Products of dystopia:
Philip K. Dick's reflections on uncomfortable social realities in three novels

by

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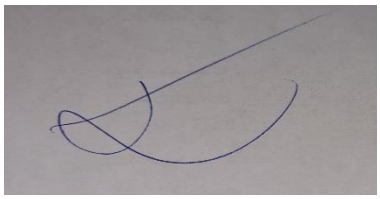

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Abstract

This dissertation explores ways in which a selection of Philip K. Dick's novels express the idea of products produced in a dystopian setting and how these products reflect uncomfortable social realities. The first novel to be discussed is *We Can Build You*, in which constructed humanoids referred to as 'simulacra' are uniquely situated to reflect societal decay under a system of late-stage capitalism and governmental overreach through mental health institutionalisation. The second is *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, which also features constructed humanoids, although the androids of this text are far more advanced and agentive. These androids and their role in the society of the text, are explored considering their positioning in the dynamic of empathy established in the novel's post-apocalyptic setting. The final text discussed is *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, which is analysed with special attention to the use of drugs and escapism, as characters seek to escape the climate apocalypse ravaging the Earth. The use of such drugs and the solipsistic nightmare world in which the characters are entrapped, forms the basis of this discussion.

The works of Umberto Rossi in *The Twisted Worlds of Philip K. Dick* and Evan Lampe in *Philip K. Dick and The World We Live In* are drawn from extensively throughout the dissertation, as they are instrumental in establishing the nature of the dystopian societies described and the perspectives through which we view them. This dissertation explores an under-represented aspect of Dick's works, in that it discusses the use of products as reflectors of social reality. Dick's writing often engages with capitalist characters, societies or ideas and the products of such a society are important to discuss as they reflect the priorities and values of such a society. This is a field of Dick's work that would benefit from more discussion.

Key words

Androids – Synthetic humanoids used for deep-space mining operations, often under brutal conditions. These androids (specifically the Nexus-6 androids present in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*) are near-indistinguishable from humans and can pass as human when not under scrutiny.

A special – See ‘chickenhead’.

Can-D – A drug used by Martian colonists in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* to enter a shared hallucinatory experience, with the intention of escaping the harsh realities of colonial living.

Chew-Z – A competitor to Can-D, which traps its users in a solipsistic nightmare reality.

Chickenhead – A derogatory term for someone that has failed a government-mandated intelligence test to determine fitness for off-planet travel and colonisation.

Conapt – A slang term for an apartment building in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*.

Empathy box – A means of sharing in a communal experience with other users of the empathy box. The main way to partake in Mercerism.

E-Therapy – An experimental procedure designed to stimulate the evolutionary process, often with the effect of increased intelligence or creativity.

Homeopape – A slang term for a newspaper.

Humanoid – A term used in this dissertation to refer to something that resembles a human being. See ‘androids’ and ‘simulacra’.

Kipple – A term that Dick uses to describe the waste products of entropy, often comprised of dust and decaying matter.

Mercerism – A system of belief structured around a shared Sisyphean religious experience. Considered proof of human empathy (See ‘empathy box’).

Nexus-6 – A more advanced android than seen previously in the world of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?.* Nearly-indistinguishable from biological humans (See ‘androids’).

Perky-pat layouts – Simulated layouts depicting mid-20th century American home life. Used in conjunction with Can-D to achieve an escapist transition into a hallucinatory life within the layout

Precog – An individual with the ability to glimpse into the future. Barney Mayerson (*The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*) is the most notable of these.

Robot – A term derived from old Slavonic, meaning ‘servitude’ or ‘forced labour’.

Simulacra – Simulacra are constructed humanoids that are more rudimentary than androids. While they can pass as human when not under scrutiny, they are not as agentive and are more programmatic in their responses and actions.

Skins – A slang term for currency used in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*.

The Lincoln – A simulacrum of Abraham Lincoln. The second simulacrum constructed in *We Can Build You*.

The Stanton – A simulacrum of Edwin M. Stanton. The first simulacrum constructed in *We Can Build You*.

The tomb world – A concept that occurs throughout several of Dick's novels. A mental place of stagnation and decay.

World War Terminus – A nuclear war that resulted in a prolonged nuclear winter in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. This war is the main reason behind the planetary exodus.

Contents

Chapter 1:

Introduction

> [One's] products would be so many mirrors in which [one would see] reflected our essential nature.
>
> (Karl Marx, 1844)

Philip K. Dick was an American science-fiction author, famous for his often psychedelic and strange novels. The majority of Dick's oeuvre was published between the 1950s and 1980s. As such, he was creatively active at a time of great social change in the United States, as the country shifted from the post-World War Two mentality to the psychedelic haze of the 1960s, through to the paranoia and mistrust of the government that was common in the 1970s and 1980s. Dick's own life was troubled, as he endured family troubles, failed marriages and habitual drug abuse, most notably the amphetamines that he abused in order to maintain his breakneck writing pace. The combination of this habitual drug use and his own identification with the counterculture of the time meant that Dick felt paranoid and targeted by the US government, a belief that was compounded when he suffered a break-in in 1972. This fear and paranoia is something that is carried over into his work, as many of his texts deal with conspiracy, dystopia and the inability to fully define what is real. Dick also saw first-hand the rise of the capitalist American economy as the most powerful in the world, and the impact that this had on the world around him. His attitude towards capitalism is displayed in several of his novels, as he depicts capitalist characters as either robotic and machine-like, or inhuman and reptilian. The work of Philip K. Dick is primarily concerned with the idea of speculative fiction, which involves taking stock of one's current societal

circumstances and extrapolating a potential future from these circumstances. Dick, having artistically cut his teeth among the psychedelic mania of the 1960s and the ensuing disillusionment of the 1970's, was acutely aware of the power of both psychedelic substances and the idea that 'reality' is to a certain extent both finite and subjective. This dissertation, focusing on a selection of three of Dick's most notable works (*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, We Can Build You and The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*) is engaged in a discussion of how Dick displays this ontological uncertainty throughout the selected works, achieved through the use of close readings throughout the three texts. Of particular concern is how Dick uses what this dissertation refers to as 'dark mirrors', which are products and devices used throughout the text that indicate grander and often unpleasant social realities. These products are important to discuss as the contemporary discourse around Dick has not fully explored the products of the capitalist societies of his texts. While theorists like Lampe and Rossi have engaged with the capitalist nature of Dick's societies, one needs to look closer at these societies and what they produce, as this allows a deeper insight into the priorities and values of these societies.

Capitalism and Dystopia

All three texts discussed in this dissertation concern societies that are to a greater or lesser extent dystopian, with capitalism being an element in each text. The pursuit of profit at the expense of all else is seen throughout these texts, and the dystopian consequences of this pursuit are discussed. A dystopia is most easily categorized as a failed utopia, or a society that has the potential to handily solve many (if not all) of its problems but fails to do so. In this instance, the relentless capitalist drive towards ever-increasing profits is one of the main contributors to this failure. The theoretical

framework for these two concepts is derived from Scott Durham's *P.K. Dick: From the Death of the Subject to a Theology of Late Capitalism* and Gregory Claeys' *Dystopia: A Natural History.* Claeys offers a broader discussion around the idea of a dystopia and argues that the increased isolation and solipsism of individuals, along with the dissolution of individual agency and freedoms is a frequent factor in dystopian societies. This is backed up through several historical examples, before being applied to several texts, some of them science fictional. *Dystopia* also offers a critical relation between science-fiction and dystopian writing, which I relate here to the discussion surrounding the products of the texts. Claeys argues that 'for dystopia, the question is not what the science produces, but its negative impact on humanity' and that 'the issue is not whether we imagine ray guns, infinite power sources or space travel. It is whether we use them as instruments of oppression and destruction' (Claeys. 2017: 286). Each of the texts discussed in this dissertation involves technology that can demonstrably increase the quality of life for the society that has created them, as the simulacra, androids, evolutionary therapy, and Can-D have ground-breaking implications for the fabric of any society that produces them. The reality, however, is that these products are used to further capitalist ends – the simulacra are created for financial gain, the androids are glorified slave labour, and Can-D/Chew-Z are tolerated as they make the horrific experience of Martian colonization (typically foisted upon the less financially privileged) more bearable. This exemplifies what we see in Claeys' argument, as the products (examples of advanced technology) themselves allow for a deeper inspection of the social consequences of living under a capitalist system that engenders the creation of such exploitative products.

The use of dystopian elements in Dick's work is not explored to its fullest extent, as comparatively few critics (such as Suvin and Rossi) have fully grappled with it. This

dissertation aims to explore the nature of these dystopian societies in more focused detail through the discussion of the products that these capitalist dystopias produce. This can be seen in the creation of the simulacra and the use of the androids in deep space mining operations, and also the profiteering present in the drug trade in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*. Throughout these texts, the dystopian societies that Dick depicts consistently prioritise financial and social gain over the wellbeing of characters in the texts. De Wet argues that '…through many of his novels…Dick expresses a distaste for the capitalist values of American society by illustrating the multifarious, destructive effects of capitalism on the average citizen' (De Wet, 2020: 1). This is seen in each of the texts discussed in this dissertation, as characters are consistently subordinated to the will of capitalist systems. The emphasis here is also on the 'average' citizen, as the social stratification present in these texts implies that these societies are not necessarily dystopian for the more privileged members of said societies. Booker and Thomas argue that 'there is a fine line between utopia and dystopia, and one person's dream society might be another person's nightmare' (Booker and Thomas, 2009: 70). This can be seen in more financially and socially privileged characters like Leo Bulero and Sam Barrows, who seem to exist in a different world to the less fortunate characters of the texts. While critics such as Evan Lampe have examined the depiction of capitalism in Dick's works, the products depicted in these texts are not fully explored in the current body of critical literature.

This dissertation discusses the use of these products and how they reflect the nature of these worlds as capitalist dystopias. Durham argues, in reference to Dick's writings, that 'Dick emerges as particularly symptomatic of the transformations that American culture has undergone with the emergence of late capitalism' (Durham, 1988: 173). This is seen in his work, as the texts discussed in this dissertation often feature

elements of schizophrenia, paranoia and the consequences of living under such oppressive late capitalist regimes. This is important, as Dick himself suffered from severe paranoia and was convinced that there was a state conspiracy to track and spy on him. As many of his texts were written in the 1960s and 1970s, the period in which he was writing coincides with the rise of conspiracy mania and growing distrust of the federal government in the United States. The products in question, such as the simulacra, the androids and hallucinogenic drugs are referred to in this dissertation as dark mirrors, as they reflect the true nature of these dystopias. What is seen throughout this dissertation is that each of these dystopias is made manifest through the products that they manufacture. The simulacra, the androids, and the drugs/layouts[1] each exemplify the warped values and priorities of the societies that have produced them.

Overview of critical sources

The body of work surrounding Dick's works is expansive and engages with many facets of his novels. Due to the broad nature of this field and the breadth of topics that one can broach when it comes to Dick, this dissertation focuses on using several prominent critics to introduce and corroborate important ideas relevant to each text. Many critics (such as Christopher Sims' *The Dangers of Individualism and the Human Relationship to Technology in Philip K. Dick's "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?")* fixate on Dick's use of technology, or the positioning of androids and simulacra in his texts. While this is important and touched on in this dissertation, I feel that many of these critical works often neglect to discuss the nature of products in the

[1] See 'Perky Pat Layouts' in list of key terms

capitalist worlds of Dick's novels. Some critics, such as Katherine Hayles in *Schizoid Android: Cybernetics and the Mid-Sixties Novels of Philip K. Dick* also grapple with the nature of humanity and what it means to be human. This is an idea that is especially prescient in the overall critical discussion of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, but for the purposes of this dissertation is too far-reaching to fully apply to the nature of the androids as manufactured products that reflect the social realities of the text. This dissertation aims to view the products of the texts (simulacra, androids and drugs for example) in a different light, as the focus is on their social significance and what their existence and treatment implies about the society that has created them.

Other critical sources like Nigel Wheale's *Recognising a 'human-Thing': cyborgs, robots and replicants in Philip K. Dick's "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" and Ridley Scott's "Blade Runner"* focus on the androids and how they are depicted in both the original text and the film adaptation by Ridley Scott. While the relationship between these two works is important and should be discussed, this dissertation seeks to focus more specifically on the human elements in the texts, and how they relate to the manufactured products with which they interact. This can be seen in the discussion of Louis Rosen and his 'relationship' with the simulacrum of Abraham Lincoln and how this is contrasted with his relationship with Pris, who is actually human. This focus on products and what they tell us about the characters and worlds of the text is carried throughout each chapter and can be seen in Deckard's interactions with various androids and Mayerson's experiences with both Can-D and Chew-Z.

This dissertation makes use of several critical sources. Emanuel Carrere's *I Am Alive and You Are Dead: A Journey Inside the Mind of Philip K. Dick* and Lawrence Sutin's *Divine Invasions: A Life of Philip K. Dick* are used throughout for biographical

information on Dick's life and allow the dissertation to relate certain points to the author's own lived experiences. Chief among these is the representation of drugs in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* and the general paranoia and distrust towards authority displayed in *We Can Build You* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?.* Carrere's book focuses on exploring Dick's psyche and worldview and is more concerned with understanding how and why Dick wrote and acted the way that he did, rather than a clinical recounting of the author's life. Carrere details Dick's experiences with drugs like amphetamines and psychedelics, and his association with counterculture movements (like the hippies of the 1960s) throughout his life. Sutin's book is recognized by Dick's family as the official biography and leans more towards a presentation of facts without trying to enter Dick's psyche in quite the same way that Carrere does. Sutin also coins the term 'PhilDickian' in this book, used to describe the general influence that Dick had on the body of science fiction writing as a whole. These sources provide sufficient detail on Dick's own experiences that the dissertation can more confidently relate the presence of these ideas to Dick's own life.

Evan Lampe's *Philip K. Dick and The World We Live In* is used extensively throughout this dissertation. Lampe discusses each of the texts focused on in this dissertation and provides a useful critical basis for further analysis. This book relates Dick's novels to contemporary issues, and underscores how the world of today is in many ways similar to what Dick envisioned in his writings. Lampe discusses the use of police states, mental health complexes, drug abuse and consumerist practices throughout his book. Several ideas used in this dissertation, such as the presence of capitalism and issues surrounding mental health are discussed in detail in Lampe's work. Lampe's approach to Dick allows for a strong theoretical foundation for many of the arguments made throughout the dissertation. This is especially useful in terms of the discussion

surrounding mental health and institutionalisation, as the chapter on *We Can Build You* is concerned with such ideas. Lampe argues that the mental health institution in that text is designed to '…[mitigate] the social damage caused by underemployment' (Lampe, 2015: 203-204). This argument allows for a relation to be drawn between the mental health complex and the consequences of late capitalism, another important idea discussed in that chapter. This paints a clearer picture of the dystopian elements of the society of the text, as mental health institutions are used as buffers to keep unemployment in check.

Lampe's book along with Umberto Rossi's *The Twisted Worlds of Philip K. Dick* is especially useful in the discussion of *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, as they allow for a stronger theoretical background in the discussion of that text. This dissertation seeks to expand on these ideas by focusing more on the products manufactured in these societies, and to discuss how these products reflect and represent certain aspects of these dystopian societies that are not immediately apparent. This focus on manufactured products distinguishes this dissertation from other critical works, as this is an aspect of Dick's work that is not fully fleshed out or explored. Rossi's *The Twisted Worlds of Philip K. Dick* is used throughout the dissertation in the same way that Lampe's work is used, as these two texts provide a framework of existing critical knowledge from which to draw and are used in each chapter. Rossi focuses on the idea of ontological uncertainty in his book, and expresses this focus through a discussion of ideas like finite subjective realities and schizophrenia. This means that Rossi's work is most useful in the discussions of *We Can Build You* and *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, as his focus on the presence of mental health issues and drug abuse allow for a stronger and more confident argument on those topics. While Rossi does not examine the use of products

themselves, his discussion on these topics deepens and strengthens this dissertation's own focus on the devices used in those texts.

This dissertation also benefits from the work of Darko Suvin, whose article *P.K. Dick's opus: Artifice as refuge and world view* helps to flesh out arguments surrounding the mental health complex that the characters in *We Can Build You* must grapple with. Suvin also helps to flesh out and categorise Dick's body of work, as he breaks it into three categories. These categories range from 1952-62, 1962-65 and 1966-74. Suvin argues that the period between 1962-65 is when Dick is at his most creatively potent, and the periods before and after are periods of 'apprenticeship' and 'falling off', respectively. This period of 'falling off' is where Suvin remarks that Dick's work is beset by a 'creative sterility', arguably due to his growing social problems and paranoia around the United States government. In this vein, Suvin argues that Dick's work is 'intimately influenced by and participating in the great processes of the American collective or social psychology in these last 20 years' (Suvin, 1975: 8). This is seen in the elements of paranoia, schizophrenia and ontological uncertainty (as Rossi refers to it) that are prevalent throughout the texts discussed in this dissertation. This is especially important to keep in mind since Dick lived through the growth of modern American capitalism, and consistently aligned himself with the counterculture of his time. This sympathy for the counterculture is seen in his writing, as many of his characters (such as Rosen, Deckard, and Mayerson) find themselves estranged as a result of the society in which they live, not unlike many Americans of Dick's time that were unable to adapt to the rapidly shifting American zeitgeist. This article is especially useful when discussing the character of Palmer Eldritch in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, as Suvin introduces the idea of Eldritch as a late-capitalist demiurge. This idea is important in the discussion of Eldritch, as this dissertation's focus on

products manufactured in capitalist dystopias benefits from a more nuanced understanding of this character, and what he represents.

The chapter on *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* makes use of several critics to strengthen the arguments made in the chapter. Three critics are used in conjunction with one another to form the main theoretical framework of the chapter. These critics are Jill Galvan, Ursula Heise and Tony Vinci. Since these critics deal with similar subject matters, the chapter makes of each one of the three when discussing the particular critical niche that that author fills. Jill Galvan's article *Entering the posthuman collective in Philip K. Dick's Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* helps to establish the existence of an empathy dynamic in the text that exists to create a strong distinction between authentically human and constructed products. Her description of the android figure is crucial to understanding how this society is structured. She states that 'the machine, by declaring its right to live as an autonomous self, challenges the very categories of life and selfhood' (Galvan, 1997: 413). Galvan also argues that 'technology, in the hands of the powers that be, has acquired not simply a life of its own, but a life that substantially infiltrates our lives' (Galvan, 1997: 414). This idea of technology gaining a life of its own is one of the main ideas discussed in this chapter, as the technology in question (androids) reflects the callousness and violence of the society that has manufactured them. This is especially important in this chapter as the main thrust of the narrative concerns the difficulty that characters experience in distinguishing between human and product (the electric animals and the androids). The use of animals to draw a distinction between human and android is expanded upon by Ursula Heise, in her article *The Android and The Animal*. Heise's argument that animals are used as repositories for human empathy and as markers of true humanity is integral to the discussion of the text, as most 'animals' in the world of the

text are electronic and manufactured products created by corporations. Heise argues that ‘in the novel authentic humanness… is associated with biophilia’ (Heise, 2009: 506). This biophilia and the way in which it is used as a marker of one’s authentic humanity is important, as many animals are electronic and manufactured by corporations, thus reflecting the role that products play in maintaining this dystopian social hierarchy.

Tony Vinci’s *Posthuman wounds: Trauma, non-anthropocentric vulnerability, and the human/android/ animal dynamic in Philip K. Dick’s Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* also focuses on the relationship between humans, animals and androids. Vinci makes the argument that biological and electronic animals are used in the text as a means of reifying human superiority over the androids, as humans are capable of feeling empathy for animals whereas androids are not. This article provides a more detailed critical breakdown of the social stratification present in the world of the text, as Vinci argues that ‘in order to keep the myth of human exceptionalism alive, androids must remain culturally and ontologically marginalised’ (Vinci, 2014: 93). He goes on to argue that animals are then ‘positioned as the android’s opposite: [they become] the transcendental marker of humanity’s unique ability to feel for or with each other’ (Vinci, 2014: 93). This is an important point to make, as many ‘animals’ in the text are mass-produced electronic stand-ins for authentic animals. As such, humans in the text make use of products to affirm their essential humanity over other manufactured products that resemble humans, thus highlighting the use of capitalist goods in the text as mirrors that reflect the general disintegration of society.

Breakdown of chapters

The chapters on *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and *We Can Build You* extensively discuss the use of artificial humanoids, known as androids or simulacra in their respective texts, with the aim of demonstrating how these devices illuminate deeper-set social ills. While there is a real temptation to lavish most of the focus on these constructed humanoid figures, as they represent the most immediately apparent and obvious examples of these ‘dark mirrors’, one would be remiss not to mention several important secondary analyses present in both chapters.

The post-nuclear-war society of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?,* for example, is one fixated on the idea of a firm boundary between real human beings and androids. This boundary is reinforced by a warped and twisted sense of ‘empathy’ towards animals that distinguishes human from android, as androids are incapable of feeling empathy towards animals. Most animals in this text have been rendered extinct by the nuclear fallout rendering large tracts of the planet uninhabitable. The analysis of *We Can Build You* also focuses on the mental health crisis plaguing the society of the text, as the state exercises the right to intern individuals that fail to achieve a certain (arbitrary) level of mental stability. This results in a substantial portion of the population having had some degree of experience with the mental institutions of the text, such as the character of Pris Frauenzimmer and later Louis Rosen. *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* engages to a certain degree with the idea of mental health through the use of Doctor Smile, an automated portable psychologist, but focuses most keenly on the idea of drug abuse as an escapism from the harsh realities of late-stage capitalism. The characters in the text make use of two mind-altering substances, Can-D and later Chew-Z, with the intention of temporarily escaping the harshness of the Martian

surface, to which they have been relocated as drafted colonists for the purposes of inter-planetary colonization in the face of rapidly increasing global temperatures on Earth. These drugs are the reflectors in this text, as their use and the consequences thereof illuminates the social reality of the text.

Born in 1928, many of Dick's most famous literary works were written in the psychedelic haze of 1960s America. Dick's own experiences with recreational drug use (most notably LSD, or 'acid') are recounted in Emmanuel Carrère's *I Am Alive and You Are Dead: A Journey Inside The Mind of Philip K. Dick*. Carrère remarks of Dick's first LSD experience that it 'didn't go well for him' (Carrère, 2005: 126). Dick reportedly claimed that 'he had been in hell…and it had taken him two thousand years to crawl out' (Carrère, 2005: 127). Instead of a spiritual communion with the true beauty of the world around him, as many users of the drug report, Dick encountered 'the nightmare world of his novels', a place not dissimilar to the psychedelic entrapment practiced, as we shall see, by Palmer Eldritch in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*. This experience, one can argue, had an effect on Dick's own perspective and is an ordeal that shines through in his work. The concept of 'kipple' or entropic decay is representative of the kind of mind that Dick believed he had. Carrère states that Dick 'concluded that there were but two kinds of minds: those for whom the reality of reality is light, life and joy and those for whom it is death, entombment [reminiscent of Dick's own conception of the 'tomb world'] and chaos' (Carrère, 2005: 127). This vague and persistent sense of despair permeates his novels. This is seen in the ineffective and authoritarian nature of mental health treatment in *We Can Build You,* the cynical euthanasia of the androids and the ever-presence of 'kipple' in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and, aptly, the confused and subjective nature of experienced reality in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*. The idea of an inscrutable reality that

escapes any attempt at understanding is one that runs throughout many of Dick's works. This is seen most pertinently in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*. While Dick's engagement with psychedelic drugs like LSD certainly influenced this, it must be noted that many of his novels were written under the influence of heavy amphetamines, before he had begun experimenting with LSD. This is corroborated by Dick's statement in a 1977 interview that '…*Palmer Eldritch* I wrote without ever having seen psychedelic drugs' (Dick, 1977). Dick himself states, in the same interview, that 'I'd like to be able to say that I could have done it without the amphetamines, but I'm not sure I could have' (Dick, 1977). As such, while the temptation to ascribe Dick's psychedelic writing style to LSD is powerful, it simply does not align with the fact that, by Dick's own admission, amphetamines were the oil that lubricated his creative engine. This amphetamine addiction had a profound effect on his mental state, as Dick recalls a day included in Lawrence Sutin's biography, *Divine Invasions: A Life of Philip K. Dick* wherein he '…looked up in the sky and saw a face… it was not a human face; it was a vast visage of perfect evil… it was immense; it filled a quarter of the sky. It had empty slots for eyes – it was metal and cruel and, worst of all, it was God' (Sutin, 1989: 127). This vast, mechanical face in the sky is emblematic of Dick's mental struggles because of his drug abuse and bears a striking resemblance to the character of Palmer Eldritch, in that it is vast, unknowable, distinctly evil and reminiscent of a demiurge: a false god that obscures and obfuscates instead of illuminating and uplifting.

