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Abyss and Oppression: *I Ching* Symbolisms in Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*

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Abstract: Being one of the most influential science fiction writers of the 20th century, Philip K. Dick (1928–82) was acclaimed as the “most brilliant Sci-Fi mind on any planet.” Thanks to the influential English translation by Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930) and Cary F. Baynes (1883–1977) published in 1950, the *I Ching* (or *Yijing*; *Book of Changes*), the ancient Chinese philosophical/religious classic and divinatory text, has transcended cultural borders, leaving a lasting impact on Western society against the backdrop of the counterculture hippy movement of the 1960s. With an extraordinary enthusiasm for the *I Ching*, Dick experimented creative use of the *I Ching* in the process of writing his best-selling novel *The Man in the High Castle* (1962), marking its debut in American fiction. Through a critical textual analysis of the novel, this paper attempts to unearth deeper levels of motifs by discovering the underlying symbolisms of the *I Ching* incorporated in the narrative, with special references to two related Hexagrams *Kan* (䷜ Abyss) and *Kun* (䷁ Oppression). Dick took full advantage of the multifaceted dimensions of their symbolisms to develop characterization and fictional plots, particularly foregrounding the core themes of universal anxiety and oppression.

Keywords: *I Ching*; symbolism; Philip K. Dick; *The Man in the High Castle*

1 Introduction

Thanks to the influential English translation by Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930) and Cary F. Baynes (1883–1977) published in 1950,¹ the *I Ching* (or *Yijing*; *Book of Changes*), the ancient Chinese philosophical/religious classic and divinatory text, has travelled across the Pacific, transcended cultural borders, leaving a lasting impact on Western society. Against the backdrop of the counterculture hippy movement of the 1960s, the

1 Richard Wilhelm, *The I Ching, or Book of Changes*, translated from German by Cary F. Baynes (New York: Pantheon Books, 1950).

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Wilhelm/Baynes translation, as Richard Rutt remarked, emerged as a “cult document for the hippy movement of the 1960s, leading to an explosion of popular interest in *Yijing* throughout the English-speaking world.”² Edward Shaughnessy affirmed the immense popularity of the *I Ching* in the United States, furnished with a foreword by Carl Jung (1875–1961), claiming that it emerged as the “bible for the postwar countercultural generation.”³

Philip K. Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle* (1962, hereafter *High Castle*), according to Lawrence Sutin, holds the distinction of being the “first American novel to refer to the *I Ching* and employ it as a plot device (and deviser). Many who, in the sixties, elevated the *I Ching* to cult status first learned of it in *High Castle*.”⁴ Paul Mountfort has critically analysed the twelve divination episodes in *High Castle* by positioning the *I Ching* as a book of oracle. Instead of considering these consultations as separate or unrelated instances, Mountfort rightly argued that although certain major characters have not met, several of their divinations are mirror images that demonstrate Jung’s notion of synchronicity, which underlies the narrative.⁵ James H. Thrall also discussed how the *I Ching* occupies a central role in *High Castle* and how Dick himself consulted it for plot advice.⁶ However, more scholarly work has to be done on Dick’s encounter and reception of the *I Ching*, as well as the intricate intertextual relations between the *I Ching* and *High Castle*.⁷ Through a critical textual analysis of *High Castle*, this paper attempts to unearth deeper levels of characterisation and motifs in the novel by discovering the underlying and nuanced symbolisms of the *I Ching* incorporated in

2 Richard Rutt, *The Book of Changes (Zhouyi): A Bronze Age Document* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 79.

3 Edward L. Shaughnessy, *Unearthing the Changes: Recently Discovered Manuscripts of the Yijing (I Ching) and Related Texts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 1.

4 Lawrence Sutin, *Divine Invasions: A Life of Philip K. Dick* (London: Gollancz, 2006), 113.

5 Paul Mountfort, “The *I Ching* and Philip K. Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle*,” *Science Fiction Studies* 43 (2016): 287–309.

6 James H. Thrall, “Shifting Histories, Blurred Borders, and Mediated Sacred Texts in Philip K. Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle*,” *Literature and Theology: An International Journal of Religion, Theory and Culture* 32, no. 2 (June 2018): 211–25.

7 Dick recognised the intertextuality between his novel and the *I Ching* in his Acknowledgements for *High Castle*, “The version of the *I Ching* or *Books of Changes* used and quoted in this novel is the Richard Wilhelm translation rendered into English by Cary F. Baynes, published by Pantheon Books, Bollingen Series XIX, 1950, by the Bollingen Foundation Inc., New York.” See Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle* (London: Penguin Books, 2017), “Acknowledgements.” To facilitate contemporary readers’ reference, the more popular third edition of Wilhelm’s translation will be adopted in this paper, Richard Wilhelm, trans, *The I Ching, or Book of Changes*, translated from German by Cary Baynes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

it, with special references to two related Hexagrams *Kan* (䷜ Abyss) and *Kun* (䷁ Oppression).

2 Philip K. Dick: “Most Brilliant Sci-Fi Mind” “Got Hooked” on *I Ching*

Born in Chicago in 1928 and spent most of his life in California, Philip K. Dick (1928–82) published more than 40 novels and 120 short stories, chiefly science fiction, during his lifetime.⁸ Illustrating his lifelong passion for science fiction, Dick found in the genre “a numinous quality” and began to perceive an idea of a “mysterious quality in the universe” that could be dealt with in science fiction.⁹ The essence of science fiction lies in the “conceptual dislocation—the new idea, in other words—must be truly new [...] and it must be intellectually stimulating to the reader” or, in Dick’s words, “*the shock of dysrecognition*.”¹⁰ Being one of the most influential science fiction writers of the 20th century, Dick was even acclaimed as the “most brilliant Sci-Fi mind on any planet.”¹¹

Among his voluminous literary productions, the novel *The Man in the High Castle* is widely considered Dick’s finest work, winning the prestigious Hugo Award for Best Science Fiction Novel in 1963. In self-reflection, Dick commented that “[his] best known novel is THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE, for which I received the international Hugo Award in 1963.”¹² He took pride in becoming a “well-known author of science fiction novels”¹³ and regarded *High Castle* as his “best book.”¹⁴ Dick was gratified to witness the prevalent popularity of *High Castle* more than a decade after its first publication: “The novel has sold well over 300,000 copies, and is a classic

8 For the list of Dick’s novels, see Philip K. Dick, *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1972–1973* (Novato, CA: Underwood-Miller, 1993), “Books by Philip K. Dick.” For a chronological survey of these novels, see Lawrence Sutin, *Divine Invasions: A Life of Philip K. Dick*, 290–312.

9 Philip K. Dick, “Killing the Rat,” interview by Charles Platt (May 17, 1979), in David Streitfeld, ed., *Philip K. Dick: The Last Interview and Other Conversations* (Brooklyn, NY: Melville House, 2015), 66–67.

