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AUTHORS: Cenk TAN

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**Master–Slave Dialectic and Morality in Philip K. Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle***

**Cenk Tan**

**Abstract**

*The Man in the High Castle* (1962) is one of Philip K. Dick’s most acclaimed and striking novels. The narrative is set in an alternate reality where the Axis powers have won the Second World War and occupied the United States, dividing the country into three regions: the Nazi ruled greater Reich, the Pacific Japanese States and the neutral zone. As a result of this partition, Americans have become foreign in their own country. This article examines the master-slave dialectic and master-slave morality in Philip K. Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle*. The master-slave dialectic is a theory proposed by Hegel in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Hegel outlines a mutual relationship where he assigns specific roles to two parties that engage in a struggle for desire to achieve self-consciousness. In direct connection with the master-slave dialectic is Nietzsche’s master-slave morality which was developed upon Hegel’s original conception. The thinker describes a binary opposition where particular values have been ascribed to master and slave/servant morality to establish a sustainable and reciprocal relationship. This study aims to analyze Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle* from a philosophical perspective, attempting to expose the master-slave dialectic and morality in the work of fiction and thus revealing the author’s covert messages implied in the subtext of the novel, while at the same time comparing and contrasting these with the television adaptation.

**Keywords:** Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*, Master-Slave Dialectic, GWF. Hegel, Friedrich Nietzsche

## Philip K. Dick'in *Yüksek Şatodaki Adam* Romanında Efendi-Köle Diyalektiği ve Ahlâkı

### Öz

*Yüksek Şatodaki Adam* (1962) Philip K. Dick'in en çok bilinen ve en çarpıcı romanlarından biridir. Hikâye, Mihver Güçlerinin ikinci dünya savaşını kazandıkları ve ABD'yi işgal ederek, Nazilerin hüküm sürdükleri Büyük Reich, Pasifik Japon devletleri ve tarafsız bölge olmak üzere ülkeyi üç farklı bölgeye ayıran alternatif bir gerçeklikte geçmektedir. Bu bölünmenin sonucunda Amerikalılar kendi ülkelerinde yabancı konumuna düşmüşlerdir. Bu makale, Philip K. Dick'in *Yüksek Şatodaki Adam* romanında efendi-köle diyalektiği ile efendi-köle ahlâkını incelemektedir. Efendi-köle diyalektiği Hegel tarafından *Ruhun Fenomenolojisi* adlı eserinde ortaya atılan bir teoridir. Hegel, özbilince ulaşma arzusu için mücadele eden bu iki tarafa belirli roller atadığı karşılıklı bir ilişkinin ana hatlarını çizer. Efendi-köle diyalektiği ile doğrudan bağlantılı olan Friedrich Nietzsche'nin efendi-köle ahlâkı Hegel'in özgün kavramı üzerine kurulmuştur. Düşünür, sürdürülebilir ve karşılıklı bir ilişki kurmak için efendi ve köle ahlâkına belirli değerlerin atfedildiği ikili bir karşıtlığı tanımlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, Dick'in *Yüksek Şatodaki Adam* adlı eserini felsefi bir bakış açısıyla incelemeyi, eserdeki efendi-köle diyalektiğini ve ahlâkını ortaya koymayı ve böylece televizyon uyarlaması ile özgün eseri karşılaştırarak, romanın alt metninde yazarın ima ettiği örtülü mesajları açığa çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Philip K. Dick, *Yüksek Şatodaki Adam*, Efendi-Köle Diyalektiği, GWF. Hegel, Friedrich Nietzsche

### Introduction

Philip Kindred Dick (1928-1982) is one of the most celebrated science fiction authors of all time. He published 44 novels and more than 120 short stories in his lifetime (Wittkower 342) and won worldwide recognition by his novels entitled *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (1968) and *Ubik* (1969). Dick's oeuvre became extremely popular in Europe, specifically in France during the 1980s (Burton 21). Due to this growing popularity, Dick's works have been the subject of critical analysis which in the majority of cases, is connected to one or more

psychological, social, or ontological dimensions of the postmodernist experience (Burton 21).

Another renowned Philip K. Dick novel that attracted fame around the globe is *The Man in the High Castle* (shortly *MHC*) (1962) which is considered one of the exemplary representations of alternate history. Dick’s prominent experiment in *MHC*, in which the outcome of World War II is inverted and the Axis powers are declared victorious, demonstrates the author’s interest in history as a changeable record of events that may be adjusted in the narrative (Kucukalic 21). As a narrative of alternate history, *MHC*, is a complex work of fiction that focuses on a variety of themes and issues. This attempts purports to critique Philip K. Dick’s *MHC* from a philosophical point of view, specifically, from the perspective of Hegel’s master-slave dialectic and Nietzsche’s master-slave morality. The study aims to analyze representations of master-slave dialectic and morality in Dick’s *MHC* in order to unveil the author’s covert criticism towards America and American people in particular. Thus, the study analyzes the novel, while also comparing and contrasting the original work with the TV series released after 53 years in 2015. The article comes up with notable differences from various perspectives between Dick’s authentic work of fiction and the television adaptation.

