



Idleness as a form of resistance to Capitalism in Philip K. Dick's Piper in the Woods

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Abstract

In Philip K. Dick's short story "Piper in the Woods", an increasing number of personnel on Asteroid Y-3 began identifying themselves as plants rather than humans after an encounter with the natives. Because the plants were unconcerned with work, their superiors were alarmed and attempted to unravel the mystery behind such a drastic transformation. This research studies, via textual analysis from a Marxist perspective, the ways in which capitalist ideologies are portrayed, reproduced, and resisted in the story. It was found that generally, humans perceive productivity as an essential part of their nature, and the only way to become valuable is by working. Under capitalism, wage labour is indeed crucial both for the working class to earn a living and for capitalists to accumulate even more capital. By this logic, the plants and asteroid natives that are content with minimal labor were considered primitive savages, even though they are perfectly self-sufficient. This is perhaps ironic given mankind's insights into the tremendous stress stemming from the need to always be productive and that becoming a plant could be a form of resistance. Nevertheless, the idleness of the former humans was treated simply as a mental disorder that has to be cured so that the status quo can be maintained. This study would hopefully prompt readers to examine stories such as this one from a more critical perspective and demand meaningful changes over simple solutions about issues arising from the capitalist system.

Keywords: *Science fiction; Marxist criticism; Ideology; Oppression; Literary criticism*

INTRODUCTION

Humans are inherently social beings, and this is obvious from their constant engagement in regulated social behaviors such as affiliation and the establishment of hierarchy (Young, 2008). From a Marxist perspective, society is generally divided into two social classes under the capitalist system: the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (Marx & Engels, 1988). The proletariat, also known as the working class, owns no means of production and resorts to selling their labor; the bourgeoisie, also known as the capitalists, owns various means of production and purchases the labor of the former. Profit is generated when capitalists sell their products at a higher price than all the production cost combined. To maximize of profit, one could either lower the production cost or raise the selling price, sometimes both. This leads to the creation of inequality between the classes and since capitalists are in a more privileged position, they are viewed as exploiters of the working class because all profits would go to them directly. While such a disparity might be material in nature, it undoubtedly impact the psychological as well.

Marx and Engels (1965) were of the view that material conditions shape human consciousness. The former is known as infrastructure, while the latter is known as superstructure (Williams, 1977). Since capitalists have more control over financial resources, they are therefore able to legitimize the status quo of being superior by exerting great influence on how others think.

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This can be achieved through the manipulation of media that include religion, law, politics, and literature. The superstructure is thus a reflection of the ideas held by the dominant group, in this case the capitalists, or what has come to be known as ideology. It serves as a shroud that prevents the working class from having an awareness of the conditions to which they have been subjected (Eagleton, 1976). Much of human behavior and thought is influenced by mainstream ideologies. A society in which the most its members share a similar ideology would serve as a self-regulating body. Consequently, compliance with established norms and traditions can be ensured. While this would provide some form of stability, often in favor of the existing power structure, revolution or radical change is possible when conflict arises between the classes.

Despite its focus on the economy, Marxism generally concerns the struggles between two main classes in society: the oppressor and the oppressed (Marx & Engels, 1988). As such, it can be applied to provide critical insights into a wide variety of texts, including the short story written by Philip K. Dick that is the focus of this study – *Piper in the Woods*. The text is selected because the source of oppression is capitalism ideologies, rather than the differing political ideologies that are more commonly seen. Cho (2015) remarked that science fiction as a genre is more closely related to the era and culture in which it was produced than to the actual future. While the story is set in the future, many of its elements are parallel to the current state of the world except for some new or improved technologies.

The author described a future where humanity has mastered space exploration and ventured far beyond the moon. On Asteroid Y-3, a new garrison was established to serve as a point of inspection for incoming and outgoing spacecraft. However, an increasing number of personnel stationed there abandoned their duty after encountering the natives. The affected individuals identified themselves as plants rather than humans and would behave accordingly, such as sitting idly under the sun during the day before entering a cataleptic state at night. Since the plants were unconcerned with work, their superiors were alarmed and attempted to unravel the mystery behind such a drastic transformation.