10 Philip K. Dick, “My Definition of Science Fiction,” in Lawrence Sutin, ed., *The Shifting Realities of Philip K. Dick: Selected Literary and Philosophical Writings* (New York: Vintage Books 1995), 99–100.

11 Paul William, “The Most Brilliant Sci-Fi Mind on Any Planet: Philip K. Dick,” *Rolling Stone*, No. 199 (November 6, 1975), front page.

12 “Letter to Federal Bureau of Investigation, August 15, 1975,” in Philip K. Dick, *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1975–1976* (Novato, CA: Underwood-Miller, 1992), 203.

13 “Letter to Federal Bureau of Investigation, October 28, 1972,” Philip K. Dick, *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1972–1973*, 64.

14 “Letter to Robert and Virginia Heinlein, May 10, 1974,” in Philip K. Dick, *Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick, 1974* (Novato, CA: Underwood-Miller, 1991), 104.

in the field.”¹⁵ Amazon Studios recently adapted the novel into a television series, also titled *The Man in the High Castle* (2015–2019), which became immensely popular among American audiences.

On his first encounter with the *I Ching*, Dick recalled the early sixties when he was seeking to “find an explanation for how the I CHING works.”¹⁶ He admitted having “got hooked right away”¹⁷ after reading Jung’s remarkable foreword to the *I Ching* in 1961, immediately using it to show him “a way of conduct in a certain situation. Now first of all it will analyze the situation for you more accurately than you have [...] Then it will give you the advice.”¹⁸ Underscoring the life-changing experience of using the *I Ching*, Dick maintained that “the *I Ching* gives advice beyond the particular, advice that transcends the immediate situation. The answers have a universal quality. For instance: “The mighty are humbled and the humbled are raised.” If you use the *I Ching* long enough and continually enough, it will begin to change and shape you as a person. It will make you into a Taoist.”¹⁹ As a matter of fact, Dick acknowledged himself as a Taoist towards the end of his life, while making attempts to impart an interest in the *I Ching* to his neighbor by asserting that “I’m a Taoist, which certainly is true; I will turn her [Karen] onto the I CHING.”²⁰

With great amazement, Dick expressed admiration for the *I Ching* as a living book of five thousand years, “I’ve been thoroughly amazed. I CHING is alleged to have an eighty percent positive factor [...] It has yet to fail. It is almost as if it has been lying dormant for five thousand years—waiting for the feathery kiss of some dying princess to give it impetus [...] This book is alive [...] It is alive.”²¹ Dick’s comment resonates with that of Nobusuke Tagomi, a major character in *High Castle*: “We live by a five-thousand-year-old book. We set it questions as if it were alive. It is alive.”²² According to his biographer Lawrence Sutin, Dick was consulting the *I Ching* at least once a day by summer 1961 and had even dreamed of Chinese sages superimposed

15 “Letter to Robert Jaffe, June 27, 1976,” in Philip K. Dick, *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1975–1976*, 315.

16 “Letter to Mark Hurst, February 11, 1977,” in Philip K. Dick, *Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick, 1977–1979* (Novato, CA: Underwood-Miller, 1993), 14.

17 Philip K. Dick, “An Interview with Philip K. Dick,” interview by Daniel DePrez, in *Science Fiction Review* 5, no. 3 (August 1976): 7.

18 Philip K. Dick, “Vertex Interviews: Philip K. Dick,” interview by Arthur Byron Cover, in *Vertex: The Magazine of Science Fiction* 1, no. 6 (February 1974): 97.

19 Philip K. Dick, “Vertex Interviews: Philip K. Dick,” interview by Arthur Byron Cover, in *Vertex: The Magazine of Science Fiction* 1, no. 6 (February 1974): 96–97.

20 “Letter to Sandra, December 25, 1981,” in Philip K. Dick, *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1980–1982* (Nevada City, CA: Underwood Books, 2009), 291.

21 “Letter to Carol Carr, November 30, 1964,” in Philip K. Dick, *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1938–1971* (Grass Valley, CA: Underwood Books, 1996), 141.

22 Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle* (London: Penguin Books, 2017), 60.

upon each other.²³ On top of his belief in its mysterious power for making life decisions, Dick experimented creative use of the *I Ching* in the process of writing his best-selling novel *High Castle*, marking its debut in American fiction.²⁴

3 *I Ching*: “Governed the Direction” of *High Castle*

Within the fascinating fictional world of *High Castle* depicting a precarious “alternate world” in which Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan won the Second World War and jointly occupied the United States, various characters frequently consult the oracle and draw from the ancient wisdom of the *I Ching* to tackle their day-to-day problems, dangers and anxiety.

Mirroring Dick’s extraordinary enthusiasm for the *I Ching*, the female protagonist Juliana Frink professes, “The only book I carry around [...] isn’t actually a book; it’s the oracle, the *I Ching*—Frank got me hooked on it and I use it all the time to decide. I never let it out of my sight. Ever.”²⁵ Frank Frink himself demonstrates a high regard of the cosmological and scientific dimensions of the *I Ching*: “A book created by the sages of China over a period of five thousand years, winnowed, perfected, that superb cosmology—and science—codified before Europe had even learned to do long division.”²⁶ Similarly, Nobusuke Tagomi, the Japanese trade minister in San Francisco, often consults the *I Ching*: “Mr. Nobusuke Tagomi sat consulting the divine Fifth Book of Confucian wisdom, the Taoist oracle called for centuries the *I Ching* or *Book of Changes*.”²⁷ Furthermore, Tagomi, to begin his day, “took a moment to be alone. He sat in his office in the Nippon Times Building and contemplated.”²⁸ Robert Childan has also been advised by Paul Kasoura, the young Japanese businessman in San Francisco, to “[w]ithdraw for a period into isolation. Meditate, possibly consult the *Book of Changes*.”²⁹

Dick recollected that *High Castle* was the sole novel he had ever written “with no notes of any kind—I just sat down at the typewriter and began to write. But I did have the help of the I CHING, so I was not alone in the work.”³⁰ In the process of writing *High Castle*, he used the *I Ching* “only when one of the characters made use of it,

23 Lawrence Sutin, *Divine Invasions: A Life of Philip K. Dick* (London: Gollancz, 2006), 109.

24 Ibid., 4.

25 Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*, 72.

26 Ibid., 12.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., 78.

29 Ibid., 155.

30 “Letter to Larry, January 19, 1977,” in Philip K. Dick, *Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick, 1977–1979*, 9.

which in effect meant I used it for plot development.”³¹ Dick reiterated in 1968 that “I did use the I CHING to write MITHC. Every hexagram in the novel is the actual one which I obtained by throwing the coins and asking the Oracle the character’s question.”³² More specifically, in each case when the characters asked a question, Dick “threw the coins and wrote the hexagram lines they got. That governed the direction of the book. Like in the end when Juliana Frink is deciding whether or not to tell Hawthorne Abensen [sic] that he is the target of assassins, the answer indicated that she should. Now if it had said not to tell him, I would have had her not go there.”³³ In other words, the *I Ching* became Dick’s most prominent source of inspiration in guiding the creation, particularly developing the plot of *High Castle*.