### **Hegel’s Master-Slave Dialectic**

GWF. Hegel (1770-1831) is commonly regarded as one of the founders of German idealism and western continental philosophy. From dialectics and existentialism to progress and logic, Hegel exerted a profound impact on western philosophy. An essential component of Hegel’s philosophy is the master-slave dialectic which he also refers to as the *master-servant dialectic*.

Hegel sets forth two different entities, the first being the master which is self-sufficient and the second being the servant/slave which is non-self-sufficient (Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* 113). The master is described as a substance that exists for itself, yet also in relation to others, mainly the servants (113). Thus, the master’s recognition comes to exist via another consciousness, that of the slave. On the other hand, the slave is another substance that lacks purity and shows dependence on the master. For the slave, the master represents essence

and the ultimate goal is to achieve self-consciousness which Hegel deems synonymous with desire (107). To this end, in order for desire to be achieved, the independence of objects is necessary (Şekerci 150). Thus, desire cannot take place if the object shows dependency and when desire is achieved, it leads to satisfaction (150). However, satisfaction through desire is what both parties want to obtain and thereby engage in a struggle to do so. Therefore, both the master and the slave engage in a deep struggle for desire to achieve self-consciousness (151).

Alexandre Kojève posits that human history is the “history of the interaction between mastery and slavery: the historical ‘dialectic’ is the ‘dialectic’ of Master and Slave.” But this interaction must “finally end in the ‘dialectical overcoming’ of both of them,” mastery and slavery (9). Through this statement, Kojève formulates the fundamental problematic classification of European colonization and postcolonial studies. In the upcoming periods, Hegel’s interpretation of colonial activities through the master-slave dialectic met stark resistance and opposition. The reason of this lies in Hegel’s assertion that all countries must consequently suffer the strict discipline of subordination to a master in order to become free, to have the capacity for self-control (Habib 27). Hegel even goes further to claim that slavery and tyranny are ‘relatively justified’ as they stand for a necessary stage in the advancement of countries (27).

Additionally, the dialectic condition emerges where consciousness evolves into the transformation from consciousness to self-consciousness (Habib 21). According to Hegel, achieving self-consciousness represents a mutual process where humans are dependent on one another (21). The first stage on the path to achieve self-consciousness is desire where consciousness is addressed to an exterior item to fulfill desire (Habib 22). Next, the second stage includes the contradiction which will result in sheer competition and struggle for survival (25). M.A.R. Habib contends that this struggle leads to “a one-sided denial accompanied by inequity.” While one side favors life, preserves his solitary self-consciousness, but relinquishes his claim to recognition, the other maintains his self-assertion and is acknowledged as superior by the former (26). The slave, being an “unfree consciousness”, can only bestow upon the master a void and formal recognition (26). It is this recognition that approves and affirms the master’s identity. Additionally, both sides do not attempt to exterminate one another, but maintain an inequitable and interdependent

connection which is a struggle for recognition and a war of wills (Cole 580). Therefore, rather than annihilating one another, sustaining the unequal relationship is the major characteristic of the master-slave dialectic. Furthermore, Hegel outlined three classes: the “absolute and free,” the “honest” class, “and a class of unfree or natural ethical life,” which are lords (the military, landed class), the bourgeoisie, and the peasantry (*Systems of Ethical Life* 152). Hence, the possibility of conflict between the first and the third class was apparent.

Hegel's master-slave dialectic was inspired by the feudal condition of agrarian Germany during his lifetime and he argued that the battle between possession and ownership of land eventually determined the personal connections of control in *Herrschaft* (Cole 578). Thus, feudality had a profound influence on Hegel's master-slave dialectic. Hegel discusses how slave-masters and feudal lords justify their dominance over others by comparing *Sklaverei* and *Herrschaft*:

The alleged justification of slavery [*Sklaverei*] (by reference to all its proximate beginnings through physical force, capture in war, saving and preservation of life, upkeep, education, philanthropy, the slave's own acquiescence, and so forth), as well as the justification of a slave-ownership [*Herrschaft*] as simple lordship [*Herrenschaft*] in general, all historical views of the justice of slavery [*Recht der Sklaverei*] and lordship [*Herrenschaft*], depend on regarding man as a natural entity pure and simple, as an existent not in conformity with its concept (an existent to which arbitrariness is appropriation). (Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* 48)

Hegel centered his dialectic system on the notion of the slave. Whether the epoch is feudal or not, every time period has its own masters and slaves. Within a general context, it is apparent that Hegel conveyed the master-slave dialectic in an allegorical manner, highlighting its timeless nature. As a consequence, the master-slave dialectic is formulated as a notion that exists since the early periods of history and will continue to exist in different forms in the future.