The first chapter, based on *We Can Build You*, revolves primarily around the discussion of mental health and the treatment of the simulacra, artificial humanoids (these being Abraham Lincoln and Edwin Stanton) created initially for the purpose of re-enacting famous battles of the American Civil War and later for the purpose of

making lunar colonization more palatable. *We Can Build You* is a text that walks a line between the mores of conventional science-fiction and the more psychological lens that Dick would later become known for. This idea is corroborated by Umberto Rossi in *The Twisted Worlds of Philip K. Dick*, who argues that *We Can Build You* '…must be a hybrid, a text which mixes some sfnal ['science-fictional'] elements with the characterization, the more careful plotting and the stylistic quality of the realistic works…' (Rossi, 2011: 146). The society of *We Can Build You* is one where a substantial portion of the population has been identified as a possible mental health hazard and as such has spent some time in a mental institution. This idea of mental health as an industry is one of the most prominent topics of the text, as the schizophrenic Pris Frauenzimmer (the creative force behind the construction of the simulacra) has spent much of her life in these institutions and struggles to adjust to life outside their walls. From what is known, Dick himself was very familiar with the power of mental health institutions, as he had had one of his wives (Anne Dick, neé Rubenstein) committed to a psychiatric ward over the course of their troubled marriage (Streitfield, 2017). This is corroborated by Lawrence Sutin in *Divine Invasions: A Life of Philip K. Dick,* wherein he states that Dick's reaction to his wife's time in the mental ward was to remark that '…he [Dick] is the mentally ill partner and should be hospitalised. He feels he may be schizophrenic' (Sutin, 1989, 124).

The main character, Louis Rosen, also struggles with his own institutionalization after he suffers a mental break towards the end of the novel, due to his obsession with Pris. Indeed, both Rosen *and* Pris exhibit schizoid personality traits and Rosen consistently refers to Pris as inhuman and otherworldly. He thinks to himself, as he realizes that he has fallen in love with her, that she is '…a woman with eyes of ice, a calculating, ambitious schizoid type…What a woman, what a *thing* to fall in love with' (Dick, 1972:

157). One of the more prominent comparisons in the text is the comparison of Pris to the simulacra that she helps to construct. In many ways, these simulacra are *more* humane and warmer than their biologically human creator, especially in the case of the simulacrum of Abraham Lincoln. This same inhumanity is something that is observed by Rosen in the character of Sam Barrows, a billionaire that they approach to help with funding for the construction of the simulacra. Barrows can be seen as representative of the capitalist forces at work in the text. The philosophy of austerity and hard work that Barrows represents can be seen as indicative of what Gayle Porter refers to in *Work Ethic and Ethical Work: Distortions in the American Dream* as 'A primary underpinning… [of] the message that hard work will be rewarded' (Porter, 2010: 541). Barrows seems to become, in this text, more of a representative of capitalist ideology than authentic human being, as his mental state is never explored in as much detail as Pris and Rosen. As such, *We Can Build You* is an excellent introduction to the other two texts, as it establishes Dick and his work as capable of approaching more cerebral societal issues (mental health as an industry and the consequences of late capitalism), while simultaneously using traditional conventions of speculative fiction to frame these problems.

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? is perhaps Dick's most famous work and continues many of the thematic concerns raised in *We Can Build You*. In a world ravaged by nuclear fallout, the character of Rick Deckard is tasked with hunting down a group of escaped Nexus-6 androids who are primarily used for mining expeditions in the void of space. The way that these androids are treated and what that reflects about the society of the text is one of the larger concerns discussed in the chapter on this book. Deckard is the main focaliser through which the narrative is perceived, as his hunt for the escaped androids is the driving force behind the events that occur. As

a character, he is discussed for one main reason as throughout the narrative, he becomes gradually more understanding towards the androids and begins to doubt the necessity or virtue of his occupation. This virtuous nature is hinted at when Resch, another bounty hunter that Deckard briefly works alongside, states that '…we stand between the Nexus-6 and mankind, a barrier which keeps the two distinct' (Dick, 1968: 91). Deckard's growing understanding of the plight of the androids is a key element in humanist thinking, as he is forced to recognize something intangibly and inexplicably human in the constructed, robotic 'other'. This recognition of perceived humanity is present in other texts (most notably *We Can Build You*), but what makes it worth discussing in this novel is the fact that Deckard may well have good reason to suspect that the androids are something more than machine.

These androids possess a greater degree of autonomy, self-actualization and will to live than the simulacra seen in *We Can Build You*. Their escape to Earth is a good example of this agentive action. Deckard thinks to himself that '…androids equipped with the new Nexus-6 brain unit had from a sort of rough, pragmatic, no-nonsense standpoint evolved beyond a major-but inferior-segment of mankind' (Dick, 1968: 18). It is through Deckard that these androids are perceived and through the androids and their actions that we perceive characters like Deckard and Isidore. This use of the androids as 'dark mirrors' is one of the primary argumentative thrusts of the chapter. The treatment and perception of the remaining non-human animals in this post-apocalyptic world is also crucial in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, as it forms the basis for the 'Voigt-Kampff' test, a series of questions aimed at determining one's capacity for empathy for animals. If one is not sufficiently empathic to the suffering of animals, then one is not 'human'. Jill Galvan reinforces this argument, by stating that 'The Voigt-Kampff scale refers in large part to incidents of animal mistreatment

because live animals, in a post-nuclear era which finds them scarce, have been fetishized as the repositories for human empathy' (Galvan, 1997: 415).

Of particular importance is the idea that humanity in the world of the text uses animals and their own ability to empathise with them as a way of affirming a 'unique' sense of humanity. This is corroborated by Tony Vinci in *Posthuman Wounds*, wherein he states that 'To offset this ideological sleight of hand [positioning the androids as empathically excluded 'others'], the animal must be positioned as the android's opposite: it becomes the transcendental marker of humanity's unique ability to feel for or with each other' (Vinci, 2014: 93). Vinci continues and argues that '…the animal and the android become part of an ideological dialectic that defers traumatic experience by reifying the essential human as superior to the android (who cannot empathize) and empathetic towards the animal (whose vulnerability necessitates human care)' (Vinci, 2014: 93). As such, this relationship with animals is one that is discussed in detail, as it relates to characters throughout the text.

Also of note is the character of John Isidore, a man who lives a solitary existence as a 'special': someone deemed unfit for interstellar colonization due to his failure to pass an I.Q. test. This status also prevents him from being allowed to marry or reproduce. While Isidore does occupy this socially undesirable position, he remains an intensely empathic and compassionate character, giving shelter to the runaway androids and exhibiting a great deal of empathy for fallen animals and other humans. While sheltering the androids, Isidore is consistently berated and abused, with the situation rapidly devolving into a hostage scenario. Despite this, he continues to attempt to relate to and empathise with, the escaped androids, often to his own detriment. Isidore's status as a socially undesirable individual and his continued (if inadvertent)

adherence to humanist principles such as empathy and understanding for the 'other' is discussed at great lengths throughout this chapter, as he is one of the clearest examples of empathic thinking in the text.

The practice of Mercerism, a shared communal experience that can be accessed through placing one's hands on what is known as an 'empathy box', is also crucial due to how it sheds light on the interrelationships between people (and crucially, the androids who are excluded from this system). This mentally transports the individual into the body of a man known as Mercer, who is perpetually pelted with stones as he climbs a steep hill. This Sisyphean experience is shared with all those who are currently touching their own empathy boxes, allowing it to be seen as a truly unifying experience, as emotions are shared and amplified through the use of the empathy box. The use of these empathy boxes and the practice of Mercerism is one of the 'dark mirrors' that Dick uses throughout these texts to highlight otherwise hidden and often unpleasant social realities. The society of the text is so deeply fragmented and isolated that the only true method of 'connection' for many of the remaining humans on Earth is through these boxes and the practice of Mercerism. It is very telling, then, that the androids are unable to use these boxes. For the androids to be unable to engage with these boxes and the practice of Mercerism as a whole is another example of how they are excluded by the state from the dynamic of empathy present within the text.

The final chapter of the dissertation focuses on *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, a text that focuses heavily on the ideas of drug abuse, mental health and subjective reality to highlight the dystopian nature of the society in the text. While both *We Can Build You* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* follow the creation and consequences of artificial, constructed humanoids and their position as reflections of

darker social realities, *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* does not make use of these constructed humanoids, but continues in the same vein as the other texts by having other devices, such as drugs, climate catastrophe and rampant late-stage capitalism function as reflectors of less immediately obvious social truths in the world of the text. Following the characters of Barney Mayerson and Leo Bulero, *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* focuses on the use and proliferation of two separate but similar types of hallucinatory drugs, Can-D and Chew-Z. The world of the text, much like *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and to a lesser extent *We Can Build You,* is an unpleasant one, ravaged by global warming and '…too hot for human endurance' without special technological interventions (Dick, 1964: 6). Due to this climate apocalypse, many humans are forced to emigrate to Mars to live squalid and arduous lives as Martian colonists. In order to cope with the crushing isolation and suffering induced by this planetary migration, along with the deeply ingrained social inequality present in the society of the text, the colonists use a drug known as Can-D which allows them to 'translate' into a hallucinatory world created with the aid of 'Perky-Pat layouts', hallucinatory aids that assist them in mentally recreating an idealized version of American life in the mid-20th century. Both Mayerson and Bulero are involved in the production and marketing of these layouts. Their business is however shortly interrupted by the arrival of Palmer Eldritch and his competing drug (Chew-Z).

Eldritch is one of the more bizarre figures in Dick's library of work – a man with artificial eyes, steel teeth and a prosthetic arm, recently returned from the Prox system. Eldritch brings with him Chew-Z, a more potent and powerful alternative to Can-D that seems to grant Eldritch godlike powers over those caught within his thrall as Chew-Z traps its users in a finite subjective reality, where Eldritch is in complete control. Eldritch can be seen as a great corrupting force, as he uses Chew-Z to isolate and trap its users in

a stagnant world of decay. The idea of late capitalism and how Eldritch is emblematic of that system is discussed at length in this chapter. Darko Suvin, in *P.K. Dick's Opus: Artifice as Refuge and World View,* relates Eldritch to the idea of late capitalism in the text, as 'The Palmer Eldritch type of super-corporative capitalism is in fact a new religion, stronger and more pervasive than the classical transcendental ones, because 'God promises eternal life. We [Chew-Z manufacturers] can deliver it'.' Suvin goes on to argue that while Eldritch does occupy the position of figurehead of a new corporatized religion, '…What [this religion] delivers, though, is not only a new thing under the Sun but also false, activating the bestial or alien inhumanity within man' (Suvin 1975: 14).

Chapter 2:

We Can Build You

> We live in a society where detachment is almost essential.
>
> (Philip K. Dick, *We Can Build You*)

Philip K. Dick's *We Can Build You* (1972) serves as a precursor text to *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and primarily revolves around the characters of Louis Rosen and Pris Frauenzimmer, as the company that Rosen works at attempts to strike a deal involving the creation of simulacra (artificial humanoid machines) with the archetypal capitalist Sam Barrows. This chapter focuses primarily on Rosen and Pris and their position in the society of the text as 'dark mirrors' that reflect often uncomfortable social truths. A major focus of this chapter is the use of products in the text, as the simulacra are manufactured products of this capitalist society. As such, they reflect social realities that are otherwise not immediately apparent. This is crucial to this chapter, as the simulacra are created for the purpose of serving capitalist interests, and their treatment throughout the text will be discussed as reflective of the society in which they are created. Other, more minor characters, such as Barrows and Rosen's own family are also discussed, as they present realities that need to be confronted. One of the most prevalent of these is the overwhelming presence of capitalist ideology in the text, from the stereotypical venture capitalist Barrows to the creation of technology that has the potential to alter the foundation of what it means to be human and the use of this technology to further capitalist agendas, such as the colonization and subsequent real-estate development of the moon. Also of note in this chapter is the focus on mental health in such a capitalist society, as the character of Louis Rosen begins to suffer

from a deteriorating mental state and is hospitalized as a result. The nature of his treatment will be discussed at length, as the mental health industry in this text is another product of a society that reflects uncomfortable social truths. In this case, the commodification and industrialisation of mental health treatment.

These simulacra are of Abraham Lincoln and Edwin Stanton and are remarkably lifelike, sometimes to the extent that characters do not initially realise that they are constructed humanoids. These simulacra can be directly compared to *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep'*s androids, as there are numerous similarities and connections between the texts, but it must be noted that while these simulacra are remarkably advanced, they remain constructed, artificial beings, with little agency beyond what their historical originals would have done, or rather what their programmers *believe* their historical originals would have done. While the androids of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* can be seen as agentive if flawed beings, these simulacra are incapable of reaching beyond their namesakes and grasping a distinct sense of self. Nevertheless, these constructed beings are important due to what they reveal about the characters and the society around them, through their interactions with said characters.

Of special importance for the contextual grounding of this chapter is the American movement against psychiatric practices that began to emerge in the 1960s, around the time that Dick would have been writing the novel. As argued by Rob Whitley in *The Antipsychiatry Movement: Dead, Diminishing, or Developing?*, 'the term 'antipsychiatry' originated in the 1960s to describe a broad-based movement that questioned the legitimacy of standard psychiatric theory and practice' (Whitley, 2012). This movement was 'motivated by anger at the perceived arbitrariness of psychiatric

diagnostic practice as well as outrage at the apparent inhumanity of certain treatments, such as electroconvulsive therapy and long-term involuntary hospitalization' (Whitley, 2012). The ideas of inhumane treatment, arbitrary diagnoses and involuntary hospitalization are crucial to this analysis, as the characters of Louis Rosen and Pris Frauenzimmer are both at the mercy of the state due to their psychiatric diagnoses and are unable to leave or agentively participate in their own treatment in a manner that they choose. There are clear parallels drawn between the ideologies of this movement and Dick's own paranoia and fear of the government. This paranoia would only have been compounded by the aura of conspiracy surrounding the American government's experimentation with drugs like LSD as a form of mind-control, which was later termed 'MK Ultra' (Fore, 2018: 27-33). While some of the experiments have only recently been made more publicly knowable, there remained even in the 1960s an atmosphere of distrust towards the American government that Dick certainly shared. Fore argues that this program '…involved children, unknowing individuals and many others who did not give consent to participate' (Fore, 2018: 30). This governmental overreach into the lives of private citizens is something that Dick would have been strongly against, as it exemplifies a schism between citizen and governing body that negates any sense of autonomy. This is something that can be seen in *We Can Build You* with the time that Louis Rosen spends involuntarily at mental institutions.

Products as dark mirrors

One of the most crucial aspects of *We Can Build You* that establishes it as worthy of analysis is the fact that it blends two of the more common characteristics of Dickian writing: the exploration of scientific advancements and their social impacts and the psychological abnormality or malaise of the text's characters. Darko Suvin argues in *P.K. Dick's Opus: Artifice as Refuge and World View* that '…the erstwhile characteristic Dickian theme of the simulacrum Lincoln is left to fizzle out in favour of the Jungian [more psychoanalytical and mental health-oriented] theme of Pris…' (Suvin, 1975: 20). This idea is corroborated by Umberto Rossi in *The Twisted Worlds of Philip K. Dick*, who argues that *We Can Build You* '…must be a hybrid, a text which mixes some sfnal ['science-fictional'] elements with the characterization, the more careful plotting and the stylistic quality of the realistic works…' (Rossi, 2011: 146). As such, this analysis focuses primarily on a discussion of the characters of Louis Rosen and Pris Frauenzimmer and their supporting characters. The ideas of the societal impacts of technological advancement and the mental unease that afflicts the characters is also expanded upon here and related to the argument that Dick consistently employs characters, objects and devices as 'dark mirrors' with the intention of reflecting uncomfortable social realities.

The discussion of Louis Rosen in this text is two-pronged. Firstly, Rosen's interactions with the capitalist machinations of characters like Barrows and their implications for the simulacra and the underlying social critique of said interactions is discussed. The text does, however, shift into a heavier focus on the psychological aspects of Rosen's life, following his psychotic episode wherein he becomes obsessed with Pris and desires to murder Barrows. Louis Rosen works with his family and business associate

Maury Rock, building and selling organs and spinets. Rosen is initially hesitant in the face of change and opportunity and prefers to focus on the construction of their original products. However, Maury and his daughter Pris begin the process of constructing artificial humanoids referred to as simulacra that they attempt to sell to the billionaire capitalist and lunar expansionist Samuel K. Barrows. Pris has been subjected to and recently released from, a state-run psychiatric facility due to a '-…dynamism of difficulty-' (Dick, 1972: 26) picked up by the routinely administered psychological evaluations. Rosen finds her snipping tiles and constructing a mosaic in the bathroom, an early indicator of Pris's predilection for creative work. This predisposition towards creativity is unexpected, as Pris is frequently depicted as a harsh, sometimes inhuman figure. This can be seen when Rosen states that:

> '…she still did not look normal or natural to me… the whole colour scheme [of her makeup] made her appear unreal and doll-like, lost somewhere back behind the mask which she had created out of her face… she looked to me like a dance of death creation animated in some weird way… she looked less normal than the Stanton' (Dick, 1972: 27).

The final description of Pris looking less normal than the Stanton is important, as it highlights the fundamental incompatibility of Pris with her environment, as she is incapable of assimilating and seems capable of expressing her humanity only when creating simulacra. This is seen when the Stanton simulacra is mentioned and Pris's '…eyes [burn] with a wild, intense flame…' (Dick, 1972: 28).

This same interaction with Pris serves as an introduction for the primary antagonist of the text, Sam K. Barrows. Barrows can be seen as representative of the capitalist forces at work in the text. Pris states that '…when he was twenty, he always rose at

five A.M., had a bowl of stewed prunes, ran two miles around the streets of Seattle, then returned to his room to shave and take a cold shower. And then he went off and studied his law books' (Dick, 1972: 30). Barrows is no doubt someone that Dick would have seen in a negative light, were he to meet someone like that in his own life. Carrère remarks in his biography of Dick that '…Phil found himself in a world of kids, a world neatly divided between 'freaks' (us) and 'straights' (them)' Carrère. 2005:175). Dick's positioning of himself as part of the counterculture of the time (while not necessarily concurrent with the writing of *We Can Build You*) can arguably be seen in his view of Barrows as something near-inhuman; a capitalist machine solely focused on monetary growth and productivity. This ethos of austerity and hard work can be seen as indicative of what Gayle Porter refers to in *Work Ethic and Ethical Work: Distortions in the American Dream* as 'A primary underpinning… [of] the message that hard work will be rewarded' (Porter, 2010: 541). Barrows seems to become, in this text, more of a construct of capitalist ideology than authentic human being. Rosen describes his eyes as '…expressionless, tiny. No emotion there…' (Dick, 1972: 30). This idea of humanity being stripped or, in the case of Barrows, perhaps given away under systems of capitalist exploitation is prevalent throughout the text and affects characters like Rosen, Pris and Maury.

In *The Social Content of Science Fiction,* Oscar Shaftel argues that '…a common theme in science-fiction is the conflict between financial interests and altruistic scientists and settlers for control of newly explored planets…' (Press, 1953: 116). In *We Can Build You,* Dick subverts this idea by complicating the dynamic of altruistic scientists and corrupt financial backers. This can be seen in the creation and subsequent marketing of the simulacra to Sam Barrows. Maury in particular is purely interested in the financial gains to be had from such a development and Rosen is wary

and disapproving of the simulacra and their construction. Barrows himself is at first under the impression that their proposition is an altruistic one, as Rosen states when reading a letter from Barrows to Pris that Barrows views their proposal as '…a civic enterprise, a do-gooding patriotic effort along the lines of improving the schools and reclaiming the deserts, not a business proposition…' (Dick, 1972: 35). This is emphatically not the case, as Rosen and Co. are, despite Rosen's misgivings, largely interested in the financial gain that could be had from their creation of the simulacra as Maury indicates that '[They] could be as big as General Dynamics in five years' (Dick, 1972: 18), underscoring the profit motive that drives the group. This serves to further highlight the presence of capitalist ideology throughout the text and can be seen as a mirror to the uncomfortable social reality of the corrupting influence of capitalist motivations. The creation of the simulacra is an immense technological accomplishment with implications for the future of humanity and the main drive behind said creation is profit and an increase in social standing.

The effects of this capitalist dogma are felt prior to the creation of the simulacra as well, as Maury and Rosen's spinet-making enterprise faces significant economic competition from the Hammerstein electronic mood organ, an organ that allows one to trigger or manipulate one's own mood or disposition. Rosen is dismissive of these mood organs, arguing that '…that's not music. That's escape. Who wants it?' (Dick, 1972: 11). This sentiment, coupled with the popularity of these mood organs, inadvertently highlights the fact that the reality of the text is one where escapism is prevalent. This is reinforced when Rosen's partner, Maury, attempts to convince Rosen to '…Convert to something new and useful that mankind can lean on during its painful ascent upward' (Dick, 1972: 12). This indicates that the newly established lunar colonization efforts have had a profound effect on the social climate of the text, as the

characters find themselves living in a time of immense flux and change and must desperately attempt to change themselves in order to keep pace. As a result, the widespread social appeal of mood-altering devices such as the mood organ becomes apparent. This idea of a mood-altering organ also introduces the idea of the human experience as malleable, as negative, or undesirable emotions can be removed and replaced using the organ. Rosen remarks that 'You might – theoretically – even hit on the combination that will put you in the state of nirvana' (Dick, 1972: 10). The idea of attaining a state of enlightenment using a mass-market commodity is indicative of the widespread and pervasive social grasp of often corrosive capitalist ideology. One could certainly not attain a state of nirvana through the rigorous pursuit of enlightenment, but by using the Hammerstein mood organ and *only* the Hammerstein mood organ, the company would surely imply, such a state becomes possible.