The following sections will further scrutinize the influence of the *I Ching* upon Dick’s literary creation of *High Castle*, particularly how the major themes of abyss and oppression are uniquely depicted with the *I Ching* images, and metaphorically symbolised by the corresponding hexagrams. These symbolisms are carefully examined in light of the Wilhelm/Baynes translation of the *I Ching*.

4 Abyss: Multiple Symbolisms of Hexagram Kan



The 29th Hexagram *Kan* (䷜ Water/Abysmal/Abyss) (hereafter Hexagram Abyss), with its multifarious layers of symbolisms, has emerged as the fundamental thread running through the plot and characterization of *High Castle*, imbued with its direct and subtle references. In the section “Shuo Kua: Discussion of the Trigrams,” Richard Wilhelm translated the multifaceted dimensions of the Trigram *Kan* (☵) (hereafter Trigram Abyss) as follows: “The Abysmal is water [...] Among men it means the melancholy, those with sick hearts, those with earache. It is the blood sign; it is red [...] It is penetration [...] It means thieves.”³⁴ Wilhelm further elaborated the signification of these metaphors in his commentary: “Melancholy is expressed by the fact that one strong line is hemmed in between two weak lines; thus also sickness of the heart [...] Blood is the fluid of the body, therefore the symbolic color of K’an is red [...]”

31 “Letter to Joseph Milicia, August 7, 1978,” in Philip K. Dick, *Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick, 1977–1979*, 180.

32 “Letter to Arthur J. Hillen, December 5, 1968,” in Philip K. Dick, *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1938–1971*, 240.

33 Philip K. Dick, “Vertex Interviews: Philip K. Dick,” interview by Arthur Byron Cover, in *Vertex: The Magazine of Science Fiction* 1, no. 6 (February 1974): 96.

34 Richard Wilhelm, trans, *The I Ching, or Book of Changes*, translated from German by Cary Baynes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 277.

Penetration is suggested by the penetrating line in the middle wedged in between the two weak lines [...] Persons who secretly penetrate a place and sneak away are thieves.”³⁵ The Hexagram Abyss, consisting of a doubling of the Trigram Abyss, refers to the repetition of danger, as its Commentary on the Decision states that “[t]he Abysmal repeated is twofold danger.”³⁶

Remarkably, Dick, in his 1964 letter to Carol Carr, discussed the multiple symbolism of the Hexagram Abyss in great length:

hex 29: THE ABYSMAL. “In man’s world K’an represents the heart, the soul locked up within the body, the principle of light inclosed in the dark—light, i.e. reason. The hex has the additional meaning, ‘repetition of danger.’ Line 3: Forward and backward, abyss on abyss. In danger like this, pause at first and wait, otherwise you will fall into a pit in the abyss. Do not act in this way. Here every step, forward or backward, leads into danger. Escape is out of the question. Therefore we must not be misled into action, as a result of which we should only bog down deeper in the danger; disagreeable as it may be to remain in such a situation, we must wait until a way out shows itself. Line 6: Bound with cords and ropes, shut in between thorn-hedged prison walls: for three years one does not find the way. Misfortune. A man who in the extremity of danger has lost the right way and is irremediably entangled in his sins has no prospect of escape. He is like a criminal who sits shackled behind thorn-hedged prison walls. For minor offenses, where repentance was shown, pardon was granted after a year, for more serious ones after two years, and for very grave ones after three years, so that here it is a question of an extremely serious entanglement.”³⁷

In a nutshell, Dick underlined the major motifs and symbolism of the Hexagram Abyss, including the repetition and extremity of dangers, imprisonment and entanglement, as well as the enclosure of the light principle of human heart within the body.

Regarding the sequence of the eight trigrams according to the “Sequence of Later Heaven, or Inner-World Arrangement,” the Trigram Abyss is in the north, while also signifying winter in the course of the year, or midnight in the course of the day, being the time of concentration, as Wilhelm remarked.³⁸ In correspondence with his fellow American science fiction writer Ursula Le Guin (1929–2018), Dick went a step further to use the symbolic connotations of the Trigram Abyss to illustrate the landscape of “winter” to depict the darkness of human history over the past two millennia: “like Kan as the trigram in Taoism, its aspects are Slavery, pain, hopelessness, ignorance, limitation, etc., the true darkness by which we have come to sense our past two thousand years as heavy, a burden, a tribulation, a condition of sin and ignorance, of

³⁵ Ibid., 278.

³⁶ Ibid., 531.

³⁷ “Letter to Carol Carr, November 30, 1964,” in Philip K. Dick, *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1938–1971*, 138–39.

³⁸ Ibid., 271.

being cut off from God, etc.”³⁹ The pejorative implications of the Trigram Abyss have been highlighted in the broader contexts of the manifold struggles and tribulations throughout the human history.

By absorbing the diverse symbolisms of the Hexagram Abyss, Dick has creatively transformed them into the narrative of the *High Castle*. Hexagram Abyss has vividly captured the political crises, military conflicts, personal distress, spiritual anxiety, and even the imminent threats of death, of the major characters, including Nobusuke Tagomi, Frank Frink, Juliana Frink, Robert Childan, and so forth.

4.1 Political Crises and Military Conflicts

As vividly represented in *High Castle*, the Hexagram Abyss captures the notions of external dangers, including pressing political crises and looming military conflicts between Japan and various factions of Nazi Germany. In particular, Tagomi specifically mentions the hexagram during his fiery argument with the German consul Hugo Reiss: “Allow me to notify you [...] that your nation is about to descend into greater vileness than ever. You know the hexagram The Abyss?”⁴⁰ The Hexagram Abyss is here used by Tagomi to symbolize all the pressing political crises and disastrous military conflicts between Japan and different factions of Nazi Germany. These warring nations are descending, if not plunging, into the watery abyss of “greater vileness.”⁴¹

The catastrophic conflict between Germany and Japan would be the “Operation Dandelion,” Germany’s secretive plot to attack Japan with nuclear bombs, as unveiled by Mr. Baynes, an undercover German agent. The major purpose of the Operation, Baynes reveals, constitutes an “enormous nuclear attack on the Home Islands, without advance warning of any kind [...] With purpose of wiping out Royal Family, Home Defense Army, most of Imperial Navy, civil population, industries, resources [...] Leaving overseas possessions for absorption by the Reich.”⁴² To put it bluntly, Germany conspires to obliterate its own ally Japan with a view to assuming hegemony of the entire world. The military abyss goes even deeper to the imminent danger of the Third World War, about which Mr. Baynes remains acutely worried and tormented during his return flight to Germany in the face of his own political persecution. He deplores in sheer panic of the grim prospect of “a final holocaust for everyone. And what will that leave, that Third World Insanity? Will that put an end to

³⁹ “Letter to Ursula Le Guin, March 5, 1975,” in Philip K. Dick, *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1975–1976*, 134.