In the context of the master-slave dialectic, the slave can only be regarded as an object for the master and himself and can never retain the status of a subject since to become a normative subject, one must first conceive of oneself as a subject, so that one may master the bravery to stake one's life for that notion (Brandom 339). Thus, the slave's

realities are not established by the slave's longing but by the master's (340). Therefore, the master acts as the determining force behind the slave. The master-slave relationship is an authentic normative subjugation and obedience system (340). While the master shares an independent position towards the slave, the slave exerts recognitive dominion over the master but nevertheless due to its hegemonic power, the master does not acknowledge the recognitive dominion of the slave (340). To this end, the master is purely independent whereas the slave not only affirms the hegemony of the master but also leads an existence dependent on the master. On the other hand, though the master exerts power over the slave, it also needs the slave to affirm its self-consciousness (Farivar, et al. 18).

In addition to Hegel's formulation of the master-slave dialectic, many other thinkers and scholars have reinterpreted this notion. Jean-Paul Sartre accepted that humans seek for acknowledgment, but since he saw the ego as fundamentally solitary, he rejected the notion of reciprocal recognition (Deleuze, et al. 182). Another influential philosopher, Simone de Beauvoir considered the conflict between master and slave as a political and social one, involving issues such as gender (182). Others such as Kojève, Hyppolite, and Lacan followed the French tradition whereas Lukács, Habermas and Gadamer continued the German tradition of Hegelians (182). However, Deleuze, himself argues that the Hegelian dialectic in general must be regarded as an inherent component of his exposition and critique of capitalism and modernity.

In short, the master-slave relationship is intrinsically dialectic as the master is less free than he/she believes because his/her entire mastery is predicated on service, and the slave is more free than he/she thinks because he/she finds freedom in labor based on the fear of death (Houlgate 102). All in all, Hegel's master-slave dialectic had a profound impact on many influential thinkers such as Marx, Nietzsche, Adorno, Kojève and Deleuze. The following section will explore Nietzsche's master-slave morality which largely relies upon the foundation established by Hegel's theory of master-slave dialectic.

### **Nietzsche's Master-Slave Morality**

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) was one of the most influential German thinkers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His controversial

notions of the übermensch, nihilism, amor fati and eternal recurrence have exercised a profound impact on western thought and society. Most of Nietzsche’s theories still remain widely discussed today. One of these is the master-slave morality which he puts forward in his acclaimed work, *Beyond Good and Evil*.

Nietzsche first describes master morality and contends that when dominant individuals define what is “good,” exalted, proud states of soul are viewed as unique and as defining rank order (*Beyond Good and Evil* 154). Hence, the philosopher ascribes values such as nobility and goodness to those who possess the master morality. Thereby, Nietzsche establishes a binary opposition with the nobles, or the ones that determine values and others that act upon the determined values. The philosopher describes the qualities of master morality as: “The capacity and duty to experience extended gratitude and vengefulness – both only among your own kind –, subtlety in retaliation, refinement in concepts of friendship, a certain need to have enemies” (155).

On the other hand, slave morality is expressed as the morality of the oppressed, exploited, unfree and toiling masses that Nietzsche associates with: “qualities that serve to alleviate existence for suffering people are pulled out and flooded with light: pity, the obliging, helpful hand, the warm heart, patience, industriousness, humility, and friendliness receive full honors” (155-156). Thus, the philosopher identifies and emphasizes multiple motives for the justification of the poor masses that suffer and lead an unhappy existence. The longing for freedom, the instinct for happiness, and nuances in the experience of freedom are invariably signs of slave morals and morality, just as artistry and zeal in regard and devotion are invariably symptoms of an aristocratic manner of thinking and valuing (*Beyond Good and Evil* 156). To that end, Nietzsche not only affirmed the reciprocal relationship between the masters and the slaves, but also set forth the opposing two types of morality which the masters and slaves abide by.

As mentioned in the earlier section, Hegel’s master-slave dialectic coincides in many aspects with Nietzsche’s master-slave morality. Firstly, both hold negativity central to their philosophy (Greene 125). In other words, both thinkers focus on the reciprocal relationship between two opposing positions that ultimately lead to the definition of one’s self-consciousness as one’s self-consciousness is eventually decided in respect to the other (Greene 126). Hegel marks



the unhappy consciousness central to his phenomenology whereas Nietzsche argues that the Christian morality results with a negative conscience (126-127). Secondly, both thinkers rely on the struggle between the two states of humans; the strong and the weak, the giver and the taker, the active and the passive, the ones who decide and the ones who carry out the decision (127). Murray Greene maintains that:

In the active master nature the old savage rapacity remains turned against the outsider, and thus continues to have a natural outlet. In the slave nature, however, the old instincts turn “inward” and become a “cauldron of unsatisfied hatred.” The impotent vengefulness of the slave nature eventually yields the “good-evil” values of *ressentiment*: meekness, pity, self-abnegation - the foul-smelling products of the underground “workshop of ideals.” As a *ressentiment* this slave morality is not only a turning of weakness against strength, not only a turning against “other” (the master), but also a turning against self, a diminution of life-force. (127-128)