While details behind the strange phenomenon are never revealed, it is not the plot but the dichotomy between the worldviews held by human and non-human characters that piqued the interest of the researchers. In the real world, issues presented by capitalism are often brought up but rarely resolved. Given that a capitalist economic system often entails the oppression of one social group by another, it was perhaps appropriate that the text be analyzed from a critical point of view. *Piper in the Woods* is chosen because its author is prolific in the science fiction genre. The movie *Blade Runner*, which is often touted as one of the greatest science fiction movies ever made, is an adaptation of his novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* In addition, his works are widely appreciated for dealing with pertinent philosophical and social problems. The Marxist concepts of ideology, oppression, and resistance form the basis of analysis and discussion of *Piper in the Woods*. A textual analysis was conducted on the story to identify the different social groups and the ways in which they interact with each other. The ideologies that inform these groups are then abstracted and examined in terms of their reproduction and/or resistance. The aims of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the portrayal of capitalist ideologies in the short story.
2. To identify the ways in which capitalist ideologies are reproduced and/or resisted in the short story.

The findings are organized according to the main ideologies identified. Each ideology is then discussed in detail as to how it is reproduced and/or resisted. Excerpts from the texts are included for ease of reference and illustration of the points raised.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Philip K. Dick's fiction typically deals with the science fiction genre. According to Vest (2009), Dick published "bizarre tales of androids, parallel realities, time travel, and planetary colonization" (p. ix). Philip K. Dick was deemed a "marginal writer" (Kucukalic, 2009) during his early career (p. 1). However, science fiction, an emerging genre, has gained a lot of attention from literary scholars, and Philip K. Dick's ideas "have permeated popular culture" (Kucukalic, 2009). According to Evans (2010), "Dick explores authenticity from a variety of perspectives and applies it to a variety of situations" (p. 366). Evans further asserted that "like many science fiction writers, he highlights the moral dilemmas of his own world by inventing a world in which those dilemmas have been exaggerated or inverted" (p. 367), which can be found in most of his works.

In a study conducted by Hannah Cooper-Smithson (2022), she examined the notion of "arboromorphism" in Philip K. Dick's *Piper in the Woods*. Cooper-Smithson defined the term "arboromorphism" as the "psychological process of becoming a tree" (p. 233). She further indicates that "arboromorphism takes a psychological turn" when the soldiers believe that they are plants and "reject the capitalist ethos of the garrison, denouncing work and trade as "unnatural" and claiming that "the only worthwhile thing was to sit and contemplate" (p. 233).

In another study of Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, Sevilla-Vallejo (2022) analyzed the interdiscursivity between the "ecology of mind, and the Freudian concept of the uncanny" (p. 119). These findings indicate that the android culture in the novel destroy humanity, resulting in the creation of an artificial world feared by humankind. Therefore, this society that stresses on reason and technology, makes humankind to be less empathetic toward one another and emotions.

McInnis (2021), who also conducted a study on *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, examined the "notions of the schizoid and the android as prototypes for the posthuman". Similar to Sevilla-Vallejo's study, McInnis also stated that humankind behaves in a "non-human way" and claims that the "androids are metaphors for schizoid humans, or posthumans". These studies on the same novel provide a warning on the schizoid posthuman on humankind.

Another study explored the esthetic values of garbage in Dick's *Martian Time Slip* (Simpson, 2014). According to Simpson, garbage is used to "satirize consumer capitalism", and studies on garbage esthetics remain scarce. Simpson further reiterated that Dick's science fiction "was the most congenial mode in which to perform the grotesque, trashed American landscape of the 1960s and 1970s". Hence, the present study argues that the selected short story entitled "Piper in the Wood" creates an avenue for "social criticism in the form of science fiction" (Klapcsik, 2014).