Rosen's refusal to consider the possibility of change as Maury would present it, along with his initial distrust of the simulacra, is depicted when Maury first wishes to demonstrate the Stanton simulacra to Rosen. Rosen asks if '…that isn't a Louis Rosen dummy and you're going to knock me off and have it take my place?' (Dick, 1972: 11). This paranoia is important for several reasons, as it foreshadows Rosen's later psychotic episode, but also establishes a commonality of sorts between Rosen and the simulacrum, as the real Edwin M. Stanton, the historical model for the simulacrum, was famously paranoid and accusative. Rossi argues that '…there is a feature of Stanton's personality… that might have appealed to Dick's sensibility: it was characterized by a striking paranoid streak' (Rossi, 2011: 148). This idea of paranoia is present throughout much of *We Can Build You* and this idea of Rosen being replaced by a simulacrum of himself thematically establishes the idea of the androids being near-indistinguishable from humans in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* if

one is to view the texts as inter-related. After activating the Stanton, Rosen remarks to himself that '…If I hadn't seen it spring to life I would believe myself it was just a sour elderly gentleman in old-style clothes and a split white beard, brushing itself off with an attitude of outrage' (Dick, 1972: 13). This remarkable technological advancement is tempered by Maury exclaiming that '[Their] entire economic future and that of America's is involved in this. Ten years from now, [they] could be wealthy, due to this thing, here' (Dick, 1972: 13). The invention of the simulacra is an event of potentially momentous importance, yet Maury's main motivation is the financial gain that can be had from it. This underscores again the inherently capitalist motivations for the creation of the simulacra and establishes the Stanton and Lincoln as two of the aforementioned Dickian devices that serve as dark mirrors to the underlying social realities of the text. In this case, the capitalist propensity for exploitation and profiteering, rather than the human implications of the technology being produced.

Upon returning to the factory where their products are manufactured, Rosen is offended when the Stanton describes it as a 'rather unsavoury and untrustworthy' place (Dick, 1972: 14). He remarks that '…It made me angry to hear a mere fake criticizing genuine humans, especially a fine person like my dad' (Dick, 1972: 14). Rosen establishes here the binary between 'real', authentic humans and what he views, initially, as 'mere fakes'. This hierarchy of humanness is ironic, as Rosen immediately begins to explain how his brother, Chester, is classed as a 'special birth' person. He states that Chester's '…eyes are set beneath his nose and his mouth is up where his eyes ought to be' (Dick, 1972: 14). He continues by attributing Chester's deformities to '…H-bomb testing in the fifties and sixties' and elaborates that '…there is so much discrimination and prejudice in so many fields… most professions of high social status are closed to them [those suffering from birth defects]' (Dick, 1972: 14).

The irony in Rosen referring to the Stanton as a ‘mere fake’ in comparison to ‘genuine’ humans is felt keenly here, as Rosen is perpetuating a similar prejudice that his brother Chester faces. Due to an inherent inability to conform to a set definition of ‘human’, both the simulacra and special birth persons face discrimination, exclusion and prejudice. While it must be noted that the simulacra of this text are not truly capable of agentive decision-making beyond their initial programming and as such cannot be viewed in the same light as the androids in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, this treatment still serves to underscore the reality of a hierarchical definition of humanness and societal worth in *We Can Build You*.

Rosen and Maury return to Rosen’s home, where Maury states that he wishes to introduce the Stanton to Rosen’s father Jerome, with the intention of proving the point that the simulacra are indistinguishable from ‘genuine’ humans. Jerome is initially fooled by the Stanton and when told about its nature as a constructed humanoid, he indignantly responds by stating that ‘…man is a frail reed, the most feeble thing in nature, but… a thinking reed’ and that human nobility stems from the fact that ‘…he knows that he dies’ (Dick, 1972: 16). He concludes by stating that the Stanton is no mere ‘thing’, but *ein mensch* (a man). This outburst establishes Jerome as a character who believes that there is inherent worth in being human, due to the agentive nature of human existence and the act of self-awareness and acknowledgement of one’s own mortality. This belief is, naturally, shaken when Maury ‘…[reaches] down and fiddles with [the Stanton] behind the ear’ (Dick, 1972: 17). The Stanton then ‘…became rigid, as lifeless as a window-store dummy; the light in its eyes expired, its arms paused and stiffened’ (Dick, 1972: 17). This sudden extinguishing of what awareness the Stanton has, has a profound effect on the onlookers, as Rosen describes its switching off as ‘graphic’ and states that ‘…we all became solemn’ (Dick, 1972: 17). In light of Jerome’s

earlier assertions, this can be seen as especially harrowing, as the Stanton is turned on and off without any sense of agentive control over these ‘deaths’ to which he is subjected.

While the simulacra cannot be considered agentive or capable of true self-expression beyond their initial programming, the treatment of the Stanton here reinforces the fact that these constructs are continually subalternated throughout the text, both for profit and to make a point. This is seen when Maury deactivates the Stanton in order to prove to Jerome that it is a construct. This treatment mirrors the social and moral degradation that exists under the capitalist economic systems that the characters in the text are subject to. This can be seen when Maury, seemingly unable or unwilling to grasp the ethical concerns inherent to the construction of the simulacra, states that ‘It’s as good as if Stanton had been alive here tonight… what a sales idea that is…’ (Dick, 1972: 18). He continues to outline his initial plan for the simulacra, that being a recreation of the American Civil War wherein the ‘…made-to-order simulacra [are] blown to bits’ (Dick, 1972: 18). This idea, while impressive in its scope, seems to disquiet Jerome, who argues that they ‘…must take care not to reach too high for maybe [they] will topple’ (Dick, 1972: 18). This hesitation on the part of Jerome can be seen as representative of what Rossi argues in relation to the title of the text: ‘…it is something that humans might tell simulacra: ‘we can build you, hence you are not authentic: you are artifacts, manufactured devices, products’’ (Rossi, 2011: 148). Maury’s plan very much treats these simulacra as products, a means to an end wherein they will be continually ‘blown to bits’ in service to the capitalist desire for the acquisition of wealth and status.

Pris and Barrows

Shortly after this interaction, Rosen is reintroduced to Maury's daughter Pris Frauenzimmer, who has recently returned from '…the custody of the Federal Bureau of Mental Health' (Dick, 1972: 20), where she had been since her third year of high school, due to her schizophrenic condition. Pris serves as the introduction to the novel's conception of mental health and psychosis and her relation to both Rosen and the simulacra is crucial. She is described, from Rosen's perspective, as someone who appears 'unreal' and 'doll-like'. He argues that she '…[does] not look normal or natural…' and remarks that she '…[looks] to me like a dance of death creation animated in some weird way…she looked less normal than the Stanton' (Dick, 1972: 21). This dehumanization of Pris is a running theme throughout the novel, as she is consistently portrayed as inhuman, due to her mental illness causing her to continually fail in her attempts at social integration. She is identified here as less than human, as unnatural and unusual for her inability or unwillingness to behave in a way that Rosen can understand or approve of. Evan Lampe, in *Philip K. Dick and the World We Live in* argues that, in Dick's work, '…the most creative people [are] the most prone to mental illness' (Lampe, 2015: 205), a statement that proves accurate in this case due to the fact that Pris is the driving creative force behind the construction of the simulacra. Indeed, she becomes most animated when they are being discussed, as seen when the Stanton is brought up in conversation and 'her eyes [burn] with a wild, intense flame' that '…both [startles and impresses]' Louis (Dick, 1972: 21). Also present in this chapter is Pris's mythologizing of Sam K. Barrows, the archetypal capitalist who later expresses an interest in the simulacra. He is depicted on the cover of a magazine that Pris owns as '…jogging up one of the waterfront streets of

downtown Seattle… his eyes like the dots stuck in a snowman's face: expressionless, tiny. No emotion there; only the lower half of the face seemed to be grinning' (Dick, 1972: 23).

This initial depiction of Barrows as emotionless and, in a sense, robotic can also be applied to Pris. This fact is not lost on Rosen, who describes the two as '…birds of a feather, or rather lizards of a scale' (Dick, 1972: 26). He also finds it remarkable that Pris created the 'almost likeable electronic simulacrum, as if on some subconscious level she was aware of the massive deficiency in herself, the emptiness dead centre and was busy compensating for it' (Dick, 1972: 26). He also indicates that '…Once [Pris] had cared about animals. And then… she had suddenly gotten so she couldn't stand a dog or a cat' (Dick, 1972: 28). This is a noteworthy reminder of how Dick often uses animals as markers or repositories of empathy. In *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, empathy for animals is used as a confirmation that one is authentically human. Through this, it becomes apparent that the simulacra are perhaps indicative of some form of social malaise, as Rosen pontificates that their very creation is an attempt by Pris to remedy some form of social or mental malaise that she is experiencing. This reinforces Lampe's argument that '*We Can Build You* looks at both the institutional and social consequences of the epidemic of mental illness' and that, due to the post-scarcity [2] nature of the society depicted in the text, 'Institutionalization… serves a role in mitigating the social damage caused by underemployment' (Lampe, 2015: 203-204). As such, one can argue that Pris's mental illness and the subsequent attempts by both her and the government to mitigate and control it, highlight the uncomfortable social and mental consequences of a capitalist

[2] This is seen when Louis states that 'The labor market's glutted' (Dick, 1972: 23).

society that is rapidly running out of resources to exploit. Crucially, the motivations of Pris and Maury differ wildly when it comes to the simulacra. Pris seems to, as Rosen says, be looking for some way to remedy her own emotional 'emptiness', while Maury sees the construction of the simulacra as a chance to reverse their financial fortunes and become one of the capitalists that, like Barrows, benefit from the processes of exploitation and expansion.

Rosen's own mental health issues are foreshadowed in his initial consultation with Dr. Horstowski, whom he sees on the recommendation of Pris. He thinks to himself that 'ever since Maury's phone call to Sam Barrows [wherein Maury tries unsuccessfully to sell Barrows on the idea of the simulacra] something had been the matter with me' (Dick, 1972: 40). In his consultation, Rosen loses his patience and tells the doctor that '…[He is] a simulacrum, like the Stanton' and asks if he (the doctor) can '…see how sinister all this is' (Dick, 1972: 43). After he continues in this vein by threatening Pris ('I consider it my sacred task to rub her out'), the doctor responds to Rosen by stating that 'Your real problem… is the hostility you feel…seeking an outlet, toward your partner and this eighteen-year-old girl who has difficulties of her own…' (Dick, 1972: 43). This obsession with Pris and Rosen's undiscovered (for now) mental issues, are both foreshadowed in this discussion with the doctor and are discussed in more detail in the analysis of Rosen's mental breakdown and subsequent stay at a mental health clinic. Dr. Horstowski neatly underscores one of the main social preoccupations of the text (the ongoing mental malaise that characters suffer) when he states that 'We live in a society where detachment is almost essential' (Dick, 1972: 45). This sense of detachment and alienation is represented when Rosen says, shortly before leaving, that '… I was not kidding when I told you I'm one of Pris's simulacra. There used to be a Louis Rosen, but no more. Now there's only me. And if anything happens to me, Pris

and Maury have the instructional tapes to create another' (Dick, 1972: 45). This sense of being 'false' and eminently replaceable can be seen as, perhaps, a reaction to the ongoing capitalist struggle that Rosen finds himself involved in, exacerbated by the existentially troubling presence of the Stanton simulacrum, along with the implications it has for his and Maury's business.

This idea of the simulacra being existentially troubling and, indeed, existentially *troubled* is seen when Rosen returns to the office and seeks out the Stanton. He asks it what it thinks of its current predicament and it responds by stating that '…when I consider the brief span of my life, swallowed up in the eternity before and behind it, the small space that I fill, or even see, engulfed in the infinite immensity of spaces which I know not and which know not me, I am afraid' (Dick, 1972: 48). It is crucial to note that while these crude simulacra are a far cry from the angsty and complex androids of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?,* they remain a technological marvel with ontologically significant implications, and are brought into existence 'to impress Mr Barrows', as Rosen says. The significance of such a technology being created to impress an archetypal venture capitalist with the intention of improving the financial fortunes of its creators is not lost on the reader, as it once again reinforces the treatment of the simulacra as tools, or as means to a financial end. This is made even more apparent when Rosen remarks that the Stanton '[is] more human… than we [are]…only my father stood above it in dignity' and he wonders how Barrows will look, '…when compared, face to face, with the Stanton' (Dick, 1972: 51). This establishes one of the most crucial debates in the novel as to whether or not the simulacra should be treated and considered as human beings. While this dissertation argues that they are not human and are inherently limited by their constructed nature, the eventual

debate between Barrows and the Lincoln is worth discussing in detail, as it illuminates a great many of the social realities to which the simulacra are subject.

The ’birth’ of the Lincoln simulacrum

The ‘birth’ of the Lincoln simulacrum is one of the defining moments of the text. While the Stanton is turned on for the first time before Rosen ever interacts with it, the Lincoln is turned on in full view of Rosen and his associates:

> We were, beyond doubt, watching a living creature being born. It now had begun to take note of us; its eyes, jet black, moved up and down, from side to side, taking us all in, the vision of us. In the eyes no emotion showed, only pure perception of us. Wariness beyond the capacity of man to imagine. The cunning of a life form from beyond the lip of our universe, from another land entirely. A creature plopped into our time and our space, conscious of us and itself, its existence, here; the black, opaque eyes rolled, focusing and yet not focusing, seeing everything and in a sense not picking out any one thing. As if it were primarily in suspension, yet; waiting with such infinite reserve that I could glimpse thereby the dreadful fear it felt, fear so great that it could not be called an emotion. It was fear as absolute existence: the basis of its life. It had become separate, yanked away from some fusion that we could not experience--at least, not now. Maybe once we all had lain quietly in that fusion. For us, the rupturing was long past; for the Lincoln it had just now occurred--was now taking place.
>
> …Some deep skill was imbedded in this thing. Imparted to it by Pris? I doubted it. By Maury? Out of the question. Neither of them did this, nor had Bob Bundy whose idea of a good time was to drive like hell down to Reno to gamble and whore around. They had dropped life into this thing's ear, but it was just a transfer, not an invention; they had passed life on, but it did not originate in any or all of them.

> It was a contagion; they had caught it once and now these materials had contracted it--for a time. And what a transformation. Life is a form which matter takes... I made that up as I watched the Lincoln thing perceive us and itself. It is something which matter does. The most astonishing--the one truly astonishing--form in the universe; the one which, if it did not exist, could never have been predicted or even imagined.
>
> And, as I watched the Lincoln come by degrees to a relationship with what it saw, I understood something: the basis of life is not a greed to exist, not a desire of any kind. It's fear, the fear which I saw here. And not even fear; much worse. Absolute *dread*. Paralyzing dread so great as to produce apathy. Yet the Lincoln stirred, rose out of this. Why? Because it had to.
>
> Movement, action, were implied by the extensiveness of the dread. That state, by its own nature, could not be endured (Dick, 1972: 61-62).

The existential implications of this 'birth' are far-reaching and significant. While, again, it must be stated that the simulacra are not human and are limited by their construction, they are, in Rosen's own estimation, more than mere machines. They are capable, in some way, of transcending the confines of wires and servos, he believes. Rosen refers to this activation of the Lincoln as some sort of birth, or 'rupturing' and argues that Pris and Bundy had 'dropped life into this thing's ear'. The Lincoln, as Rosen perceives it, seems possessed of 'an absolute *dread'* and is compelled to stir and rise out of this state of perceived dread by the nature of its construction. It is not offered a choice, but rather rises 'because it [has] to'. The profit motive behind its creation will not accommodate inaction or stillness. This mirrors the situations of the human characters, who are engaged in an endeavour to create the simulacra not for the sake of technological progress, but for their own financial gain. In the same way that the

Lincoln is compelled to rise, Maury, Rosen and Pris are compelled to find ways to avoid becoming obsolete and make money in an ever-evolving capitalist market dominated by individuals like Barrows who are in Rosen's eyes more akin to predators than humans.

It is important to note that while Louis seems to believe the Lincoln is on some level alive and aware, he still refers to the simulacrum as 'it'. It remains, despite Rosen's initial perceptions of it, inhuman and constructed. Rosen's relationship with the Lincoln simulacrum is discussed in greater detail in this chapter, as he interacts with it throughout the novel and seems to form some connection or bond with it, despite the fact that it is a machine. This 'birth' is an example of ethical and moral boundaries being discarded and overstepped in pursuit of profit and success. This is also seen outside of speculative fiction as evolving fields such as AI and machine learning ignite fears that such boundaries are becoming irrelevant in the pursuit of ever-greater technological progress and financial growth. A recent and ongoing example of this is the idea of AI-created art, wherein an artificial intelligence will use machine learning technology to create a prompted image without the artistic input of a human being, sparking debate about the economic implications of further estranging artists from the market.

Rosen's deteriorating mental state

This activation of the Lincoln simulacrum is important to discuss specifically because of what it reveals about Louis Rosen and his mental state. While the Lincoln and Stanton simulacra are remarkable pieces of technology and some arguments can be made as to their awareness of the world around them and their own agency, they

remain, fundamentally, machines. Rosen, however, seems to view the Lincoln simulacrum differently. He argues, as we saw, that 'life' has been 'dropped… into this thing's ear' and remarks that he sees both 'absolute dread' and 'fear' writ upon the face of the simulacrum. Rosen's mental health is a primary focus of the novel, with his eventual internment and treatment being the sole focus of the narrative beyond a certain point. While he seems lucid and in-control of his faculties for much of the text, it must be noted that we see the events of *We Can Build You* entirely from his narrative perspective and as such the events of the text can be seen as, perhaps, unreliable on account of being relayed by a schizophrenic. Rossi indeed describes him as a '…partly-reliable, partly-unreliable narrator' (Rossi, 2011: 154). As such, the subtle and pervasive horror of the Lincoln's activation may be, in truth, a reflection or mirroring of Rosen's own deteriorating mental state at this point in the narrative. Maury, for instance, does not seem to grasp the existential horror of this event in the same way that Rosen does. He remarks that the Lincoln 'Sure looks at [them] funny' (Dick, 1972: 62) and seems otherwise unperturbed. The Lincoln acts here as a blank canvas, a mirror upon which Rosen's own anxieties and schizophrenia are writ large and reflected back to him and, by extension, the reader.

This instability is revealed by the Lincoln again when Rosen returns to the office after a trip and sees it in a display area, working at his father's desk. Upon approaching it, he refers to it as 'Mr President' and remarks to himself that '[His] going up to it and speaking to it this way put [him] into the fiction' (Dick, 1972: 67). After speaking briefly with the simulacrum, Rosen faints and injures his lip on his father's desk. Upon awakening, he finds that Pris offers to drive him to a doctor and while doing so she remarks that 'There must be a far less stable streak in you than any of us knows about' (Dick, 1972: 69). This foreshadows Rosen's eventual obsessive and schizophrenic

behaviour towards Pris, soon followed by his confinement to a mental health facility. While driving Rosen to the doctor, Pris, too, begins to break down emotionally, remarking that she will '…never touch it [the Lincoln] again' and that she '…[has] no further purpose in life' (Dick, 1972: 69). This loss of purpose can be seen as reflective of the deep emotional maladjustment that naturally comes about under a system of late capitalism as seen in this text. Without a purpose, Pris has no reason to live. She remarks: 'I wish I were a man. Women are cut off from so much… what can a woman be? A housewife or a clerk or a typist or a teacher' (Dick, 1972: 70). Through this interaction, it is made evident that systems of gender-based repression are very much active in the capitalist society of *We Can Build You* and such a revelation is made possible through a series of events with the Lincoln simulacrum as the catalyst.

At a later point in the chapter, Louis and Pris find themselves in a bar having a celebratory drink and Louis tells Pris that he is in love with her or rather, that he *could* be in love with her. Pris responds to this by musing that she '…can't understand women who are always having children…it must be nice to be biological and earthy like that' and that said women '…fulfil themselves through their reproductive system…but [she] could never be that way. [Pris is] never happy unless [she is] doing things with her hands' (Dick, 1972: 73). This is a telling admission from Pris. She indicates that she *does* wish that she could fulfil more of a traditional feminine role through the process of biological reproduction, but that it remains beyond her. She is, in this chapter, a woman whose compulsive need to be productive (brought about perhaps by a combination of her own psyche and the inherent pressures of capital to produce) has removed her from the natural process of birth and child-rearing. She remarks that by giving 'life' to the Stanton and Lincoln, '…[they] empty [themselves]' (Dick, 1972: 74). It should be noted that while the Lincoln simulacrum is not present

for this exchange, its creation serves as the catalysing force for this conversation between Rosen and Pris. As such, it indirectly highlights or reveals social tensions and insecurities suffered by these two characters.

After this exchange, the company receives a phone call from Sam Barrows indicating his interest in the simulacra, after the Stanton travels to Seattle to meet with him. Barrows and his retinue meet the company at the Boise airport and escorts them to his limousine. The idolization of capitalist figures such as Barrows is telling, as it reveals the extent to which the ideals of capitalist social structures are present. Barrows has more money; therefore, Barrows is inherently better. This can be seen when Rosen remarks that '…Barrows differed from the rest of us in that he looked as if he had grown his grey English wool suit the way an animal grows its fur; it was simply part of him, like his nails and his teeth… a long jump from the bottom rung like myself…that's the dregs, people like me…I wish I was rich' (Dick, 1972: 81). This social stratification based on the acquisition of capital and wealth underscores the reality that the world of *We Can Build You* is one that exists in a state of late capitalism, with a glutted labour market and a powerful fixation on personal wealth and social standing. This hearkens back to the prevalence of mental institutionalization, in an effort to, as Lampe puts it, '…[mitigate] the social damage caused by underemployment' (Lampe, 2015: 203-204). This social damage can be seen in Rosen's own sense of inferiority when he compares himself to Barrows. Despite noticing certain flaws in Barrows' appearance, such as the '…puffy wrinkled skin beneath his eyes' (Dick, 1972: 82), Barrows' financial prestige precludes him from being considered in the same light as someone of a lower social class, such as Rosen.

Barrows vs the Lincoln simulacrum

Shortly hereafter, Barrows expresses his discontent with the status of the Lincoln simulacrum and reveals that he views it as little more than a '…familiar mechanical man gimmick' (Dick, 1972: 90). The Lincoln, upon hearing this, responds by enquiring: 'Did I not hear you, a short while ago, express the notion of 'acquiring me', as an asset of some kind?... If so, I would wonder how you could acquire me or anyone else, when Miss Frauenzimmer tells me that there is a stronger impartiality between the races now than ever before', to which Barrows responds that 'That doesn't include mechanical men' (Dick, 1972: 90). Barrows continues, after being asked by the Lincoln what an animal is, by stating that '…an animal has a biological heritage and makeup which you lack. You've got valves and wires and switches…Can a steam engine consider itself entitled to protection under the clause of the Constitution which you quoted? Has it got the right to eat the bread it produces, like a white man?' (Dick, 1972: 91). Barrow's argumentation here is telling, as Rossi argues that his line of thinking '…is the traditional justification of racial discrimination (and slavery): some humans can be treated in a different way (possibly be sold and bought) because they do not qualify as fully human, be they Africans or Jews' (Rossi, 2011: 150).

