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**Research Question:** How successfully do Brackett and Dick explore the dystopian elements in the novels "The Long Tomorrow" and "The Man in the High Castle"?

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### **Abstract**

“The Man in the High Castle” by Phillip K. Dick, and “The Long Tomorrow” by Leigh Brackett are two dystopian novels which explore the same issues from different perspectives. My study evaluates the authors’ approach towards the dystopian elements in their novels in regard to the research question:

**How successfully do Brackett and Dick explore the dystopian elements in the novels “The Long Tomorrow” and “The Man in the High Castle”?**

This research will come in the form of three main sections dealing with the Social Issues, Oppression of the Societies and Effects of War. Numerous dystopian elements will be evaluated separately with respect to the main sections. The authors’ approach towards dystopian elements will be evaluated and discussed from a third perspective, other than Dick’s and Brackett’s perspectives. Continuing with comparisons of two novels, not only similarities and differences, but also inductive reasoning will help us analyse these novels in depth and reach insights about dystopian novels in general.

In the Conclusion, it was shown that two novels center on significant changes, and it can be observed that the creation of dystopias are initialized by these changes. These novels- paying attention to the era they were written in- focus on a change brought by wars and the eventual alterations that have transformed the people into dystopian societies.

## I. Introduction

Dystopian novels have arisen in the 1900s and been gaining popularity ever since. Having begun as a response to utopian novels, dystopian novels deal with issues such as poverty, dehumanization, persecution and illusion. A dystopia is an imagined universe in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through corporate, bureaucratic, technological, moral, or totalitarian control.<sup>1</sup> A dystopia is an exaggerated worst-case scenario that serves as a criticism about a trend, societal norm, or a political system.<sup>2</sup> With a quick glance through the history of dystopian novels, one can easily come across the works of well-known writers including George Orwell, Ray Bradbury and William Golding. In addition, dystopian novels are usually science-fiction books; however most of them intend to warn the future generations about the dangers of the modern times. Dystopian novels, in general, take place in dreadful places where people are deceived by misconceptions such as propaganda and manipulative language. Furthermore, the regimes take a stand against freedom and independent thought by strict restrictions.

In the novels “The Long Tomorrow” by Leigh Brackett and “The Man in the High Castle” by Phillip K. Dick, the settings can be considered as nightmarish and due to a multitude of reasons, they can be referred as dystopian novels since it is not even possible to mention freedom and independent thought considering these societies. In these novels, Brackett and Dick portray two discrete societies where they both have reflected their impressions of the contemporary societies. “The Man in the High Castle” was set in an alternate universe unlike Brackett’s novel, which takes place in a futuristic society. In Dick’s novel, the setting, America is occupied by the German and Japanese in the aftermath of WWII. As the country is administered by exterior forces, citizens have to face the struggle of living under the influence of another culture. The impact of the Nazi Germany in this novel is massive: Jews

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson926/DefinitionCharacteristics.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson926/DefinitionCharacteristics.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Chung, Terri. "Dystopias: Definition and Characteristics." *Dystopias: Definition and Characteristics*. NSCC, 2006. Web. 18 Jan. 2015.

are enslaved. This is one of the main elements which splits up the two novels. In Leigh Brackett's "The Long Tomorrow", the theme "War" is encountered once again. The novel reflects the outcome of a nuclear war; one of the most serious threats towards our society for decades. In this novel, destruction and oppression are predominant and technology has taken a backseat. When investigating what makes the settings in these novels 'dystopian' we obtain the question; "How successfully do Brackett and Dick explore the dystopian elements in the novels 'The Long Tomorrow' and 'The Man in the High Castle'?" Moving from this question, this essay will explicate and compare these novels in regard to the dystopian elements classified as social issues, oppression by the government and effects of war.

## **I. Social Issues**

First of all, one of the major elements that make up these dystopian novels are the social aspects of life in the two nightmarish worlds created by the authors. In both novels, Phillip K. Dick and Leigh Brackett portray a world in which fear is existent, traces and violence are explicitly seen and interference of government to the society can be observed easily. However, these two novels differ in a few ways.