RESEARCH METHOD

In order to meet the objectives of this study, textual analysis was carried out as it enabled the researchers to explore the cultural as well as ideological assumptions embedded in the story for it to make sense. After all, the focus is not so much on the structural aspect of the text as on the ways in which it is likely to be interpreted based on the aforementioned assumptions. Given that reading is impossible without drawing upon extra-textual knowledge, it is imperative for researchers to clearly indicate and explain the theoretical perspective from which a text is examined. This study is informed by the concept of Marx's (1977) infrastructure and superstructure. Instead of summarizing the points discussed previously, a more detailed and nuanced discussion is provided. As depicted in Figure 1, the means and relations of production often shape ideology. Using Confucianism as an example, Hiroshi (2015) illustrates such a relationship at work. He explains that in ancient China, where feudalism was practiced, the production system relied heavily on human skills and the conceptualization of Confucianism was timely as it promoted the concept of apprenticeship, which could produce skilled craftsmen. This entails the prioritization of seniority,

respect for elders and loyalty to one's master - all under the assumption that sincere obedience is the key to mastery. [Eagleton \(2000\)](#) remarked that from a Marxist perspective, the superstructure is necessary to serve the interest of the ruling class by managing the divide and contradictions within the infrastructure. In the case of Confucianism, for example, its teachings of a natural, harmonious order of things ([Feuchtwang, 2016](#)) are useful in legitimizing the power held by rulers over their subjects. In the case of capitalism, capitalists are often touted as ingenious despite their questionable ethics ([Kim, 2022](#)) to justify the widening wealth gap between them and the working class. [Stiglitz \(2022\)](#) reported that while billionaires became richer during the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of people fell below the poverty line. Without a superstructure that could justify such inequality, the legitimacy of the rich would be questioned. [Hiroshi \(2015\)](#) cautioned that even scientists are not always objective in their pursuit and conduct as they serve the interests of certain parties. Yet, they must appear neutral for the sake of credibility. Ideology thus becomes harder to detect and resist under the guise of intellectualism. Given the importance of material conditions, infrastructure is generally regarded as having a greater effect on superstructure ([Eagleton, 2000](#); [Hiroshi, 2015](#)) as once established, the latter would serve to maintain the former and prevent drastic changes from taking place. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the relationship between the two are ultimately dialectic instead of linear, and as such, they both could influence each other.