While the Lincoln simulacrum cannot be viewed as sentient or agentive, it functions here as a mirror to the capitalist exploitation that Barrows represents. Individuals and concepts that are not immediately financially beneficial are decried as '…pure absurdity' (Dick, 1972: 92). The Lincoln also indirectly reveals the inherent inhumanity of late capitalism when it argues that 'The critical thing…is the soul. A machine can do anything a man can…but it doesn't have a soul' to which Barrows responds that 'There is no soul' (Dick, 1972: 92). This deeply rooted cynicism as to the existence of a soul

allows the Lincoln to argue that ‘a machine is the same as an animal…and an animal is the same as a man’ (Dick, 1972: 93), blurring the distinctions between human, animal and machine and cementing the fact that the simulacrum, while not authentically human or sentient, is more than a ‘mechanical man gimmick’. Rossi argues that ‘all this shifts the argument between the Lincoln and Barrows from the realm of noble (or questionable) philosophical and political principles to the prosaic world of business transactions’ (Rossi, 2011: 151), as it becomes evident that Barrows is attempting to degrade the technological value of the simulacrum in order to lower the price that he would potentially have to pay at the conclusion of the transaction. This again reinforces the nature of the simulacra as dark mirrors to the social reality in which they find themselves. While the Lincoln is attempting to discuss the nature of being and human-ness with Barrows, Barrows is attempting to spin the situation for his own financial gain and in so doing becomes representative of the archetypal, soulless capitalist figure.

This placement of Barrows at the heart of the capitalist push towards lunar expansionism is no coincidence, as he outlines his idea of using the simulacra to create ‘families next door’ to Maury and Co. Barrows intends to use these artificial families to make the prospect of lunar colonization more appealing, as he remarks that ‘it’s an environment up there that once you’ve seen it…About ten minutes is enough for most people. I’ve been there. I’m not going again’ (Dick, 1972: 94). Barrows is referring here to the desolate wasteland of the lunar surface, which, coupled with the intense loneliness of being a lunar colonist, disincentivizes most prospective settlers from relocating to the moon. Barrows desires to use the simulacra to, as Rosen puts it, ‘…create an illusion of prosperity. Man, woman and child simulacra in little living rooms, eating phony dinners, going to phony bathrooms…it was horrible. It was a way

of bailing this man out of the troubles he had run into' (Dick, 1972: 94). Rosen touches here upon the inherently self-interested and profit-driven motivations of Barrows. He has no altruistic desire to make the lunar surface more desirable for settlers but seeks instead to protect his investments by falsifying a bustling and lively lunar colony. Rossi argues that 'Barrows is then less a human being than a cold-blooded and unsympathetic predator' (Rossi, 2011: 159). Barrows has been described as such by Rosen before (when referring, for example, to his eyes as '…expressionless, tiny. No emotion there…' (Dick, 1972: 30) and this underscores his inherent inhumanity. This is further compounded by his conversation with the Lincoln simulacrum, wherein he reveals his belief that the soul does not exist.

Ironically, the simulacrum espouses the more humanist ideas in said exchange, as it argues that the soul is inherent to humanity and is indeed what defines an individual as human. Rossi touches on this idea when he argues that 'Being made of flesh and blood or wiring and tubes is ultimately unimportant; it is what characters do, strive to do, or do not do which is really relevant' (Rossi, 2011: 159). While the Lincoln cannot be seen as authentically human, it is remarkably telling that its actions and beliefs are more noble and humane than those of Barrows, a biological human. Barrows, in this instance, assumes the role of the cold-blooded, capitalist predator, seeking only to protect his investments and generate new revenue, instead of seeking to further the cause of the human race through expansion into space. In his 1976 essay, *Man android and Machine* (to which Rossi also makes explicit reference), Dick argues that 'As one of us *acts* godlike (gives his cloak to a stranger), a machine *acts* human when it pauses in its programmed cycle to defer to it by reason of a decision' (Dick, 1976: 2). This idea of intentionality is crucial. By *acting* more humane than Barrows, the Lincoln reveals again the inherent inhumanity of the late capitalist society of the text.

Inhumanity in the face of the simulacrum

This inhumanity is present in characters other than Barrows, as well. Both Rosen and Pris exhibit schizoid personality traits and Rosen consistently refers to Pris as inhuman and otherworldly. He thinks to himself, as he realizes that he has fallen in love with her, that she is '…a woman with eyes of ice, a calculating, ambitious schizoid type…What a woman, what a *thing* to fall in love with' (Dick, 1972: 157). This *thing*-ness of Pris is one of the main attractors for Rosen, who obsesses over Pris and her mercurial validation of his existence.

After Pris's departure from Maury and Rosen's company, Rosen begins to experience a mental break, which heralds the beginning of the second part of the novel and a dramatic shift in tone that follows Rosen throughout his psychotic episode and subsequent internment in a mental health facility after becoming violently agitated. Prior to his final outburst before his internment, Rosen obsessively researches the original figure of Abraham Lincoln in a local library. He comes to the conclusion that 'Lincoln was exactly like me. I might have been reading my own biography, there in the library; psychologically we were as alike as two peas in a pod and by understanding him I understood myself' (Dick, 1972: 188). He continues by remarking that

> '[Lincoln] might have been remote, but he was not dead emotionally…so he was the opposite of Pris… I didn't catch the *alienness*, the otherness, with the simulacrum that I had caught with Pris. I had a natural trust and liking for Lincoln and that was certainly the opposite to what I felt towards Pris. There was something innately good and warm and human about him, a vulnerability. And I knew, by my own experience with Pris, that the schizoid was not vulnerable…in the final analysis that was what distinguished the two of them. Lincoln knew the

> paradoxes of the human soul, its great parts, its weak parts, its lusts, its nobility, all the odd-shaped pieces that went to make it up in its almost infinite variety…Pris – she had an ironclad rigid schematic view, a blueprint, of mankind. An abstraction. And she lived in it' (Dick, 1972: 189).

We see again here the idea that the simulacrum, the crude approximation of a once-living historical figure, is in fact more human, more 'authentic' than someone like Pris, who has been rendered inhuman and machine-like by her schizoid personality. While it can be tempting to assume that this is an indication of the inherent humanity of the Lincoln simulacrum, it is instead more prudent to recognize that this observation by Rosen is instead an indication of the *in*humanity of characters like Pris. The Lincoln simulacrum functions as a marker by which Pris's deviation from 'human-ness' can be measured and as such it functions again as a mirror to the dehumanizing effect of the mental health disorder suffered by characters like Pris and, later in the text, Rosen. This reflects the dehumanizing nature of the pursuit of success in a capitalist system. While Pris is not especially interested in financial gain she does desperately seek the approval of Barrows, the archetypal capitalist. In doing so, she creates machines that are in Rosen's eyes more human than she is.

Rosen's internment

Rosen's psychologist during his internment, Ragland Nisea, can be seen as an extension or rather a reflection of the wide-reaching mental health crisis that plagues the America of the text. Lampe argues that 'Nisea is the ultimate extension of the therapeutic state and enjoys all of its powers' (Lampe, 2015: 208). Crucially, Lampe also notes that '…despite all of his reported brilliance, Nisea largely performs from a script, informed by popular fashions…the description of Rosen's 'illness' is not much

more than a passage from a textbook, chosen based on the results of a test…without much reflection Rosen takes on the identity assigned to him by the dominant taxonomy' (Lampe, 2015: 209). While the simulacra can be argued to be the dominant Dickian devices that reflect otherwise hidden social realities, the character of Nisea and his treatment of Rosen remains very telling. His prescriptive assignation of Rosen's illness to him along with his adherence to, as Lampe puts it, a 'script, informed by popular fashions' (Lampe, 2015: 209) highlights the deeply seated institutional problems present throughout the mental health system of the text. This is exemplified further in Rosen' next therapist, Dr. Albert Shedd, who posits the idea of inducing psychedelic fugue states at regular intervals in order to jab at the root of Rosen' 'madness'.

The inhumanity of such a formalized and standardized system of mental health treatment is made evident here, as '…Rosen is still totally without autonomy…[and] is rendered so passive that he accepts every suggestion of treatment given by the mild-mannered psychiatrist. Rosen is institutionally broken down and helpless' (Lampe, 2015: 209). As Lampe argues, Rosen is reduced to a passive state in his own treatment, incapable of agentively advocating for himself. He becomes, in essence, something of an automaton himself, routinely going through his prescribed treatments with little concept of the outside world and a complete inability to speak for himself. Lampe does note that 'This is not entirely the fault of Shedd, who even suggests deep doubts about Rosen's diagnosis and the fact of his mental illness, but he remains an agent of the clinic and therefore not entirely free to treat patients as he would wish' (Lampe, 2015: 209). This is a crucial observation, as it underscores the fact that the representatives of the clinic and the mental health wing of the government are also, to an extent, powerless to agentively assist their patients in a way that does not adhere

to a prescriptive regimen of what the government deems appropriate. Dick's own experiences with mental health facilities support this view, as he had had his third wife involuntarily committed to a mental health facility, as such facilities were not rigorously vetted at the time. One doctor signing off on the process was enough to have someone committed against their own will. This is something Dick would have found disturbing in the extreme, due to his own paranoia around the role of the state in his own life (Streitfield, 2017).

This paranoia that Dick experienced was not uncommon in 1960/1970s America, as his identification with counter-culture movements ('Hippies') placed him in opposition to the governmental power structure. Such paranoia was further strengthened by Dick's home being broken into, with his papers strewn about and his safe bombed open (Bzdek, 2002). Small wonder, then, that the mental health institutions of the text are not depicted in a positive light. Doctors are forced to follow a 'script' instead of interacting with their patients as individuals. This removes the humanity and agency from the mental health process and automates it on a near-industrial scale. As such, one can argue that the therapists, both Shedd and Nisea, represent and reflect a deeply rooted systemic issue in the mental health programs of *We Can Build You* and of the America that it reflects upon.

Rosen's controlled fugues are intended to help him understand and work past his obsession with Pris, whom he describes as '…the *other*' (Dick, 1972: 171). The idea of drugs being used to induce a 'finite subjective reality' as Rossi refers to them (Rossi, 2011: 155) is present in one of the other texts to be discussed in this dissertation, *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*. In *We Can Build You*, these subjective realities become an interminable hell for Rosen, as he undergoes over 200 of these induced

fugue states and begins to lose track of time. His continued dehumanization at the hands of the mental health system of the text is evident here, as he is continually drugged and subjected to finite subjective realities that force him to confront Pris as an antagonistic force in his life. Lampe argues that he '…loses all sense of self-worth and even personal privacy' and that 'It is made clear by the end of the novel that the bureaucratic infrastructure that brought Rosen to the mental health clinic broke down in his case…Rosen's diagnosis and therapy was done by the book, even the conclusions were wrong at every stage' (Lampe, 2015: 213). This reinforces the idea of the mental health system of the text as inherently problematic, as the one-size-fits-all approach to mental health is extremely detrimental to Rosen. One need only look at the character of Pris in her final moments in the text to understand the consequences of such a system. She tells Rosen '…I'm not up for release. I'm much too sick. I have to stay here a long time more, maybe forever' (Dick, 1972: 207). As Lampe argues, Pris has been subject to the mental health system for much of her life, as 'her life was organized for her by institutions, her family, or her workplace' (Lampe, 2015: 213). She becomes entirely dependent on the institution and seems incapable of truly living outside of its walls. This can be seen as another indictment against the mental health system of the text, as Dick seems to portray it as more harmful than helpful. Its detrimental effects and long reach are reflected clearly in the characters of Rosen and Pris.

Conclusion

Dick ultimately concludes the text with an image of Pris who sits '…carding and weaving virgin black sheep's wool, utterly involved, without a thought for me or for any other thing' (Dick, 1972: 207). Lampe argues that 'Rosen will return to his career, while

Pris's brilliance will be squandered as she learns to knit within the walls of the Kasanin Clinic. With this finale Dick is suggesting the massive waste in human potential that goes into commitment' (Lampe, 2015: 214). Pris transitions from a mentally tormented but undeniably brilliant creator of two simulacra that can be seen as the precursors of the androids in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, to banal and patronizing acts of menial creation, such as knitting, as this is what the mental health state deems appropriate. The creative ability that Pris exhibits throughout the text is remarkable, but her reduction to something as banal as knitting is seen as representative of a prescriptive and industrialized mental health state. As Lampe argues, 'Pris's creativity and talent are never denied, but [are] deemed secondary to her anti-social tendencies from the perspective of the therapeutic state [a state that Dick was distrustful and fearful of in his own life]' (Lampe, 2015: 214). This reflects, as with Rosen's internment, the prescriptivism and by-the-numbers approach to mental health that plagues the broader society of *We Can Build You*'s world.

Lampe corroborates this idea as well, when he remarks that 'Dick's writing career coincided with the height of the anti-psychiatry movement in the United States, a time when the institutions of mental health care, [and] mental health professionals… were being contested' (Lampe, 2015: 216). Lampe continues by arguing that '…Dick believed that modern society itself was the real patient… most often, insanity emerged from social conditions that were unbearable. The drudgery of the workplace…the paranoia inspired by surveillance and anxieties about the global political and economy system were creating worlds gone insane' (Lampe, 2015: 216). This can be directly applied to *We Can Build You*, as the late capitalist social environment in which Rosen and Pris find themselves plays a defining role in the classification and institutionalization of their 'illnesses'. Indeed, 'mental illness emerges in most of

[Dick's] novels as either a tool of political control or as a result of social conditions that drive people insane' (Lampe, 2015: 216). This degraded society that seems to have driven Rosen and Frauenzimmer 'insane' is made even more apparent and reflected all the more clearly by the inclusion of the simulacra. The Lincoln and Stanton function as moral touchstones from a bygone age and the manner in which they are treated as means of attaining capital further corroborates Lampe's argument that the mental health system in the text is deeply flawed and that social causes are to blame for the mental struggles of the protagonists.

Chapter 3:

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

> ‘You will be required to do wrong no matter where you go. It is the basic condition of life, to be required to violate your own identity… It is the ultimate shadow, the defeat of creation; this is the curse at work, the curse that feeds on all life.’
>
> (Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*)

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? is one of Dick’s most famous novels and follows the character of Rick Deckard as he hunts down and ‘retires’ a group of Nexus-6’s: runaway androids that have escaped from deep space mining operations. The Nexus-6 android as a manufactured product is very telling of the society that has created it. Thompson remarks in *Work, Sex and Power* that ‘capitalism represents a society dominated by commodity production in which labour-power itself has mostly become a commodity’ (Thompson, 2015: 188). The Nexus-6 androids, created for the purpose of deep space mining, are a synthesis of commodity and labour as they are products manufactured with the sole purpose *of* labouring. This chapter discusses these androids and how they relate to the human characters of the text. Much like the simulacra of *We Can Build You* and, as discussed in Chapter 4, the hallucinatory drugs of *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, these androids function as a form of social critique, a ‘dark mirror’ that reflects often uncomfortable truths about the human characters of the text and the society which they inhabit. The role of animals and the prevalence of Mercerism also fulfil a similar role in the text, as they are used as markers of one’s humanity, due to the connections to other humans and to generally electronic animals that one needs to form. This is a connection that androids are unable to make. These androids exist as manufactured products of the society of the text, as they are used for deep space mining. This chapter focuses on this idea of

androids as products, and what they reflect about the society that has created them. This chapter follows the characters of Rick Deckard and John Isidore, and their experiences with the androids. Through these experiences, the nature of these androids as mirrors to the society that has created them becomes more apparent, as their behaviour and priorities are telling of the society in which they are produced.

These androids are in many ways indistinguishable from human beings, which causes Deckard to begin to question his own values and beliefs, especially after his exposure to the enigmatic and charismatic Roy Baty, the leader of the runaway group. These androids, while similar at first glance to the simulacra in *We Can Build You*, are different in numerous ways. Firstly, they are not based on historical figures and are instead wholly ‘unique’, with their own ‘identities’ and ‘personalities’. Secondly, they are substantially more advanced than the simulacra, with superhuman strength and a will to live that drives them to escape from their mining operations and travel to Earth, with the intention of finding a way to prolong their artificially shortened lives. Deckard’s hunt for the androids brings him into contact with several important human characters, as well as the androids themselves. These characters include John Isidore, a man who lives a solitary existence as a ‘special’, or someone deemed unfit for interstellar colonization. Deckard also encounters Rachael Rosen, Pris Stratton and Roy and Irmgard Baty. These four are all androids, though they vary wildly in personality and perspectives.

Rick Deckard

Deckard's life as a bounty hunter is not portrayed as especially unique or glamourous; he lives in an apartment with his wife Iran and a mechanical sheep that the pair own. Due to what is known as 'World War Terminus', their environment is polluted and nigh post-apocalyptic. The majority of biological life excepting humans has been wiped out, resulting in real animals being held in incredibly high esteem. A crucial distinction between genuine humans and androids is the fact that androids are incapable of feeling empathy for animals and are quite content to harm or kill them. This is a fact that bounty hunters like Deckard incorporate into the Voigt-Kampff test, allowing them to establish the validity of one's status as a biological human. Jill Galvan states (in *Entering the Posthuman Collective in Philip K. Dick's 'Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?'*) that 'the Voigt-Kampff scale refers in large part to incidents of animal mistreatment because live animals, in a post-nuclear era which finds them scarce, have been fetishized as the repositories for human empathy' (Galvan, 1997: 415). This emphasis on empathy is one of the key aspects of humanism and is a useful marker for establishing the humanity of the characters discussed. This argument is supported by Ursula Heise, who argues in *The Android and The Animal* that '…Dick does not in fact postulate any simple parallelism between technologically produced humans and animals. Instead, he makes empathy and care for real or artificial animals a crucial criterion for distinguishing humans… from androids, who are shown mutilating or killing them…' (Heise, 2009: 506). As such, the ownership of the mechanical sheep is relevant as a marker of Deckard's humanity, as well as his status as someone that has the means to own and care for an electric animal. As this marker of humanity is an expensive one, many are unable to achieve such a social milestone.

While Deckard does draw a distinction between biological and electric animals, he does acknowledge at the end of the novel that '…The electric things have their life too. Paltry as those lives are' (Dick, 1968: 239). This acknowledgement of some shared kinship with the 'electric things' establishes Deckard as a character capable of human empathy with the 'other' and further alienates the androids from this dynamic of empathy and understanding, as they are incapable of empathising with or caring for living things. Dick's writing of the text coincided with a significant increase in technological integration into the lives of the average person**,** something Dick would have found alarming. Quoting Johan Huizinga in *Life and Thought in America,* David Nye argues in his article *Technology and the Production of Difference* that 'the progress of technology compels the economic process to move forward toward concentration and general uniformity at an ever-faster tempo. The more human inventiveness and exact science become locked… the more the active man… seems to disappear' (Nye, 2006: 599). This drive towards uniformity is something that Dick would undoubtedly have noticed and is something that he would have found concerning. In his 1972 essay, titled *The Android and The Human,* Dick states that '…what we are seeing is a gradual merging of the general nature of human activity and function into the activity and function of what we humans have built and surrounded ourselves with' (Dick, 1972). This merging of human life with environment is something that Dick was preoccupied with, as he refers to it as 'the absolutely horrible technological society… that dreadful, nightmare society' (Dick, 1972). This nightmare society would be one wherein the state has absolute power, bolstered by the integration of technology into the fabric of society. This 'evil process utilizes technology as its instrument' and seeks to render docile the human spirit and to make machine-like what was once human. Dick refers to 'the human versus the android and

how the former can become…the latter'. He discusses 'the calculated, widespread and thoroughly sanctioned use of specific tranquilising drugs' to this end (Dick, 1972). This fear that man can be made machine or that machine can be made indistinguishable from man is at the heart of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. The androids are machines made to resemble humans, who are incapable of forming empathic bonds as we would traditionally define them, though androids like Rachael do complicate this assertion. This fundamental inability of the 'other', who are themselves representative of technological advancement to integrate into society could be seen as a reflection of the paranoia that Dick feels regarding this erosion of human society.

While the narrative primarily follows Deckard and his hunt for the androids, it is worth establishing the positions of the other characters in the narrative, as well. John Isidore is what is considered a 'special', or a human being who is considered unfit for interstellar colonization and is doomed to remain on Earth. Isidore is considered 'special' due to his failure to pass an IQ test. This status also prevents him from being allowed to marry or reproduce. While Isidore does occupy this socially undesirable position, he remains an intensely empathic and compassionate character, giving shelter to the runaway androids and exhibiting a great deal of empathy for fallen animals and other humans. While sheltering the androids, Isidore is consistently berated and abused, with the situation rapidly devolving into a hostage scenario. Despite this, he continues to attempt to relate to and empathise with, the escaped androids, often to his own detriment. Isidore's status as a socially undesirable individual and his continued adherence to humanist principles such as empathy and understanding for the 'other' are discussed at great length throughout this chapter, as he is one of the clearest examples of empathic thinking in the text.

Isidore and Mercerism

Isidore is also a devout adherent to the practice of Mercerism, a shared communal experience that can be accessed through placing one's hands on what is known as an 'empathy box'. This mentally transports the individual into the body of a man known as Mercer, who is perpetually pelted with stones as he climbs a steep hill. This Sisyphean experience is shared with all those who are currently touching their own empathy boxes, allowing it to be seen as a unifying experience, as emotions are shared and amplified through the use of the empathy device. When one of the runaway androids informs Isidore that it had assumed to find one in his flat and had not brought its own, Isidore is shocked and responds that '…an empathy box… is the most personal possession you have! It's an extension of your body; it's the way you touch other humans, it's the way you stop being alone…' (Dick, 1968: 53). This establishes the empathy boxes and through them Mercerism, as the main method of connection in the post-apocalyptic setting of the text. Galvan argues that Mercer is little more than a '…compelling effigy' and that '… the government has managed to foist this image on any number of gullible citizen-consumers…' (Galvan, 1997: 416). Isidore's surprise at the escaped android later known to be Pris and its lack of concern for not having an empathy box is indicative of his own personal reliance on this method of connection, of 'touching' other humans. For the androids to be unable to engage with these boxes is another example of how they are excluded by the state from the dynamic of empathy present within the text.

These empathy boxes are ostensibly a means by which humans can become mentally and emotionally entwined over great distances. This is a harsh consequence of World War Terminus and the ensuing nuclear fallout and stellar colonization driving the few

remaining humans further apart. Their true purpose can however be seen as something more sinister. Galvan rightly argues that '…technology often acts in Dick's novel as the long arm of the government, furtively breaching the bounds between public and private…' and states that these empathy boxes rupture more than unite the human collective. Galvan also argues that '…the empathy box… more undermines than facilitates the experience of emotional community [as it further separates humans from one another in terms of both distance and social interaction]'. She continues by stating that the '…accepted notion of empathy, the purported marker of humanity, falls under the same suspicion as does the device that has presumably enabled it' (Galvan, 1997: 418). This questioning and interrogation of empathy as the defining characteristic of the human and the separating element between human, animal and machine are raised throughout this chapter, as it is integral to the development of both Isidore and Deckard throughout the narrative.

Phil Resch

Phil Resch is a character who is also discussed at a later point in this chapter, because his position as a fellow bounty hunter allows him to function as a foil to Deckard. He introduces the idea that either he or Deckard could well be androids created as bounty hunters and imbued with false memories. This is one of the more prominent crises that Deckard faces throughout the text, as the lines between human and android begin to blur. Resch also, however, raises the idea of one's relationship to animals as a form of litmus test for whether or not one is authentically human. He states that he owns a squirrel and that he loves it deeply. The reasoning here is that androids are incapable of empathy towards animals, which is seen as nigh sacrilegious in Dick's post-atomic dystopia. Therefore, Resch's adoration of his biological squirrel marks him as

authentically human. His relation to the androids is expanded upon in a later discussion, but it is important to establish now that he does not see them as in any way human and does not empathise with them or their plight in the slightest. In essence, he sees the act of retiring an android as akin to turning off a dishwasher.