To begin with, the adversaries in "The Long Tomorrow" are technology, cities and any kind of development; and this is the core reason behind the rise of fear. In this novel, Brackett depicts a world in which there is no trace of modern technology. The reason behind fear is that in this post-war society, people connect to any kind of evil with technology. Therefore, the people of "Fall Creek"- the primary setting- act and live their lives very similarly to those who lived in ancient times. Evaluating the quote; "*But when the cities ended, and men found that in the changed world these of all folks were best fitted to survive, the Mennonites had swiftly multiplied into millions they now*

*counted.*”(Brackett,12) it can be stated that the Mennonites have integrated their lifestyle to a broader range of people using strict rules, fear and societal control mechanisms, thanks to the social impact of the war on hjn people. Blaming the modern lifestyle for the destruction, the Mennonites seem to have made use of an opportunity that let them climb into a more effective position. This quote illustrates that the Mennonites have rapidly proliferated into millions and gained control over the majority. Since the Mennonites’ philosophies regarding the regulation of the country completely contradict the modern ideas, they had to take severe precautions to prevent the spark of anarchy against the major changes. For instance, should a member of this society engage in an activity where technology is involved or be alleged to come from “Bartorstown”- a city that is subject to speculations and rumors that indicate they have technology there- the other members of the society attack the ‘guilty’ person using sticks and stones. This life-threatening behavior is full of inhumanity and is very underdeveloped considering the real world we are living in. For instance, when a trader accommodating in Fall Creek- Mr.Soames, was found to be coming from Bartorstown, he was viciously beaten to death; “*Somebody threw a stone. It hit Soames on the mouth. He reeled over a little and put up his arms, but another stone came, and another, sticks and clods of earth, and his white skin was all blotched and streaked.*”(Dick,24) As seen here, social mechanisms penalize the members who are found guilty of conducting prohibited action, such as accessing technology or reading books.

In Brackett’s novel, another issue regarding social life is the way religion is perceived. From the perspective of the members of Fall Creek, religion rewards brutality against advanced knowledge in any area including technological sciences. Despite the fact that most religions advise the mankind to gather every piece of knowledge they can reach, the interpretation by the people of Fall Creek is entirely controversial. After brutally executing Soames- a merchant who is believed to come from Bartorstown- the people around there celebrate this ritual; “*Glory, glory, hallelujah, the wages of sin are death, hallelujah!*”(Dick,25) This celebration reflects the absence of mercy and forgiveness among the members of this community. The lack of these humane feelings result in extreme brutality and intolerance, and the execution of Soames confirms the severity of this issue.

Contrary to “The Long Tomorrow”, “The Man in the High Castle” portrays a society that is under the influence of multiple cultures. In Dick’s alternate reality, the inhabitants of North America seem to have lost their genuine culture and adopted the cultures of the victorious nations of the World War II. Not only Dick’s usage of German words, but also the remarks about racism and discrimination towards Jews show the influence of Nazi Germany on the people in America. Since the country is administrated by the diverse cultures, ambiguity of cultural elements can unmistakably be grasped. On that account, racial extermination undoubtedly has a massive influence on people’s lives, as shown with these words of Juliana Frink: *“Anyhow, they killed most of the really great comedians. Because most of them were Jewish. In fact, she realized, they killed most of the entertainment field.”*(Dick,80) In Dick’s novel, the policy against Jews and most of the other minorities is racial extermination or discrimination which is shown in the novel as: *“Slavs, Poles, Puerto Ricans, were most limited as to what they could read, do, listen to.”*(Dick,91) In the novel, there are only a few Jews who live under assumed names and identities. This policy triggers hatred towards Jews and sets a nervous tone throughout the novel. There is also racial discrimination within the top dogs in the country- which are the Japs and the Germans. The Germans refer to the Japanese as *“little yellow men”*, which is a highly offensive statement.

Moreover, the society in Dick’s novel has the direct opposite beliefs regarding religion, different from those in Brackett’s novel: *“(…)so-called necessary illusions such as belief in God, etc.”* (Dick, 98) With this quote, Dick illustrates the blasphemy in this society. By referring to religion as a *‘necessary illusion’*, the author reveals that the government unscrupulously places religion upfront as cloak for their actions.