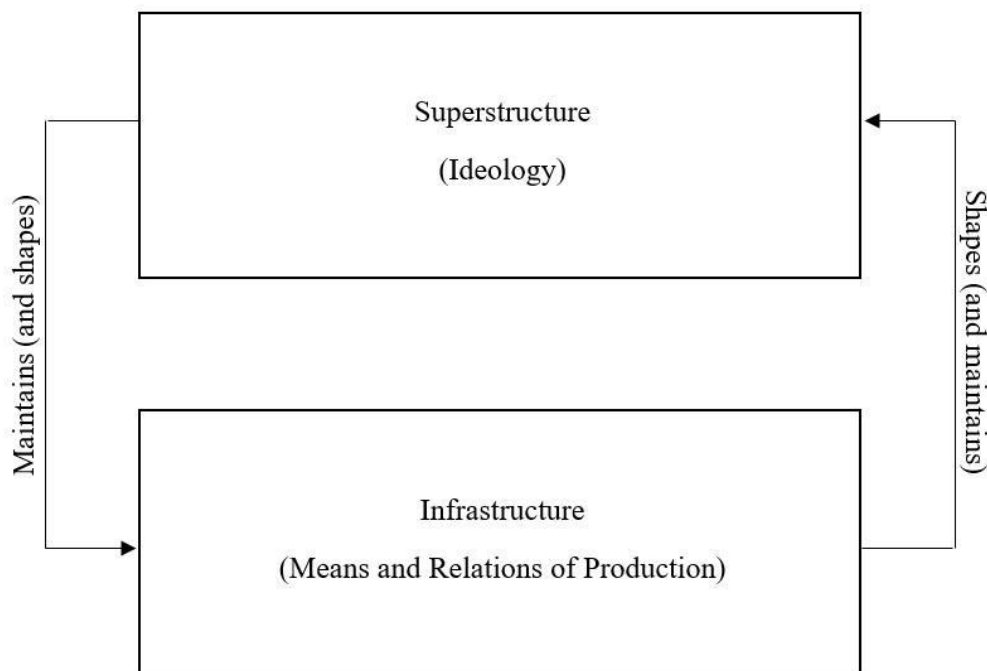


Figure 1. Infrastructure and Superstructure

Given the focus of this study, it would be appropriate to also discuss two of the major ideologies at the core of capitalism that informs the analysis. First, the value of a working-class individual is determined through work ([Harman, 1998](#)). Because the means of production are owned by capitalists, workers have to earn a living by selling their labor. While such an arrangement may seem fair, the latter are often underpaid by the former in order to maximize profits, and such an exploitation is often justified as being necessary for the continuous investment into further businesses development. Despite this unfairness, there is no alternative under capitalism as workers have various material needs that they need to fulfill at the end of the day.

This is exacerbated by the fact that complaining about work or choosing not to engage in it is often perceived as a sign of moral failure. Ehrenreich (2010) observed that positive thinking, when taken to its extreme, places such a heavy emphasis on individual responsibility to the extent that no fault should be assigned to external factors for one's failings and misfortunes. Following the same logic, positive thinking dictates that workers should focus on thinking good thoughts and improving themselves instead of protesting against the system. Therefore, it would be fair to regard positive thinking as one component of the superstructure that seeks to maintain the status quo. Second, growth should be endless under capitalism. Studies have proven that under the system, businesses should theoretically be subjected to a growth imperative or they would be unsustainable eventually (Binswanger, 2009; Gordon & Rosenthal, 2003). In reality, such growth might not be achievable (Ayres, 1998; Daly, 1993; Meadows, Meadows & Randers, 1992) due to limited resources and the impact it would have on the environment. However, capitalism seems impossible to replace despite its flaws, as it has become ubiquitous in both infrastructure and superstructure. The growth imperative goes hand in hand with labor exploitation as the latter fuels the former

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Reproduction of Capitalist Ideologies

All right, let's say you give up your job and sit in the sun. Well, what happens, then? Someone else has to do the job instead of you. Isn't that true? The job has to be done, your job has to be done. And if you don't do it someone else has to... To keep society going... People couldn't live without society (Dick, 1953).

The first ideology portrayed in the story is that productivity is an essential part of human nature and that the only way to become valuable is by working. When queried by one of the plants as to why humans are required to toil endlessly, the protagonist who is a doctor, pointed out that society would collapse otherwise. In doing so, the doctor reveals that he is working to serve the interests of the military instead of the interest of his patients. His priority is not so much in discovering the cause behind the transformations taking place as it is in curing the transformed personnel so that they can go back to their positions and work. Hiroshi's (2015) observation that scientists are hardly objective can also be made here because the doctor, informed by the superstructure, is trying to maintain the stability of the infrastructure. The plant responded to the doctor by presenting him with an alternate paradigm, one in which everyone is content and therefore the endless need to explore outer space becomes irrelevant. Nevertheless, the doctor dismissed the idea almost immediately as he is unable to envision such a reality due to its absurdity - one that the plant ironically holds and is at peace with. This exchange shows the extent to which people have been conditioned to equate value with work - one becomes more valuable if one works harder and vice versa. Consequently, idleness is often frowned upon because it does not seem to generate any value and labor can thus be considered a form of societal expectation.

Harris, this garrison is one vast machine. The men are parts, and each has his job... Look what happens when one person steps away from his job. Everything else begins to creak... The Garrison is built that way. If you take the supports out the whole building falls. No one can leave. We're all tied here, and these people know it. They know they have no right to do that, run off on their own. No one has that right anymore. We're all too tightly interwoven to suddenly start doing what we want. It's unfair to the rest, the majority (Dick, 1953)

