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**Futuristic Dystopia in Philip Dick's *A Scanner Darkly* (1977)**

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## Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to:

My mother, the sun of my dark days, whose love endured me through all. Thank you for being my pillar.

My father, my hero, Thank you for being a support system and my force to continue in this journey.

My brothers Amine, Faycel and my beautiful sister in law Zeyneb, Thank you for encouraging and believing in me.

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## Table of Contents

Dedication.....	I
Acknowledgments.....	II
Abstract.....	III
Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER One: A Theoretical Analysis of Post-Modern Science Fiction	
I. Definitions and History of Science Fiction.....	4
II. Dystopia in Science Fiction.....	13
III. Postmodernism in Dystopian Fiction.....	19
IV. Development of Futurism.....	20
CHAPTER Two: <i>A Scanner Darkly</i> as a Dystopian Novel	
I. The Novel as a Technological Dystopia.....	24
II. Dystopian Narrative in the Novel .....	31
CHAPTER Three: <i>A Scanner Darkly</i> as a Futuristic Depiction of Dystopian Science Fiction	
I. Futurism as a Literary Movement.....	36
II. Futuristic Aspects in the Novel.....	38
Conclusion.....	46
Works cited.....	49

**Abstract**

Philip Dick is a renowned science fiction writer. His novels depict dystopian futuristic societies and discuss a reoccurring theme of the dangers of over reliance on technology. Dick's masterful exploration of the theme inspired the selection of the topic. Previous attempts at probing the topic focused on the postmodern aspects of the novel. This dissertation attempts instead to lay emphasis on the pessimistic futuristic interest of the novel. This study aims to answer two core questions: What indicates that Philip Dick's *A Scanner Darkly* is a futuristic novel, and most importantly how do the dystopian elements of the narrative make it futuristic? An eclectic approach of both a qualitative and analytical methods is employed to contextualize the analysis of the novel and answer the aforementioned questions.

**Keywords:** Science fiction, postmodernism, futurism, dystopia.

## الملخص

فيليب ديك كاتب خيال علمي مشهور. تصور رواياته مجتمعات مستقبلية تشاؤمية وتناقش موضوعًا متكررًا عن مخاطر الاعتماد المفرط على التكنولوجيا. ألهمت دراسة ديك البارعة للموضوع اختيار الموضوع لهذه المذكرة. ركزت المحاولات السابقة في بحث السؤال على جوانب ما بعد الحداثة للرواية. تحاول هذه المذكرة بدلاً من ذلك التركيز على الاهتمام المستقبلي التشاؤمي للرواية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الإجابة عن سؤالين أساسيين: ما الذي يشير إلى أن الماسح الضوئي لفيليب ديك هو رواية مستقبلية ، والأهم من ذلك كيف تجعل عناصر السرد البائسة من الرواية مستقبلية؟ يتم استخدام نهج انتقائي لوضع سياق لتحليل الرواية والإجابة على الأسئلة المذكورة أعلاه.

## Résumé

Philip Dick est un écrivain de science-fiction renommé. Ses romans dépeignent des sociétés futuristes dystopiques et traitent d'un thème récurrent des dangers d'une dépendance excessive à l'égard de la technologie. L'exploration magistrale du thème par Dick a inspiré le choix du sujet. Les tentatives précédentes pour sonder la question se sont concentrées sur les aspects postmodernes du roman. Cette un mémoire tente plutôt de mettre l'accent sur l'intérêt futuriste pessimiste du roman. Cette étude vise à répondre à deux questions fondamentales: Qu'est-ce qui indique que *Le Scanner Sombre* de Philip Dick est un roman futuriste, et surtout comment les éléments dystopiques du récit le rendent-il futuriste ? Une approche éclectique est employée pour contextualiser l'analyse du roman et répondre aux questions susmentionnées.

## Introduction

Futurism has been one of the most prominent aspects of science fiction novels. When composing their works, many authors incorporated futurism and blended it with various post-modern ideas. Futurism as a concept started in architecture, although the term was later adopted in literature. It was closely associated with the science-fiction genre since it focused on technical advancements. As a result, most authors relied heavily on the utilization of technology breakthroughs in their works to infer negative futuristic notions of reality. Using futurism in writing was deemed radical at the time.

Philip Dick was one of the writers who used futurism. The author was well-known for his science-fiction books, but it was his use of Futurism that set him apart. He mastered the art of futurism and was one of the few writers who are capable of producing futuristic fiction on a regular basis. *A Scanner Darkly* (1977), for example, is a landmark work in which he demonstrated his mastery of futurism. Philip Dick exploited technological advancements to convey a pessimistic view of the future.

The study attempts to reflect on scientific ideology in the 1970s and 1980s. In *A Scanner Darkly*, Philip Dick also examines and investigates the concept of futurism. Furthermore, the study adds to our understanding of the underlying motives and goals for Philip Dick's usage of futurism in *A Scanner Darkly* (1977). The choice of the topic was inspired by Philip Dick's masterful employment of futuristic elements in his novel. In addition, the complex and dark nature of the reality described by the author raised various compelling questions in regards of the trajectory in which society is headed.

The dissertation will build on many fruitful and reliable sources. One of these sources is "*The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*", a reliable source by Routledge University in London, in which it discusses the concept of postmodern fiction and its different genres. Another



beneficial source for this dissertation is “*The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*”, published by Cambridge UP. The book provides a plethora of information related to science fiction and dystopia, with perspectives from different scholars on the field. In order to get more information about futurism, the book entitled “*Russian Futurism: A History*” along with “*Origins of Futuristic Fiction*” would help define the history of futurism, as well as its concepts and characteristics.

Several literary scholars gave different definitions in the topic of science fictional dystopia. The concept of futurism is often considered to be heavily-linked with dystopian science fiction. However, the best implication of the genre is presented in Philip Dick’s *A Scanner Darkly* (1977). He was a visionary and one of few writers who used futurism in their novels. The topic of futuristic dystopia was a reoccurring theme in Philip Dick’s novels. In order to better investigate his futuristic dystopian insight, several works would be consulted such as *Philip K. Dick: Contemporary Critical Interpretations* (1995) and *The Exegesis of Philip K. Dick* (2011). The works would help identify and illustrate the concept of futuristic dystopia. As far as “*Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (2005), it would help illustrate Philip Dick’s vision of a dystopian futurism in his novel *A Scanner Darkly*. The previously mentioned works only focuses on postmodernism, dystopia and futurism as separate themes associated with science fiction. This dissertation aims to bridge that gap by emphasizing a relation between the three themes.

The significance of this dissertation is attributed to the novelty and paucity of the topic around which it is centered. It establishes a logical link between postmodernism and dystopia, as well as futurism and dystopia, and, finally, postmodern futurism.

There are three key chapters in this dissertation. The topic of postmodernism and science fiction is discussed in the first chapter. It also looks into Philip Dick's science fiction. On one

side, the chapter looks at how dystopia is portrayed in postmodern science fiction. On the other side, it concentrates on dystopian science fiction as a genre. The second chapter discusses Philip Dick's novel as a dystopian science fiction novel. It highlights the novel's dystopian elements. The novel is examined in depth in connection to futuristic dystopia in the third chapter.

The dissertation is conducted through an eclectic approach. First a qualitative descriptive approach is used to define science fiction, postmodernism, dystopia and futurism. Second, an analytical approach is used to analyze Philip Dick's *A Scanner Darkly* (1977) as a futuristic postmodern dystopian science fiction novel. A major difficulty faced the journey to complete this novel which is the application of futurism on the novel as sources in regards to this aspect of the novel are scarce. Sources regarding postmodernism in the novel however were available as the novel is considered a classic postmodern novel.

## **Chapter One: A Theoretical Overview of Post-Modern Dystopian Science Fiction**

The first chapter is a theoretical overview of the main research theories. This dissertation relies on to conduct an informed and specialized analysis of the novel. The chapter includes elaborate definitions of postmodernism, dystopian fiction and futurism as well as a historical background for each of the aforementioned theories. The overview includes various definitions of science fiction given by scholars in the field as well as a timeline for its rise to prominence in accordance with various historical events.

### **I. Definitions and History of Science Fiction**

The term Science Fiction has been an interesting topic of many literary works throughout the years. Several scholars attempted to define the concept of science fiction, but none of these concepts were universal as Adam Roberts adequately phrased it: “The terms science fiction resists easy definitions” (1). The genre is often defined superficially as literature pertaining to a fictional world which contains futuristic and technological elements. This definition provides the scholar protection from future contradiction or rebuff. However, the various definitions of science fiction to be shortly discussed in this dissertation, given by various scholars, were motivated by different philosophical, historical or social perspectives and present significant strides in the evolution of science fiction definition.