In addition, usage of Marijuana is legal and it seems to be exceedingly pervaded among the people in America. Considering its effects, Marijuana is an elements to be blamed for the extraordinary behavior demonstrated by some characters in the novel. These responses of a man and a woman having a

conversation on the matters Fascism and Nazi Germany are examples of extraordinary and unpredictable behavior;

*“She couldn’t answer; it was too funny. But the man beside her did not think it was funny; he glowered at her, his face red. Veins in his forehead became distended and he began once more to shake.”(Dick,171)*

In this quote, extraordinary responses can be spotted straightforwardly. This conversation is clearly not the type that we encounter frequently. These people, mentioned in the quote, give completely dissimilar reactions to the given circumstances. This shows that people in the novel, from time to time, demonstrate unusual behavior which grounds a lack of seriousness in conversations, hence initiating the degeneration of interactions and communication among the members. Here in this quote, an acceptable communication does not exist. In this novel, at every point where marijuana cigarettes are encountered, the atmosphere eases.

*“His hands, he discovered, were still shaking. And then he recalled his two o’clock appointment with Mr.Tagomi(...) To inspire himself, he lit up a marijuana cigarette, excellent Land-O-Smiles brand.”(Dick,6)*

In this quote, thinking of an important meeting with a prominent Japanese man, Childan lights up a marijuana cigarette to ease his stress. In addition, the name of the brand reveals that these cigarettes cause temporary joy and help people overlook their daily problems for a while.

In other words, Dick explores the widespread usage of marijuana as a dystopian element since its effects seem to impair social relationships and the emotional state of the people.

To summarize, both Dick and Brackett convey social issues very clearly in their novels. The most striking issue in both novels is racism. In Dick’s novel, discrimination is towards some other races such as Jews and the Japanese; whereas in Brackett’s novel people from Bartorstown are isolated because of the suspicions that they have access to technology.



## II. Oppression of the Societies

In both novels, the authors reflect the ways in which the governing bodies interfere with what the inhabitants experience throughout their lives. Moreover, the governing bodies in both societies have adjusted their policies in order to keep the society under control. Without any doubt, propaganda and the use of force are two of the methods used by the governments.

First of all, in the novel “The Long Tomorrow”, the society portrayed by Brackett demonstrates signs of control mechanisms. The strict ban on technology and progress is explicitly noticeable.

*“They don’t like growth. They don’t like change.(...) They don’t want to see trading centers like Refuge get rich and fat. They don’t want a competitive market, and above all they don’t want people like us pushing them out of their nice seats in congress where they can make all the laws. So they forbid us to build a new warehouse when we need it. Do you think that’s fair or right goodly?”(Brackett,89)*

This quote from the book exposes what the government intends to do by not allowing any commercial growth. In order to keep their duties, they preclude any development, and departing from this point it is inevitable that there is an oppression of the society by the government as they have adopted strict procedures regarding the construction in the cities.

Moreover, the ban on the use of technology destroys any chance of opposing views to pervade. *“And his conscience would hurt him with a physical pain because he knew he was doing wrong to fool with the forbidden radio and the forbidden dream of Bartorstown.”(Brackett,42)* These words in the novel convey the idea that fear undeniably exists. The people are afraid of technology and books, even though nearly all of them have not ever seen one in their lives. The reason behind this fear is the

government's policy to make people fear from these elements. In other words, the reason behind the government's strategy- which is oppression of the society- is the aim of maintaining an authority over the people. As the people in the society are strictly forbidden from accessing any technological or mass communication device, there are practically no ways to criticize, protest or complain about the government. However, Len and Esau -the protagonists- have overheard of people talking over the radio, using the one they have found in a trade wagon. This proves that even if the government enforces these prohibitions, there will always be members who can get beyond those.

In the second novel – “The Man in the High Castle”, Dick clearly reveals the ways in which the government controls the society. Firstly, the use of propaganda is a major element since the author attempts to help the readers witness a total invasion which would be incomplete without any direct intervention to the culture and daily lifestyles of the society.