With the diminution of life-force, Nietzsche means the very fact that slaves are not capable of reflecting their energies to the outer sphere, but rather lose this vast potential due to directing it inwards. This calls for an impediment of instinctual energies that fail to be reflected to the outer world (Greene 128). Nietzsche refers to this phenomenon as “the internalization of bad conscience” and names this process the “debtor-creditor” relationship of “exchange” (128). As a consequence, those adhering to slave morality find themselves in constant debt and guilt before God. This, in turn causes the “‘maximization’ of God and the ‘minimization’ of self which could be interpreted as the deprivation of one’s life force” (129). In addition, Nietzsche identifies *ressentiment* as a major characteristic of slave morality that is an instrument for the weak, for those who are scared to act and who suppress their desire for vengeance, preferring constraint over action (Lindstedt 87). Nietzsche constantly associates revenge with *ressentiment* and identifies it as one of the key motivators of the slave uprising (Meredith 251).

Moreover, slave values present a purely derivative picture of the excellent person by rejecting a good-making trait embodied by nobles and considering the value’s inverse to be good (Snelson 4). The noble value judgments ‘good’ and ‘bad’ have this distinct self-affirmative structure because they are based on the noble’s sense of

superiority, his 'pathos of distance.' The melancholy of distance is the second distinguishing trait of nobility and noble values. According to Nietzsche, this "lasting and dominant collective and basic sensation of a higher governing nature in connection to a lower nature, to a 'below' - that is the root of the antagonism 'good' and 'evil'" (*Genealogy of Morality* 12). Hence, the nobles not only structure the system according to their values, but also set the basis for the implementation of a hierarchical order.

In the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche also disputes that slave morality is a retroversion or pulling people down from a higher position (Lindstedt 83). Unlike the aristocrats, who are formed and motivated by instinct and external discharges of action, slaves internalized their rage (84). It is this internalization which provides the sustainability of the master-slave relationship. About the retroversion of humans, Nietzsche purports:

Supposing that . . . the meaning of all culture is the reduction of the beast of prey "man" to a tame and civilized animal, a domestic animal, then one would undoubtedly have to regard all those instincts . . . through whose aid the noble races and their ideals were finally confounded and overthrown as the actual instruments of culture . . . Rather is the reverse not merely probable – no! today it is palpable! These bearers of the oppressive instincts . . ., the descendants of every kind of European and non-European slavery . . . they represent the regression of mankind! (*Genealogy of Morality* 42-43)

Thus, those who oppose the norms of the noble/masters finally result in becoming a "maggot man," "hopelessly mediocre and insipid" (43). Nietzsche perceives mediocrity and insipidity as the consequences of the slave morality. He argues that culture can only be produced by people of a higher status who rise above the mediocre masses (Lindstedt 86).

All in all, the morality of good and evil is not equivalent with 'slave morality' (Snelson 26). The former is a vast category whereas the latter mainly constitutes and glorifies values such as passivity, gentleness and empathy. These values of passivity are generated in contradiction to what master morality deems good and valuable. Nietzsche further points out that the battle between master and slave

morality is a historical reality, thereby accusing the Judeo-Christian cult for the proliferation and justification of this system (Snelson 9).

Finally, the question that needs to be answered is whether Hegel's master-slave conception is different from Nietzsche's. Both thinkers view the master-slave issue as a central matter in reaching independent liberty, yet they consider servitude and their revolt quite disparately (Williams 33). In Hegel's point of view, the slave's revolt embodies a possibility for freedom whereas for Nietzsche, a cultural and historical disaster has generated "the herd morality" (33). Therefore, Nietzsche searched an alternative formulated as "the return of the master, i.e., the recovery the heroic noble and tragic tradition" (33). Thus, despite their common ground, Nietzsche has added a new and critical interpretation to the original conception put forward by Hegel.

### **Master-Slave Dialectic and Morality in *The Man in the High Castle***

Philip K. Dick's *MHC* (1962) is a novel of alternate history that recounts a story where the United States has been occupied by the Axis powers which have defeated the Allies during the World War II. As a result of this outcome, the US. has been divided into three main sections: The Pacific States of America which represents the West coast invaded by the Japanese Empire, The Greater Germanic Reich, where the Nazis invaded the East coast and the Rocky Mountain States (neutral zone) which act as a buffer zone between the two forces. Dick's alternate history classic provides a realistic glimpse of how it might have turned out if the allies had lost the World War II.