Many different definitions of science fiction emerged throughout the years. However, the first attempt to define science fiction dates back to 1926. Hugo Gernsback argues:

By scientification I mean the Jules Verne, H.G. Wells and Edgar Allan Poe type of story ... a charming romance intermingled with scientific fact and prophetic vision ... new adventures pictured for us in the scientification of today are not at all impossible of

realization tomorrow ... Many great science stories destined to be of historical interest are still to be written. (Westfahl3)

Gernsback affiliated science fiction with the works of Jules Verne, H.G. Wells and the great Edgar Allan Poe. At that time, only these writers were the faces of science fiction and considered as the founders of that a totally new concept, as a result scholars had no standard for defining it. People could not solely define science fiction, what leads them to use the definition provided by the writers who promoted it. Gernsback described science fiction as a mixture of romantic fiction and scientific fact. This means that while science fiction contains a great percentage of fiction it is still relies on established and general rules, principles and theories of physics, chemistry and astronomy to support its plotline, characters and setting. The elements of scientific base presented a not-so-impossible future, but rather a probable reality for tomorrow. This gives the genre of science fiction a more realistic and credible feel which in turn establishes a major difference between it and fantasy.

It took more than twenty years to see another attempt to define science fiction. J.O. Bailey, a late literature professor who taught at University of North Carolina, presented one of the earliest books that analyzed science fiction. In his *Pilgrims through Space and Time: A History and Analysis of Scientific Fiction* (1997), he argues that: "A piece of scientific fiction is a narrative of an imaginary invention or discovery in the natural sciences and consequent adventures and experiences ... It must be a scientific discovery" (10). Bailey emphasizes that science fiction is a fictional adventure in which a scientific discovery occurs. The existence of an invention, combined with an adventurous imaginary experience, generates a science fiction piece of literature. The definition stresses on the presence of a scientific invention in the literature

work. The constant emphasis on the scientific discovery painted the bigger picture of science fiction as a concept.

Many researchers, scholars and teachers presented their own definition of science fiction. However, one of the most accepted definitions is that of a science fiction author called Christopher Evans. He stresses that: “Perhaps the creepiest definition is that science fiction is a literature of ‘what if’ What if we could travel in time? What if we were living in other planets? What if we made contact with alien races? And so on” (Ellis 9). Christopher Evans focuses on the idea of probability and possibility. He presented a philosophical root of science fiction initiating the ‘what if question’. According to Evans, science fiction answers questions that no other literature dares to. Science fiction can visualize a situation and even depict humans’ reaction to this imaginary, yet possible situation.

To navigate more in the concept of science fiction one must view it from a postmodern perspective. Postmodern science fiction overwhelms space and time does not focus only on the effects of technology, alien narrative, robotism or time travel but sets more philosophical questions about human survival within the hyper modernized world and insists on the transformation of the human imagination through science and technology, it is no more limited like classic Sci-Fi. As it was stated earlier, it is nearly impossible to generate a universal definition of the term science fiction. Nonetheless, the closest one is that given by the American writer Isaac Asimov in 1951. He states that: “The best definition of s-f that I know of is, indeed, almost sociological in its gravity. It goes as follows: Science-fiction is that branch of literature which is concerned with the impact of scientific advance upon human beings” (Ellis 1). Asimov’s interpretation correlates science fiction as a branch of literature; an essential part of it. The statement shows the great impact of science fiction on literature. Moreover, he emphasizes on the

effect of science on human lives; as the main aspect of science fiction. Asimov's definition is coined as close as it gets to universal definition. Nowadays many researchers and scholars refer to this interpretation as the go-to definition for science fiction.

It is quite hard to pinpoint the exact time where science fiction began. Several researchers state that the history of science fiction started with Plato's republic. However, it is hard to make that argument since science fiction is affiliated with science. The existence of science fiction started in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century; an era that was characterized by technological advances. The industrial revolution pushed people into a modernized highly industrialized world where it became apparent that all is possible; the only limitation being lack of imagination.

The first attempt of writing science fiction was made by the Greek Lucian Samosata. In his work *Ikaromeniposs*, written between 160 and 180 AD, the character Meniposs gets two wings; from an eagle and a vulture. Then, he began his journey to fly up to the sky and visit the moon (Roberts 27). Lucian is often referred to as "the father of science fiction" for his use of science fiction elements. He was the first one to use moon travelling in his works. One could argue that his works were rather mythical religious than science fictional ones. However, the presence of moon travelling classifies the work under science fiction.

Several researchers argue that only in the Seventeenth-century, when the true development of science fiction started. Nicolaus Copernicus, a Polish churchman, mathematician and an astronomer, has revolutionized science by his unfolded theory of cosmology. Copernicus suggests that the sun is the centre of the solar system; the earth is a stationary centre of cosmos, while moon and other planets are just a part of it (Roberts 36). The new theory was unwelcomed by the church. At that time, the church saw this interpretation as a threat and a disregard to its

fundamentals. The new perception presented the pluralism of worlds; our universe is infinite and there are unlimited planets. Copernicus's new interpretation opened new doors for science fiction; since now people can actually imagine the solar system and planets. Thanks to Copernicus's theory, science fiction has changed from its theological, religious nature to more scientific one. Now backed by scientific theory, science fiction blossomed with ideas about outer space and the possible existence of other beings opening an entirely new field of science fiction like H.G. Well's *War of the Worlds* (1897) which is based on accurate scientific fact, discussed the possibility of a technologically superior alien and the implications of that possibility for humans.

The Eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of gothic style of novels. The era was characterized by the use of gothic fiction as a constant style of writing. A number of specialists in the field of science fiction have affiliated gothic with science fiction. Brian Aldiss, a well-known science fiction writer, went far to say that gothic is a continuation of science fiction (Roberts 82). In his argument, gothic novels usually feature supernatural events, monsters or sinister places. The presence of supernatural elements is a major characteristic of science fiction. Therefore, gothic is considered as a sub-genre and prolongation of science fiction.

By the end of 1800s, the post-gothic era emerges. The era features major works such as: Edgar Allan Poes' *Narrative of a Gordon Pym* (1838), Oliver Wonders Homes' *Elsie Venner* (1861) and Edward Bellemy's *Dr. Heidenhooff's Process* (1880). All the aforementioned works were considered as science fictional romances; focused on the strange psychology of characters (James and Mandlesohn 19). The post-gothic era is heavily linked with writers who used monstrous characters whom are psychologically unstable. The theme of the mentally and emotionally abnormal characters was the key concept analysed during the late Eighteen century.

Science fiction started to bloom thanks to the efforts of Jules Vern and H.G. Wells. The two writers have been referred to as the fathers of futuristic science fiction. They were responsible for saving science fiction from the romance genre domination, as stated by Patrick Parrinder, an English university professor. The two writers helped shape the modern concept of science fiction, after an era that was dominated by romance science fiction. Vern and Wells works represent alien invasion, biological mutation, bombing, time travelling, dystopia and the brand-new futurism (Gibson 2). The introduction of futuristic cities and settings opened new doors for science fiction to explore. H.G. Wells' works such as: *Time Machine* (1895), *The Island of the Doctor Moreau* (1896), *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and *The Invisible Man* (1897) which inducted the concepts of time travelling and futurism to the readers. It was an inauguration of a sub-genre of science fiction which will later on bloom even more.

In 1926, Hugo Gernsback established the first ever science fiction magazine entitled "Amazing Stories". It was a huge move to further grow and help spread the genre for more audience. He argues:

Not only is science fiction an idea of tremendous import, but it is to be an important factor in making the world a better place to live in, through educating the public to the possibilities of science on life...If every man, woman, boy and girl, could be inducted to read science fiction right along, these would certainly be a great resulting benefit to the community Science fiction would make people happier, give them a boarder understanding of the world, make them more tolerant.... (Parrinder 8-9)

Gernsback's attempts to put science fiction on the literature map cannot be overlooked. He single handily promotes science fiction through his magazine. He emphasizes on the importance of



reading science fiction to the individual and community. Gernsback urged people to read science fiction so they can get to know new perspectives and comprehension to the world around them. Since science fiction is a tool for humans, they can always be better and more receptive to different vision; especially that futuristic vision.

The genre of science fiction has a fascinating growth of population during late 1930s to early 1950s. A large portion of this bloom is thanks to John W. Campbell's science fiction magazine "Astounding". During that era, science fiction production was overwhelming in both quantity and quality. Writers such as: John W. Campbell, Isaac Asimov, John C. Wright, A.E van Vogt, Clifford D. Simak, L. Sprague de Camp and many others, helped the spread of the genre. The era features several masterpieces such as: Robert Heinlein's *Double Star* (1957), Isaac Asimov's *Foundation Series* (1942), Van Vogt's *Slan* (1940), Sprague de Camp's *Isolinguals* (1937) and Clifford Simak's *Rule 18* (1938). Themes of the era included utopia, dystopia, aliens, new technologies, fear of war, atomic bombing, human psychology and galaxy exploration (James and Mendelsohn 37-41). The golden age writers continued the main themes of science fiction of previous eras, with a slight touch of creativity. The newly integrated themes were generated by the fear of WWII.