⁴⁰ Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*, 210.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 164.

all life, of every kind, everywhere? When our planet becomes a dead planet, by our own hands?”⁴³ In short, these political crises and military conflicts manifest Nazi Germany’s descendence into the abyss of “vileness,” as figuratively foretold by Tagomi’s insightful reference to the Hexagram Abyss.

4.2 Bloodbath and Death

The vileness of wars is inseparable with the shedding of blood, killing and death. As a matter of fact, “blood” constitutes another core symbolism of the Trigram Abyss because, as Wilhelm put it, “[b]lood is the fluid of the body.”⁴⁴ Intriguingly, Tagomi once attempts to listen to the interior sound of the silver triangle, resembling the noise of the flow of blood within a human body: “No sound. No roar of simulated ocean, in actuality interior blood-motion noises—not even that.”⁴⁵ Tagomi also aptly highlights the connection between the Hexagram Abyss and bloodbath by illustrating his warning to Hugo Reiss: “You know the hexagram The Abyss? [...] I declare: heart sick with horror. Bloodbath coming beyond all compare.”⁴⁶

In this light, the episodes of killing and bloodbath in the novel could be analyzed from the perspective of the Hexagram Abyss. Two Nazi assassins are on a secret mission to murder Mr. Baynes who has disclosed the classified military secret to the Japanese. In an effort to safeguard Mr. Baynes who is visiting Tagomi’s office in Nippon Times Building, Tagomi, under the immediate threat of death, resolutely shoots the two assassins with a revolver. “The SD man’s jaw burst. Bits of bone, flesh, shreds of tooth, flew in the air [...] The jawless SD man’s eyes still contained life, of a kind.”⁴⁷ While the loss of blood results in the loss of life for these assassins, the bloody scene visualizes the dreadful image of the Hexagram Abyss: danger, blood and death.

Burdened with enormous guilt and fear in his heart, Tagomi is originally convinced of the demise of his career, never able to return to the Nippon Times Building which is filled with its “stink of Death.”⁴⁸ After a period of spiritual turmoil and emotional recovery, Tagomi manages to ascend, to a certain extent, from his psychological abyss by regaining consciousness. Upon returning to the Nippon Times Building, the first thing Tagomi inquires is the cleansing of the bloody scene of the horrific murder in his office: “Has the mess been cleared?” His assistant reassured

⁴³ Ibid., 214.

⁴⁴ Richard Wilhelm, *The I Ching, or Book of Changes*, 278.

⁴⁵ Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*, 201.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 210.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 174.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 195.

him: “No sign remains.”⁴⁹ Although the physical mess of the bloodbath has been cleaned, the psychological guilt of the bloodshed has left a lasting scar on Tagomi’s psyche. He confronts the German consul Hugo Reiss that the heinous sin of murder could not easily be wiped out: “Guilt nonetheless is on my soul [...] Blood, Herr Reiss, can never be eradicated like ink.”⁵⁰

The gothic narrative of Tagomi’s murder of the Nazi secret assassins is ingeniously resonated by Juliana Frink’s killing of Joe Cinnadella, another Germany spy on an undercover mission to assassinate Hawthorne Abendsen, the author of *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*, a banned novel in the occupied United States. On the way to Abendsen’s house, Juliana astoundingly discovers Cinnadella’s assassination plot and discerns the imminence of murder, as Cinnadella “breathes—death.”⁵¹ Mirroring Tagomi who has courageously safeguarded Baynes, Juliana risks her own life to defend Abendsen by slashing Cinnadella’s throat, resulting in the horrifying bloodbath: “Blood had seeped through his fingers [...] down his wrist. Pool on the floor.”⁵² These bloody scenes can also be perceived as Dick’s literary representation of the “blood” symbolism of the Trigram Abyss.

Frank Frink also deplores the cruelty of bloodbath of purging and killing by the *pinocs*, the white American puppet government of the Pacific States of America, located in Sacramento: “the great blood bath, the purging of the *pinocs* and their masters.”⁵³ Being a Jew, Frank is abhorred by Wyndam-Matson, his former employer, who reports him to the German police: “They’ll gas the bugger soon as they get him across the Demarcation Line. I think they’ve got one of those camps in New York, he thought. Those oven camps.”⁵⁴ Subsequently in Chapter 12, Frank is arrested and imprisoned by the Nazi police, facing imminent execution as a Jew in the German concentration camp. Frank’s plight and custody displays Dick’s depiction of the magnitude of danger and “prison” imagery of the Hexagram Abyss: “A man who in the extremity of danger has lost the right way and is irremediably entangled in his sins has no prospect of escape. He is like a criminal who sits shackled behind thorn-hedged prison walls.”⁵⁵

It is worthwhile to note that the ubiquitous existence of spies, like Mr. Baynes, Cinnadella and other Nazi assassins, in *High Castle* may also evoke the “thieves” symbolism of Abyss, like water silently running in underground ditches in secretive

⁴⁹ Ibid., 207.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 209.

⁵¹ Ibid., 37.

⁵² Ibid., 188.

⁵³ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 53.

⁵⁵ “Letter to Carol Carr, November 30, 1964,” in Philip K. Dick, *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1938–1971*, 139.

and imperceptible manners. The “Discussion of the Trigrams” refers Abyss to “thieves,” illustrated with Wilhelm’s commentary: “Persons who secretly penetrate a place and sneak away are thieves.”⁵⁶ Admittedly, these “thieves” become the chief source of the bloodbath and death. All in all, the Hexagram Abyss symbolizes the related images of bloodbath, imprisonment, death, which permeate the narrative of *High Castle*.