In a conversation with the protagonist, the Garrison Chief once again highlighted the importance of labor and how being idle would be unfair to those who are productive. He even claimed that one has no right to reject such a responsibility - a statement similar to those drawing upon the natural order of things as justification for inequality. In fact, his views echo those held by the doctor, as they both are not capable of imagining a society that is radically different from the current one. Diligence has always been touted as a virtue and the key to success. However, an overemphasis of this notion could lead to a myriad of problems. For example, the culture of overworking in Japan, which has resulted in numerous deaths, gave rise to the term *karoshi* (Morioka, 2004). The term is not geographically exclusive and can be generally applied to deaths caused by overwork, often highly developed capitalist societies. Some would think that foregoing rest could lead to greater productivity, but the latter would in fact be negated by fatigue (Eden, 2020). In terms of fairness, Wade et al. (2006), for instance, remarked that CEOs have been observed to use their power to raise their own salary and that of those in the top management team. Other employees consider such a practice unjust and even decide to leave a company if the disparity between salaries is too great. While the idleness displayed by the plants in the story would seem rather excessive, it is merely a critique of the capitalistic ideology that overidealizes the notion of labor.

Well, the story is that they're originally from Mars. They don't look much like Martians, though. They're dark, a kind of coppery color. Thin. Very agile, in their own way. They hunt and fish. No written language. We don't pay much attention to them... The natives are primitive savages. They don't have anything to teach anybody, especially a top-flight biologist (Dick, 1953)

Another ideology portrayed in the story is that the idea of being self-sufficient is primitive as there is always more to be had. After all, capitalism as a system is based on the premise that infinite growth is not only desirable but also, necessary (Gordon & Rosenthal, 2003). In response to the protagonist's question about The Pipers, the Garrison Chief described them as savages because they are considered less advanced than humans. In fact, their description and their lifestyle resemble those of early human beings were are hunter-gatherers. In addition, they do not seem to have the aid of sophisticated technology such as electricity or electronics, not even a writing system. Ironically, they can still alter the minds of humans who are far superior and turn them into plants. Once again, the stark difference between opposing ideologies can be seen in this exchange. While the natives have no problems living life the way they do, capitalist ideologies are so ingrained in the Garrison Chief that he can only see their lifestyle as one that is backward due to laziness and lack of productivity.

Those men are put down suddenly on an asteroid where there are natives living the most primitive of existence, completely vegetable lives. No concept of goal, no concept of purpose, and hence no ability to plan. The natives live the way the animals live, from day to day, sleeping, picking food from the trees. A kind of Garden-of-Eden existence, without struggle or conflict (Dick, 1953).

After an encounter with the natives, the protagonist's observations further reinforce the beliefs that he shares with the Garrison Chief. According to him, a distinguishing trait that separates the natives from humans is their inability to plan. However, the ability of humans to plan is perhaps limited, and excessive developments often come at a cost. The endless pursuit of progress has led to activities such as deforestation and the burning of fossil fuels – both major contributors to global

warming (Houghton, 2005) that pose a great threat to the entire planet. In addition, resources are being consumed at higher rates than before. It is estimated that fossil fuels and seafood might be fully depleted soon (Kuo, 2019; Woody, 2019). The idea that more is better would eventually lead to unsustainability, given that the amount of resources available is actually limited.

It should be quite clear at this juncture that capitalist ideologies do not exist in a vacuum and are directly linked to the material conditions that produce them. The insatiable desire of the human race to venture into space and exploit the resources within its reach necessitates an ideology that extolls the virtue of diligence in performing one's job. In the context of the military, it is conceptualized as one's duty – something that is perhaps more innate and noble than to a mere job. Those who subscribe to such an ideology form a self-regulating community that ensure that all its member do not deviate from what is considered normal behavior and way of thinking. In the story, only cursory attempts were made to understand the actual reason behind the peculiar transformation of a human into a plant. What is known as common sense under capitalism offers an easy explanation for the phenomenon of – laziness and the inability to cope with stress. Instead of seeking solutions that would require extra resources from the capitalists, it would be more cost-effective to expect those affected to adopt a more productive mindset. Not only are the superiors unhelpful, they even chastise those affected for leaving their posts. Therefore, the onus is on the working class itself to overcome the challenges posed by capitalists and this vicious cycle will continue as long as the infrastructure and superstructure work in tandem. However, this system can be disrupted if the working class resistance.