This is where he and Deckard differ most, as Deckard is forced to reconcile himself with the growing empathy that he feels for the at times disturbingly human-seeming androids. Resch can be seen as a version of Deckard that does not possess this empathy. Deckard himself states something to this effect when speaking to Resch after the retirement of Luba Luft; he states '… You [Resch] don't kill the way I [Deckard] do… You like to kill. All you need is a pretext…' (Dick, 1968: 109). This difference between the characters is discussed in more detail at a later point in the dissertation, as it establishes a clear difference between the two and complicates the idea of the authentically human being automatically empathic and willing to relate to the 'other'. Resch also functions as a mirror for the character of Deckard, here, as he establishes what an 'ideal' bounty hunter should be and allows for a deeper understanding of Deckard's often sympathetic relationship to the androids that he is retiring.

Rachael Rosen and the Voigt-Kampff test

Due to this sympathy towards androids, the character of Rachael Rosen is important to introduce, due to her being the android that Deckard forms the closest relationship with over the course of the narrative. Rachael is an android created by the Rosen association (a reference to the corporatist nature of technology in *We Can Build You*) and in some ways fulfils the same role as Pris Frauenzimmer in that narrative. She functions as a form of unreachable and unknowable feminine 'other', which Deckard

tries and fails to fully understand. She is the first character in the narrative that the reader sees tested using the Voigt-Kampff method, which is a test used to distinguish between androids and biological humans, through the use of a series of questions often involving animals in distress. The test monitors the involuntary responses of the individual being tested, with the main method of distinguishing between android and human being that androids cannot fake a sense of empathy for the suffering of other beings, animals included.

Due to the near-deified status of animals in the text, any biological human would have an adverse physical reaction to the idea of animals in any kind of distress. Rosen almost fools the test, with Deckard only managing to determine her status as an android with one final question. This introduces the idea of the Nexus-6 androids being harder to distinguish from biological humans and complicates the binary of human/non-human. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone posits in *Human versus Nonhuman: Binary Opposition as an Ordering Principle of Western Human Thought* that '…humans are distinguished by their culture, their minds, their reasoning and their thinking, nonhumans by the conceptual antithesis of each of these categories…' (Sheets-Johnstone, 1996: 58). These 'conceptual antitheses' are no longer readily apparent to the extent that Deckard, a trained and experienced bounty hunter and administrator of the Voigt-Kampff test is almost unable to tell Rachael apart from an actual human. This indicates that these Nexus-6 variants are straddling the line between human and non-human. It is important to note that, while Rosen is an unreachable feminine 'other', she differs from Frauenzimmer in that she is very literally constructed to fulfil that niche, as she has been designed to embody that archetypal feminine being. Her murder of the biological goat that Deckard purchases near the end of the novel is an interesting example of this, as her motivations are muddled. I

would argue that she might have killed Deckard's goat as a form of revenge for his murder of the androids, whom Rosen has been aiding throughout the novel. This act is discussed in greater detail at a later point in this chapter, as it is an indication of Rosen acting beyond the bounds of what can be described as comfortably in the domain of a machine's set of programmes and codes.

It is also important to discuss the meaning of the term 'retire' as it relates to the androids and how their 'deaths' are not considered as such by the bounty hunters. When Deckard corners an android and shoots it, it is not seen as a murder or an act of violence against a sentient being. Rather, it is seen as akin to turning off a dishwasher or scrapping a particularly troublesome piece of machinery. This can be seen in the following extract, wherein Deckard retires the first android of the text, Polokov:

> As the android's hands sank into his throat Rick fired his regulation issue old-style pistol from its shoulder holster; the .38 magnum slug struck the android in the head and its brain box burst. The Nexus-6 unit which operated it blew into pieces, a raging, mad wind which carried throughout the car. Bits of it, like the radioactive dust itself, whirled down on Rick. The retired remains of the android rocked back, collided with the car door, bounced off and struck heavily against him; he found himself struggling to shove the twitching remnants of the android away. (Dick, 1968: 59)

This cavalier attitude seen in the free-indirect discourse present in Deckard's reference to Polokov as 'it' is seemingly at odds with the novel's intense focus on the idea of empathy and compassion for other humans and animals. The androids, through their exclusion from this dynamic of empathy, are used as a lens through which the society and characters of the text are discussed and analysed. This killing of Polokov can be

seen, Galvan argues, as an example of '…Rick's responsibility… to reclaim the disturbed hierarchy between human and machine' (Galvan, 1997: 419). This reclamation of the hierarchy is predicated on the non-humanity of the androids; their very nature as *it*, instead of *he, she,* or *they.* One should note here the difference between the simulacra of *We Can Build You* and the androids. While the simulacra are in some ways capable of producing a convincing facsimile of human interaction, they are ultimately machines and are limited by their mechanical construction and the instructions relayed to their central processing units (CPU). The androids, while also mechanical, are more narratively agentive and are willing to resort to violence and terrorism to ensure their own continued survival. This will to live situates the androids in a liminal position in the text. They are not quite soulless and obedient machines, but they are also not fully empathic and socially aware beings. This complicates the discussion of the androids and results in a more nuanced and in-depth discussion of how they relate to the dynamic of empathy present in the text. This is seen in Rosen's concern for and desire to assist her fellow androids, with whom she has developed a bond of friendship. This is a space ostensibly reserved only for biologically authentic humans.

Deckard's hunt

The character of Rick Deckard is the main perspective through which the narrative is perceived, as his hunt for the escaped androids is the driving force behind the events that occur. As a character, he is discussed for one main reason, as throughout the narrative he becomes gradually more empathetic towards the androids (although they are manufactured products) and begins to doubt the virtuous nature of his occupation. Deckard's growing understanding of the plight of the androids is a key element in

humanist thinking, as he is forced to recognize something intangibly and inexplicably human in the constructed, robotic 'other'. This recognition of perceived humanity is present in other texts (most notably *We Can Build You*), but what makes it interesting in this novel is the fact that Deckard may well have good reason to suspect that the androids are something more than machine. While Louis Rosen often seems to project his own psychological traumas and schizophrenia onto the Lincoln simulacrum, it remains a machine and reacts as it is programmed to react. The androids, however, are often depicted as possessing a greater degree of autonomy, self-actualization and will to live than the simulacra. This is seen in the very cause of their arrival on Earth, as they defy their programming and escape their bonds in search of a means to extend their lifespans. This escape and further agentive action can be attributed to their advanced brain power, which allows some Nexus-6 androids to act agentively and beyond their programming. Deckard muses on this idea when he thinks that '…androids equipped with the new Nexus-6 brain unit had from a sort of rough, pragmatic, no-nonsense standpoint evolved beyond a major-but inferior-segment of mankind' (Dick, 1968: 18). It is through Deckard that we perceive these androids and through the androids that we perceive characters like Deckard and Isidore.

In keeping with the idea of the androids functioning as mirrors that reflect the social and cultural climate that surrounds them, Louis Chude-Sokei reinforces the idea of androids as socially active agents in the social hierarchy of the text. Quoting David Levy, Chude-Sokei opines that: 'When robot creatures are generally perceived as being similar to biological creatures, the effect on society will be enormous. It will be as though hordes of people from a hitherto-unknown and far-off land have emigrated to our shores, a people who behave like us in many ways but who are very clearly

different' (Chude-Sokei, 2019: 1 citing Levy, 2007: 303). The depiction of robot[3] creatures as immigrants from far-off cosmic shores is fascinating and offers an insight that assists in this chapter's understanding of the androids as socially active, if often spectral and absent players in the society of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?.*

Chude-Sokei further reinforces this idea by briefly raising the idea of a machine insurrection against human creators, much like the labour insurrection staged by the escaped androids. As mentioned earlier, while the androids are not human and cannot be analysed through the same lens, they remain 'more-than-machine', due to the agentive nature of their insurrection. Said insurrection and subsequent escape is instigated by Baty, as the text states:

> …this android [Baty] proposed the group escape attempt, underwriting it ideologically with a pretentious fiction as to the sacredness of so-called android 'life.' In addition, this android stole and experimented with, various mind-fusing drugs, claiming when caught that it hoped to promote in androids a group experience similar to that of Mercerism (Dick, 1968: 120).

The escape attempt, coupled with the use of mind-fusing drugs in an attempt to approximate the experience of Mercerism, can be seen as an agentive attempt by Baty and the androids to imitate the union of biologically authentic humans, which is an act that transcends the original boundaries of their programmed purpose. In the context of this dissertation's focus on products, these ideas lend weight to the argument that the androids function as a 'dark mirror' of human society. They are the often silent but ever-present reminder of the social malaise and exploitation that

[3] a word fittingly drawn from old Slavonic, meaning 'servitude' or 'forced labour'

plagues Earth and the other human colonies in the text. The androids exist as products of capitalist exploitation and seek to escape the role placed upon them under that system, yet they also desire to imitate their creators. Baty's experimentation with mind-fusing drugs calls to mind the use of similar narcotics in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, as both are used to achieve some level of intimacy and connection with others. It is crucial to note, however, that Baty seeks specifically to replicate the group experience of Mercerism and in so doing seeks to emulate the humans from whom he has escaped. It is in this way that these androids reflect the social division and isolation of the society that has created them, as even the products of such a society seek to find some sense of community and togetherness.

Deckard's first encounter with an android as he begins his work is with Rachael Rosen, as he converses with her about an owl that the Rosen association had recently purchased. Rosen observes to the bounty hunter that Deckard has '…no difficulty viewing an android as inert…' (Dick, 1968: 32), indicating that Deckard begins the narrative with the perspective that androids are no more than machines that need to be decommissioned. This is a perspective that will be significantly altered as the events of the narrative unfold. Shortly hereafter, Deckard notices the collection of animals that the Rosen association had amassed and has a telling reaction. Upon seeing the animals, Deckard notes that '…it was not surprise that he felt but more a sort of yearning…' (Dick, 1968: 32). This sense of yearning is indicative of the incredible social value placed on biological animals after World War Terminus, as the majority of animals have become extinct. It is also indicative of Deckard's authentic humanity, as androids are shown to be either indifferent or openly antagonistic towards animals.

Upon viewing the owl referred to as ‘Scrappy’ (Dick, 1968: 27), Deckard experiences a sudden and intense hatred towards his electronic sheep, ‘…which he had to tend, had to care about, as if it lived’ (Dick, 1968: 33). He refers to this relationship as the ‘Tyranny of the object’ and states that it [the sheep] ‘…doesn’t know [he exists]’ (Dick, 1968: 34). This highlights the fact that Deckard still possesses a rather black-and-white view of constructed beings like androids and electric animals and that he views them in a distinctly hierarchic way. The mention of the sheep not knowing that he exists is also important and can be seen as an indication of the psychological consequences of living in an almost post-apocalyptic world, as Deckard expresses here a desire to be ‘seen’ and to have his existence validated. Electric animals and arguably androids are, according to Deckard, incapable of authentically perceiving others, as they are only operating according to their programming.

Shortly hereafter, Deckard administers the text’s first Voigt-Kampff test on Rachael Rosen, with the intention of determining whether she is a Nexus-6 android or biologically human. The test is administered by asking questions regarding animals, often in some form of distress or suffering some manner of harm. Deckard asks Rosen, for example, how she would feel about receiving a calfskin wallet for her birthday (Dick, 1968: 38). Rosen’s response causes the gauges on the test machinery to swing ‘…past the green and onto the red…’ (Dick, 1968: 38). It becomes clear through this testing that the Voigt-Kampff scale is dependent on reactions to the suffering of animals. As androids are incapable of experiencing empathy towards biological life forms, the test is designed to determine their status as androids by observing their lack of authentic involuntary muscle reactions. Rosen, however, is able to pass the test, with Deckard initially accusing her of being an android and then being rebuffed with the knowledge that she had grown up aboard an interstellar transport ship and as

such had not had the ‘normal’ childhood that most biological humans would have had. The Rosen association uses this supposed failure of the Voigt-Kampff test to blackmail Deckard, with Scrappy the owl being thrown in as a bribe to make the deal more palatable. Deckard notices, however, that Rosen keeps referring to the owl as ‘it’, instead of he or she (Dick, 1968: 46). This prompts him to ask Rosen to be seated for one final question, where he asks if she likes his department-issued briefcase and states that it is made of ‘…one hundred percent genuine human baby hide’ (Dick,1968: 47).

Rosen’s responses are in accordance with how a biological human would respond but, as Deckard notes, ‘…the reaction had come…too late’ (Dick, 1968: 47). This is how Deckard concludes that Rosen is a Nexus-6 android, as the correct response time would have contained no delay. This establishes several important details that are relevant to the discussion hereafter. The first being that the Voigt-Kampff test is ultimately effective, but that the Nexus-6 androids are capable of evading detection if the test is administered by an inexperienced bounty hunter. Deckard is only able to determine Rosen’s status as an android due to his experience as a bounty hunter, as he knows instinctually what the appropriate delay between stimulus and response *should* be. The second important detail that is established is that androids can have false memories implanted into them, leading them to believe that they are in fact biological humans. This can be seen when Deckard asks Eldon Rosen if Rachael knew that she was an android. Eldon responds that she did not, as they had ‘… programmed her completely’ (Dick, 1968: 47). This complicates the binary of human/android, as even the individual being tested might not be aware of their status as an android. Deckard himself begins to harbour these doubts at a later point in the novel.

This ambiguity surrounding the Nexus-6 androids and their ability to almost seamlessly blend into biological human society links into an idea raised by Umberto Rossi, who argues in *The Twisted Worlds of Philip K. Dick* that the '…main issue of the novel [is] the attempt to define… what is human' (Rossi, 2011:149). While the Voigt-Kampff test is able to successfully delineate between humans and androids based on their reaction to animals being put in distressing situations, the fact remains that the individual administering the test is as responsible for its success as the test itself. As such, only Deckard's experience allowed him to perceive the delay between the question being asked and the feedback registering on the testing apparatus. This experience is of great help upon Deckard's encounter with the second android, Luba Luft, who is posing as an opera singer in order to avoid detection. Upon entering the android's dressing room, Deckard notes that 'her tone held cold reserve – and that other cold, which he had encountered in so many androids. Always the same: great intellect, ability to accomplish much, but also this. He deplored it. And yet, without it, he could not track them down' (Dick, 1968: 79). This further reinforces the divide between humans and androids, as Deckard is able to tell almost immediately that Luft is an android due to the characteristic 'coldness' in her voice and admits to the fact that this coldness, this lack of warmth, is what allows him to track them down. This is again mentioned later in the conversation with Luft, as Deckard remarks that 'an android… doesn't care what happens to another android' (Dick, 1968: 80). While this is a generally valid assessment, Luft responds by introducing one of the more important discussions to be had around the text. She states that Deckard, then, must be an android, given his bounty hunting. This again plays with the idea of an individual being an android, but not being aware of it due to the implanting of false memories, much like Rachael Rosen. Luft manages to draw a weapon on Deckard and states that she

intends to phone the police as she believes he is some form of sexual deviant, instead of a real bounty hunter.

Deckard and Resch

This leads into one of the more thought-provoking sections of the text, where Deckard falls prey to an organized effort to cut him off from police support, through the establishment of a false android-run police station. While this is a rather bizarre development in the narrative, it does introduce the character of Phil Resch, another supposedly human bounty hunter who assists Deckard in his escape from the android-run police station. Before his escape, Deckard converses with an android named Garland who states that it is one of the androids that had recently escaped to Earth. The android continues by stating that Resch stayed behind to receive a synthetic memory system, leading him to believe that he was human. While Resch is eventually confirmed to be human through the Voigt-Kampff test, Deckard's reaction to Garland revealing itself as an android is a telling example of the divide drawn between human and non-human individuals in the text, as he begins to refer to Garland as 'it' instead of 'he', thus stripping the android of any veneer of humanness that it may have displayed (Dick, 1968: 97). This is yet another instance of the androids functioning as 'dark mirrors' that reflect the social and cultural climate in which they exist. Despite Garland ostensibly possessing a will to live and a desire to be free from being hunted, its status as an android prevents Deckard from forming any kind of connection with it, thus excluding it from the dynamic of empathy present in the text.

This is mentioned again after Resch kills Garland and asks Deckard if he '…[thinks] of them as 'it'' (Dick, 1968: 99). Deckard responds that he used to, '…when [his]

conscience occasionally bothered [him] about the work [he] had to do' but states that he '…no longer [finds] it necessary…' (Dick, 1968: 99). This implies that there has been a process of desensitization that Deckard has undergone due to his retirement of these human-seeming androids. This process will be in some ways reversed by his subsequent encounter with Luft and the other escaped androids. Deckard's initial comfort with retiring the androids can be seen as a result of the overall societal depiction of the androids. Stephen Utych touches on this idea of dehumanization in *'How Dehumanization Influences Attitudes toward Immigrants'.* While the comparison between androids and immigrants (used in the context of the 21st century refugee crises) may seem tenuous, they are arguably more similar than one would initially expect. Both flee from their original location in search of something better or more fulfilling. This is seen in Baty's desire to emulate the experience of Mercerism and his orchestration of the escape attempt. Utych states that 'Directly, dehumanization should lead to more negative attitudes toward immigrants, as it provides a moral justification for punishment of out-groups' (Utych, 2018: 441). While Utych does not refer to Dick's work, the idea of a moral justification for punishment is crucial. This moral justification is what Deckard's occupation as a bounty hunter is predicated on, as evidenced by Resch's belief that bounty hunters are the only thing keeping human and android distinct. In keeping with the idea of the androids functioning as a dark mirror, this treatment of ostensibly agentive and self-aware (though not necessarily human) individuals can be seen as reflective of the societal malaise that afflicts Deckard's post-apocalyptic world.

After their escape from the police station, Resch asks Deckard to administer a test to determine whether or not he is an android once they have retired Luft. Deckard responds evasively and Resch picks up on this reluctance to discuss the matter,

stating that ‘It’s not just false memory structures. I own an animal; not a false one but the real thing. A squirrel. I love the squirrel, Deckard…’ (Dick, 1968: 102). This mention of the biological animal as corroboration of Resch’s essential humanity is mentioned by Tony Vinci in *Posthuman Wounds*, wherein he states that ‘To offset this ideological sleight of hand [positioning the androids as empathically excluded ‘others’], the animal must be positioned as the android’s opposite: it becomes the transcendental marker of humanity’s unique ability to feel for or with each other’ (Vinci, 2014: 93). Vinci further argues that ‘…the animal and the android become part of an ideological dialectic that defers traumatic experience by reifying the essential human as superior to the android (who cannot empathize) and empathetic towards the animal (whose vulnerability necessitates human care)’ (Vinci, 2014: 93). As such, Resch’s invocation of his animal serves as confirmation beyond doubt that he is, in fact, human. It is interesting, then, that the relationship between Deckard and Resch is as tense as it is. Deckard responds, after Resch informs him that the squirrel enjoys running in place on a wheel, that he ‘… [guesses that] squirrels aren’t too bright’ (Dick, 1968: 102). This acts as a prelude to Deckard’s eventual distaste for Resch as a person and complicates the idea of humans automatically possessing empathy for each other. This conviction that Resch is an android can be seen as a reflector of Deckard’s own distrust and growing paranoia of the world around him, as he is unable to immediately prove that Resch is biologically human. The distinction between the two bounty hunters becomes clearer in their treatment of Luft once she is arrested.

Their final encounter with Luft is a telling one, in terms of Deckard’s character growth through the narrative. Upon escorting her out of the museum where she was transfixed by the artworks, Luft asks Deckard if he would be willing to buy her a reproduction of the artwork that she was staring at. Deckard, surprisingly, does so. Upon purchasing

a copy of Munch's *Puberty*, Luft comments 'It's very nice of you… There's something very strange and touching about humans. An android would never have done that' (Dick, 1968: 106). She continues by stating that '[she] really [doesn't] like androids' and that she considers humans to be a '…superior life form' (Dick, 1968: 106). This exchange is important for numerous reasons. Firstly, it indicates that Deckard has begun to develop some form of empathy for androids, as he acquiesces to Luft's request and purchases the artwork for her. Deckard also insists that Luft be given a test to determine her status as an android, despite her admitting to being non-human. This further deepens the divide between Deckard and Resch, as Deckard is willing to treat Luft with some measure of dignity, while Resch simply wishes to fire his laser pistol at it and be done with the matter. After being taunted by Luft, Resch shoots it in the stomach, forcing Deckard to finish off the android himself. After burning the art book he had bought for Luft, Deckard abruptly asks Resch if he thinks that androids have souls (Dick, 1968: 107). This is another indication of Deckard's growing disillusionment with his work and his deepening empathy for the androids, as he states that '…she was a wonderful singer. The planet could have used her. This is insane' (Dick, 1968: 108). Crucially, Deckard refers to Luft here as 'she' instead of 'it'. Again, Luft functions here as a reflection of the world around it, as it allows for Deckard's growing empathy for the subalternated 'other' of the androids to be shown. It also highlights the callous cruelty of their society at large, as Resch guns the android down without hesitation, without allowing a test to be done to determine Luft's status as either android or human. Deckard's statement that '…the planet could have used her…' (Dick, 1968: 108) can also be seen as a consideration of the broader social implications of the immediate culling of captured androids. Deckard here begins to consider what androids could offer, beyond menial and unpleasant labour. This is yet

another indicator of his growing disillusionment with the treatment of androids and marks another step in his transition towards a more empathic attitude towards them.

This divide between Resch and Deckard becomes ever deeper when Deckard returns from making a phone call and confronts Resch, stating: 'I see a pattern. The way you killed Garland and then the way you killed Luba. You don't kill the way I do… You like to kill. All you need is a pretext…' (Dick, 1968: 109). Deckard here underscores the key difference between the two. While he retires androids as part of his work, he takes no joy in it and does not exhibit any form of cruelty. Resch, on the other hand, seems to enjoy his retirement of androids and seeks any pretext to do so. After administering the test, Deckard is forced to confront the reality that Resch is, in fact, not an android. Resch asks him if he '… [has his] ideology framed… that would explain [him] as part of the human race' (Dick, 1968: 112). Deckard reasons that 'There is a defect in [Resch's] empathic, role-taking ability… [his] feelings towards androids' (Dick, 1968: 112). Deckard comes here to a realization about his feelings towards androids when he states that '…in contrast to Phil Resch, a difference had manifested itself… Luba Luft had seemed *genuinely* alive; it had not worn the aspect of a simulation' (Dick, 1968: 112). Deckard then has Resch test him using the Voigt-Kampff scale, with an android-centric question pertaining exactly to what had just occurred with Luft. Deckard exhibits an '…emphatically empathetic response' and states that he is '…capable of feeling empathy for at least specific, certain androids. Not for all of them but – one or two' (Dick, 1968: 113). This is direct evidence of the fact that Deckard's perspective towards androids has begun to shift and the development of a connection with the androids has begun.