4.3 Sick Heart and Heart Attack

While Tagomi is acutely guilty in his soul for committing the murder, the Hexagram Abyss calls attention to the psychological dimension. As Tagomi pronounces, “You know the hexagram The Abyss? [...] I declare: heart sick with horror.”⁵⁷ The Hexagram Abyss is closely associated with the heart, particularly the “sick heart.”⁵⁸ On another occasion, Tagomi makes ingenious use of the *yin-yang* imagery to portray the psychological world: “Penetrate to the heart. The heart, locked within two yin lines of black passion. Strangled, sometimes, and yet, even then, the light of yang, the flicker at the centre.”⁵⁹ While not a direct reference, here Tagomi alludes to the Trigram/Hexagram Abyss, and according to Wilhelm, “[i]n man’s world K’an represents the heart, the soul locked up within the body, the principle of light inclosed in the dark—that is, reason.”⁶⁰ In other words, the Trigram Abyss, where the middle *yang* line is locked within two *yin* lines, further symbolizes the human heart, particularly its divine (*yang*) nature being engulfed by black (*yin*) passions and desires. When the trigram is doubled, the entire hexagram, meaning The Abyss, “the light lines are inclosed [sic] by the dark lines, and thus endangered.”⁶¹ Tagomi’s psychological understanding of Abyss distinctly originates from Wilhelm’s interpretation that “K’an further means the heart. In the heart the divine nature is locked within the natural inclinations and tendencies, and is thus in danger of being engulfed by desires and passions.”⁶² In Tagomi’s words “heart sick with horror,”⁶³ the rationality, light principle, and divine nature of human heart, signified by the middle *yang* line, has been engulfed and drowned by black passions, desires and horror, symbolized by the two engulfing *yin* lines of the Trigram Abyss (☵).

56 Richard Wilhelm, *The I Ching, or Book of Changes*, 278.

57 Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*, 210.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid., 78.

60 Ibid., 115.

61 Richard Wilhelm, *The I Ching, or Book of Changes*, 535.

62 Ibid., 532.

63 Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*, 210.

The sickness of heart may also point to the psychological imbalance and even heart attack experienced by Tagomi. In the aftermath of killing two German assassins, Tagomi suffers from mental breakdown and the loss of internal balance. “To save one life, Mr. Tagomi had to take two. The logical, balanced mind cannot make sense of that. A kindly man like Mr. Tagomi could be driven insane by the implications of such reality.”⁶⁴ Towards the end of Chapter 14, Tagomi, after recovering from a neurotic disorder, has engaged in a fierce debate with the German consul Hugo Reiss on the relationship between the Hexagram Abyss and military confrontation. Tagomi has a sudden heart attack, another vivid symbolism of the Hexagram Abyss. “His body struck the floor. Hands and knees, gasping, the carpet at his nose [...] Keep equipoise, Mr. Tagomi thought, ‘I’m having a small heart attack.’”⁶⁵ Before falling to the ground, Tagomi is keenly aware of the importance of keeping “equipoise”—the internal balance, the balance between *yin* and *yang*, between the consciousness and unconsciousness—a response to his previous loss of psychological balance, where his consciousness was suppressed by overwhelming unconsciousness. Such a heart attack could be interpreted as the manifestation of Tagomi’s internal distress and psychological imbalance.

Prior to the previous incident, Tagomi has suffered another heart attack. Upon the death of Reichs Chancellor Martin Bormann, Tagomi is obliged to rush to the German Foreign Office and listen to the long-winded reports on all the candidates scrambling to become the successor. Suffocated, Tagomi drops ill with a heart attack: “I am going mad. I have to get out of here; I am having an attack. My body is throwing up things or spurting them out—I am dying.”⁶⁶ Interestingly, that particular heart attack is connected with the problem of his ear, which is again related to the Trigram Abyss. According to the “Discussion of the Trigrams,” the eight trigrams also symbolize different parts of the body. The Abyss manifests itself in the “ear” which is “hollow outside,” as Wilhelm put it.⁶⁷ Furthermore, among men it refers to those with “earache,”⁶⁸ while Wilhelm illustrated that “[t]he trigram signifies toil and also the ear. Pains in the ear come from laborious listening.”⁶⁹ Tagomi “felt ill as he listened”⁷⁰ to the agonizing power struggle in the German Foreign Office. Alongside his small heart attack, Tagomi subsequently endures some problem with his ear: “Attack of vertigo. Middle-ear malfunction.”⁷¹ This attack of vertigo, the sensation of

⁶⁴ Ibid., 176.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 211.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 82.

⁶⁷ Richard Wilhelm, *The I Ching, or Book of Changes*, 274.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 277.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 278.

⁷⁰ Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*, 82.

⁷¹ Ibid., 83.

spinning related to problems with the inner ear, leads to Tagomi's loss of equilibrium as a result of non-specific dizziness and illusion. On another occasion, Tagomi also has an ear issue: "[O]ur space and our time creations of our own psyche, and when these momentarily falter—like acute disturbance of middle ear [...] all sense of balance gone."⁷² In *High Castle*, the two symbolisms of Abyss, "sick heart" and "earache," feature creatively in the narrative of Tagomi's physical illness and psychological imbalance.

Like Tagomi, Juliana suffers a "sick heart" and "anxiety attack" in her final encounter with the assassin Cinnadella: "'I'm dying,' she [Juliana] said. 'It's just an anxiety attack [...] 'I'm sick. Please.' She struggled loose from him. 'I'm being sick—let me go.'"⁷³ In this connection, Juliana exhibits a mirror image of Tagomi, both of whom have killed the Nazi assassins in a bid to protect somebody who possesses and reveals the "inner truth," namely Baynes and Abendsen. In the meantime, both Juliana and Tagomi have plunged into bloodbath, dangers, and sick heart—all these are the multifarious layers of symbolisms of the Hexagram Abyss.

4.4 Fear and Anxiety

The Hexagram Abyss can also be understood to be related to people with psychological problems, including fear, anxiety, distress, despair and melancholy. In his unpublished yet more substantial preface to the Wilhelm's *I Ching*, Carl Jung discussed the psychological implication of Hexagram *Kan* (Abyss) in more detail: "Kan decidedly belongs to the less agreeable hexagrams. Not infrequently I have encountered it with patients who were too much under the domination of the unconscious (water!) and therefore in danger of developing psychotic symptoms."⁷⁴ The "psychotic symptoms" developed out of the unbalanced domination of the "unconscious," symbolized by "water" of the Hexagram Abyss, are prevalent in *High Castle*. Responding to the spontaneous and sarcastic remark of Alex Lotze on the Japanese style of architecture, Mr. Baynes has sensed the imbalance quality of the German mind: "He felt, strongly for a moment, the unbalanced quality, the psychotic streak, in the German mind."⁷⁵ According to Baynes, the unbalanced mind of the German epitomizes the psychotic and chaotic world run by the Nazi German madmen in the novel: "A psychotic world we live in. The madmen are in power."⁷⁶

⁷² Ibid., 205–6.

⁷³ Ibid., 185.

⁷⁴ C. G. Jung, "Preface to the English Translation of Wilhelm's *I Ching*," in *The Records of Bollingen Foundation*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, BOX I: 92, Folder 670.019 "*I Ching* Correspondences, 1929–1952," 20.

⁷⁵ Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*, 34.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 34.