*MHC* focuses on many issues but mainly centers on the master-slave dialectic proposed by Hegel. In Dick's narrative, Americans have assumed the role of slaves whereas the occupiers have embraced and are enacting the position of masters. Thus, Hegel's master-slave dialectic manifests itself in various forms throughout *MHC*. This mutual relationship is visible from the very beginning until the end of the novel via many different representations. Americans have succumbed to their invading masters and become slaves/servants in their own land. American culture is reduced to minimum, trapped between being non-existent and obsolete. In the Pacific States, Japanese culture has

prevailed over American culture and has taken on a dominant stance, determining the norms and values of the society. American culture, identity and history have been modified and categorized into the pre-war and post-war era.

The novel opens with the brief introduction of Robert Childan, an American citizen who lives in San Francisco in the Japanese ruled Pacific States. Childan owns American Artistic Handcrafts Inc., a business where he sells authentic American items, mostly to wealthy, high-ranking Japanese citizens. Through Childan’s business, it can be inferred that American products, symbols and “Americanness” in general have all been confined to a very specific, narrow domain which is identified as the domain of the slave. Because they reflect pre-war American culture, all American items are restricted to local stores such as Childan’s small business which is directed towards the few elite:

‘Your earrings,’ he murmured. ‘Purchased here, perhaps?’  
‘No,’ she said. ‘At home.’ Childan nodded. No contemporary American art; only the past could be represented here, in a store such as his. [...] It was a chance to meet a young Japanese couple socially, on a basis of acceptance of him as a man rather than him as a yank or, at best, a tradesman who sold art objects. Yes, these new young people, of the rising generation, who did not remember the days before the war or even the war itself — they were the hope of the world. Place difference did not have the significance for them. (Dick 11-12)

Childan has assigned himself the role of preserving and selling American antiquities to the masters, namely the Japanese who are the rulers of the new country that once used to be America. Living off of the goods that represent what was once America is the ultimate objective of Childan who does not show any emotional attachment to the artifacts he displays and sells. On the contrary, making profit is Childan’s one and only goal.

In *MHC*, the master-slave dialectic reveals itself through the relationship between the Japanese masters and American slaves/servants. Thus, as stated earlier by Hegel, the Japanese self-consciousness is strengthened and affirmed by the existence of the American slaves. Thanks to the presence of the American population

in the Pacific States, the Japanese rulers, including soldiers, officials and common civilian folk, are able to define themselves as the hegemonic power which ultimately leads to the consolidation of their self-consciousness and self-satisfaction. In Hegel's words, self-consciousness and desire are synonymous and this is demonstrated by the Japanese domination of the Pacific States.

Philip K. Dick displays two types of fascism, Japanese and German but rather than favoring one over the other; the author denounces all forms of totalitarianism, including economic, political, military totalitarianism and rejects fascism at the same time (Warrick 174). Patricia Warrick contends that Dick places Taoism in opposition to Fascism, via the character of Nobusuke Tagomi (174). At the center of Taoist philosophy is "Yin and Yang" which could be interpreted as the harmony created from the good and evil forces (Warrick 177). The novel refers to this philosophy with the following words:

What would it be like, he wondered, to really know the Tao? The Tao is that which first lets the light, then the dark. Occasions the interplay of the two primal forces so that there is always renewal. It is that which keeps it all from wearing down. The universe will never be extinguished because just when the darkness seems to have smothered all, to be truly transcendent, the new seeds of light are reborn in the very depths. That is the Way. When the seed falls, it falls into the earth, into the soil. And beneath, out of sight, it comes to life. (Dick 106)

In contrast to Hegel's dialectic, Taoist philosophy does not include any conflict or struggle between opposing values. Therefore, Taoism is more complementary rather than conflicting (Warrick 178). Turning back to Hegel's master-slave dialectic, it should be maintained that as a representative of Taoism, Tagomi is a radical character that defies and attempts to break the master-slave dialectic. Though he does not cause a radical change in the outcome of events, he draws the portrait of an alternative mentality through his insightful and emphatic personality. Despite being a member of the master fraction, Tagomi's behavior and mentality often contradicts with his colleagues and fellow Japanese officials. He condemns the Nazis for their evil purposes: "There is evil! It's actual, like cement. I can't believe it. I can't stand it. Evil is not a view ... it's an ingredient in us. In the world. Poured over us, filtering

into our bodies, minds, hearts, into the pavement itself" (Dick 97). Thus, Tagomi is a non-conformist who often disagrees with his fellow countrymen and ideological partners.

In *MHC*, the American people represent a dependent and unfree consciousness which only deliver formal recognition to their masters. Americans are there simply to reaffirm and consolidate the master's position, not to revolt or overthrow the system constructed by the fascist oppressors. However, it needs to be emphasized that Dick presents his characters in the most realistic and complex way possible. Characters are round and exhibit complicated features, even contradictions. Childan has racist tendencies, Joe praises Nazi deeds and the expectation that a fellow American will stand up against the tyrannical order is deconstructed by the author as it is not an American that defies the master-slave dialectic but a Japanese, namely Mr. Tagomi (DiTommaso 95).

