system in his novels by revealing it to be the true antagonist of free society, he finally suggests to us that capitalism itself has turned our world into a dystopian one. Thus, we are already living in a dystopia, which is oppressive and dehumanizing, and because the capitalist system is deeply rooted in society, there is no foreseeable way to change it or to escape from it. Dick says that we need to find a way to withstand the forces that try to take away our freedom and humanity:

The authentic human being is one of us who instinctively knows what he should not do, and, in addition, he will balk at doing it. He will refuse to do it, even if this brings down dread consequences to him and to those whom he loves. This, to me, is the ultimately heroic trait of ordinary people; they say no to the tyrant and they calmly take the consequences of this resistance. Their deeds may be small, and almost always unnoticed, unmarked by history. Their names are not remembered, nor did these authentic humans expect their names to be remembered. I see their authenticity in an odd way: not in their willingness to perform great heroic deeds but in their quiet refusals. In essence, they cannot be compelled to be what they are not. (Dick, 1978: 273)

Dick's protagonists are not heroic figures that bravely fight oppression in an attempt to free the masses, but rather 'authentic human beings' who quietly resist their oppressive conditions. Perhaps Dick sees himself as such: rather than being a famous author of powerfully influential mainstream texts, he is the 'authentic' writer whose works might be seen as the small deeds

of resistance that go unnoticed. With his dystopian vision, Dick similarly implores his readers to refuse the tyrant – capitalism – not with a forceful rebellion, but by rebelling in whatever way they can, and accepting the consequences.

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