The major theme of fear and anxiety runs through the *High Castle*, capturing the personal adversity, internal distress, and spiritual crisis of most characters in the psychotic world they live in. The opening line of the entire novel epitomizes the anxiety of Robert Childan: “For a week Mr. R. Childan had been anxiously watching the mail. But the valuable shipment from the Rocky Mountain States had not arrived [...] I’m going to have an angry customer.”⁷⁷ In dealing with the occupying Japanese customers in California, particularly the “angry customer” Tagomi, Childan’s “aspirations and fears and torments rose up and exposed themselves, swamped him, stopping his tongue.”⁷⁸ After spending the entire day finding the artistic item for Tagomi, Childan’s “bitterness and anxiety almost overwhelmed him.”⁷⁹

Adding to his psychological burden, Childan is overwhelmed with nervousness with his hands shaking, by just thinking about the upcoming visit of the young Japanese couple, Betty and Paul Kasoura: “And yet he trembled with fear, imagining himself knocking at their door [...] Would he do the right thing? [...] Or would he disgrace himself, like an animal, by some dismal faux pas?”⁸⁰ On the day of visit, as the pedicab takes Childan closer to Kasoura’s house, Childan becomes “increasingly nervous.”⁸¹ The entire meeting with the Kasouras remains in a panic mode for Childan: “Yet in a panic he thought, My wits scrambled by the drink. And fatigue and nervousness [...] He felt despair.”⁸² In the wake of another intense encounter with Paul Kasoura, Childan, enduring a profound sense of humiliation and melancholy, feels “melancholy. Brief instant, as if I rose to the surface and saw unencumbered.”⁸³ As mentioned previously, Wilhelm illustrated the image of Abyss with its connection of melancholy: “Melancholy is expressed by the fact that one strong line is hemmed in between two weak lines; thus also sickness of the heart.”⁸⁴ More vividly, the dark cave and *yin* world may symbolize and visualize the melancholy aspect of the human heart: “Land of trolls and caves, dank, always dark. Yin world, in its most melancholy aspect.”⁸⁵ In a nutshell, Childan acknowledges the suffering and misery of life: “We all suffer in this life [...] my life miserable.”⁸⁶ He is just like that *yang* line of the Trigram Abyss hemmed in between two weak lines, suffering all sort of anxiety, despair and misery in life.

77 Ibid., 1.

78 Ibid., 2.

79 Ibid., 17.

80 Ibid., 5.

81 Ibid., 90.

82 Ibid., 94.

83 Ibid., 161.

84 Ibid., 278.

85 Ibid., 202.

86 Ibid., 151.

Anxiety also constitutes a distinctive feature for Juliana Frink. After her divorce with Frank Frink, Juliana escapes from San Francisco to Canon City, Colorado in the Rocky Mountain States. During her desperate journey of wandering, Juliana has been agonized by severe anxiety, so much so that she contemplates suicide: “Commit suicide by drowning himself on an ocean voyage? Maybe I ought to do that.”⁸⁷ The encountering with Joe Cinnadella, the German assassin disguised as her lover, has aggravated her state of fear and anxiety. Cinnadella has witnessed Juliana’s unsettling psychological state: “Groaning. Always downcast, aren’t you? Worry, fear and suspicion, about me and everything else in the world.”⁸⁸ Juliana offers some glimpses of her source of anxiety and mistrust of people, particularly male: “I have a neurotic fear of the masculine [...] That’s why he [Frank] and I broke up; that’s why I still feel this anxiety now, this mistrust.”⁸⁹ After discovering Cinnadella’s vicious plot to murder Hawthorne Abendsen, Juliana becomes hysterically anxious about her own demise in the hands of Cinnadella. Responding to Juliana’s exclamation “I’m dying,” Cinnadella offered some sort of consolation, “It’s just an anxiety attack. Don’t you have them all the time?”⁹⁰ Juliana’s extremity of anxiety has to some extent been relieved by killing Cinnadella and knowing that the authority has little knowledge about her identity: “So he’s dead [...] they don’t know who I am or anything about me. Much less anxious now.”⁹¹ Nevertheless, Juliana remains very anxious in meeting Hawthorne Abendsen, as observed by Caroline Abendsen: “This is one of your readers who is very anxious to say a few words to you.”⁹² All along her tumultuous journey of escape and deadly encounter, Juliana has been incessantly enshrouded in thick clouds of anxiety.

Likewise, Tagomi suffers an acute sense of anxiety throughout the novel. In his first contact with Mr. Baynes, a suspected spy, Tagomi “scrutinized Mr. Baynes’ face anxiously”⁹³ and “felt dismay [...] I am anxious to begin. Are you [Baynes] about to present your injection molds to us?”⁹⁴ On the other hand, Baynes has been painstakingly burdened with his own worry and anxiety meeting the Japanese: “Now I wish I had approached the agent sooner. I would have saved myself much worry and distress.”⁹⁵ Having discovered the true identity of Baynes, Tagomi’s fear and anxiety fails to altogether evaporate: “I admit to fear. I sense in this encounter something

⁸⁷ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 121.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 124.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 185.

⁹¹ Ibid., 218.

⁹² Ibid., 222.

⁹³ Ibid., 36.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 87.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 136.

terrible.”⁹⁶ In the aftermath of killing the German assassins, Baynes and General Tedeki witness Tagomi’s distress and despair, “seeing Mr. Tagomi distractedly manipulating the handful of vegetable stalks, recognized how deep the man’s distress was [...] You witness the man’s despair.”⁹⁷ Persistently burdened with guilt, Tagomi desires to get rid of the revolver: “I possibly could manage my anxious proclivities by a ruse [...] This gun, for me, has too much subjective history [...] all of the wrong kind.”⁹⁸ Rejected by Childan to trade in the gun, Tagomi resignedly sighs, “[I] did not feel any strength. I yield. Yin, the adaptive, receptive, holds sway in me, I fear.”⁹⁹ This resonates with the words of Tagomi who aptly adopted the image of Hexagram Abyss to depict the psychological plight of human: “The heart, locked within two yin lines of black passion. Strangled.”¹⁰⁰

In the face of the political crises, bloodbath, and personal perplexity symbolized by the Hexagram Abyss, various characters from time to time consult the *I Ching* as a manual of divination, or book of oracle, for making their critical decisions. Among the altogether twelve episodes of divination, there are three interconnected divinations by Tagomi, Frank Frink and Robert Childan: the 47th Hexagram *Kun* (䷁ Oppression/Exhaustion). The phenomenon of this universal anxiety can be further manifested by these three connected episodes of divination.

5 Oppression: Connected Oracles of Hexagram *Kun* (䷁)

Regarding the Hexagram *Kun* (䷁ Oppression/Exhaustion) (hereafter Hexagram Oppression), the idea of oppression and exhaustion derives from the lower Trigram Abyss, as Wilhelm elaborated that “The lake is above, water below; the lake is empty, dried up [Literally, ‘exhausted.’]”¹⁰¹ and “a light line is hemmed in between two dark ones [...] Thus everywhere superior men are oppressed and held in restraint by inferior men.”¹⁰² In this light, the Hexagram Oppression is closely related with the multiple connotations of the Hexagram Abyss, with a *yang* line locked within two *yin* lines, as discussed in the previous section.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 162.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 176.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 196.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 197.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 78.