The post-golden era science fiction was characterized by the establishment of "Galaxy Science Fiction" magazine in 1950. The magazines featured stories which took place in space. However, going in 1950s, magazines started to lose their exclusivity of publishing science fiction works. Famous works from the era includes: Fredrick Pohl's *The Space Merchants* (1953), Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), Smith Cordwainer's *The Game of Rat and Dragon* (1954) and Philip Dick's *Solar Lottery* (1955). Most 1950s works consistently focused on the negative depiction of the future. Adam Roberts, a British writer, states that after 1950s science fiction was

affected by increasing unease, an era which there was an overwhelming increase of skepticism (Roberts 17). The direction towards skepticism was due to the rise of Cold War paranoia. In US, people, as well as writers, were afraid of the spread of Communism. Thus, most works covered paranoiac and dystopian societies. The combination of new themes with previous eras' themes, made the post 1950s science fiction so popular.

During the 1960s and 1970s, science fiction had a significant downfall in popularity. Nonetheless, some works were successful among mainstream culture. Robert Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961) discusses the adventure of a human child born on Mars, who was then raised by Martians and later on sent back to earth only to detain in a medical centre to be studied. With the help of a friend, he escapes to his lover seeking sanctuary. The novel was considered taboo at the time and Heinlein struggled to get it published. It discussed themes of sex, sexual liberation and religion. The novel reflected its author's radical opinion by openly endorsing polygamy and out of wedlock birth (Cusack 77).

J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1968) is trilogy that generated a great deal of attention especially after its adaptation into a successful franchise. The novels tell the story of hobbits, a magical people that lives in the shire. The story is about the power struggle between various sides to take control of an ancient powerful ring.

Frank Herbert's *Dune* (1965) is categorized as hard science fiction which is a category of science fiction that is scientifically accurate. The novels makes reference to various technological elements that did not exist at that time but were later introduced reinforcing the notion of the mutual influence between scientific advancement and science fiction (Larsen 1).

Roger Zelazny's *Lord of Light* (1967) is a science fantasy novel. The work is heavily religious and is considered complex and ambiguous for its bizarre style but highly scientific and plausible setting a mixture that set the novel apart from others at the time. And many others such as: Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat Cradle* (1963), Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), Samuel Delany's *Dhalgren* (1971) and Isaac Asimov's *The God Themselves* (1972) were successful among mainstream society.

Furthermore, the era focused on mocking previous themes and adding a sense of sarcasm and parody to what once was a real science fiction theme (Ramphal170). The works featured a sudden shift to deal with taboo themes for example: religion, radical politics and sexuality. The introduction of such themes turned a lot of necks; perhaps broke some in the process. Writers like Philip Dick, were coined as revolutionary for their new, yet odd, depiction of reality in their works. Most writers just wanted to get the reader's attention; by any means possible. However, during this era, science fiction re-emerged as prominent aspect in mainstream literature.

The early 1980s to present day era is considered a success to the genre. The rise of mass media definitely helped spread the genre even more. Science fiction gained even more popularity than other eras. Previous science fiction works got their own film and cinematic adaptations such as: *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (1968), *Star Trek* (1968-1997), *Star Wars* (1976), *Jurassic World* (1990) and *The Hunger Games* (2008-2010) among other works. The top six of most successful Hollywood movies of all time features three science fiction movies; *Avatar*, *Star Wars* and *Jurassic World*. Thanks to all eras of science fiction, people nowadays have become invested in science fiction as a genre. What was once considered as merely sinful act now has become an essential entertainment in mainstream culture. With the development of filming techniques and the introduction of computer generated images, science fiction skyrocketed to mainstream fame

and success as images no longer seem silly but appear realistic allow the viewer to focus on the plot rather than the special effects. The adaptation of avatar into a movie represented the induction of 3D technology producing a movie that sat as the highest grossing movie of all time for over a decade.

## II. Dystopia in Science Fiction

One cannot discuss dystopia without mentioning utopia. The concept of utopia first originated in Thomas more's *Utopia* (1516). The works featured a perfect depiction of people, cities and societies; taking place in a futuristic timeline. The term utopia is based on the Greek "outopous" which translates "no place" (Milner 827). The aforementioned definition suggests that a perfect society does not exist in the real world. Nowadays, the most fitting definition of utopia is conducted by *Oxford English Dictionary* as: "an imagined or a hypothetical place, system or state of existence in which everything is perfect, especially in respect of social structure, laws and politics". The definition reiterates on the "unreal" depiction of a social system. The idea of utopia helped generate a related, yet, extremely opposing concept; dystopia.

The first recorded use of the term dystopia was by John Stuart Mill in a speech in front of the British Parliament as he said "It is, perhaps, too complimentary to call them Utopians, they ought rather to be called dys-topians, or caco-topians. What is commonly called Utopian is something too good to be practicable; but what they appear to favour is too bad to be practicable." (Pospíšil 9) this was the first time the word dystopia was used and it was used to describe the horrible future to be awaited.

The concept of dystopia comes from the Greek "distopous" translated as "bad place" (Milner 827). The term was firstly coined in 1868 by John Stuart Mill. He defined the term as "to

describe a political proposal rather than a literary genre” (Milner 827). Stuart Mill affiliated dystopia with politics rather than society. From this point on, the term dystopia was related to a futuristic depiction of a political situation. Mainly, it attempts at presenting political problems, while using futuristic settings; speculative fiction (Atwood 1). Dystopia was a tool to criticize political powers and imagine a politically trembled futuristic society.

It was till the twentieth century that dystopia started to become popular. Lym Tower Sargent argues that “political events such as: WWI and II, Vietnam War, Korean War as well as the revolutions against colonialism, the rise of racism, sexism and homophobia” (Do Dystopias Matter 10). The tension caused by wars, revolutions, racism and colonialism made the dystopia a prominent subgenre; especially in the first half of the twentieth century. Works such as: *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1948) and *Animal Farm* (1945) by George Orwell and *Brave New World* (1932) by Aldous Huxley, were considered as the era’s masterpieces of dystopian literature.

The American-Irish literary critic Tom Moylan expanded the factors that helped the rise of dystopia. He states that:

A hundred years of exploitation, repression, state violence, war, genocide, disease, famine, ecocide, depression, debt, and the steady depletion of humanity through the buying and selling of everyday life provided more than enough fertile ground for this fictive underside of the utopian imaginations. (Moylan XI)

Moylan represents social, economic and political circumstances to be the motive of the development of dystopian fiction.

Gregory Claeys, a professor of the History of Political Thought, emphasizes that the idea of utopia and dystopia originated in religions. The two subgenres are just a continuation of the concept of heaven and hell (Scruton 146). The insightful argument by Claeys suggests that utopia is “an imaginary futuristic” place just like heaven, while dystopia is its counterpart, hell. Claeys wanted to associate utopia and dystopia to religious studies, rather than social or political fields.

It is also necessary to note that the dystopian novel is an art used to criticise certain aspects of society and to give people a dark image of what’s yet to come if these aspects are not to be changed as said by Gordon Browning in his essay “Toward a Set of Standards for Evaluating Anti-Utopian Fiction” that “the author is, in one way or another, commenting on the nature of his own society by taking what he considers the most significant aspects of that society and projecting them into an imaginary environment”

The first real dystopian novel was written under the name *We* by Yevgeni Zamyatin from the Soviet Union in 1920-1921 as it built the foundation for many dystopian novels after it such as *Brave New World* and *Player Piano* as Kurt Vonnegut the writer of the latter mentioned novel said that “I cheerfully ripped off the plot of *Brave New World*, whose plot had been cheerfully ripped off from Eugene Zamyatin’s *We*”. The novel had many characteristics that later became the prime elements of a dystopian novel.

Elements of the dystopian novel can include but are not limited to government control as seen in novels like *1984* by George Orwell and *V for Vendetta* by Alan Moore in which government controls the people through fear as a tyrannical rule or *Brave New World* in which government controls its citizens through the use of drugs rendering them unable to feel the oppression they live in.

Another element of dystopia can be seen in *The Maze Runner* (2009) by James Dashner as we see the effects of technology on the world, how it plays a big role in creating a big dystopian future for humanity, and how scary it is. Technology is also a big part of the dystopian novel especially after the events of World War II and the invention of the nuclear weapons. The novel is set in futuristic setting where the human race has been brought to the brink of extinction due to a virus that turns them into zombies. In the novel a conglomerate seeks to find a cure to the disease by conducting experiments on children. In the novel the evil conglomerate possesses highly advanced technology while the rest of the people live in state of deep poverty at the verge of starvation because of the depleted resources. This is not an accidental dichotomy but an intentional one. Technology in the novel is synonymous to evil. This is a common conception in science fiction as futuristic technology is always depicted as negative on human race.