*“And those great glossy magazines printed in Munich and circulated around to all libraries newsstands... One could see full-page color pictures for oneself: the blue-eyed, blond-haired Aryan settlers who now industriously tilled, culled, plowed, and so forth in the vast grain bowl of the world, like Ukraine.”(Dick, 23-24)*

This definition of the Aryan settler, is completely identical with the definition made during the World War II by the Nazi Partei. Bearing this in mind, the government's tendency to create the standardized Aryan race seems to have survived the war and have gone underway. The outcome of creating the exact ideal figure which represents a race will most probably be awakening the thought of racial superiority, and this is completely noticeable in Dick's novel. *“The top of the hierarchy was reserved for the Aryan races. The figure of the Übermensch, with his blonde hair and blue eyes, was a member of the superior race which was intended to rule the earth during the Nazis' so-called 'Thousand Year Reich'.”*<sup>3</sup> This quote from an article shows that the conception of the Aryan settler used in Dick's

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<sup>3</sup> "Hitler's Supermen: The Übermensch, Eugenics, and Perfecting the Master Race." *Hitler's Supermen: The Übermensch, Eugenics, and Perfecting the Master Race*. N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Jan. 2015.

novel is very common. Foremost, the dream of obtaining the pure superior Aryan race seems to have come true in this novel.

To continue, the government utilizes racial discrimination as a tool to reinforce their authority. Because of the biases the natives have, Germans were often considered superior in the novel. *“It was easy to tell which were the Germans. They had that healthy, clean, energetic, assured look. The Americans, on the other hand- they just looked like people. They could have been anybody.”*(Dick, 79) Here, it can easily be noticed that the Americans are biased by the image of the German created by the German government. The image leads Americans to believe that the Germans are the perfect race, and unintentionally force them to undervalue themselves, thus the foreseeable outcome is self-discrimination.

Not only Germans, but also the Japanese try to maintain authority in a variety of ways. First of all, the book ‘I Ching’, which is a form of faith, is made prevalent by force. *“Even the ‘I Ching’, which they’ve forced down our throats; it’s Chinese.”*(Dick, 117) Here, it is a fact that the Chinese are using faith as a way of retaining the society under control. The ‘I Ching’ being Chinese also shows that they are trying to assimilate the Americans’ culture. Although the people in America believe that relying on the ‘I Ching’ is senseless, there is a feeling that forces them to depend on the book while making decisions. The prevalence of the ‘I Ching’ among Americans is very striking since they create an impression of the book as it has always been a part of their culture. On the other hand, they seem to be aware of the fact that they have been forced to adapt to the Chinese culture and the ‘I Ching’ as it is obvious with the words; *“They’ve forced down our throats”*.

In this novel, the people’s opinions regarding the media are also signs of dystopia as they serve as credible sources which give significant comprehensions on this society. *“They’ll write anything if they*

*know they'll get paid. Tell any bunch of lies, and then the public actually takes the smelly brew seriously when it's dished out.*"(Dick,134) These words show that the media is inactive and does not aid the society. Although the primary role of media is to freely inform the society about the recent events, they are completely nonchalant about this mission and accept every demand of the government to get paid because of their greed for wealth.

Last but not least, extraordinary literary pieces- especially "The Grasshopper Lies Heavy" are regarded as hazardous. Because the book- which is an alternative reality within another – triggers the Germans' and Japs' fury, the writer of the book is accused of being a liar and even a Jew. "*Maybe this Abendsen is a Jew. They're still at it, trying to poison us. This judisches Buch – He slammed the covers of the Grasshopper violently together. Actual name probably Abendstein.*"(Dick,134) Here, Dick conveys a clear example of the approach of the Germans towards media. The German are infuriated by any opposing view. They usually deal with these counter arguments using force, which is even more shocking. "*I don't have time for any of these harebrained adventures, this sending of Einsatz kommandos after Abendsen.*" (Dick,135) In this quote, the German Military are considering capturing a writer because of his novel-"*The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*"-which suggests an alternative finale to the World War II. This dialogue in Dick's novel terminates any idea of admiration towards contrasting views. The Germans clearly do not tolerate any thought that can cause people to criticize their authority.

### **III. Effects of War**

Both "The Man in the High Castle" and "The Long Tomorrow" portray the aftermath of war as a period of reconstruction after total destruction. As based on the teachings from my history class, a war does not only damage the economy of a society but also their social structure. Therefore, they take action aiming to rebuild the society and alleviate the pain of the post-war society that has gone through

an extremely difficult era. However, in both novels, this reconstruction process includes extreme regulations that restrict social life and form additional complications while trying to solve the current ones.