¹⁰¹ Richard Wilhelm, *The I Ching, or Book of Changes*, 181.

¹⁰² Ibid.

The overarching theme of oppression is narrated through a pivotal oracle of Tagomi. In the wake of a phone conversation with Mr. Baynes, Tagomi feels guilty by offending Baynes with his foolish and reckless attitude. Hence, he proceeds to consult the oracle, “I should have consulted the oracle, discovered what Moment it is. I have drifted far from the Tao.”¹⁰³ He inquires the *I Ching*, “Which of the sixty-four hexagrams [...] am I labouring under?” The result of the divination turned out to be “The hexagram was Forty-Seven. Oppression—Exhaustion [...] The Moment for us all. No moving lines. A static hexagram.”¹⁰⁴ Apparently, Tagomi remains conscious of the fact that this kind of oppression is not confined to him alone, but a universal and synchronic experience for all humankind. In other words, everybody is shrouded by this cloud of oppression in such an age of anxiety.

Despite the fact that Tagomi has never encountered Frank Frink face to face in the novel, their fate and practice of divination seem to be intricately interconnected. After his own consultation of the oracle in the first chapter, Frink wonders “who else in the vast complicated city of San Francisco was at this same moment consulting the oracle. And were they all getting as gloomy advice as he? Was the tenor of the Moment as adverse for them as it was for him?”¹⁰⁵ At this particular juncture, the narrative of the novel immediately turns to Tagomi: “Mr. Nobusuke Tagomi sat consulting the divine Fifth Book of Confucian wisdom, the Taoist oracle called for centuries the *I Ching* or *Book of Changes*.”¹⁰⁶ In similar fashion, almost at the same moment when Tagomi obtains the Hexagram Oppression, Frink decides to consult the oracle while anxiously waiting for his former employer Wyndham-Matson’s decision on funding his fledgling jewelry business. Strikingly, Frink obtains the same result:

The hexagram was Forty-seven [Oppression – Exhaustion]. He obtained one moving line, Nine in the fifth place.
His nose and feet are cut off.
Oppression at the hands of the man with the purple knee bands.
Joy comes softly.
It furthers one to make offerings and libations.¹⁰⁷

Scrupulously Frink studies the implication of the line and concludes that the money would not be forthcoming. However, when the two-thousand-dollar cheque arrives from Wyndham-Matson, Frink realizes that the Hexagram Oppression—Exhaustion refers to some crisis of a deeper level with more far-reaching impacts on not only his

¹⁰³ Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*, 87–88.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 88.

own fate but also the geopolitical predicaments of the entire world. That has become the source of his profound anxiety: “I am looking ahead, Frink thought. He thought of the hexagram. What offerings and libations can I make? And—to whom?”¹⁰⁸

The third related episode of divination comes from Robert Childan who ponders about the appropriateness of his gift, the ornamented art object called scrimshaw, to the Japanese couple, Paul and Betty Kasoura. When they appear pleased with Childan’s offering, “[t]here was peace, then, for a moment, in his heart. This offering, this—as the *I Ching* put it—libation. It had done what needed to be done. Some of the anxiety and oppression which he had felt lately began to lift from him.”¹⁰⁹ Without an actual operation of divination in the narrative, this could be considered, as Paul Mountfort argued, a “ghost” consultation by Childan obtaining the fifth line of the Hexagram Oppression.¹¹⁰

As examined above, the very first line of the entire novel epitomizes the anxiety of Childan: “For a week Mr. R. Childan had been anxiously watching the mail,”¹¹¹ while his “bitterness and anxiety almost overwhelmed him.”¹¹² When Childan experiences the lifting and easing of some of his anxiety and oppression, this demonstrates the Hexagram Oppression could offer some ways of relieving the oppression. The key to that relief lies in “making offerings and libations” mentioned in the fifth line. As Wilhelm commented, “The line is hemmed in by dark lines,”¹¹³ while “[an] individual who has the good of mankind at heart is oppressed from above and below (this is the meaning of the cutting off of nose and feet) [...] he should turn to God, firm in his inner composure, and pray and offer sacrifice for the general well-being.”¹¹⁴ In Childan’s case, he has been oppressed simultaneously from above (Tagomi) and below (Kasouras), while being deeply troubled and devastated by the astounding discovery of the forgery of the Colt .44 revolvers by Frink’s visit to his antique store. In the meantime, “making offerings and libations” emerges as the advice from the *I Ching* for relieving his oppression. Coupled with profound religious connotation, libation refers to an act of ritual pouring a liquid as an offering or sacrifice to a deity.¹¹⁵

108 Ibid., 89.

109 Ibid., 92.

110 Paul Mountfort, “The *I Ching* and Philip K. Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle*,” *Science Fiction Studies* 43 (2016): 296.

111 Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*, 1.

112 Ibid., 17.

113 Richard Wilhelm, *The I Ching, or Book of Changes*, 628.

114 Ibid., 184.

115 In East Asia, pouring an offering of rice into a running stream symbolizes the detachment from karma and bad energy. In Burmese Buddhism, the water libation ceremony, which involves the ceremonial pouring of water from a vessel of water into a vase, drop by drop, concludes most

More specifically, Childan's libation pertains to his offering to the Kasouras of the ornamented art object called scrimshaw which is a kind whalebone carving done a century ago by whalers from New England and "[n]o single thing could have summed up old U.S. culture more."¹¹⁶ In other words, the presentation of this gift (which carries profound American history and culture) conveys some religious and ritualistic symbolism on the part of Childan, the offering and sacrifice of the "old U.S. culture" to the new generation of Japanese. The immediate consequence of his libation is auspicious: "There was peace, then, for a moment, in his heart."¹¹⁷ With the sacrifice of the old, Childan has a glimpse of the new, the Tao: "The proportion. Balance. They are so close to the Tao, these two young Japanese. That is why I reacted to them before. I sensed the Tao through them."¹¹⁸ In this light, the libation of this artistic object has the powerful symbolic significance of lifting people out of personal anxiety and collective oppression.

The oracle Hexagram Oppression has offered Frink a glimmer of hope in relieving his oppression. His business partner McCarthy admonishes him: "Don't look back [...] Look ahead. To the business."¹¹⁹ Put in another way, Frink is advised not to dwell on his current anxiety and oppression, but to keep moving like water (flowing out of the oppression), anticipating the future prosperity of their jewelry business. At this juncture of divination, Frink obtains one moving line, nine in the fifth place, which results in a new hexagram, the 40th Hexagram *Jie* (䷧ Deliverance). Deliverance refers to a time in which tensions and complications begin to be eased and lifted. According to Wilhelm, "[j]ust as rain relieves atmospheric tension, making all the buds burst open, so a time of deliverance from burdensome pressure has a liberating and stimulating effect in life."¹²⁰ Simply put, Frink's future deliverance is hidden in his current oppression and exhaustion.