Environmental destruction is also a big topic that dystopian literature likes to discuss novels as *The Parable of the Sower* (1993) by Octavia E. Butler and *The Fifth Season* (2015) by N.K. Jemisin talks about how our actions can cause the destruction of our environment, something that will eventually lead to the destruction of humanity. Very often this is because of industrial lifestyle or because of a nuclear war that leads to the destruction of environment and the near extinction of all of humanity.

Survival is another common element of these novels an example of that is *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins as the characters try to survive the competition in order to live something that has defined dystopian fiction and as far as the creation of the genre itself. Most novels show the fight between man and the elements of the dystopian world and due to the psychological nature of the genre severe psychological damage is highly likely to happen as we

see the characters live to tell the story but lose trace of them and who they were go insane or even lose the will to live.

Loss of Individualism is another staple of the genre. *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld is a prime example of that as citizens must have a surgery when they are 16 so they can all look the same and thus have the same chances. This leads to a society of people who look exactly the same thus taking away even the simplest form of individuality. Another example in the *Hunger Games* as characters do not have the right to think differently than the others. Thus, losing the right to have their own personal thoughts. The loss of individuality is a big topic that the dystopian literature tries to delve deep into.

When I was younger, I scared my mother to death, the things I would blurt out about District 12, about the people who rule our country, Panem, from the far-off city called the Capitol. Eventually I understood this would only lead us to more trouble. So I learned to hold my tongue and to turn my features into an indifferent mask so that no one could ever read my thoughts. (Collins 6)

*The Hunger Games* (2008) is a dystopian novel set in the future in a country with various similarities with the United States. *The Hunger Games*, like many other dystopian novels, has a connection to American reality and history. Through the fictional scenario of Panem and the heroine Katniss Everdeen, Collins indirectly criticizes realistic parts of American society.

Drugs are a big part of the creation of a dystopian world as many novels like *Brave New World* (1932), *Dune* (1965), *Naked Lunch* (1959) and many others try to insinuate drugs can lead to many things it can lead to control as in *Brave New World* it can lead to wars and even lead the downfall of many people. Drugs are a force to be reckoned with in the dystopian novel and they



are a big part of its psychological charm. Novels like *A Scanner Darkly* which focuses on the destructive nature of drugs. The 1960s and 1970s were decades of social revolution where people revolted against traditions and rules. This period witnessed the spread of alcohol and drugs and with the death and destruction the epidemic left in its wake, authors focused on discovering its effects on the human psyche. These novels in true postmodern fashion emphasized the individual rather than the community and delved deep into the internal effects of external elements such as drugs.

Finally one cannot look at the dystopian novel without mentioning religion. Many dystopian novels discuss religion and how it is used to build a dystopia, how people take and kill in the name of God and how this destroys the future of humanity. In the novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), it is shown how religion is used in the future as people built a patriarchy on it and whatever church that opposes them gets eliminated making the wrong use of religion as a tool a path of destruction for humanity. As it has been proven many times history tends to repeat itself. This phenomena was used as the base of this novel as it predicts that in the future, religion will once again be used to further personal agendas and manipulate the masses which was the case with the church in the dark ages.

From what we have established we can tell that the dystopian literature gives us a pessimistic view to the future in order to criticize aspects the writer finds to be wrong in society while showing the downfall of humanity to shed light on topics such as individuality, survival, drugs, environment, religion and technology while focusing on the psychological part of the characters and how they affect and/or change the world.

### III. Postmodernism in Dystopian Fiction:

Dystopian fiction has started as a modern literary genre in the image of works as *We* 1920-1921. Literature anticipates what is to happen in the future and due to events like World War II. People in the modern era started seeing the future as more bad and dark place. This took place in the same era as the modernist movement a movement that rejected everything that realism brought and as a result came with new literary techniques and methods in telling a story.

Modernism is a literary movement that emerged in the late 1800's and lasted to the mid 1900's it came as reaction to realism as it tried to portray the individual rather than society and how the individual challenges the society to keep his identity while also challenging the traditions and differences between the two sexes it also deals with the technological advances and how they affected life while also abandoning the old forms of writing a novel and poetry examples of that could be seen in Virginia Woolf's novels. It also used different techniques such as, inter-textually and introduced the unreliable narrator that became a huge part of the movement. Works like *The Great Gatsby* (1925) embodies these themes in great detail and is remembered as a modern classic.

Dystopian fiction by default embodies all these themes and more, as most modernist novels discussed. The present dystopian novels seek the future this has gave the genre a push to flourish and be welcomed to the literary scene not just that, but even cinema started to popularise the genre making movies as early as 1922 with Dr Mabuse *The Gambler* and this growth in genre only continued to grow in the postmodernist era. More movies pushed the genre into mainstream recognition rather than being exposed to a limited faction of society. People started looking for

relatable material that captures their hopeless and defeated state of mind. With the 1970s came the beat generation with their revolutionary spirit and further sought inspirational works that spoke of their aspiration. Not only that but as this type of novel became considered radical and untraditional it became a means of revolt.

Postmodernism is a literary movement that -as its predecessor- came as a reaction to the previous movement modernism which kept on discussing similar topics but with difference on the form and outcome. This movement was really influenced by the Second World War as the fear of technology grew bigger than ever and stories started to develop many meanings as there was no objective reality and no objective right or wrong. The use of irony and dark humour were also important in that movement they also returned to the old forms of writings by mixing them together to try and create new forms and styles. Novels like *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) defined what to expect from the genre and became a mainstream postmodern novel.

Postmodernism as a movement rejected boundaries previously set for literature and instead set out to liberate the mind and fight back against all that is conform and normal. It employed techniques that changed the form of literature and gave author a means to express ideas that normally would not be discussed and gave the readers who were reeling from the effects of the Second World War materials and content they can relate to. It introduced techniques like the stream of consciousness which allows the reader an unfiltered access to the psychological condition of the characters.

#### **IV. Development of Futurism**

Futurism is an artistic movement that is originated in Italy. It was first manifested in art as it shed light on the traditional imagery in art and focuses on painting images of the future and

modernity to help Italy oust the chains of the past and set it on a path to future prosperity. The futurist movement was first just concerned with art, but it had a significant influence in Italy due to its propaganda for revolutionary patriotism, anticlericalism, and against the Central Empires, which helped us prepare for our intervention in the war against Austria.

Milan is the birthplace of Italian futurism. Thousands of exhibitions and talks have been held around the world in the last 12 years, and numerous variations of futurisms have been born. It has been recognized and accepted in all of Europe's principal cities. Reactionaries, clergymen, moralists, prigs, and conservative periodicals have maligned and slandered it throughout Italy. In the futurist manifesto, futurist in is that who expresses himself with courageous directness without fear of prosecution or criticism; that who hates ruins, museums, professionalism, academicism and all that glorifies the past; that who prefers modern casual theatre instead of the stuffy classy and strained theatre of the past; that who aims to rejuvenate Italian art and save it from the past traditions. The manifesto also describes what a futurist in life should be. A futurist is that who loves life, liberty and progress; that who acts bravely without cowardly hesitation; that who can work hard but still manage to have fun; that who takes care of their body in terms of exercise and hygiene; that who, when necessary can use violence. As for the theater, futurists despise the classical theater. They hate the use of this form of art being used as a commodity where the theatre goer pay a costly ticket and sit in a dark depressing room watch a restricted practiced performers with audience members being paid to applaud (Castelli 5-8).

Marinetti, the founder of futurism, was applauded in France his writings were considered a master piece as he was described as one of the greatest contemporary poets in the world. Futurism spread through Europe and was immediately celebrated as new a brave movement that aims to liberate art from traditionalism. The movement was particularly famous in France with

the publication of works such as: Auguste Joly's *Sur le futurism* (1912), Henry Bidou *Les Bruiteurs Futuristes Italiens de Luigi Russolo* (1921) and *L'art mecanique Manifeste futuriste*. While largely anti feminine, it included active female participants; while calling for a rupture between "high" and "low" culture, it prioritized painting over other forms of expression; and while celebrating the machine, it avoided the mechanical medium of film. In 1914, architect Antonio Sant'Elia published an architecture futurist manifesto in an exhibition catalogue inspiring other young architects to follow in his footsteps and produce similar modern designs (Chipp 281).

## CHAPTER Two: *A Scanner Darkly as a Dystopian Novel*

This chapter attempts to deliver an analytical summary of Philip Dick's novel *A Scanner Darkly* (1977). The novel is considered a classic science fiction novel and like many of his works, it depicts a pessimistic future. In his fictions, Dick expresses his perspective of modern technology cultures. He covers all of the major components of a technology-driven society, including the impact on the human psychology, science's relationship with technology, and the future society's shape.