It is worth noting that in *MHC*, there exists plural master-slave dialectics. Japanese-American and German-American are the most conspicuous master-slave representations. In both of these relationships, Americans carry out the role of the slaves/servants. They are passive, weak, dependent and are in a constant state of anxiety. However, there is also a third dialectic besides these two which is manifested through the Japanese-German dialectic relationship. In contrast to the previous ones, it is not possible to determine and label one or the other as master and/or slave as the struggle for power and hegemony between these two forces takes place in a perpetual state. Furthermore, due to Dick's science fictional tendencies, the novel presents alternate realities within another alternate reality. The novel incorporates three different realities: "the realities of the reader, the novel, and that of *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*" (Everett and Halpern 49). Each of these three timelines represents different master-slave dialectics where the roles have been reversed. On the other hand, because of its predominant representation, the novel's alternate reality, where the Axis powers remain in charge, forms the principal reality and the prevalent master-slave dialectic relationship.

As a result, Hegel's master-slave dialectic is constructed by the author mainly through the subordination of the American people by the fascist oppressors. Americans have acknowledged their roles as slaves and have yielded to their masters without much struggle. In this

alternate reality, American culture has been reduced to a minimum, confined to antique stores and labeled as a thing of the past that needs to be done away with.

In addition to the master-slave dialectic, Dick's *MHC* incorporates strong tendencies of Nietzsche's master-slave morality as well. In this novel of alternate reality, Americans have been enslaved and obliged to adopt the slave morality. From the early pages of the novel, American presence is insignificant and quite trivial:

You, sir, are of American ancestry. Although you have gone to the trouble of darkening your skin color. He scrutinized Mr. Ramsey. 'A tan achieved by a sun lamp,' Mr. Ramsey murmured. 'For merely acquiring vitamin D.' But his expression of humiliation gave him away. 'I assure you that I retain authentic roots with — ' Mr. Ramsey stumbled over the words. 'I have not cut off all ties with — native ethnic patterns.' (Dick 24)

This dialogue between Mr. Tagomi and Mr. Ramsey reveals how disregarded and unwanted American identity has become. Mr. Ramsey has darkened his skin color in order not to be associated with American identity though he admits he still possesses Native American identity. Some white Americans (particularly those in government) darken their complexion and hair to appear Asian, and even adopt Asian religious beliefs (Evans 369). This shows the level of American obedience and the extent of conformity. There is also a lot of subliminal hostility, such as ethnic jokes and "urban legends" about Japanese males committing atrocities against white women (Evans 369). However, due to the mutual master-slave relationship, the master is influenced by the slave as well. Japanese characters in America have acquired parts of American culture, such as American folk phrases ("chickenshit"; "the real McCoy") and names. Older Japanese characters, such as Nobusuke Tagomi, use their Japanese names, whereas younger ones, such as Paul and Betty Kasoura, adopt American names (369).

California is occupied by the Japanese and Americans do not defend against the occupation. Americans' feelings toward the Japanese are a mix of awe and animosity, as is typical of a conquered people (Evans 368). As stated by Nietzsche, master morality exhibits certain characteristics such as goodness and nobility. The Japanese



bureaucratic elite that control and reign over California demonstrate signs of sophistication and nobility. This type of nobility and refined grace is personified with the Minister of Trade, Nobusuke Tagomi who is described as: “A heavyset middle-aged Japanese man, well-dressed in a British overcoat, pointed Oxfords, bowler, stood -a little ahead of the others, with a younger Japanese beside him. On his coat lapel he wore the badge of the ranking Pacific Trade Mission of the Imperial Government” (Dick 47). Tagomi is the foremost person that embodies the “master characteristics” as affirmed by Nietzsche.

On the other hand, in *MHC*, there exist two representations of master morality, the Japanese and the Nazis. As the embodiment of slave morality, Americans present their sympathy for one side over the other. While some acknowledge Japanese as the ultimate model of master morality, others display preference for the Nazis. Childan, an American who has racist tendencies belongs to the ones that acknowledge the Nazis as their supreme masters:

So it all came back to what he had told his fellow store owners; what the Nazis have which we lack is — nobility. Admire them for their love of work or their efficiency. . . but it’s the dream that stirs one. Space flights first to the moon, then to Mars; if that isn’t the oldest yearning of mankind, our finest hope for glory. Now, the Japanese on the other hand. I know them pretty well; I do business with them, after all, day in and day out. They are — let’s face it — Orientals. Yellow people. We whites have to bow to them because they hold the power. But we watch Germany; we see what can be done where whites have conquered, and it’s quite different. (Dick 30)

In these lines, Childan not only confesses his racist conviction but also openly admits his acceptance of the slave morality. Childan bows to them not because of his respect but due to the power relations. Childan’s racist thoughts lead him to admire the Nazis as a role-model and embrace them as the ultimate master morality.