The result of the divination by Tagomi, Frink and Childan exhibits not only their particular situation but also their interrelated destiny. The aforementioned three related oracles of the Hexagram Oppression may exemplify Carl Jung's synchronicity theory, whereas "synchronicity takes the coincidence of events in space and time as meaning something more than mere chance."¹²¹ In fact, Jung is directly mentioned in

Buddhist ceremonies. This ceremonial libation is done to share the accrued merit with all other living beings in all 31 planes of existence. See Melford E. Spiro, *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and its Burmese Vicissitudes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 213–14.

¹¹⁶ Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*, 92.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 92.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 89.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 155.

¹²¹ Jung discussed the synchronicity theory in his foreword to Wilhelm's *I Ching*: "This assumption involves a certain curious principle that I have termed synchronicity [...] whereas synchronicity

High Castle. Mr. Baynes has once remarked, “Perhaps they are driven by some desperate subconscious archetype. In the Jungian sense. Mr. Tagomi nodded. ‘I have read Jung. I understand.’”¹²² Additionally, Jung’s synchronicity theory is also alluded to explicitly in the novel: “[S]ynchronicity theory, every particle being connected with every other; you can’t fart without changing the balance in the universe.”¹²³ Frink’s consultation of the *I Ching* oracle has also implied Jung’s synchronicity theory: “Random, and yet rooted in the moment in which he lived, in which his life was bound up with all other lives and particles in the universe. The necessary hexagram picturing in its pattern of broken and unbroken lines the *situation*.”¹²⁴ As Paul Mountfort argued, “That Moment [...] thus becomes a synchronistic one, with characters living apparently unconnected lives, but whose paths will, once again, fatefully cross, unified in the simultaneities of time and space via the same *I Ching* hexagram [Oppression].”¹²⁵ Put it another way, oppression has become the universal and synchronistic plight of the characters in *High Castle*, or in Tagomi’s words, “The Moment for us all.”

6 Concluding Remarks

In the midst of all the dreadful bloodbath, gruesome murder, pressing political crises, and precarious military conflicts between Japan and different factions of Nazi Germany, fear and anxiety turn out to be a ubiquitous phenomenon in the *High Castle*, experienced by major and minor characters alike. The major source of anxiety comes from the fragility and uncertainty of life, and the existential threat to human beings, while religion could not provide the necessary help and redemption. Tagomi contemplates the finitude of the world, “The finite, finite world [...] All our religion is wrong.”¹²⁶ Similarly, Baynes ponders about the human’s futility and helplessness in the vast universe, “What they do not comprehend is man’s

takes the coincidence of events in space and time as meaning something more than mere chance, namely, a peculiar interdependence of objective events among themselves as well as with the subjective (psychic) states of the observer or observers.” (xxiv)

¹²² Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*, 64.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹²⁵ Paul Mountfort, “The *I Ching* and Philip K. Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle*,” *Science Fiction Studies* 43 (2016): 296.

¹²⁶ Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*, 83.

helplessness. I am weak, small, of no consequence to the universe.”¹²⁷ Cinnadella gloomily describes the human nature along the lines of “[s]uspicion, fear, greed.”¹²⁸

While fear and anxiety are virtually experienced by almost every character in *High Castle* where individuals face existential crises of the external world, consulting the *I Ching* oracle becomes a favored way for many characters to tackle their own dangers and distress, offering them a glimmer of hope and return of light.¹²⁹ The interconnectedness of seemingly unrelated people is vividly portrayed in several instances of consultation of the *I Ching* oracle in *High Castle*. The dramatically identical result of divination—oppression and exhaustion—by Tagomi, Frink and Childan symbolizes the shared destiny of humanity and Jung’s synchronicity where apparently unrelated events coincide meaningfully in space and time. All in all, these explicit and implicit references to the Hexagram Abyss, together with the related Hexagram Oppression, demonstrate that Dick was not only well-acquainted with but also took full advantage of the multifaceted dimensions of their symbolisms to develop characterisation and narrative in *High Castle*, particularly foregrounding the core themes of universal anxiety and oppression.

Personally, Dick experienced some intense sense of fear and anxiety, a vivid representation of the psychological dimension of the Hexagram Abyss, prior to and in the midst of writing the *High Castle*. Before the composition of *High Castle*, Dick admitted that “[his] sense of self-worth began to flag, so [he] hitched [himself] to the priest of our times, the psychologist-psychiatrist” who advised him to write a good book that he really believed in.¹³⁰ The book turns out to be *High Castle*. Furthermore, Dick revealed in a 1962 letter his own psychological turmoil and abyss: “I recall my original warped view [...] Fear. Anxiety on my part. My worldview was shaped by my own inner fears—and my repressed aggressions [...] I saw that in me the fear (of other people) was based on a deep hostility in me.”¹³¹ Worse still, Dick even developed a phobia towards the cabin where he composed the *High Castle*, and towards his third wife Anne R. Dick (1927–2017), with whom Dick had some severe conflicts and fighting: “We owned a little cabin in Inverness where I had written MAN; I had a phobia against using the car to get there, and against the cabin itself. Finally, I had

¹²⁷ Ibid., 35.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 140.

¹²⁹ John T. P. Lai, “Decay, Death, and the Return of Light: The *I Ching* Yin-Yang Cycle in Philip K. Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle*,” *Literature and Theology: An International Journal of Religion, Theory and Culture* 37, no. 2 (June 2023): 155–65.

¹³⁰ Philip K. Dick, “Self Portrait,” *The Philip K. Dick Society Newsletter* 2 (December 1983): 4.

¹³¹ “Letter to Anthony Boucher, April 25, 1962,” in Philip K. Dick, *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1938–1971*, 69.

begun to develop a terrible fear of Anne.”¹³² Dick’s own psychological and spiritual experiences may offer some explanations and insights into why the Hexagrams Abyss and Oppression feature so prominently in the narrative of *High Castle*. The interconnectedness and synchronicity are not confined to the characters within the fictional world of *High Castle*, but also intertwined with its author, as Dick would earnestly proceed with his own consultation whenever those characters anxiously ask the *I Ching* a critical question.

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¹³² “Letter to Anthony Boucher, April 25, 1962,” in Philip K. Dick, *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1938–1971*, 67. In the wake of their divorce, Dick had even grumbled about Anne’s “oppression”: “What are you defending? Cruelty? Oppression? The killing off of the smaller souls around you?” See “Letter to Anne Dick, July 29, 1967,” in Philip K. Dick, *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1938–1971*, 215.

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