Philip Dick is one of the most famous science fiction writers of all time. He is attributed with the incorporation of futurism to the genre. However, this was not always the case. Dick was virtually unknown for most of his life and his work was considered too radical. After his death, his novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) was adapted into a movie entitled *Blade Runner* and was immediately hailed a cult classic and this catapulted his works to fame. Now with the recognition he gained, his works became the subject of debates. His works often contained a philosophical undertone and often existential questions about life and humanity and most importantly the effects of technology on mankind.

Philip Dick's stories are often drug induced as he spent the 1960s in a drug haze, a fact his critics often used as an argument for his madness. Although he is considered a prolific writer with 44 published novels and 121 short stories under his belt, this reputation he garnered stood in the face of recognition. To counter that effect he wrote the novel *A Scanner Darkly* (1977), a harrowing account warning about the dangers of drug use. Dick eventually overcomes his drug addiction and even experiences a spiritual awakening which he discussed in his last three novels where he has an encounter with god himself.

## I. The Novel as a Technological Dystopia

Philip K Dick's *A Scanner Darkly* (1977) is a classical postmodernist work that depicts the life in the future the semi-autobiographical takes place in Orange County, California and follows the story of Bob Arctor, an undercover narcotics agent looking for a supplier for the new drug located in a rehab called new path. However the story starts from a very different direction than what the reader would expect. The story starts with a drugs' friend Jerry Fabin who is trying to get rid of insects that took over his house, or so he thinks as no one else but him sees them and they are driving him insane, but a friend of his, another drug addict, named Charles Freck comes and seems to be able to see them too, so together they made a decision which is collecting the bugs and show them to a doctor later. These two characters represent the comical relief this novel needs. As a postmodern novel it depicts humor in a dark and unusual manner.

After that readers are introduced to Jim Barris, Jerry Fabin's roommate, Jim offers Freck help to teach him the easy way on how to make cocaine at home to help him get a girl, he wants to spend a night with him, that girl is Donna Hawthorne a drug seller that he commands substance D from, and also known as the girlfriend of Bob Arctor who is the main character.

When we see Bob, he is in a scramble suit which is a new device that helps hide your identity by changing it each nanosecond, giving a speech about the world of illegal drugs, warning people about them and telling them to avoid it. This secret identity is safe from even Donna, his roommates, and the people he works with as they all know him by the name Fred.

Later Bob calls Donna to buy some drugs for himself and she tells him that his cephalochromosome, a device used to relax, has been sabotaged by someone, after that he is assigned to go to New-path, a rehab facility, where he must search, find, and arrest a drug

supplier, but the people who work there start throwing insults at him as a part of their treatment forcing Bob to leave the facility feeling uneasy and without learning the truth about the supplier yet. The issue of identity is introduced in the beginning of the novel with the scramble suit continues to be a major discussion point as a central issue for a postmodern novel.

After that Bob, still in his suit, goes to meet Hank another agent who doesn't know the identity of Fred and tells him that someone has been making anonymous calls warning the police from Bob Arctor and so without knowing it Bob is sent to spy on himself in order to claim evidence of any illegal activities that Arctor is a part of. Then Bob takes his roommates out one day in order to let the police put devices to monitor the apartment. This continuation of the predominant theme of paranoia in the novel, a common feeling for postmodernists as they harbor deep mistrust for all that is around even one's self. but he later on ditches them to go and visit a junky named Kimberly Hawkins and he gets stuck in a problem with her and her boyfriend making him go back home later, but on the way home, his car gets out of control and it seems that someone has messed with it leading Bob to suspect Barris.

After Bob goes to work the other day, he is summoned to a room where he is tested to see if he has any signs of split-brain dementia that he seems to show, after that he goes to a safe apartment to watch the footage and live feed from his apartment just in time to see Jim Barris watch a Luckman choking on some food and Barris standing beside him watching.

Later Bob goes to meet Donna to get some drugs and smoke weed with her and as so he asks her on a date that she accepts he tries to hug her but she refuses and calls him ugly, he gets up angry ready to leave when she tells him that she just wants to get married but he was not the kind of guy she will get married to. As a result Bob gets Connie, a drug addict, to sleep with her,



but while they are having sex he sees her face turning into Donna, and later on he sees the same thing in the holoscans, the footage from his house, which makes him fear for his own sanity.

In the sane, Fred sees that Barris is trying to set him up for a bounced check after he asks for a locksmith and gives him a check from an old account Bob had that is now closed, of course Bob finds the man and pays him the money back to stop any legal problems. At the same time Charles Freck decides to kill himself and so he tries to overdose on some pills with wine, but he discovers that he had the wrong pills, so a creature from another dimension with many eyes in his face comes to read his sins forever in shifts, leaving him thinking that the only good thing that came up from this was the wine.

Now Bob has two different personalities one of them is Bob and the other is Fred and so he feels disgusted, creeped out by what Bob is doing as he starts speaking in German and Fred questions Bob's sanity. After that he is called to the psychologist's room where more tests has and is told that he has a split brain. Usually in the normal brain the left part takes the lead while the right side is only there for assistance, but in Bob's case his left side is almost not working so the right side is competing to take the lead and do all the work of the right side.

Later Bob goes to Hank's office to find Barris there telling them that he was the anonymous caller and that he has evidence that Bob is actually working with an organization to take down the United States by buying weapons, and that Bob and Donna are both working for it, after further investigation it is found that these evidence were forged and thus Barris is taken to prison.

But Bob also has to face consequences as he is fired for becoming an addict during the job and also fined, in his last talk with Hanks it is revealed that he knows who Fred is and that he is

Bob Arctor himself, something that doesn't make sense to Fred and sees it as impossible. Later Bob is taken to New-path by Donna who is revealed to be a cop, in there Bob forgets who he is and is called Bruce, and makes a new friend called Mike Westaway who works there but is also a cop and just then Bob finds some flowers that he understands to be the drug they have been looking for substance D and hides one of the flowers to show it to Mike on thanksgiving.

In dystopian fiction, technology stands as one of the primary reasons to the rise of the genre and so it is reflected in most dystopian novels. Technology usually corrupts people taking away their ethics, reason, and humanity .So, most of the dystopian novels try to build on the idea that corruption comes from power and that power comes from technology and *A Scanner Darkly* is not different.

Technology in *A Scanner Darkly* is demonstrated in different ways as it is first introduced to our main character Bob Arctor we see him in what is known as “a scramble suit” which is a new invention that cops use to hide their identity. It projects a new identity every nanosecond. This is an invention that Arctor uses whenever he is working as an undercover narcotics agent who keeps his identity safe from his co-workers, higher ups, and previous people he arrested.

However, this invention gives Bob the ultimate secret identity making him vulnerable to corruption and so he grows a drug addiction leading him to take huge amounts of substance D and making him grow a split-brain dementia this leads him to forget who he is at some points in the story and later forget his whole identity and his name as a whole leading him to the rehab facility as a mindless patient without a chance of returning to who he is.

On the subject of technology and identity technology is also used to conceal the identity of the person who notified the police from Bob Arctor. This keeps him away from any suspicion

which makes this secret identity a threat to the life of Bob as he does not recognize whether he is someone close to him or not. Another use of technology we see in the novel is to monitor people as it is used to monitor the apartment of Bob Arctor as everything he says and does is recorded and viewed by the police this takes away the personal life of Bob as it his privacy is invaded via the use of technology an example of that could be seen when Bob sees the tape in which he is having a sexual intercourse with a woman named Connie, but the tape also reveals that Jim Barris ,Arctor's roommate, is setting him up for not paying a bounced check this helps Bob escape serious legal charges.

The novel directly relates the main character's struggle with his identity to technology. As Bob relies on technology to maintain anonymity from both his roommates and his fellow police officers. This constant change in appearance causes him to lose connection to his true identity and eventually leads him to suspect himself and question his own sanity this is directly linked to his reliance on a piece of technology meant to aid in his endeavor. This reflects the author's opinion on the high technological advance made at the time with the technological race between the United States and the Soviet Union fuelled by the cold war. The author has often expressed his disdain for the destructive path technology is leading humanity down especially with the invention of the nuclear bomb.

The author claims that this story had a lot of elements from his own life, and with its sad ending we could easily see what the author tries to show, how he tries to warn others from the lifestyle that they chose, that they cannot live with it for very long, and how they should change it and try to escape the future that awaits them.