Nietzsche identifies the longing for freedom, the instinct for happiness, and nuances in the experience of freedom as the major components of the slave morality. In *MHC*, Americans long for freedom but they do not engage into any form of action or uprising against their



masters. The instinct for happiness motivates them to lead a happy life as designed and imposed by their masters and the experience of freedom is that limited nuance of freedom granted to them by their masters.

Moreover, slave morality in *MHC* is reflected via two American characters: Robert Childan, the white Anglo-Saxon protestant and Frank Frink, the Jewish-American. Though both have internalized the role of the (American) slave, their profiles and tendencies are disparate. While occupied America is horrible both for Childan and Frink, it is in reality much worse for Frink who, because of his Jewish identity, risks being deported to the Nazis by the Japanese authorities (Rossi 477). On the other hand, Childan's profile and behavior are contradictory and highly ironical firstly due to his racist attitude but more specifically because his racist mentality leads him to adopt an excessive responsive condition towards the abusive and manipulative methods used by the Japanese on the Americans (Rossi 477). At a particular point, Childan comes to this realization:

Christ! We're barbarians compared to them, Childan realized. Paul did not say — did not tell me — that our art was worthless; he got me to say it for him. And, as a final irony, he regretted my utterance. He's broken me. Humiliated me and my race. And I'm helpless. There's no avenging this; we are defeated and our defeats are like this, so tenuous, so delicate, that we're hardly able to perceive them. What more proof could be presented, as to the Japanese fitness to rule? (Dick 177)

The realization that the white race he deemed superior is barbaric compared to the ones he regards inferior comes as a major blow to Childan whose belief and value system collapses after this moment. Thus, comparing and contrasting both master moralities, Childan ends up on the "right track" by favoring and reaffirming the Japanese as the true, rightful master morality.

In contrast to Childan, Frink's experience with the master morality is different from the very beginning. Frink is terrified of the Nazis whereas he shares a constructive opinion towards the Japanese as he appreciates their value system and liberal racial policies (Rossi 478): "It horrified him, this thought: the ancient gigantic cannibal near-

man flourishing now, ruling the world once more. We spent a million years escaping him, Frink thought, and now he's back. And not merely as the adversary . . . but as the master" (Dick 17-18). Hence, Childan and Frink are both Americans who demonstrate a dissimilar version of the slave morality but these are not the only people that represent slave morality in *MHC* as blacks and Jews are other social groups which face discrimination within the oppressive system. In this respect, blacks and Jews are disadvantaged as they represent and symbolize the slaves amongst other slaves.

Finally, the reference to parallel worlds within an alternative reality is what makes *MHC* not only a science fiction classic, but also an intriguing novel that embodies multiple realities within an alternative reality. Tagomi possesses a special gift of visiting alternate reality through meditation and this alternate reality is the reality where the Allies have won the war and the Axis powers have been defeated. This technique is used by Dick who, instead of openly mentioning the future, brings the residents of that world into contact with our own time sequence, which is slightly different and through this actions affirms his opposition against totalitarian oppression (Wittkower 279).

As a result, *MHC* strongly manifests concrete examples concerning the master-slave dialectic and morality. Nietzsche's internalization of bad conscience is another aspect that is observable through the conduct of the American characters. Childan, Frink, Joe and Juliana constantly find themselves in a state of guilt towards their masters. Due to this guilt, they cannot direct their energy outwards, but have to keep it inside of them. Their being guilty puts them in a position of debt, where they owe the masters for their peaceful existence in the society. Because of their lack of life force, these characters are unable to stand up and revolt against the masters as they have internalized and appropriated the slave morality.

### **Master-Slave Dialectic and Morality in *The Man in the High Castle* (TV Series)**

Philip K. Dick's *MHC* was adapted to television in 2015 by Amazon Prime Video. The series, which lasts four seasons, was received with enthusiasm around the world. Compared with the novel, the series has more differences than similarities. Firstly, the novel

mostly takes place in the Japanized Pacific States whereas the series follows a more balanced setting that goes back and forth between the Pacific States (San Francisco) and the Nazi occupied Greater Reich (New York). The biggest difference about the series is the fact that it introduces new, fictional characters to the original manuscript written by Philip K. Dick. In the Pacific States, the plot follows the storyline of Juliana Crain, a character present in the novel while on the other hand, in New York it follows the quest of former American soldier and newly promoted Nazi commander, (Obergruppenführer) John Smith who is a fictional character, non-existent in the novel. In addition to the authentic characters of Tagomi, Childan, Frink and Joe Blake, other fictional characters such as Helen Smith, Takeshi Kido, Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler have also been added to the script. Of all the fictional characters introduced into the series, those who receive the most screen time are John Smith and the Japanese head of secret police, (Kempeitai) chief inspector Takeshi Kido.