Deckard and Rachael

This connection is seen again upon Deckard's next interaction with Rachael Rosen when he meets her in a motel to enlist her help with retiring the remaining androids. Rosen remarks that the Pris Stratton android is the same model as she is and that the resemblance is uncanny. She views it as 'identification; there goes I' (Dick, 1968: 149). This again underscores the often-muted reality that the androids are in fact constructed humanoids and that more than one of them can exist at any one time. She states that she is just '…representative of a type' (Dick, 1968:149). The philosophical implications of this exact a heavy toll on Rachael, who muses on whether or not she will be reborn when the Rosen association creates another Rachael Rosen-type android. Rosen internalizes here the reality that they (androids) '…*are* machines, stamped out like bottle caps…' and states that '…it's an illusion that I – I personally – really exist…' (Dick, 1968: 149). Deckard responds to this crisis of identity by feeling amused and describes Rachael as 'mawkishly morose' (Dick, 1968: 149). This response to Rachael's existential anguish could indicate that while Deckard has begun to develop some sense of empathy for certain androids, he still maintains a position of moral and social superiority over them, as he does not see them as capable of truly grasping their situation or reacting to it in a genuine or human way. Neil Badmington states in *Theorizing Posthumanism* that 'the human, in short, is absolutely distinct from the inhuman over which it towers in a position of natural supremacy. *I think, therefore I cannot possibly be an automaton*' (Badmington, 2003: 18). This idea of natural supremacy is on display here, as we see that Deckard thinks to himself that Rachael has '…no emotional awareness, no feeling-sense of the actual *meaning* of what she [says]' (Dick, 1968: 150). This lack of emotional awareness is seen again when

Rachael states that she '…[doesn't] care if Roy Baty nails [Deckard] or not. [She cares] whether [*she*] gets nailed…' (Dick, 1968: 150). This underscores again the fact that androids are generally incapable of empathy for others, as self-preservation is their most prominent instinct.

Deckard comes to the realization that he cannot retire the remaining androids without Rachael's assistance, as he thinks to himself that '…he [has] acquired an overt, incontestable fear directed toward the principal android' (Dick, 1968: 151). After this realization, the pair begin to undress, with the intention of having sexual relations. Rachael exclaims: '*I'm not alive!* You're not going to bed with a woman. Don't be disappointed, okay?' (Dick, 1968: 152). This sense of insecurity is crucial, as one would imagine a constructed humanoid robot to be calm and collected in situations such as this. Perhaps Rachael's implanted memories and the strain of being forced to reconcile what she thought to be her own human existence with the constructed nature of her body have laid the foundations for this emotional turmoil. This can be seen as the beginnings of self-awareness on Rachael's part, as she tells Deckard: 'Don't pause and be philosophical, because from a philosophical standpoint it's dreary. For us both' (Dick, 1968: 152). Rachael's sarcastic consideration of the 'dreary' philosophical implications of their union can be seen as an example of her ability to interpret her environment and situation in a manner that transcends the bounds of programs and directives. One could raise the argument that while one could program a system to emulate a sense of irony and sarcasm, it would be exceedingly difficult and not conducive to profit. Thus, Rachael's attitude here seems to be one that has arisen from her own 'psyche'. Deckard's response is interesting as well, as he thinks to himself after being told that Rachael loves him that he has '…wound up where Phil Resch said. Go to bed with her first, he remembered. Then kill her…' (Dick, 1968:

153). He then states that he cannot go through with the act as a further indication that he has ceased to view Rachael as purely android. While he has not yet entirely formed an empathic connection with the robotic, constructed other, this encounter with Rachael demonstrates that said connection is indeed in the process of being formed. He thinks to himself that he will, at some point, have to '…retire a Nexus-6 who looks exactly like this naked girl…' (Dick, 1968: 153). Interestingly, Deckard refers to Rachael as a girl and Pris Stratton as a Nexus-6; this is another example of the selective empathy that Deckard mentions in his conversation with Phil Resch. Rachael promises that if he goes to bed with her, she will retire the Stratton Nexus-6, which is an immense relief to Deckard, who acquiesces to her proposal.

After their tryst, the two leave the hotel and head to the suburbs of San Francisco. Rosen asks Deckard what his wife is like and he responds by stating that if he could, he would marry Rachael instead. When Rachael responds by stating that she is not alive, Deckard argues that '…really you are. Biologically. You're not made out of transistorized circuits like a false animal; you're an organic entity…' (Dick, 1968: 155). The implication here that Rachael is an organic, living entity regardless of her material construction is crucial, as it illuminates the possibility that meaningful existence can arise from non-traditional means. This statement also marks a significant departure for Deckard, as he attains here a level of empathy for the android 'other' and recognizes Rachael as another living being. Rachael functions as a mirror to Deckard's progression throughout the narrative and allows for his growing empathy and identification with the 'other' to be made apparent. Deckard resolves to quit bounty hunting after retiring the Batys. After coming to that resolution, Rachael reveals that she has been manipulating him with the intention of preventing him from retiring the other androids, for whom she seems to exhibit some empathy. Galvan notes that

‘…Rosen, the android who most pointedly calls Rick to account for his actions, shows real concern for the six escaped androids he has been commissioned to ‘retire’…’ (Galvan, 1997: 414).

This compassion for her fellow androids is revelatory, as it has been repeatedly stated that androids are incapable of caring for other androids. Galvan argues that, as a result of this revelation, it becomes apparent that ‘…what passes for empathy among humans derives far more from a cultural construction than from any categorical essence…’ (Galvan, 1997: 415). Rosen herself states that ‘…no bounty hunter has ever gone on… after being with me…’ (Dick, 1968: 156), with the exception of Phil Resch, whom Deckard found repugnant and devoid of empathy. Thus, Rachael forces bounty hunters to view her and other androids as empathic beings through these trysts. The fact that Resch remains unaffected by Rachael also shatters the narrative that humans are inherently empathic, as Resch remains entirely devoid of empathy for the androids. This is seen when he retires Luft without hesitation and leaves the corpse lying uncovered on the floor. Rosen states that she and Luft ‘…had been close, very close friends for almost two years…’ (Dick, 1968: 156), further disrupting the established propaganda espoused by bounty hunters like Resch that androids are incapable of caring about one another.

After being told by Rachael that she had been manipulating him with the intention of protecting the other androids, Deckard declares that he is going to park the car and kill her there and then. He is, however, incapable of doing so, as he states that he ‘…can’t do what Phil Resch said’ (Dick, 1968: 158). This again underscores the distinct difference between the two bounty hunters. Resch had advised Deckard to sleep with the android, then kill her. Deckard is incapable of doing this, as he has developed an

emotional bond with Rosen, a bond which she believes will prevent him from retiring the remaining androids as he now sees them as living entities. This theory of hers is soon put to the test, as Deckard heads to Isidore's apartment building to retire the remaining three androids. It is here that Deckard encounters a man who describes himself as Mercer, the central figure of the reality shown by the empathy boxes. This Mercer informs Deckard that his actions are necessary and warns him of '…the hard one of the three [androids]…' (Dick, 1968: 175) that is approaching him from behind. Deckard turns and sees an android that he initially mistakes for Rachael; this android being Pris. He fires on it and kills it before it can kill him. Tony Vinci argues that this act '…proves the human to be inhuman and undoes the 'human' part of his subjectivity… in killing the androids, Deckard performs in the flesh what the entire human culture performs ideologically: he sacrifices the android' (Vinci, 2014: 100). Deckard, in killing Pris, reaffirms that the androids are subalternated beings in the structural hierarchy of his society. While he does find it incredibly difficult to kill Pris, her nature as an android is what allows him to pull the trigger. He states that '…She – it – would have gotten me…' (Dick, 1968: 175). In mentally correcting his reference to Pris as a 'she', Deckard attempts to sever his ties with the androids and becomes again a remorseless implement of state-sanctioned violence against the androids. As Vinci argues, '…he kills them because he feels for and with them; he becomes unnatural…' (Vinci, 2014: 100). This unnatural separation from the empathy he had gained from Luft and Rachael can be seen when he kills Irmgard and Roy Baty. After killing Irmgard, Roy Baty '…let[s] out a cry of anguish' (Dick, 1968: 177). Deckard responds by stating that '…you loved her… and I loved Rachael. And the special loved the other Rachael' (Dick, 1968: 177). He then proceeds to shoot and kill Baty, fulfilling his contract.

His reference to loving Rachael in the past tense is an indication of the fugue state in which Deckard now finds himself and his unnatural ability to kill the androids despite ostensibly feeling for them and empathizing with them. The description of Deckard's ability to kill the androids by Vinci as 'unnatural' is especially apt, as it becomes apparent that Deckard's retiring of the androids is a symptom of a larger societal problem, compounded by state-sanctioned propaganda designed to reinforce the non-humanity of the androids. It is no coincidence, then, that Deckard is visited by a manifestation of Mercer before killing the final androids. Mercer can be seen as an extension of the state, with the purpose of reinforcing the empathic and emotional distance between individuals, while also compounding the divide between humans and androids. This is done by providing the human characters of the novel with some form of biological and emotional superiority that the androids cannot replicate, due to their inability to use the empathy boxes. Galvan states that 'Mercerism and the ideology of empathy that is its mainstay, far from appealing to innate human characteristics, function merely as the means by which the government controls an otherwise unwieldy populace' (Galvan, 1997: 416). As such, Deckard's visitation by Mercer before his final killings can be seen as a manifestation of his own indoctrination or programming by the state, or his social environment.

This is seen in the fact that Mercer, a supposed beacon of empathy and understanding, tells Deckard that 'what [he] is doing has to be done' (Dick, 1968: 144). His experiences with androids like Luft and Rachael go some distance towards a 'deprogramming' of his internalized hatred of the android 'other', though this is evidently not enough, as the manifestation of Mercer pushes Deckard to commit the unnatural act of murdering those for whom he has empathy. After Deckard retires the Batys, Isidore enters the room and begins to weep, as Deckard has also killed Pris,

the android with which Isidore was supposedly in love. This underscores a key difference between Deckard and Isidore. Whereas Deckard does come to possess some empathy for the androids, he is still capable of assuming the mantle of a state-sanctioned executioner. Isidore, on the other hand, is an inherently empathic figure who cannot help but feel the pain and fear of the androids as his own. His own experiences with the androids are discussed and contrasted against Deckard's at a later point in this chapter.

After his retiring of the androids, Deckard has a moment of reflection wherein he states '…I'm a scourge, like a famine or plague. Where I go the ancient curse follows. As Mercer said, I am required to do wrong. Everything I've done has been wrong from the start…' (Dick, 1968: 178). While Deckard is clearly shaken and angry due to his betrayal at the hands of Rachael Rosen, he remains a fundamentally changed person due to his experiences throughout the narrative. Due to his growing empathy for the androids, he comes to the realization that his actions have been, by his own human metric, wrong from the very beginning. The treatment of the androids again reflects unpleasant truths. For Deckard, it forces him to confront the reality that he is capable of going against his own instincts, and 'killing' beings that he views as, on some level, alive. Aaron Barlow argues that:

> The dangers androids represent, again, grow from the humans who constructed them, not from the androids themselves. This is a… "cruel deception," one whose cruelty is aimed at the androids, not their "victims." (Barlow, 2017).

The significance of this cruelty is apparent in the effect that the retirement of the androids has on Deckard. The androids, while dangerous and often devoid

of empathy, are manufactured products and are created to fulfil a purpose. When that purpose is no longer fulfilled, they are hunted down and retired without mercy. This reflects an uncaring, profit-driven society that requires people like Deckard to, as he says, ‘be required to do wrong’.

Isidore, in many ways the empathic heart of the narrative, states that he does not want to live near Deckard, after Deckard retires the androids. This implies a level of emotional decay that Deckard has undergone because of his acting against his own impulses. As such, the androids have served as mirrors which reflect Deckard’s awakening to the injustices of the subalternation of androids in the social climate of the text. This highlights the ongoing state-sanctioned brutality against these subalterns, as Deckard is encouraged by Mercer to go against his own desires regarding the retiring of the Nexus-6 model androids. The difference between Deckard and the androids is underscored here as well, as Deckard chooses to ultimately act against his own nature to fulfil his duty, whereas the androids are not depicted as being capable of making such a choice. They are inherently closed-off to the human/animal dynamic discussed earlier by Vinci and as such are capable only of expressing empathy for other androids. This exclusion is reinforced after the retiring of the Batys, when Deckard tells the grief-stricken Isidore that ‘Androids are stupid…’ and that ‘Roy Baty couldn’t tell me from you…’ (Dick, 1968: 178), implying that androids perceive humans as interchangeable.

Deckard in the wasteland

Upon his return home from retiring the Batys, Deckard is greeted by his wife Iran, who states that the goat that he had purchased earlier in the novel has been pushed off

the roof to its death. It is made clear that the perpetrator of this act is Rachael Rosen, though her reasoning is left muddled. Deckard states that '…she had what seemed to her a reason' and thinks to himself that it must be an '…android reason' (Dick, 1968: 179). Whether Rachael murders the goat out of jealousy or a desire to avenge her fallen android comrades, the conception of the android as a placid and logical creature is again disrupted. Galvan argues that '…the reader begins to surmise… that what passes for 'empathy' among humans derives far more from a cultural construction than from any categorical essence…' (Galvan, 1997: 415). As such, Rachael's reasoning for murdering the goat becomes obsolete, as the act itself is what disrupts the human-centric monopoly on empathy and 'humanity'. Whether Rachael acted out of jealousy or a desire for vengeance is moot, as the very act runs counter to the idea of an android as an emotionless creature devoid of emotion or desires.

After this revelation, Deckard gets back in his car and begins to travel to the desolate wastelands surrounding the inhabited areas of the novel. Upon touching down and beginning his trek through the wastes, he thinks to himself: '…what I've done…that's become alien to me…in fact everything about me has become unnatural; I've become an unnatural self' (Dick, 1968: 182). The consequences of Deckard's actions throughout the novel begin to become apparent here. Through his final retiring of the Batys and Pris, he has reneged on his status as what his society would deem human. Deckard felt empathy towards the androids, yet he shot them dead regardless. This has resulted in Deckard becoming, as he puts it, an unnatural self; a human being without empathy. This is a consequence of Deckard's own internal struggle, between an essentially kind and empathic human nature and the ruthless and cold killer that the state has moulded him into. He then seemingly begins to hallucinate. First, he hallucinates a stone being thrown at him, followed by a hallucination of his own shadow

being Wilbur Mercer. When struck by this imaginary stone, Deckard experiences '…the first knowledge of absolute isolation and suffering…' (Dick, 1968: 183). Having had his 'social programming' and indoctrinated perceptions of the androids stripped away through his experiences throughout the text, Deckard is now experiencing the full weight of the isolation and emotional damage that has been caused due to his ruthless killing of the androids.

The blurring of the divide between Deckard and Mercer when Deckard mistakes his shadow for that of Mercer can be seen as an extension of Deckard's growing sense of inhumanity and 'other'-ness as a result of his actions. Perhaps he is attempting, through this merging with Mercer, to recover some aspect of himself that is undeniably human as Mercer is treated as the very symbol of those ideals. This idea of Deckard being confronted with the full weight of his isolation is reinforced again after he returns to his car, when he asks himself why the stone bothers him as much as it does. He remarks that it is, in fact, '…because [he did] it alone' (Dick, 1968: 184). Deckard finds himself thinking back to his time with Rachael and further illustrates the psychological damage of his disillusionment when he states that Rachael was '…correct about one thing; it did change me. But not in the way you predicted. A much worse way' (Dick, 1968: 186). The implication here could be that, while Deckard did develop a connection to the androids like Rachael wanted him to, this connection does not prevent him from retiring androids in the future. This can be seen when he states while in conversation with his secretary over video-communication that '…Rachael was wrong – I didn't have any trouble retiring them [the androids]' (Dick, 1968: 185). While Deckard does empathise with the androids, it can arguably be seen as an imperfect transformation, as he is left at the end of his transformation with no resolution or way to consolidate what he has experienced. He has, in essence, had the blinkers of his

original perception of androids ripped off and is forced to confront the reality that he is still capable of killing them even though they are more-than-machine.

This sudden lack of clarity and purpose can be seen when Deckard returns to his wife Iran, after finding what he believes to be a biologically alive toad in the desert. After Iran reveals a switch on the toad's stomach, indicating that the toad is in fact electric, Deckard comes to an important realization, when he states that 'The spider Mercer gave the chickenhead, Isidore, it probably was artificial too. But it doesn't matter. The electric things have their lives, too. Paltry as those lives are' (Dick, 1968: 191). Deckard seems to find some measure of clarity regarding his perspective on the androids here. He comes to terms with their position in the hierarchy of animals, humans and machines. By stating that they have their own 'paltry' lives, Deckard affirms that they are more-than-machine, but still less-than-human. Sherryl Vint in *Speciesism and Species Being in 'Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?'* argues that 'What matters is not whether the animals are 'real' or 'simulated,' but rather how we ethically treat the other, what use we make of any differences that are found' (Vint, 2017: 123). Crucially, Deckard underscores a key similarity that androids and humans share in his conversation with Iran, when he states that his assignment '…kept carrying [him] along, until finally [he] got to the Batys and then suddenly [he] didn't have anything to do… That part was worse… [he] couldn't stop because there would be nothing left after I stopped' (Dick, 1968: 192).

This preoccupation with the task at hand and the desolation after that task is complete, can be seen as symptomatic of Deckard's own 'programming' by his environment. In his single-minded pursuit of his state-assigned task, Deckard himself becomes robotic, even going so far as to overstep his own emotional understanding of the androids

when he kills them. This machine-like pursuit of his goal strips Deckard of his humanity, resulting his mental break after the task is completed, as he is incapable of fathoming what to do next. The key difference between humans and androids is shown in the relationship between Deckard and Iran. She tells Deckard that '…[she's] just damn glad to have you come back home where you ought to be' and kisses him, causing his face to '…[light] up' (Dick, 1968: 192). The warmth of this marital relationship, absent earlier in the text, now serves to affirm the power of authentic bonds between humans. This is something that androids can, at best, weakly imitate. Iran reinforces this bond when, after Deckard retires to sleep, she orders electronic accessories for the toad, telling the salesman: 'I want it to work perfectly. My husband is devoted to it' (Dick, 1968: 193). This act of care can be seen as an example of the care and attention between humans that share an emotional bond, as Iran seeks to care for the electric animal in order to please her husband. This is a dynamic that androids cannot fathom, as they are entirely excluded from the empathy dynamic of animals and humans. This exemplifies yet again Vinci's idea that '…the animal must be positioned as the android's opposite: it becomes the transcendental marker of humanity's unique ability to feel for or with each other' (Vinci, 2014: 93).

Isidore

J. R. Isidore can be seen as the other truly humanist character in the text and is arguably the deuteragonist, as his experiences through the novel are often narrated from his perspective. He can be seen, as Tony Vinci argues, as '…a kind of anti-Deckard. Dick allows J.R. to demonstrate a profound sensitivity to the pain of others, but his subjectivity is heavily moulded by the ideologies of anthropocentric humanism as conditioned through Mercerism… empathy toward the animal is the primary signifier

of the human; therefore, J.R.'s vulnerability toward the animal might be read as a profoundly anthropocentric act (Vinci, 2014: 103). This is not to indicate that Deckard is not an empathic character, but rather that Isidore, due to his designation as a subaltern, is faced with societal pressures that Deckard is not. As such, he must approximate and 'strive towards' being what he deems authentically human. Isidore, known as a 'chickenhead' due to his failure to pass base-level mental faculty assessments, can be seen as similar to Chester Rosen, a character that is subalternated in *We Can Build You*. Due to his designation as a 'chickenhead', Isidore muses that '…upon him the contempt of three planets [Earth and Mars are the only planets directly referenced] descended' (Dick, 1968: 12). Both of these characters are inherently empathic and kind at heart yet are mistreated by the world around them (Isidore more so than Deckard). Vinci raises the point that 'J.R. is often cited as Dick's archetypal figure of empathic openness, a position that places him somewhere between the human and the posthuman' (Vinci, 2014: 102). The analysis of Isidore that follows incorporates a discussion regarding Isidore's status as a 'dark mirror', as he reflects the social ills around him through his oppression and isolation. Despite his socially undesirable designation, Isidore works as a truck driver for a '…false animal repair firm' where his employer, Hannibal Sloat, '…[accepts] him as human' (Dick, 1968: 12).

Isidore, much like Deckard, is an important character because he offers a unique insight into the world of the text. Deckard sheds light on the capacity of the androids to approximate humanity and underscores the fundamental differences between androids and humans. Isidore reveals more of the consequences of World War Terminus, the catastrophic nuclear event that forces stellar colonization to begin and which socially stratifies the remnants of humanity. Those who choose to '[Loiter] on

Earth potentially [find themselves] abruptly classed as biologically unacceptable, a menace to the pristine heredity of the race' (Dick, 1968: 11). This social exclusion that Isidore is forced to suffer through further disrupts the rather saccharine depiction of humans as inherently empathic beings in the text, as the treatment of Isidore and other 'specials' like him is cruel and inhumane. Whereas other, non-'special' humans are allowed to emigrate to colonies on other planets, people like Isidore are forced to remain on an Earth that is slowly dying and being consumed by what Isidore refers to as 'kipple'. This 'kipple' is described by Isidore as '…useless objects, like junk mail or match folders after you use the last match or gum wrappers or yesterday's homeopape [newspaper]' and argues that '…kipple reproduces itself' (Dick, 1968: 41).

This kipple can be seen as the ever-increasing force of entropy that is slowly consuming Earth after World War Terminus. This is a force that Isidore needs to contend with as he '…[lives] alone in [a] deteriorating, blind building of a thousand uninhabited apartments, which, like all its counterparts, fell, day by day, into greater entropic ruin' (Dick, 1968: 13). While Deckard does see the entropy around him, he is not forced to contend with it in as direct a manner as Isidore. Through Isidore's designation as a 'special' and his ensuing social excommunication, we are able to see the growing entropic force as it affects Isidore in a first-hand manner. As such, Isidore functions as a mirror to the accelerating disintegration of the remnants of human settlement on Earth and the social stratification that occurs as a result. Due to his social exclusion and 'chickenhead' status, Isidore is in many ways as isolated from the empathy dynamic of the text as the androids. A key distinction that must be drawn, however, is the fact that Isidore yearns to connect with his fellow human beings, as seen by his usage of the empathy box and his willingness to risk death or harm through its use, as he states that '…he'd take the risk. He always had before' (Dick, 1968: 16).

Isidore also escapes his social isolation, if temporarily, through his TV set, which displays only the government-approved public access channel. Jill Galvan argues that 'Television, which Isidore anxiously clings to as a surrogate for human interaction, offers the individual a similar 'fix', in that its screen simulations salve - but only temporarily – the anguish of social dislocation' (Galvan, 1997: 417).

This desire to escape his isolation and exclusion is seen when Isidore first encounters the androids, as he hears a television set blaring in the supposedly empty apartment building in which he resides. His eagerness for social contact is seen when he remarks that he must not '…let him know I'm a chickenhead. If he finds out I'm a chickenhead he won't talk to me…' (Dick, 1968: 16). What can be seen here is one of the differences between Isidore and Deckard. While Deckard benefits from the bond that he shares with his wife and co-workers, Isidore is forced to live a much more solitary and excluded life, divorced from meaningful social interactions with others. This results in his willingness to use the empathy box despite the dangers and his eagerness to greet the new tenant in his building. His greeting of this new tenant who is later revealed to be one of the escaped androids highlights his struggle to socially connect with others, but also indicates that he is not quite so disconnected as one might think. When first conversing with this escaped android, he notices that she is imperceptibly different from what he has come to know as human, as he remarks that '…now that her initial fear had diminished, something else had begun to emerge from her. Something more strange. And, he thought, deplorable. A coldness. Like, he thought, a breath from the vacuum between inhabited worlds' (Dick, 1968: 42). Isidore is capable here of identifying something about this android (named Pris, perhaps in another nod to the cold and 'machine-like' character in *We Can Build You*) that marks her as distinct and

separate from other ‘humans’; something cold and lifeless. This substantiates the idea that Isidore is not quite as oblivious as he may seem, despite his infirmity.