As established earlier dystopian fiction works to change something that the author believes can change the lives of people to the worst by depicting a future in which the dangers of that thing are shown in full detail and sometime even exaggerated and as the author said at the end of the novel:

Drug misuse is not a disease; it is a decision, like the decision to step out in front of a moving car. You would call that not a disease but an error in judgment. When a bunch of people begin to do it, it is a social error, a life-style. In this particular life-style the motto is "Be happy now because tomorrow you are dying," but the dying begins almost at once, and the happiness is a memory. It is, then, only a speeding up, an intensifying, of the ordinary human existence. It is not different from your life-style, it is only faster. It all takes place in days or weeks or months instead of years. "Take the cash and let the credit go," as Villon said in 1460. But that is a mistake if the cash is a penny and the credit a whole lifetime. (234)

Showcasing that what he fights here is the social error of doing drugs, of choosing a moment rather than a lifetime of lies that people tell not just each other, but themselves as well in order to be able to move on with their lifestyles to have a reason not to change and to accept that their lifestyle is not the reason for their own demise. This is the kind of dystopia that the author fears, a one where drugs are seen as an acceptable lifestyle and people lying to them to keep making "good memories".

Philip's Dick style is quite confusing one and you can see it in his main choice of the opening as you start with Jerry Fabin's delusions, how he thinks he has bugs in his head and how these delusions spread to his roommates in this opening scene nothing is explained to the reader

about them being drug addicts this leaves to many possibilities for the reader as he is unable to decipher what is happening here, are the two men delusional, can they see things others cannot, did the doctor just miss these bugs all of these are possibilities that can flash the readers' minds as they are unable to understand what is real and what is fake this is the confusing style of Philip Dick telling the story from the perspective of the characters without giving any clue to the readers helps confuse them and see the story from the eyes of the characters.

Another example could be seen when Charles Freck decides to end his life by overdosing on some pills we as audience are expecting him to die an easy death as that would explain why he chose this method but it all goes south when he realizes that he has taken the wrong pills and just then there is an inter-dimensional being who enters the scene as he tells Charles that he will read all his sins and it will take him an eternity, of course all of this is just him hallucinating in his last moments before he dies but from his point of view this takes place in over a thousand years, and this is why it was important to tell this part of the story through his point of view it would not give the same impression or deliver the feeling of death in the same way it did now show how the character himself sees his sad death.

This also serves to deliver the themes of the story, the dangers of drugs, how it can affect mental health and how others who "play" with them see the world and how it takes away their livelihoods and puts them in horrible situations that even we cannot understand until all is said and done. Another example is seen when Fred is wondering to himself what Bob Arctor was doing and he starts to question the actions of Bob not even realizing that he is Bob himself.

Unreliable narration and multiple points of view of the same story gives the story a bit of a complex nature around it that serves to not just attract but also confuse the viewer this in

addition to a very important element that the story uses and is built upon which is withdrawing information in his book story Robert McKee explains the following: “A great story authenticates its ideas solely within the dynamics of its events; failure to express a view through the pure, honest consequences of human choice and action is a creative defeat no amount of clever language can salvage.” He later on adds: “Never pass on exposition unless the missing fact would cause confusion. You do not keep the audience’s interest by giving it information, but by withholding information, except that which is absolutely necessary for comprehension. Pace the exposition.”

Giving the audience information is not an easy task as it could lead them losing interest at the story withdrawing completely just makes them uninterested because nothing new is being learned or acquired but withdrawing information until it is necessary to is the tool that Phillip Dick has perfected and utilized more than once in the story to keep the audience engaged and keep the tension rising and the readers confused.

## **II. Dystopian Narrative in the Novel**

In general, many of Philip’s works talk about that part of his life where he was a drug addict, as it seems that he has learnt a lot from those years and decided to spread his wisdom to others through his stories, that all share similar themes and ideas and this one is not different.

The novel was influenced by three years of his life from 1970 to 1972 in these three years he has gone through many relationships and has been addicted to many drugs and you can see the life he lived and the people he knew engraved into the story with all its darkness. Its characters taking their own lives, characters going to jail, or even the main character who loses his mind and identity in this darkness is something that runs deep in the story and feeds every action and every

act of the story. This is why it is considered an autobiographical novel as it draws from the author's own life, struggles and vices. One must wonder if the paranoia and the protagonist's sense of insanity are also derived from the author's life. Of course this darkness in nothing short of our fear, our fear of insanity, of unhappiness, of being alone, all those fears are seen in the story and they feed not just the characters but us as well as we are afraid of our destiny to be like these characters and stay like them and as the Guardian has said:

A Scanner Darkly is about the fragility of our lives and the obscure horror of insanity. In his later work, Dick explores what lies behind our fear of madness, and perhaps it's there that his work becomes true art. But in A Scanner Darkly he drives us down into our deepest fears and leaves us there, in the darkness. (Walter 1)

So, even though this isn't Philip's best work, it is surely going to stick to us for a long time as the work that has lead us to the darkness and kept us there, in fear and anticipation to our society leads the darkness to us. For it depicts the influence of one's entourage on a person's choices. By shedding a light on Bob's psychological degradation because of drugs, we see the characters in the novel suffer because and yet they are incapable of saving themselves as they influenced by their environment.

“Government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state, an intolerable one.” (Paine 1) Government in the eyes of many people is evil but the debate is whether that evil can serve as a means to end. When done correctly governments can lead the country to a great life, one where people are felt satisfied and fulfilled. But where does it cross the line of where it becomes pure evil? The government is the target of the bulk of mistrust in most of dystopian works and rightfully so. In the novel we see the government represented in the

police force that leads the investigation on Bob Arctor and also New-path. The investigation leads to planting surveillance equipment in his apartment without the knowledge and agreement of any of his roommates or him, except that Bob actually knows that because he is the officer who is in charge of the investigation. This theme of government surveillance was also discussed in George Orwell's *1984*. The question of whether the government has too much power over people's lives and whether they have the right to spy on people in their homes dates back to the days of the church control on Europe. In those days the church would conduct random searches for evidence of heresy which triggered witch trials and many innocent people lost their lives whereas priests gain power and money from the ordeal. The debate was further reignited with the foundation of the NSA in the United States in clear violation of the constitution. The fourth amendment in the United States constitution reads as follows:

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized. ("Constitution of the United States," amend 4)

Since the events of the story take place in California it is unconstitutional of them to put surveillance in the apartment of Bob Arctor without his consent and knowledge, not just that but an anonymous call is not good enough reasoning for doing that as it can be ruled out to be just a joke, a prank or blatant lie as we already know.

So, the government in this story is breaking its own law and invades the privacy of three individuals this is a clear case of government control where the government knows no clear



boundaries to how far they can go and they break all protocols this could be interpreted as the author calling out the government saying that if we continue going this way and letting the government do whatever it wants, soon enough it will turn on us and starts taking away our basic rights such as privacy.

Another example in the novel of government control is seen in Donna, Donna is an undercover cop who was using Bob all along selling him drugs until he gets sick and forgets what his name even is and Donna uses this to her advantage as she puts Bob into New-path in order to get information on the new drug. Donna is another example of the traitorous nature of government as it furthers her own agenda at the expense of others' wellbeing. She manipulates Bob into doing her bidding.

Needless to say, possessing drugs to sell them is illegal in California under Health and Safety Code 11351, so for a cop to violate that it is a serious felony. Not just that but after Bob develops an addiction and later on a split-brain dementia so Donna uses Bob to secure information about the drugs made in New-path.

In this position we have Donna, an officer working for the federal government selling drugs to a civilian, as far as she knows, making him grow an addiction to use him to find the source of drugs in a certain area. This is a clear case of corruption as Donna does not and should not have the power to put other officers or civilians' lives at risk for her to solve a case. It is illegal and a demonstration how power can corrupt government officers leading them to risk what they should protect.

Now one could argue that Donna could risk the life of one character, Bob Arctor, and try to save the life and stability of the many people in there and this is what the message that the

author is trying to set; however, it is not the job of the police to decide who to save and who to use as it is not the job of the government, the government and police have to save everyone or at least try to save everyone and it is obvious that even Donna herself questions her morality thinking about whether she emits a “greedy noise” showing how immoral and unjust what she did was.

Another element of dystopia that is highlighted in the novel is survival in the face of challenging odds. In this story the characters are trying to survive, but unlike other stories where the threat is obvious these characters are trying to survive their own lifestyle, the one revolving around drugs. As the characters go on their daily lives drugs seem to be the reason of every fight, every clash, and every problem, each and every one of them is trying to survive that lifestyle. A clear example of that is Bob Arctor, who gets addicted to drugs this leads him to form a relationship with Donna that uses him to her advantage, it also leads him to get sick to the sad degree. In the end, he did not survive, he could not accomplish his mission, he failed and the cost was dear. Another example of that is Donna who does whatever is necessary to survive, examples of that can be seen in her actually selling drugs to Bob, this is an act that is seen on her part as selfish but as the author says it is their decision to stop taking the drugs so it could be seen as her doing whatever is necessary to survive and in the end she has a lead in the inside Bob so it is seen as survival.