In the novel “The Long Tomorrow”, the author vividly echoes the voice of a civilization that is nearly reduced to its ruins and ashes. The society in this novel- which is ruled by Mennonites- seems to have been heavily influenced by the war and fear is a highly-spread factor. Since nuclear war is a modern trend, people tend to associate modern cities with destruction. “*You think if a city grows up here the bombs will come again, and you’ll be under them.*”(Brackett,95) Here, Len brings up the story behind the ban on ‘cities’. There is a prevalent belief that cities and the modern lifestyle will bring war, and what destroys their houses is ‘growth’. All in all, the nuclear war has caused people to fear from cities, and a government who are sustained by fear has taken over the government. It is obvious that the war has brought change to this society, and this change consists of going back to the roots where nuclear wars did not exist. This approach explains the strict bans on technology and any kind of modern scientific knowledge. Parallel to the Mennonite government, the society simply ignores technology. Asking “What if we had technology” is not among their tendencies.

Dick’s novel, just like Brackett’s, portrays a society busy with the process of reconstruction. However, the objective of this process- unlike the other novel- is not to take precautions for the wars in the future but to recover from a chaotic state to an industrial society and turn the society in a productive one once again.

*“We all lived out there in the woods, in Upper State New York, like brothers. Sang songs. Marched to work. Spirit of the war, only rebuilding, not breaking down. Those were the best days of all, rebuilding*

*after the war- fine, clean long-lasting rows of public buildings block by block, whole new downtown, New York and Baltimore.”(Dick,90)*

This quote from “The Man in the High Castle” helps the reader explore ‘*the spirit of the war*’ from the perspective of the people of this post war society. The construction of many buildings, one after another, provides huge opportunities for industrialists- the big fish in the sea. After every part of the country is rebuilt, unimaginable growth of huge companies may be witnessed by these words; “*Now of course that work’s past. Big cartels like New Jersey Krupp and Sohnen running the show.*”(Dick, 90) A prototype of the world in this novel can be noticed in America. While the Japanese and the Germans are seeking to grow their empires, huge corporations aim to destroy smaller companies. This situation proves that the balances in a specific country are highly dependent on those in the world.

To summarize, huge cartels, paranoiac precautions and change of governments- in both novels- help maintain dystopian societies and not only restrict social life in any area, but also pave the way for the oppression of the societies.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

In the final analysis of our research question, two dissimilar approaches towards the term ‘dystopia’ by Brackett and Dick were revealed. Examining these approaches, we were led to the result that a dystopia could be explicated from more than one perspective. However, even though these two novels were written from two completely different perspectives, their resemblance in dystopian elements led us to examine the way they were explored.

In “The Long Tomorrow”, the conception of a dystopia was produced from the perspective of a futuristic society where Brackett could introduce unexpected elements such as federal laws and the other regulations that affect the society. It is easily noticeable that Brackett features change as a factor that has formed a chaotic environment- which later developed into a complete dystopia.

Furthermore, the society portrayed by Dick in “The Man in the High Castle” also centers on a change which could have been brought by a past event- which is the World War II. By this change, the fortune of a country was precisely altered to create a dystopian society.

In spite of this fact, it is possible to state that the concept of war serves as departure points for both authors. To be more specific, in both novels the novelists- by a cautionary attitude- have targeted post-war societies which are still suffering from nuclear weapons as their source of chaos and dystopia, and both of the novels cover the change that has initialized the chain-reaction to a dystopian society.

Evaluating this resemblance, I have seen that a major ‘change’ is what takes us to a dystopia as it was the center point of these two novels. However, a further research on this question is needed as it is an extremely crucial point in the quest of acquiring accurate insights on dystopian novels; “Can a dystopian society be created without a change?”

To abridge, in both novels, we can effortlessly notice the impression the war has created on the authors. In “The Man in the High Castle”, Dick inclines to find an answer to the query; “What if the nuclear war went one step further?” Because of this, Dick is imposed by the pursuit for an answer to dread from the outcomes of a nuclear war, and this seems to have reverberated in the society created by Dick as ‘fear’. At this point, Brackett’s novel splits from Dick’s, as his conception of dystopia is grounded on the extreme safety measures which are the main reason the vicious restrictions on the society are present.

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