As mentioned previously, Isidore possesses a capacity to empathize with and feel for the pain of others. After leaving the apartment building, Isidore goes to work and is instructed to pick up a faulty model of artificial cat that needs to be repaired. While driving the cat to the ‘vet’, Isidore experiences sincere empathy for what he believes to be an artificial animal. He states that ‘even though I know rationally it's faked, the sound of a false animal burning out its drive-train and power supply ties my stomach in knots’ (Dick, 1968: 45). This empathy for an animal that Isidore believes is false is important, as it indicates that he is a genuinely empathic character who cannot help but share the pain of others around him. Vint argues that Isidore is ‘…the only character to demonstrate concern for animals as something other than commodities…’ and that ‘…[he] is unable to suspend his emotional response and work out logically whether it is reasonable’ (Vint, 2017: 117). Isidore’s empathy stems from his status as a socially maligned subaltern in the text. Vint refers to him as ‘…[occupying] a marginal ethical position in the novel’ (Vint, 2017: 117). Due to said position, perhaps Isidore cannot help but connect with and feel for others that exist outside of the pre-established and anthropocentric social hierarchy that he and others like him find themselves excluded from. Here we find again one of the key differences between Deckard and Isidore: while Deckard is forced to come to terms with his connections with several of the androids and is left disillusioned by the end of the novel, he remains a firm part of said social hierarchy and is soundly commended for his efforts. Isidore remains an outsider, with none of the social benefits or connections that Deckard often reluctantly takes part in.

Isidore's remarkable and often unexpectedly astute observations continue during his drive to the electric animal repair shop. He notes with a sense of '…baffled and impotent rage…' (Dick,1968: 45) that Buster Friendly, the most popular post-war radio host is yet again decrying the virtues of Mercerism, a belief system with which Isidore is strongly aligned. This is no surprise, considering the aforementioned empathic nature of the character, but his observation that the radio host and Mercerism are in competition for '…[their] minds… [their] psychic selves…' (Dick,1968: 46) is rather astute and again highlights how Isidore functions as a mirror to the world around him. He is, perhaps, not entirely capable of discerning the reasoning behind this conflict, but he does illustrate through this observation the fragmented and controlling nature of the society in which he lives.

Isidore's place in this fragmented society is crucial to an analysis of his character. As a 'chickenhead', he is relegated to an outsider's position in human society. Isidore is biologically human, but remains, always, a 'chickenhead' first. In this sense, he occupies a similar position as the androids, as he is seemingly human but failing in many ways to conform to the idealized perception of what 'human' is, as defined by the society that Isidore and Deckard belong to. Vinci describes Isidore's status as highlighting '…the traumatic nature of losing the human and existing within the unformed posthuman space of radical vulnerability' (Vinci, 2014: 15). Upon his return from his place of work, he brings a selection of foodstuffs to Pris, whom he does not yet know to be an android. Upon being asked about a certain item, he responds that it is 'made with soy bean whey. I wish I had some –' followed by a sense of embarrassment when he says 'It used to be eaten with beef gravy' (Dick, 1968: 96). Pris responds to this by saying '…That's the sort of slip an android makes' (Dick, 1968: 96). This seemingly innocuous exchange affirms the fact that while Isidore is

biologically human, he occupies a similar social space to the androids. He is allowed to approximate humanity, but never fully accepted as authentically human. Ironically, Isidore's empathy for animals both biological and electronic establishes him as one of the most human characters in the text, if one were to go by the metric that one's humanity increases as one's empathy for others does. Isidore's interaction with the androids is discussed in detail, but it is worth establishing now how Isidore becomes something of a supreme subaltern, as even the androids assume a dominant role when they move into the apartment building. Vinci describes this as a 'strange reversal' and argues that '…J.R. becomes the 'human technology' that exists to serve his mechanical masters, blipping out of subjective existence when not directly involved with the other' (Vinci, 2014: 15).

This total subalternation is seen when Roy and Irmgard Baty make their way to Pris's apartment. At this stage in the text, Deckard has already retired Luft, Polokov and Garland and the Batys have decided to stick together with Pris for the sake of safety. When Roy suggests that Pris move in with Isidore, as he can confer a '…certain amount of protection', Pris retorts that '…[she's] not going to live with a chickenhead' (Dick, 1968: 101). This derision of Isidore, despite his status as the only biological human in the room, indicates and reinforces the idea that even amongst the socially maligned androids, he remains a supreme subaltern who is consistently relegated to the social and hierarchical margins of any given situation. During this conversation, Isidore inadvertently sheds a blinding light on the reality of Deckard's profession, a reality that Deckard himself is forced to confront throughout his hunt for the androids. Isidore resolves to stay home with Pris and perhaps commission one of his colleagues to fashion him a weapon that he can use to slay bounty hunters. Isidore imagines these bounty hunters as '…something merciless that [carries] a printed list and a gun,

that [moves] machine-like through the flat, bureaucratic job of killing. A thing without emotions, or even a face; a thing that if killed got replaced immediately by another resembling it' (Dick, 1968: 102). This imagined depiction of a bounty hunter is remarkably astute when viewed from the perspective of the android (or, indeed, the subaltern). Deckard is the second bounty hunter sent after the androids and he has already carried out the bureaucratic job of killing several of them.

This functions as another glimpse into the government-controlled nature of human society in the text, as Deckard is forced to reckon with and even consider abandoning his humanity to achieve the goal set out for him by his place of employment. In this depiction of a bounty hunter, Isidore reverses the government narrative and places the mantle of a ruthless, machine-like killer squarely on the shoulders of the government representatives sent to retire the androids, instead of on the androids themselves. This is because of Isidore's innate sense of empathy for those around him, be they biological or artificial. Isidore cannot help but empathize with the plight of the androids and views anyone capable of carrying out this rote task of killing '…until everyone real and alive [has] been shot' (Dick, 1968: 102) as being the truly inhuman figure. Isidore functions again as a mirror to the often-veiled social realities of the text, as his perception of the world around him allows us to view bounty hunters and the society that employs them in a more critical light. Through Isidore, the justification for the retirement of the androids is critiqued and found to be wanting.

Isidore continues this unintentional exploration of said social realities in his conversation with Pris, when she mocks him by recounting her story and stating that she and her cohort are insane and asking Isidore if he really thinks that bounty hunters exist. When he states, relieved, that he '…didn't think it was true' (Dick, 1968: 104),

he elaborates that, within the supposedly humanist and empathic societal framework in which the government operates, '…things like that don't happen' (Dick, 1968: 104). Pris responds that '…if you're not human, then it's all different'. This is a crucial statement that Isidore has inadvertently prised out of Pris, as it alludes to the reality that the definition of what is considered 'human' is dynamic and in-flux and is used by the Earth government of the text to maintain societal control by subalternating the androids and presenting them as a social menace that must be controlled. In doing so, the government is able to maintain a human-centric ethos that allows for some level of post-war social cohesion. One of the primary factors that establishes Isidore as such a crucial aspect of the text is the fact that, as mentioned previously, he is a human subaltern, a 'special' relegated to societal margins. After realizing that the trio are androids, Isidore asks 'What does it matter to me?... I'm a special; they don't treat me very well either' (Dick, 1968: 106). In saying this, Isidore maintains some sense of solidarity with the androids, however faint.

This allows him to view the androids with a different perspective to bounty hunters like Deckard and Resch, or even ordinary humans like his employer, Hannibal Sloat. Isidore states that he '…[wishes] he had an IQ like you [the androids] have; then I could pass the test, I wouldn't be a chickenhead. I think you're very superior; I could learn a lot from you' (Dick, 1968: 106). This statement can be construed as a most likely unintentional rebellion against the human-centric ethos of the society in the text, as Isidore is willing to admit that, in some ways, the androids are superior to him. Much like in his depiction of the spectral bounty hunter that haunts his imagination, Isidore upends the established hierarchy by asserting that the androids do, in fact, have something beyond physical labour and hollow companionship to offer. While Isidore is

a subalternated human, he remains fully and authentically human by the metrics used in the text and his statements towards the androids are strengthened by this fact.

It should be noted that while Isidore, by his very nature, is capable of seeing past the social malignment of the androids, his treatment at their hands remains very telling of the fact that they are not quite as superior and worthy of emulation as Isidore believes. After assisting them against the bounty hunters, the androids begin to exploit Isidore, ordering him to 'bring the rest of [Pris's] property up' to the apartment (Dick, 1968: 132). Isidore remarks to himself that he is, '…for the first time in his dull life, useful' (Dick, 1968: 133). This is telling, as it is indicative of the social reality of exploitation that exists for specials like Isidore; be it at the hands of the government or the androids with which he identifies, Isidore seems destined to be exploited and subalternated. Through this treatment, the idea of the androids as a noble class of oppressed faux humans becomes substantially more complicated, as they seem perfectly content to exploit Isidore as they themselves have been exploited. The effect of this exploitation becomes apparent as Isidore realizes that he has become dependent on the androids for the social validation that he has been missing throughout his life. Isidore realizes that 'In the absence of the Batys and Pris he found himself fading out, becoming strangely like the inert television set which he had just unplugged' (Dick, 1968: 133). Vinci touches on this idea, arguing that 'While 'J.R. Isidore' is lost, he also merges with unknowable otherness, becoming both radically passive and radically powerful' (Vinci, 2014: 104). In this subjugation, Isidore becomes again a mirror to the realities around him; a blank screen upon which the reality of the androids is conveyed. What their treatment of Isidore reveals is that while they are not the ruthless and emotionless killing-machines that the government conveys them as, they are also not empathic and misunderstood 'others', unwilling to exploit social hierarchies for their own gain.

Isidore remains a supreme subaltern here and in doing so casts a light on the often-callous indifference to life that the androids have. Isidore vaguely perceives this power dynamic, as he thinks to himself: '…they're exploiting me sort of. But [I do not] care. They're still good friends to have' (Dick, 1968: 133). This desire by Isidore to maintain the 'friendships' that he has formed with the androids can be seen as indicative of the emotional damage caused by his social isolation as a 'special'.

Upon his return to the apartment, Isidore finds a spider crawling through the dust, which is an incredibly rare event. When he shows it to the androids, Pris and the Batys resolve to torture the creature by cutting off its legs. This is the catalyst for a transformative event that Isidore undergoes. Upon Irmgard's removal of scissors from her purse, Isidore experiences a '…weird terror' (Dick, 1968: 134) and implores them not to harm the spider. While this occurs, Buster Friendly airs an exposé revealing that Mercer and by extension Mercerism is fraudulent, created by Hollywood on a cheap sound stage. Vinci describes this twin assault on Isidore's very identity as being responsible for the '…dissolution of not only his human self but also his entire environment-world' (Vinci, 2014: 105). The cruelty of the androids can be seen as a direct counter to Isidore's prior assertion that the androids are 'good friends to have' (Dick, 1968: 133). Any romantic notions of the androids being misunderstood or misguided are swiftly stripped away, as the '…inhuman cruelty breaks his notion of personhood as well as his conception of the divine category of animal' (Vinci, 2014: 105). This, coupled with the revelation that Mercerism is a sham, results in Isidore becoming disconnected and uncoupled from his most basic view of the world, causing him to experience a mental break from reality, as he perceives the overwhelming force of 'kipple' spreading throughout the apartment and destroying everything therein. Isidore remarks to himself that '…the spider is gone; Mercer is gone' (Dick, 1968: 138),

thus conflating the two and reinforcing the fundamental link between Mercerism and empathy for animals. The androids, again, establish themselves as fundamentally divorced from this dynamic when they fail to understand the source of Isidore's anguish, offering to '…pay [him] what that… Sydney's catalogue[4] says' (Dick, 1968: 137). While the androids can approximate human behaviour and are certainly not mindless automata, they are entirely incapable of understanding the connection that humans in the text feel towards animals.

Conclusion

While the worlds of *We Can Build You* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* may seem distant from one another, this chapter has shown how Dick makes use of manufactured products to highlight the underlying social malaise that afflicts these societies. The simulacra of *We Can Build You* are represented in a more technologically advanced state here, but their narrative function remains the same. The androids are created to fulfil a purpose and are retired when they refuse to fulfil that purpose. The complications that arise from a manufactured product refusing to complete its task arise throughout the narrative, as Deckard is forced to grapple with the consequences of his extermination of the androids. This allows the androids to reflect the social reality of the narrative, as the androids are retired once they are unable or unwilling to continue with the mining operations for which they were designed. In the same way that the creation of the simulacra reflects the late-capitalist need for increased profits over ethical behaviour in *We Can Build You*, the androids are exterminated when they are no longer profitable with little consideration being

[4] A catalogue detailing prices for biological animals.

given as to the ethical questions raised by these products agentively refusing to complete their assigned tasks. Isidore, while human, is a ‘chickenhead’ and is thus treated as lesser-than due to his inability to conform to what the state deems acceptable for inter-planetary colonisation. This highlights the reality that the hierarchy of this society is willing to isolate and exclude individuals like Isidore that are not deemed useful enough. While he himself is not a manufactured product, his isolation and desperate need for companionship is.

Chapter 4:

The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch

> ‘You learn to get by from day to day. You never think in longer terms. Just until dinner or until time for bed; very finite intervals and tasks and pleasures. Escapes.’
> (Philip K. Dick, *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*)

Philip K. Dick’s *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* is a break from the norm established by the two other texts analysed in this dissertation. Both *We Can Build You* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* follow the creation and consequences of artificial, constructed humanoids and their position as reflections of darker social realities. *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* does not make use of these constructed humanoids, but continues in the same vein as the other texts by having other devices, such as drugs, climate catastrophe and rampant late-stage capitalism function as reflectors of less immediately obvious social truths in the world of the text. Following the characters of Barney Mayerson and Leo Bulero, *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* focuses on the use and proliferation of two separate but similar types of hallucinatory drugs, Can-D and Chew-Z. These characters are involved in the production and marketing of ‘Perky-Pat layouts’: dioramas used by those who consume Can-D to transport themselves mentally into the world depicted by the dioramas. This chapter will focus primarily on the use of these products to escape from the harsh world of the text. Both the drugs and the layouts are manufactured products designed to further the ends of the capitalists who benefit from their continued use. As such, the ways in which they reflect social realities in the text will be discussed at length. The focus on escapism through drug use and the continued profiting from said escapism is a key focus of this chapter.

The world of the text, much like *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* and *We Can Build You,* is an unpleasant one, ravaged by global warming and '…too hot for human endurance' (Dick, 1964: 6) without special technological interventions. Due to this climate apocalypse, many humans are forced to emigrate to Mars to live squalid and arduous lives as Martian colonists. In order to cope with the crushing isolation and suffering induced by this planetary migration, along with the deeply ingrained social inequality present in the society of the text, the colonists use the drug Can-D which allows them to 'translate' into a hallucinatory world created with the aid of 'Perky-Pat layouts' hallucinatory aids that assist them in mentally recreating an idealized version of American life in the mid-20th century. The escapism that users of this drug submit to can be seen as desirable since the society in which they live views them as expendable colonists, due to their lack of social or financial leverage. Indeed, this is a society where people are able to seek out 'Evolutionary Clinics' that allow them to accelerate their evolutionary processes resulting in increased intelligence or creativity for a hefty price, further deepening the social divide between those who have the means to afford such treatments and those who do not.

This 'translation' and the people profiting from enabling it is one of the main ideas to be discussed in this chapter, along with the character of Palmer Eldritch. Eldritch is a business competitor to Bulero who has recently returned from an interstellar voyage and his introduction of Chew-Z, a more potent alternative to Can-D that seems to grant Eldritch godlike powers over those caught within his thrall is the focus of the narrative. Eldritch can be seen as a great corrupting force, as he uses Chew-Z to isolate and trap its users in a stagnant world of decay. This is reminiscent of the 'tomb world' that J.R. Isidore experiences in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. Darko Suvin in *P.K. Dick's Opus: Artifice as Refuge and World View* relates Eldritch to the idea of late

capitalism in the text, as ‘The Palmer Eldritch type of super-corporative capitalism is in fact a new religion, stronger and more pervasive than the classical transcendental ones, because ‘God promises eternal life. We [Chew-Z manufacturers] can deliver it’.’ Suvin goes on to argue that while Eldritch does occupy the position of figurehead of a new corporatized religion, ‘…What [this religion] delivers… is not only a new thing under the Sun but also false, activating the bestial or alien inhumanity within man’ (Suvin, 1975: 14). Indeed, Umberto Rossi, in *The Twisted Worlds of Philip K. Dick,* describes the difference between Can-D and Chew-Z as being the fact that ‘Can-D allows its users to *share* a pleasant reality of Earth as it was before global heating forced people to emigrate to Mars; Chew-Z sends those who use it to different subjective worlds [these worlds are presided over by Eldritch, who has ultimate power within them]’ (Rossi, 2011: 178). These substances, along with the characters of Eldritch, Mayerson and Bulero form the foundation of this chapter’s analysis, as they best exemplify Dick’s usage of devices that reflect darker social realities.

Mayerson

The character of Barney Mayerson is introduced early in the text and is one of the two main characters that the narrative follows, along with Leo Bulero. Mayerson is intimately connected to the thematic presence of mental health struggles in the text, as he carries around a portable psychiatrist known as Dr Smile. Evan Lampe in *Philip K. Dick and the World We Live In* describes this device as something that ‘…can dispense therapy as needed but also help with day-to-day life’ (Lampe, 2015: 209). This depersonalization of mental health issues and treatment is similarly present in *We Can Build You* through the quasi-industrialization of the mental health process due to the sheer volume of patients. In *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*

depersonalization is made evident through the use of Dr Smile, an automated and mechanical approach to the traditionally sensitive and deeply personal topic of mental health. When Mayerson activates the device, Dr Smile refers to him as 'Mr Bayerson', an incorrect spelling and pronunciation of his name (Dick, 1964: 1). This can be seen as indicative of the continued commercialization and automation of mental health practices we saw in *We Can Build You*. *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* also progresses the idea of rampant and unchecked capitalism and consumerism, as the idea of the commercialization of the Martian colonists' plight through escapist drug-use indicates thorough disregard for moral or ethical treatment of people. A great deal of profit is made out of Martian colonial suffering, without any actual meaningful effort to improve colonists' living conditions. Indeed, even the United Nations acts as a mere mediating force between the great capitalist interests of the text. Bulero, the head of Perky-Pat Layouts and thus the chief beneficiary of illicit Can-D sales is able to get the Secretary of the United Nations on the phone in an attempt to encourage U.N. action against Eldritch, for monetary reasons. Eldritch's status as an 'Ubermensch' of sorts is referred to here, when Bulero thinks to himself that '…they [The U.N.] managed to take forceful steps when it came to him [Bulero] but in connection with Palmer Eldritch…that…is something else again' (Dick, 1964: 11). As seen so often before in Dick's work, the profit incentive trumps the needs of people.

The text opens with Mayerson in a post-bender state of disrepair. He awakens next to his new assistant, Roni Fugate and immediately begins to consult his portable psychologist for assistance. The text's unique approach to mental health is immediately apparent, when it becomes clear that Mayerson has received his 'draft notice', informing him that he is to be sent to Mars as one of the colonists for the remainder of his life. While the living conditions on Mars are discussed in more detail

when we see Mayerson eventually arrive there, it must be made immediately clear that they are so horrific and alienating that they are the cause of the use of Can-D and the Perky-Pat layouts to ease the process of 'translation'. This is done with the ultimate intention of promoting escapism from the harsh living conditions on the planet. Fugate asks Mayerson if 'he [Dr Smile] …has made [Mayerson] sick enough?' (Dick, 1964:4), indicating that the counterintuitive purpose of the portable psychiatrist is indeed to make the patient *more* mentally unwell, instead of less so, with the intention of making them unsuitable for the draft.

This draft is an initiative instituted by the United Nations to 'encourage' Martian colonization and can be seen as akin to a military draft. Upon receiving one's papers, one has no choice but to relocate to the harsh and demoralizing planet. This functions as an indicator of the social stratification in the text. More financially and socially privileged characters like Bulero are in no danger of being drafted, due to their influence and can often use said influence to prevent their employees or associates from being drafted. This introduction to Mayerson also establishes the idea of certain humans being more evolutionarily 'advanced' than others, in the text. Mayerson is a 'precog', meaning that he has a limited ability to see into the future and Bulero is someone who spends '…all his time at… German E-Therapy clinics' (Dick, 1964: 5), a practice that speeds up the evolution of individuals. In Bulero's case, his evolutionary therapy has made him more intelligent. This idea of evolutionary therapy being available for a price highlights again the reality of capitalist advancement in the text. In a world where temperatures outside are unliveable due to global warming, one's position in society is determined by one's apartment number (with lower being better and more prestigious), social position and personal wealth. The presence of both precogs and evolutionarily advanced individuals in the novel establishes a clear

hierarchy in the society of the text and reflects the deeply unequal nature of the society described in it.

Social stratification

This preoccupation with status in society is exemplified again in a conversation between Mayerson's ex-wife Emily's new husband, Richard Hnatt and another businessman on a commute, as they discuss Hnatt trying to sell Mayerson's ex-wife's new ceramics to Mayerson as potential new products for Perky Pat layouts. The idea of one's apartment building influencing one's social status and prestige is seen when the man states that Mayerson, after getting his wife pregnant, '…elected to divorce his wife and let her move', instead of accepting the decision of the board of directors of his 'conapt' [apartment] building to expel both of them. This valuing of the social prestige of living in a lower-situated apartment building over one's own wife and child emphasizes the preoccupation with how one is perceived in a broader society and how familial ties and obligations are dissolved under a late capitalist system so preoccupied with status. This acts as another example of a 'dark mirror' in the text, as it highlights an unpleasant social reality. It is the socially 'correct' choice to abandon one's family to retain a lower apartment number and through that, higher social status. The idea of this being the correct choice is seen when the businessman, to whom Hnatt is speaking, states that Mayerson '…decided he made a mistake…', but that said mistake was '…a natural mistake, though; for God's sake, what wouldn't you and I give to have an apt in 33 or even 34?' (Dick, 1964: 8). This is indicative of the broader social dissolution of familial ties and can arguably be said to set the stage for the intense loneliness and solipsism of the 'finite subjective realities' that Mayerson and Bulero - and others like them - undergo after ingesting Chew-Z.

The social hierarchy established through the presence of these evolutionary therapy clinics is shown through a conversation between Leo Bulero and the Secretary of the U.N., shortly after Mayerson rejects Hnatt's ceramic pots. Bulero is addressing Hepburn-Gilbert, the Secretary, with the intention of inciting action against Palmer Eldritch, as he sees the latter as a threat to both the stability of the Sol system and his own business prospects. Bulero thinks to himself that the U.N. '…would drag their feet, not act against Eldritch unless and until Leo Bulero made some move to curtail his Can-D shipments' and remarks to himself that Hepburn-Gilbert is a '…dark-skinned sneaky little unevolved politician' (Dick, 1964: 11). What is critical to note here is the equivalence of race and evolutionary status. Bulero degradingly refers to the Secretary as both 'dark-skinned' and 'unevolved'. This reinforces the idea that there is a great deal of social and hierarchical stratification because of the evolutionary therapy, to the extent that it forms the basis for a similar level of derision as is often expressed by racist ideologies towards individuals that they deem racially 'inferior'. If one is 'unevolved', then one is worth less as an individual than someone who is 'evolved'. Bulero is well-aware of his social status, as he informs Mayerson that '…because I take that E-Therapy I've got a huge frontal lobe; I'm practically a precog myself, I'm so advanced' (Dick, 1964: 12). This idea of evolution being 'for sale' to those with the net worth to afford it instead of being made readily available to the masses can be seen as a dark reflection of uncomfortable social realities in the text. The social distance between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' continues to grow, as those with the wealth to afford it are able to make themselves biologically superior (more intelligent, stronger, faster) than those who are unable to afford such therapies.