### **Chapter Three: *A Scanner Darkly* as a Futuristic Depiction of Dystopian Science Fiction**

This chapter attempts to highlight the negative effects of external elements such as technology and drugs on the future lives of humans in the eyes of the novel. The novel paints a bleak picture of what the future will amount to if the world continues the way it is. The chapter discusses the characteristics of futurism in the novel as well as the author's prediction for the future. The chapter first provides a short overview of futurism as a movement; its origin, development and adaptation to literature. Then it proceeds to pinpoint the futuristic aspects in the novel and discusses the author's vision for the future through his novel.

#### **I. Futurism as a Literary Movement**

Futurism is a social artistic movement that emerged in the early 20th century in Italy and was spread to the rest of the world it was first announced to the world via the manifesto written by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti called *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature* published in *Le Figaro* a Parisian newspaper. It revolves around celebrating the new and abandoning the old as well as loving technology and what it brings. Marinetti showed a huge love for cars and called it enrichment to the world. In addition, it also encourages what he called "the love of danger". Also, it calls for aggressive action and struggle. Claiming that, people should glorify war, destroy "museums, libraries, academies of every kind" and fight moralism, feminism and such movements.

Futurism took Europe by storm inspiring people to create Paintings and sculptures celebrating this movement sculptures such as *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* tend to be remembered by many as a classic futuristic art piece people like Umberto Boccioni, Luigi Russolo, and Gino Severini are big names in the futuristic movement.

This movement has also led writers and poets to develop new genres asking for freedom from whatever control or morality that existed with new styles such as *parole in libertà* which translates to words in freedom this movement has spread to many other countries such as Russia. This movement was also associated with modernism and postmodernism mostly writing about rape, misogyny in a positive way calling for a utopia without any type of morality. Later in the 1920's Marinetti joined fascism and later served in the Second World War to die later from cardiac arrest.

For futurists, the move to literature was a means to spread this movement's beliefs and further its aims. The movement called for revolts against all forms of power and authority. The futurist manifesto makes various references to violence encouraging the use of poetry as a weapon. Futurism is not limited to written literature but to visual and auditory form of expression. This is why adaptations of futuristic works are often successful especially with the advancement in cinematic techniques and technology.

The main condition for a work to be considered futuristic is for the plot to be set in a future time for its publication. Writing about a future that has yet to exist gave the writers a chance not comment on the past but to shape the future. Various futuristic novels have actually managed to predict future events such as Morgan Robertson's *The Wreck of a Titan (1898)* which predicted the titanic catastrophe. A futuristic literary work must adhere to a set of characteristics such as: the imagery of high technology as part of everyday life. For futurists, life should be an image of modernity and technology where all forms of life are made easier and more efficient by the reliance on machinery. Another element is human development while it is not specified in which direction this development is headed the author must depict a change from the humans of today and most importantly from the humans of the past. With a rejection of the past, the futurist

novel must also reject the classic life style and support a more modern and urbanized life. A futuristic novel also entails a focus human reaction to the world around them. Futuristic novels support individualism and focus on the internal struggle of the characters rather than the state of the community as a whole. If the plot being set in the future is any indication, a futuristic novel should have a distorted notion of space and time often relaying on fragmentation to maintain this effect.

## II. Futuristic Aspects in *A Scanner Darkly*

One of the main futuristic aspects in the novel is the theme of technology. Like any other dystopian story, technology is a big part of it as it stands as the forcing wheel of many elements of the story, it can be the reason the writer is trying to warn us of the future, it can be a medium to some other threat that the writer feels obliged to shed light on, and in this story it is a little bit of both. In this novel technology is not met very well as it stands to be one of the many reasons these characters are corrupted. The main character Bob has enjoyed so much freedom that this technology has brought him, an example of that is his cephalochromosome, a game device; this device helped him in many ways even though it was broken in the early pages of the novel. The technology is at first seen as a means of enjoyment and relaxation but in the early stages of the story the device is said to have been destroyed. This is a way to foreshadow the growing mistrust and negativity technology brings to the story. It was first explained that this device was a big help to Bob in making him relaxed and less stressed this is more emphasized by the reaction of Bob himself when he was angry that his device was broken it seems that this console had a big part of his life as Donna said that he used to turn it on and play whenever he goes home that's why he has an emotional attachment to it. This is a reflection of Dick's own belief and opinion about technology.

Dick's fictions depict modern technological cultures in which economic output is essentially based on the application of science and technology. He believes that before devolving into dystopias, modern cultures began as scientific and technological utopias. Dystopia has long been a popular genre among science fiction readers due to the importance of science and technology, the complexity of robotic human life in the near future and its implications for our lives, our erroneous belief that science and technology alone can create a utopian world, the abuse of technology to gain totalitarian control over societies, and human fear of confrontation with technology.

A technology that can alter any conversation between two people can only have one reason behind it to press someone and bend him to your will or to fake evidence of them doing something illegal or give consent to something that they do not agree on, all of these are things that are inherently evil and can only cause harm in most cases and it is something that was only seen in a negative light in the novel, but well enough there is a way to tell whether these recordings are true or not and it is what gets Barris arrested instead of Bob so even this technology fails in front of humanity.

Bob who has this suit for example uses it to keep his identity secret which lets him get addicted to drugs. This suit can also protect officers from being fired without bases or for their lives and the lives of their family to be safe from any former villain who was caught by one of the officers, this continues to play into the idea that every invention in the story can be used in both positive and negative ways, Hank for example wears his suit and does not seem to have any problems with working or serving so again technology is not the one at fault here it is Bob. The suit is an indication of the character's loss of identity first the physical and later on intellectual and sensational.

This whole story worked to serve one thing in the field of technology, that technology is not good or bad, it is neutral, it is what you decide it to be and for this whole story we can tell that the author is not trying to warn us from it but it tries to warn from the darkness within ourselves, brought by it. In one major plot point, the main character's house is infected with monitoring devices, which is seen as a major invasion of privacy because the cops can see every detail of their lives. An example of this is seeing Bob have a sexual encounter with Connie, which has nothing to do with the investigation and appears to be completely unnecessary.

Dick also emphasizes the role technology plays in creating hyperreality. Because he cannot trust his own senses, the protagonist of this tale places his reliance on technology. One of the effects of living in a hyperreal society appears to be this. Characters in this novel are delusional as a result of drug usage, and they are unable to distinguish between real and unreal situations. When the line between real and unreal is blurred, we will be confronted with hyperreality. The individual's identity will be harmed by this hyperreality (Hemmat and Shabrang 20). The novel contains moments of visual disorientation as the protagonist first struggles with his vision of Donna and later with his own self-image.

The novel is an autobiographical novel meaning it was to a great extent based on the author's own life and beliefs. The plot reflects his vision of reality under the influence of drugs and technology was and what it was coming to in the future. By the state that is shown in the novel that is set years ahead of its publication, we can deduct Dick's prediction for the future. He portrays a future of social degradation and corruption. The drugs the story is about is called substance D that is called death and yet the characters in the novel continue to use the substance with vigor without any consideration for its danger indication that drugs infest the mind beyond even common sense. The novel being set in the future predicts a bleak future for humanity as the society became infested with drugs. The emphasis that substance D does not always result in

literal death but in the death of one's identity and mind is a cautionary notion of drugs' long term effects on the human mind.

While describing the setting of the novel, Dick states that: "It was midday, in June of 1994. In California, in a tract area of cheap but durable plastic houses, long ago vacated by the straights" (Dick 3). while the place was originally designed to house families, it became a deserted tract for junkies this was used to highlight the destructive power of drugs on seemingly good neighborhoods like a disease that is spread from one household to another until nothing but mayhem is left behind.

Another futuristic element in the novel is its characters. In the opening of the novel the first character the reader is introduced to is Jerry. The book opens with him trying to shake bugs from his hair, except there are no bugs. They are a figment of his imagination elicited by his extensive drug use. This is an implication for what the author believes the people in the future will be like. It also speaks to the dramatic effect of said external elements such substance D on the human turning an otherwise healthy young man crazy. And by showcasing the evolution of the bug life in what he summarized as being a three stage process, we are lead to believe that it would only continue to get worse. After a while his friend Charles also begins to see these bugs this is to say that not only is the condition getting worse but that it would also spread. In His subsequent encounter with the police in his fantasy, the police are described as fascists another insinuation to the author's view of the controlling government.

The next character we are introduced to is Donna. She is a drug seller whom Charles approaches to in an attempt to score drugs. Donna is skeptical of him as she does not recognize him. She later on explains that she thought he was attempting to rape her. This is another show of how the world in the future is dark and corrupt that women are afraid to walk down the street in



fear of being raped or molested as the lack of morality is another epidemic that plagues the future.