The master-slave dialectic and morality are much more prevalent and visible in the series. This is mainly due to the evil characters who are often involved in action sequences. As head of the Nazi authority in North America, John Smith ruthlessly oppresses and murders anyone who opposes Nazi rule in the occupied territory. On the other hand, Takeshi Kido is the Japanese chief inspector of secret police who commits atrocities against the enemies of the empire. Both Smith and Kido are equivalent characters that overtly demonstrate the master dialectic and morality. They engage in constant struggle with the slaves/servants and affirm their self-consciousness through the satisfaction they achieve as a result of this struggle. In addition, characters like Juliana, Frink and Childan manifest the slave morality as it is the case in the original novel.

The series has implemented substantial changes in the plot as well. The reason of this is to generate action sequences so as to create more suspense which results in higher ratings. The most significant example of these changes is the retaliation by the American resistance movement that operates in the Pacific States and the Greater Reich. The resistance becomes a major nuisance for the occupying powers as their authorities spend a serious amount of time and energy to fight and eliminate them. This shows that in the series, Americans do not succumb to the slave morality and engage into action to battle the invaders in order to regain their liberty. The American resistance

violates occupiers’ laws by plotting against the regime, but it never attacks civilians or destroys property (Krajewski and Heter 103). In this context, the American resistance movement’s objective is proportionate and its ultimate aim is the eradication of the invading forces in America (115). In addition to the resistance, the Japanese authorities also get to deal with the Black Communist Rebellion (BCR) who retaliates violently against the Kempeitai. In the end, the ultimate winner is John Smith, a former American soldier who converts into a Nazi to enjoy the pleasures of conformity and to become the number one authority figure to rule the American division of the Greater Reich.

Moreover, the most striking difference between Dick’s original novel and the television adaptation is the creation of the so-called resistance movements. The American resistance movement and the black communist rebellion are integrated into the original plotline by the producers to add a populist and patriotic touch to the series. Through this addition, the series openly manifests to the people that Americans are willing and ready to fight for their freedom, no matter how bad and hopeless the conditions are. This was not only the message that the public opinion wanted to receive but also took for granted without questioning. Dick’s original work, on the other hand, does not hint at any kind of resistance. In fact, the word “resistance” does not even appear throughout the novel. Therefore, the author’s criticism towards the American people lies in total contradiction with the adaptation. Philip K. Dick deeply criticized America and American people for giving in to fascism too easily and selling American values out of pragmatism and opportunism. Given that 53 years have passed since the novel’s first release, it is also Dick’s way of reflecting the 1960s American spirit which was characterized by ongoing social struggle and democratic upheaval. Thus, the producers’ choice to put the American resistance in spotlight seems to comply with the nationalist/populist sentiment that led to the Trump era. Hence, for the sake of gaining more spectators and higher ratings, the producers went along with the patriotic sentiment by drastically modifying Dick’s original storyline.

The series ends in season four with John Smith and his family killed by the resistance and the Japanese withdrawing from the Pacific States. Compared to the novel, the series exhibits overt references to the master-slave dialectic and morality. These can be observed in multiple episodes. In season 2, episode 10, Himmler’s dialogue with the commander Heusmann is striking:

Heinrich Himmler: If we kill their emperor, it would prolong the conflict.

Heusmann: So we spare him? After he murders our Fuehrer?

Himmler: The Japanese must see their deity surrender and acknowledge the superiority of our Master Race. (Scott and Spotnitz)

Hence, having affirmed superiority over the American servants, the Nazis now seek to establish superiority over the Japanese, whom they wish to enslave as well. To that end, the Nazis are after the consolidation of their master morality around the world and aim to impose slave morality on all those who do not acknowledge their mastership.

### Conclusion

Philip K. Dick's *MHC* is a complex narrative that combines many themes and issues but above all that of the master-slave dialectic and morality. This article has determined that through the master-slave dialectic and morality, Philip K. Dick critiques America not only for succumbing to fascist rule but also for not standing up against oppression to reclaim liberty. It can be inferred from the novel that American characters assume and openly acknowledge the position of slaves/servants. Their rationalization and normalization of the slave morality leads to the continuation and consolidation of the master-slave dialectic. In the subtext of the novel, the author criticizes American citizens for not giving a decent struggle for liberty and for taking the fascist rule for granted too easily. The colonization of America by fascist rule and gradual disappearance of American culture are evidence of the slave morality that is inflicted upon them by those who claim the role of the master.

Comparing and contrasting the novel with the series, it has been observed that the series displays a harsher type of master-slave dialectic and morality. Fictional characters like John Smith and Takeshi Kido help to enforce the master-slave dialectic and morality through various conflicts and violent clashes. On the other hand, the biggest difference between the novel and the series lies in the fact that the series incorporate a forceful Resistance movement which the novel

totally lacks. Therefore, it can be asserted that the series expose the master-slave dialectic in a more visible manner while on the other hand showing resistance to it as well. The novel, in contrast, illustrates a status quo despite the oppression of the fascist forces and highlights American passivity and submissiveness to its readers. All in all, the master-slave dialectic and morality expose American passivity and reluctance to fight back for liberty, a fundamental American value.

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