Resistance of Capitalist Ideologies

Perhaps. It's a peculiar business, Doctor. You know, I struggled for years to get through Training. I had to work and pay my own way. Washed dishes, worked in kitchens. Studied at night, learned, crammed, worked on and on. And you know what I think, now?... I wish I'd become a plant earlier (Dick, 1953).

The act of turning into a plant could be viewed as a form of resistance against capitalist ideologies. A plant was challenged by the protagonist regarding his idleness and contrasted his life before the transformation to his current state as a response. In his quest to become someone valuable in society, he had subjected himself to stress and hardship, but a change of mindset made him realize that it was perhaps all a folly. After all, there will always be greater success to be achieved, and the struggle is seemingly endless. Such a radical paradigm shift seems baffling to those who have been indoctrinated to think of capitalism as the only viable option despite its shortcomings, and they will continue to maintain the status quo. Another plant was more explicit in its explanation of what the transformation entailed - while their physiology remains human, a shift in their worldview caused them to regard perpetual work as futile. In response, they behave like plants by staying idle most of the time because it is a form of escape from the rat race. It is important to point out that in the story, all the plants do is just sit under the sun when it is up and go back to their quarters to rest when it has already set. They do not seem to consume other resources besides occupying a tiny place for themselves. The reaction toward them is perhaps exaggerated as they simply keep to themselves and pose no direct threat to the system.

Those men on Y-3 were sent there because they were skilled, highly-trained men with exceptional ability. All their lives they've been schooled by complex modern society, fast tempo and high integration between people. Constant pressure toward some goal, some job to be done.

Those men are put down suddenly on an asteroid where there are natives living the most primitive of existence, completely vegetable lives. No concept of goal, no concept of purpose, and hence no ability to plan. The natives live the way the animals live, from day to day, sleeping, picking food from the trees. A kind of Garden-of-Eden existence, without struggle or conflict... Each of the Garrison crew sees the natives and unconsciously thinks of his own early life, when he was a child, when he had no worries, no responsibilities, before he joined modern society. A baby lying in the sun (Dick, 1953).

Faced with the peculiar situation of humans identifying themselves as plants, the protagonist seemed to have some sensible insights. While the actual reason behind the conversions is never revealed in the story, it is his conjecture that such a radical transformation could have resulted from the excessive strain of societal expectations to always be productive and successful. Identifying oneself with a plant can perhaps be understood as the mind's defense mechanism against overbearing pressure. The protagonist pointed out that those affected felt an affinity toward the plants and the natives found on the asteroid, which is the reason behind their mimicry of the sedentary lifestyle led by both. A recent article by Allen (2021) described the trend *tang ping*, which has become increasingly popular among the youths in China. Translated literally, the term means lying flat and it symbolizes the younger generation's protest against the pressures of work culture. While proponents of the trend are not suggesting that people should not work at all, they believe that mindfulness is crucial in achieving work-life balance. In spite of the protagonist's insights into the possible cause behind the transformations, the idleness of the former humans was eventually treated simply as a mental disorder that has to be cured so that they can become productive again. Instead of addressing core issues such as the nature and condition of work under capitalism, emphasis was placed on adjusting the human psyche, resulting in an incongruence between the problem and the solution.

What happens? Once they get out there and take it easy for a while they don't want to come back and work. It's boondoggling. Playing hookey. They don't want to work, so off they go... You know as well as I do that's a lot of poppycock. They're no more plants than you or I. They just don't want to work, that's all. When I was a cadet we had a few ways to make people work. I wish we could lay a few on their backs, like we used to (Dick, 1953).

Instead of examining the issue in a more comprehensive manner after listening to the protagonist's insights, the Garrison Chief told him that the reason behind the bizarre phenomenon was merely the laziness of certain personnel, even suggesting that some old school disciplinary action could get the affected men back on their feet again. His reasoning differs greatly from that of the protagonist, who have more empathy for the plants, considering the oppressive nature of capitalist ideologies. However, his plan was to adjust the mindset of those affected and not to improve oppressive working conditions.