Finally, we are introduced to the protagonist of the story through which the author showcases the effects of the external elements like drugs and technology and the government effect people. The novel is a journey inside Bob's mind as he slowly loses his sanity and identity. In this scene we are also introduced to the scramble suit as it is an important element in the plot. The suit itself was created when the inventor accidentally injected drugs in his system. This draws a relation between drugs and technology as they both possess the ability to manipulate and control one's mind. Which in turn paints the novel as a bleak vision of a future where people are dependent on malicious technology and drugs. The suit changes not only Bob's look but his voice as well erasing all that makes him Bob and turns him instead into his alter ego, Fred. The suit as it is being showcased to the audience is applauded extensively in parallel to what people usually react to technology assuming that it is meant to better the lives of humans completely unaware of the results of such inventions.

During his speech we see what Bob believes. He is paranoid and sees enemies everywhere. He says that he does not know who is spreading the drugs in their society and hence they are all around. When he speaks to Donna on the pay phone he says that all the payphones are being monitored another indication of both his paranoia and the government's disregard for the common people's right to privacy. That is what the future through the eyes Dick, a dark world where people are manipulated and controlled by drugs and technology while being watched and prosecuted by the government.

One of the major issues dystopia deals with is the ever-existent question about what is identity. It is also a question Dick seems to ponder in his works and most definitely in this one. In Bob's train of thought he wonders: "You put on a bishop's robe and miter, he pondered, and

walk around in that, and people bow and genuflect and like that, and try to kiss your ring, if not your ass, and pretty soon you're a bishop. So to speak. What is identity? He asked himself. Where does the act end? Nobody knows”(Dick 22) this question is both dystopian and futuristic as the question of not knowing one's self is not terrifying enough but to reach a point where due to drugs and technology one's would lose this identity is simply a petrifying notion.

In this futuristic dystopian world Dick created drugs have affected the human mind so much it became considered cool to sell drugs. Bob as he contemplates Donna and her motivations for selling drugs believes that she is: “a chick who considered it cool and far-out to deal dope” (Dick 24). Dick views this as a sign of moral degradation. He explains the difference between small time dealers like Donna and the distributors he is attempting to bring down. While the former believes it a cool trend, the latter considers the destruction of human lives a lucrative endeavor. In the novel substance D is said to be a synthetic product meaning it was manufacture in a technologically advanced laboratory which another indication that technology is tool that can be used for evil all depending on the its user.

As Bob Arctor lies in his bed thinking about the family he left behind he says: “That life had been one without excitement, with no adventure. It had been too safe. All the elements that made it up were right there before his eyes, and nothing new could ever be expected. It was like, he had once thought, a little plastic boat that would sail on forever, without incident, until it finally sank, which would be a secret relief to all” (Dick 52) this is a futuristic vision of life where one chase after excitement and speed where one would abandon the classic form living where families contain a mother and father with children for the freedom and liberty the single life can provide. This is also referred in the beginning when it is said that the neighborhood where jerry lives is no longer a home for families but for drug addicts and criminals.

Futurism is an impressionist movement meaning the most important element it focuses on is the reaction of humans to the external world and this exactly what makes Philip Dick's *A Scanner Darkly* (1977) a futuristic novel. The plot is a downward spiral of the protagonist's state of mind. In the beginning of the novel we see Bob in a state of relative sanity; still focused on his work and conscious of the effects of substance D. Then as things start to go south he begins to spiral the point is marked by one sentence as Bob's cephalochromosome was destroyed "I KNOW IF I JUST HAD ANOTHER HIT . . ." (Dick 53) he falls in the trap and becomes addicted to substance D. This is what life in this futuristic world does to people.

Another major futuristic element in the novel is the distorted nature of space and time. When describing Jerry's living condition the author makes a reference to the rejection of the common notion of time "Jerry had at an earlier date sprayed metal paint over all the windows, though, to keep out the light; the illumination for the room came from a pole lamp into which he had screwed nothing but spot lamps, which shone day and night, so as to abolish time for him and his friends. He liked that; he liked to get rid of time. By doing that he could concentrate on important things without interruption" (Dick 3). As for space, a common reoccurrence in the novel is for the characters to lose themselves in their fantasies. When Jerry is in the car trying not to draw the attention of the police he said "I'll just sit here parked for a while, he decided, and alpha meditate or go into various different altered states of consciousness. Possibly by watching the chicks going along on foot" (Dick 8). This means that characters often space out and go places in their own minds when their bodies are still in the same place. This is an illusion for just how human senses have been destroyed by drugs that they even lost sense of space and time. This however is a writing technic for Dick that allows him to produce a fragmented piece of writing to avoid the stale linear plotline.

All the characters portrayed in the novel are a representation of what humanity looks like in a dystopia futuristic world. The society would be destroyed of all that makes it good. The cities would be gone to waste with the stores like the thrift shop mentioned in the novel, a front to sell drugs. The city infested with chains of 7/11s that sell drugs and alcohol. People would be selling drugs in public to the countless victims of the epidemic. Technology will control every aspect of human life from electronic corn poppers to scrambler suit that change one's own identity. Telephones on streets will be ministered by the government and even the sanctity of one's own home would be violated. Major manufacturers will produce poison for the consumption of the masses for profitability and people will slowly lose their sanity in chase of the sweet comfort of death. This is the dark vision of the future the novel depicts.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, because it praises most facets of recent reality such as advanced technology, nuanced characters, and place, the novel is a futuristic work par excellence. Philip Dick writes science fiction that combines his dystopian vision of technology with a futuristic narrative. He attempts to use futuristic techniques such as imagery, impressionism, and detailed depiction to present a delicate dystopian vision of human development within a scientific context.

The first chapter consists of a theoretical overview of what a postmodern science fiction novel is. A specific definition of science fiction is a matter of great debate as various scholars gave different definitions. First, Hugo Gernsback defined the genre as a romantic story filled with enough scientific to be visionary but plausible and possible to achieve in the future. Another attempt at defining the genre was made twenty years later by J.O. Bailey who limited science fiction work to only a possible futuristic invention or discovery. This definition was later built on by science fiction author Christopher Evans. Evans introduced what is referred to as “what if science fiction” where he emphasized the science fiction author’s mission to introduce alternative scientific reality. But the most relied on definition of science fiction today is that of Isaac Asimov. The definition gives a more postmodern individualistic twist on the definition by stating that science fiction is all literary works that focus on the effects of scientific advancement of human life.

Science fiction is considered as a reaction to the industrialization the western world experience in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The sudden and overwhelming introduction of technology into people’s lives lead to hope for infinite possibilities for what man could now achieve. Works at this time discussed possible future achievements such as space and time travel. An important step in the rise of science fiction was made in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the introduction of the

cosmology theory which gave science fiction true scientific basis as opposed to mere works of imagination often mistaken for fantasy.

The rise of the gothic novel in the 19<sup>th</sup> century furthered the spread of science fiction as the two genres were found to have the heavy reliance on the supernatural as a common element. The post gothic era was characterized by the reoccurrence of psychological damaged characters a theme that has seen a reemergence in the postmodern era. In this period romanticism was at its height which resulted in its domination of the science fiction genre if not for the efforts of Vern and Wells who managed to save it by focusing on a much darker vision for futuristic science fiction by introducing the dangers of technological advancement on humans. The genre witnessed its true rise in the twentieth century as technological advancement flourished. Themes of political skepticism, fear of war, space travel, alien invasion and time travel were discussed heavily in correspondence with the century of political unrest and wars the world went through with the two world wars and cold war.

The chapter further explores science fiction in light of the trend of dystopia. The earlier celebration of technological advancement turned into fear as people saw technology is employed in the two world wars especially with the invention of weapons of mass destruction. The theme captured the essence of paranoia, fear and governmental mistrust the world experienced in the 1940s and 50s. The main representation of evil in dystopian novels is the government which points to people state of mind throughout the century. Another main element of dystopia is mistrust in technology. While technology was celebrated in the early days of the industrial revolution, the world became full of possibilities but as the years progressed and people saw the true uses of technology that technology laid in the hands of the few and could be used to control the many. People came to mistrust it and see it a nothing but a weapon.

The second chapter discusses the postmodernist aspects in the novel. Postmodernism is the main reason for the introduction of dystopia in literature. Postmodernism is often seen as a literary reaction to the Second World War and the destruction it brought about. As people lost hope for the future and pessimism took over. The chapter contains the plot summary of the novel through a postmodern dystopian lens. It focuses on postmodern themes that were employed in the novel. While the third chapter focuses the author's futuristic vision. From the events of the novel one can conclude that the author has a pessimistic view of the future in light of the technological advancement and drugs. It first gives a short overview of the development of futurism from art in Italy to Russia to other European countries like France and then to architecture and finally to literature.

The chapter discusses the futuristic manifestations in *A Scanner Darkly* from the dangers of technology and its effects on the characters; the analysis of characters and the elements they represent from paranoia to treachery all signs of moral degradation in the future; to the imagery of high technology and how it touches all aspects of human life; the downward development of human society from classic form of families to corruption depicted in the novel and finally the confusion of space and time the characters suffer from.

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