The answer is psychotherapy for the men. That's why I'm going right back, so I can begin work. They've got to be made to see that the Pipers are inside them, their own unconscious voices calling to them to give up their responsibilities. They've got to be made to realize that there are no Pipers, at least, not outside themselves. The woods are harmless and the natives have nothing to teach anyone. They're primitive savages, without even a written language. We're seeing a psychological projection by a whole Garrison of men who want to lay down their work and take it easy for a while (Dick, 1953).

In his final communication with the Base Commander, the protagonist concluded that the plants were simply delusional and that they could be cured with the proper therapy. Such a narrative favors the establishment as they do not have to much to address the issue since it is of a personal nature. It would be more tedious for them if changes were made policies regarding compensation, benefits, welfare, and so on. As the job market is becoming increasingly competitive due to automation, outsourcing, and other factors, the stress that comes with work would be amplified as well. The solution to this problem is perhaps more nuanced than simply adjusting the mindset of employees to be more responsible and work harder. For example, research suggests that work-life balance has a positive relationship with psychological well-being, and this could be an aspect that could be improved by corporations. Besides, it is ironic that the advancement of technology that is supposed to make life easier would end up making it harder. While it might not be necessary for everyone to work long hours, wealth is unequally distributed, and only some capitalists have such a luxury. In addition, having more people who are not wage earners would decrease consumption considerably and this would be bad for business. In the end, major changes to address such equality would be difficult to come by as the infrastructure works in tandem with the superstructure to maintain the status quo. This is perhaps due to the lack of awareness among the people of capitalism's exploitative nature or worse, their inability to see the possibility of a different economic system that is viable despite it.

CONCLUSIONS

The story highlights two major capitalist ideologies through the conflict between the plants and their superiors: a person is useful only as long as they are working because labor generates value and society as a whole should constantly pursue growth, which is assumed to be infinite under capitalism. These notions are so ingrained in those who identify themselves as humans that they are incapable of envisioning an alternate future where constant exploitation of the masses for the benefit of the few is not the norm. They even fear that society would eventually collapse without capitalism. On the other hand, those who identify themselves as plants have gone through a paradigm shift and are actively resisting the narratives expounded by humans. They see no fault in being content and self-sufficient despite being labeled lazy. Even though their position might seem radical at first glance, it would make more sense when we contemplate the future vis-à-vis sustainability.

While the short story is a work of fiction, elements of the plot reflect certain issues in reality that remain contentious yet unsolved. Through the stark contrast between the industrious human characters and the idle non-human characters, the author prompts the readers of his story to view capitalist ideologies from a more critical perspective and demand meaningful changes over simple solutions. Much progress has been made in improving overall working conditions, such as the introduction of fewer work days (Frishberg, 2021), extended maternity leave for both parents (Francis et al., 2021), and prohibition for companies to message their employees after working hours (Glenn, 2021). Nevertheless, these reforms are not universal and there is much room for improvement, especially in developing nations. Therefore, it is crucial that more people are made aware of issues regarding work so that the demand for positive changes can be heard. To that end, this study would hopefully prompt readers to seek out and examine stories such as this one from a more critical perspective as they offer insightful critiques of a flawed system. There can be no meaningful change without first the acknowledgment and understanding of not only existing problems, but also their root cause, lest collective efforts be misdirected.

LIMITATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The adoption of a Marxist theory entails a view that is often critical of capitalism. While the capitalist system has its merits, the plot of the short story renders them irrelevant and they are thus omitted from the discussion as the focus is mainly on the resistance of capitalist ideologies due to its flaws. The findings of this study are also strictly applicable to Piper in the Woods only and not other works by Philip K. Dick as they deal with a plethora of themes besides the shortcomings of capitalism. Future research could adopt a Marxist perspective in their analysis of the depictions of the capitalist system in various works of fiction to expand the literature on this topic as it is currently rather limited, especially those by Philip K. Dick. The same story could also be examined from different theoretical lenses using textual analysis as they could offer unique insights due to its rich meaning potential.

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