Crucially, however, it must be noted that this hierarchy is not as simple as one may at first assume. Prejudice against evolved individuals is also present and can take the

form of a similar level of derision that Bulero expresses for the ‘unevolved’ politician. Two examples of this present themselves early in the text. Firstly, when Richard Hnatt, Emily’s new husband manages to sell off her ceramics to Eldritch’s representative, he immediately phones her and excitedly informs her that he has been given enough money to arrange ‘E-Therapy for both of us’, to which his wife responds: ‘I’m not sure I want to evolve, when it comes right down to it… I don’t want that hair all over me. And I don’t want to have my head expand’ (Dick, 1964: 21). This reticence when provided with the opportunity to seek evolutionary therapy is telling, as it indicates that there is a certain level of prejudice and disgust levelled towards those who are ‘evolved’. This can also be seen in a conversation between Bulero and Mayerson’s assistant, Roni Fugate, when she almost refers to Bulero as a ‘bubblehead’ by accident. This is perhaps an inverse of the term ‘chickenhead’ used in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*). This slur stems from the engorged frontal lobe that occurs when one becomes intellectually evolved through artificial means. The presence of such a term highlights a general and perhaps widely shared disdain for those who have undergone such therapy, from those who have not and for reasons that are their own, will not. Such derision for those who have ‘evolved’ can be seen as indicative of a simmering social resentment for those with the means to make use of such clinics, which complicates the view of the social structure of the text as being purely one-sided in terms of prejudice.

Can-D and life on Mars

The practice of taking Can-D is worth examining in more detail. Bulero, in conversation with one of his secretaries, remarks that it is '…great stuff and no wonder it's banned. It's like religion; Can-D is the religion of the colonists…One plug of it…and…no more hovel. No more frozen methane. It provides a reason for living' (Dick, 1964: 15). The idea of Can-D being 'the religion of the colonists' is an important one, as it is a religion of escapism and avoidance of reality. The ideas of solipsism, escape and spiritual destitution are prevalent throughout the text, as the Martian colonists find themselves devoid of any meaningful social interaction or sense of community and thus must turn to drugs like Can-D and later, Chew-Z in order to escape to a sense of normality**.** The primary difference between these drugs (that becomes more apparent as Chew-Z use becomes more common) is that Can-D, while an unhealthy method of escape, does intertwine its users in a fantasy wherein they are 'together'. It is an inherently communal experience. This is similar to what the American 'hippy' movement saw in the use of psychedelic drugs, an opportunity for greater spiritual and social unity. Chew-Z, however, traps its users in a solipsistic nightmare world from which one can never fully awaken, as reality becomes questionable after the first consumption of the drug**.**

This state of affairs reflects the greater spiritual and social collapse of the text, as the confluence of late capitalism and its establishment of social hierarchies and the increasing isolation brought about by planetary colonization brings about conditions favourable to widespread drug abuse and, indeed, the near deification of those drugs. This can be seen in the case of Chicken Pox Prospects, a small settlement on Mars where we see the first use of Can-D and the effects that it has on the characters using

it. Sam Regan, the main focal point of the first chapter focused on this settlement, remarks upon seeing the Martian landscape: ‘How miserable the upstairs looked today…Dreary’ (Dick, 1964: 22). The harsh and inhuman conditions on Mars are emphasized here, along with the compulsive need for some form of escapism. This escapism takes the form of using Can-D to ‘translate’ oneself into Perky-Pat layouts, thus assuming the life of an individual living in those layouts. This idea of translation is referred to by Regan as ‘…the miracle of translation – the near-sacred moment in which the miniature artifacts of the layout no longer merely represented Earth but *became* Earth’ (Dick, 1964: 23). Regan thinks to himself that ‘His layout lacked the automatic garage-door opener that both Schein and Tod had; he was considerably behind them’ (Dick, 1964: 23). This preoccupation with such minor objects can be seen as a stark reminder of the dire living conditions on Mars, along with the banality of the colonists’ imagination. The escape sought after through Can-D is tainted by the capitalist belief that one must ‘keep up’ financially and materially with one’s neighbours. This is an arguably undesirable state of being and yet it remains infinitely preferable, near godlike, to those living in squalor in the Martian colonies. Regan begins the process of translation with another colonist’s wife and is eventually joined in a communal experience by the remaining colonists. This consumption of Can-D highlights the desperate need for escape and communal interaction that the colonists experience and also serves as a contrast to the eventual use of Chew-Z, where the users are pulled into an isolated subjective reality with no apparent means of escape and no way to reach out or interact with another human being save, perhaps, Eldritch himself. Due to the fact that they began earlier, Sam and the other colonist (Fran) come out of the fugue state earlier. Regan remarks that ‘…he felt weak and afraid and bitterly sickened at the realization [that the drug is wearing off]…back to the hovel, to

the pit in which we twist and cringe like worms in a paper bag, huddled away from the daylight' (Dick, 1964: 29).

After they awaken, Fran and Sam engage in an affair and Sam remarks that 'Can-D had made this possible; they continued to require it. In no way were they free' (Dick, 1964: 30). This emphasizes the fact that even human relationships outside of the finite subjective reality established by Can-D are, in some way, dependent on it to function as their illicit romance requires Can-D usage to progress in any meaningful capacity. It must be noted, however, that while Can-D can be seen as symptomatic and reflective of a deeply isolated and connection-starved society, it is at its very core a means of communion and connection. Those who take the drug together find themselves connected mentally in a way that, at least temporarily, serves to provide a balm for the unending loneliness of the Martian experience by allowing its users to engage with each other in an idyllic depiction of a pre-climate-catastrophe America. Chew-Z, however, is an inherently solipsistic and isolating experience, one which forever instils doubt in one's own ability to determine what is 'real' and what is not. From the moment that anyone ingests the drug, they are under Eldritch's thrall and become isolated from their surroundings. This imprisonment in an isolated drug-induced hallucination underscores again the main difference between the two drugs - Can-D is for all of its horrific social implications an inherently social experience and Chew-Z functions more like a prison or cage than a communal experience. This isolating property of Chew-Z is representative of the deep cynicism of late capitalism. Eldritch exemplifies this cynicism through his status as emblematic of the deeply-seated isolation, social stratification and prejudice present in the text. Rossi states that '…Can-D allows its users to *share* a pleasant reality of Earth as it was before global

heating forced people to emigrate to Mars; Chew-Z sends those who use it to different subjective worlds' (Rossi, 2011: 178).

Evolutionary therapy

The cynical and self-serving desire to transcend one's own place in a stratified society and its consequences can be seen when Hnatt and his wife Emily go to their first E-Therapy session, paid for with the money received from Palmer Eldritch as he begins his rollout of his own hallucinogenic drug. Emily expresses, as before, her concerns about the therapy, referring to it as 'unnatural'. Hnatt counters by arguing that it is quite the opposite and is merely an extension and acceleration of the natural evolutionary processes that are continuously ongoing. He states that, while humanity's ancestors had to evolve to combat and survive the ice age, '…we have to evolve to meet the Fire Age, just the opposite. So we need that chitinous-type skin, that rind and the altered metabolism that lets us sleep in midday and also the improved ventilation…' (Dick, 1964: 40). This evolutionary adaptation can be seen as a reflection of the greater environmental and social collapse that humanity faces in the text, as the ability to adapt, even somewhat, to the harsh climatic conditions of the text is gated behind one's own financial privilege and status. Said adaptations are also far from glamourous. When Hnatt sees Bulero emerge from the doctor's office, he thinks to himself that '…it was not like seeing pics on the society pages of the homeopape [newspaper]. Not at all' (Dick, 1964: 40). He notices the seemingly hydrocephalic head (characteristic of 'bubbleheads') and the chitinous rind and seems to realize the reality of the process. When Emily asks if the process will hurt, the Doctor responds in the negative and remarks that it '…may shock - in the figurative sense - at first. As you experience a growth of your cortex area. You'll have many new and exciting concepts

occur to you, especially of a religious nature' (Dick, 1964: 41). This equation of religious revelations and evolutionary therapy is important to note, as it is tantamount to sectioning off a process of deeper and more profound understanding of the world and one's own place in it, behind a barrier that those of lesser financial means cannot begin to overcome.

This excludes the poor and unfortunate exemplified best here by the Martian colonists from achieving any form of self-actualization, as they live their lives hoping for escape from reality in the form of Can-D. This stratifies the society described in the text into two camps, those who need Can-D and those who do not. Characters like Hnatt, Mayerson (until his own time on Mars) and Bulero do not feel the need to escape reality, as they are able to access services like evolutionary therapy in order to better their social standing. Through bettering their social position, they can better avoid undesirable social realities like the Martian draft. This elevation of one's social status is seen when Hnatt thinks to himself 'What a way to make business contacts' (Dick, 1964: 42). Hnatt himself wishes to undergo this therapy in order to improve the social position of both himself and his wife, as he feels socially inferior to Barney Mayerson, his wife's former partner. That he would feel the need for them to undergo such an extensive and potentially dangerous therapy in order to climb a social ladder is telling of the potential consequences (Martian conscription) of *not* taking advantage of such an 'opportunity' when it presents itself. This is yet another way in which the E-Therapy exemplifies a deeper and more troubling social reality that is not immediately apparent in the narrative itself. While many societies are inherently stratified, the extent to which this society can implement this stratification through financially gating off evolutionary advantages is troubling.

The process itself is also worth examining, due to the links that it draws to concepts raised in other works by Dick. After the doctor warns that there is a possibility of mental regression instead of evolution, the procedure begins. After experiencing a moment of clarity in his treatment of Emily and his pressuring her to undergo the procedure, Hnatt experiences a moment of ontological revelation:

> ‘Below lay the tomb world, the immutable cause-and effect world of the demonic. At median extended the layer of the human, but at any instant a man could plunge - descend as if sinking - into the hell-layer beneath. Or: he could ascend to the ethereal world above, which constituted the third of the trinary layers. Always, in his middle level of the human, a man risked the sinking. And yet the possibility of ascent lay before him; any aspect or sequence of reality could become either, at any instant. Hell and heaven, not after death but now! Depression, all mental illness, was the sinking. And the other… how was it achieved?
>
> Through empathy. Grasping another, not from outside but from the inner.’ (Dick, 1964: 43)

This is an important realization on Hnatt’s part. The idea of the ‘tomb world’ is one that is reflected often in Dick’s work, notably through J. R. Isidore, in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. Hnatt realizes here that depression and indeed all mental illness, can be construed within the confines of Dick’s writing as a sinking into the ‘tomb world’. This ‘tomb world’ is described by Dick in his other writings on it (such as in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*) as a place of stagnation, stasis and steady decay. Isidore refers to it as ‘…a pit of corpses and dead bones’ (Dick, 1968: 15). This tomb world that Hnatt becomes aware of is an intensely solipsistic one. Unlike the shared hallucinatory experience created by Can-D, it is a world in which one can only ever exist alone. Parallels can be drawn between this tomb world and the finite subjective

realities created by Chew-Z, as Chew-Z figuratively sends those who consume it to worlds ruled over by Eldritch. Eldritch himself can be seen as a great and corrupting force, serving to sever connections between people by trapping them in these subjective realities. This is an idea that is expanded upon later in this chapter, as Eldritch can, ultimately, be viewed as the instigator of this descent into the tomb world and thus can be seen as representative of the full social and societal stagnation and decay that grips the world of the text. It is rather apt, then, that Daniel Dinello in *Technophobia! Science Fiction Visions of Posthuman Technology* refers to Eldritch as resembling '…the Gnostic Demiurge world creator with which author Dick was fascinated' (Dinello, 2005: 152).

Chew-Z and finite subjective realities

This idea of Eldritch as some sort of 'world creator' can be seen in the various Chew-Z induced fugue states that occur over the course of the text. In the first of these states, Bulero finds himself on a grassy plain, the likes of which had long since disappeared from the Terran surface due to rampant global heating. Bulero remarks '…look for instance how he's [Eldritch] got me here and I don't even know where this is', followed by the realization that this does not matter, '…because where it is, is a place that Eldritch controls' (Dick, 1964: 47). Eldritch is positioned here as a form of false god, a demiurge that exists to obfuscate and obscure the individual's understanding of reality and the 'real'. Even Bulero, with his heightened intelligence due to E-Therapy, is powerless at the hands of this inhuman, near-alien presence. Darko Suvin, as stated earlier in this thesis, raises the idea of Eldritch as a late capitalist demiurge, who allows or activates '…the bestial or alien inhumanity within man' (Suvin, 1975:14). Suvin goes

on to quote a segment from the final pages of the novel: 'we[5] have no mediating sacraments through which to protect ourselves; we can't compel it, by our careful, time-honoured, clever, painstaking rituals, to confine itself to specific elements such as bread and water or bread and wine. It is out in the open, ranging in every direction. It looks into our eyes; and it looks out of our eyes' (Dick, 1964: 136).

This intensely corrupting force that Eldritch represents through Chew-Z's mental isolation of its users from any sense of community or solidarity can be read in several ways. Allegorically, one may view it as the growing social malaise brought about by the inter-planetary diaspora due to the unliveable conditions of the Earth, as a result of rampant and unchecked climate change, or the ever-constricting hierarchy that inevitably results when capitalism is allowed to run rampant. Perhaps it is both. Regardless, Eldritch can be seen here as a mirror for the deeply rooted and often alienating social realities of the text. He is emblematic of the isolation, solipsism and social stratification that so deeply plagues the world of the text and the characters therein.

This position that Eldritch occupies can also be linked to the persistent idea of uncertainty present throughout the text. In much the same way that our contemporary society has become inundated with 'fake news' and uncertain political narratives, the characters in the text find themselves consistently unsure as to the true nature of the reality in which they exist. The brunt of this uncertainty can be laid at the feet of the alienating nature of Chew-Z, which isolates and constricts the worldview of its users to the 'finite subjective realities' that Rossi discusses. When one views this isolation in light of the capitalist overtones present in the text, an argument can be made that

[5] Mayerson and Bulero

Chew-Z represents, on one level of meaning at least, the isolation from one's fellow human and society as a whole that Marx discusses in his *Theory of Alienation*. While the link between a Marxist view of production and alienation and the finite subjective realities created and controlled by a spacefaring demiurge may seem tenuous, the fundamental principle of isolation as a result of capital is present. Marx argues that in an ideal system of production, '…[one's] products would be so many mirrors in which [one would see] reflected our essential nature' (Marx, 1844). Lampe argues along the same lines and asks why it is '…that the dominant ideology of late capitalism happens to make us all miserable? Dick's answer to this question is that consumerism is a poor substitute for more authentic human experiences… Dick accepted a Marxist idea of 'man as producer'' (Lampe, 2015: 272). The 'product' (Chew-Z) in this instance, however, does not function as an affirmation of the essential nature of one's work and livelihood, but rather the opposite. Through the use of Chew-Z, individuals are stripped of their grasp on reality and the world around them and trapped in a solipsistic nightmare from which there can be, arguably, no escape.

Dick's own experiences with vivid hallucinations can be seen here, as the apparition of the giant face in the sky, mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation (page 3), is similar in the sense that it disrupts one's own perception of reality and forever casts a shadow of doubt on one's surroundings. One is forced to ask forevermore: Is this real, or just a figment of my consciousness? Rossi touches on this idea, when he states that 'Chew-Z is a de-realizing, hallucinogenic drug' and that as a result 'displacements of identities and objects abound; uncertainty undermines any conclusion Barney and other characters may think they have reached…' (Rossi, 2011: 181). This displacement of identity, much like the alienation from self under a system of capital that Marx discusses, can be seen in the 'stigmata' of Eldritch himself. As

Rossi argues, ‘Barney insists on the stigmata (the artificial eyes, the steel teeth, the prosthetic arm) as ‘symbols of…inhabitation’’ (Rossi, 2011: 181). This ‘inhabitation’ occurs several times throughout the text, as characters see the stigmata of Eldritch imposed upon their own beings. This happens to Mayerson after he thinks he has come to, only to find himself still trapped in the subjective reality of Chew-Z. Bulero is similarly affected by this, as both characters initially believe themselves to be free of the drug and are then surprised to see the stigmata imposed on themselves or on others. If one were to relate this to Marx’s theory of alienation under capital, then it can be argued that the imposition of the stigmata upon the characters of the text is representative of both the alienation from one’s society and from oneself. As Bulero and Mayerson become more and more entangled in Eldritch’s doings, they see these stigmata time and again, imposed on either themselves or on those around them. If Eldritch is to be viewed as emblematic of the greater social malaise, solipsism and cynicism present in the late capitalist society of the text, then the appearance of these stigmata is representative of the individual corruption that takes place under such a system. Characters that have the stigmata imposed upon them begin to see themselves as an extension of Eldritch himself, in much the same way that Marx postulates workers begin to see themselves as implements of a capitalist system, as opposed to fully actualized individuals.

The interrelation of Chew-Z, Eldritch and the capitalist society of the text is plain to see. Eldritch, even though he exists as a form of demiurge, is a decidedly capitalist figure. This is seen most clearly in his dealings with Richard Hnatt, where he, in a decidedly capitalist action, buys out Hnatt’s proposal that had been rejected by Mayerson. This interaction is played off like a deal with the devil, as Hnatt is left profoundly uneasy, having an ‘…intuition compounded by deep unease’ (Dick, 1968:

33). This replacement of traditional religious values by capitalism can also be seen in the interactions between Mayerson and Anne Hawthorne, one of the Martian colonists. After his relocation to the desolate red planet, Mayerson speaks to Hawthorne, a devout Christian who relocated to Mars to evangelize to the colonists. She states that Chew-Z is '…a spiritual problem for [her]' (Dick, 1964: 159), as the drug's promotional pamphlet reads: 'God promises eternal life. We can deliver it' (Dick, 1964: 159). This direct challenge against the traditional Christian God by Eldritch is crucial, as it signifies the replacement of orthodox religion with late capitalist promises of eternal life. Importantly, this life is neither truly eternal nor blissful as Mayerson states that it is 'more like being in hell…recurrent and unyielding' (Dick, 1964: 186). As such, what is seen here seems to be a remarkably cynical attempt to 'sell' an inherently flawed paradise. Instead of ascending to heavenly grace and becoming spiritually enlightened, Mayerson realizes that 'each time [they are] translated, they'll see – not God – but Palmer Eldritch' (Dick, 1964: 159). This same cynical monetization of a form of 'paradise' is seen later, when Mayerson 'awakens' from a Chew-Z induced stupor and remarks that he must return to his own finite subjective reality, with the intention of winning back his 'ex-wife' who is just a figment of Mayerson's own drug-induced delirium. To this end, he accosts Anne Hawthorne and begs her for her bundle of Chew-Z, only to notice that she has assumed the stigmata of Eldritch, seen in the eyes, teeth and arm. She tells him that he '…can have more later… otherwise [he would] run out of skins[6] and then what the hell would [he] do?' (Dick, 1964: 187). What we see in this interaction once again is the corruption of a supposedly sacred idea by the capitalist influence of Palmer Eldritch. Mayerson's own access to his solipsistic, isolated dream-world is gated off behind his monetary means. If he does not 'have the

[6] The currency of the text

skins', then he will not be allowed to utilize Chew-Z as a means of escape from the desolation of the Martian surface. As such, this exchange can be seen as a reflection of the deeply unsettled social consciousness of the characters in the text. That they would *willingly* want to return to such a nightmarish purgatory as the finite subjective reality of Chew-Z speaks volumes as to the social decay and cynicism of the society that envelops them.

This cynicism and spiritual desolation is exemplified best by the Martian environment itself. This celestial frontier is, as discussed by Lampe, little more than a '…horrible banality, as at best a mere extension of the California suburb, at worst a degraded and boring version of the suburbs' (Lampe, 2015: 299). The promise inherent to a future amongst the stars is inverted throughout *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, as those who are drafted desperately attempt to escape the relocation. This is how we find Mayerson at the beginning of the text, as he is hoping that he can be declared mentally unfit for the draft. This revulsion for Martian living seems to stem from the static nature of the planet itself, as it is a '…place of misery and stagnation' (Lampe, 2015: 299), where the colonists turn to Can-D and, eventually, the cheaper and more accessible Chew-Z as a means of escape. This desolation runs deeper than the physical, as the spiritual deprivation that the colonists experience primes them for eventual absorption into the finite subjective realities of Chew-Z. In essence, old-world religions such as Christianity and Buddhism have no hold or sway on the blasted crags of the Martian surface.

Nowhere is this more clearly exemplified than in the character of Anne Hawthorne, a Neo-Christian missionary that Mayerson meets on his journey to Mars. Her goal is to proselytize to the people of Mars, with the hopes of 'returning them to the fold' of Neo-

Christianity. This belief does not even last a week, however. In a discussion with Mayerson shortly after their arrival, she states that she is '…not going to convert anyone… instead they'll convert me to Can-D and Chew-Z and whatever other vice is current, here, whatever escape presents itself. Sex…I'll even try that; in fact I'm ready for it right now – I just can't stand the way things are' (Dick, 1964: 150). This immediate and decisive abandonment of one's virtues and beliefs should be read not as a marker of Hawthorne's spiritual fragility, but rather a testament to the capacity of the Martian surface to strip one of any Terran conceptions of spirituality. As Lampe argues, 'if even a well-trained and dedicated missionary like Hawthorne falls for the local cults, there is little hope that the mainstream Earth ideas were sustainable on the frontier' (Lampe, 2015: 324). The question, then, must be asked: if Terran ideas of Christ and Buddha and other cornerstones of religious thinking are not relevant to the colonists on the Martian surface, then what fills the void? It becomes apparent throughout the text that late capitalist corporate entities and the products that they produce, are the new foci of what spiritualism there is on Mars.

As Lampe states, '…Mars simply became a competitive market for corporations on Earth as they tried to sell their drugs and layouts' (Lampe, 2015: 325). While there are those in Chicken-Pox Prospects who ascribe some level of spirituality to Can-D, seeing it as a 'miracle of translation', it must be stated that this 'miracle' is one that is bought and sold for a price, as it is at no point given freely by its manufacturers with no expectation of profit. As such, one can see that even the sparse and ideologically destitute spirituality that manages to exist on Mars is tainted by the profit-motive of late capitalism. The fact that one cannot even engage in spiritual escape without needing to 'have the skins' for it further reinforces the idea of the society of the text as one that is irreparably tainted by corporate and individual desires for profit and power. Even

Eldritch, as a hallucinatory demiurge and near-godlike figure, is less of a prophet of Chew-Z and more of a Chief Executive Officer, as he recruits talent like Richard Hnatt and his wife and advertises his product.

The government in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* and how it behaves and reacts to characters such as Bulero and Eldritch is also telling. Throughout the text it becomes apparent that this is a government that exists under and is subservient to the demands of late capitalism. Prominent businessmen like Bulero are able to directly contact leaders of the United Nations, while speaking on equal terms. Lampe argues that '…the role of the state is less apparent in part because they care little beyond ensuring a steady population of emigrants using conscription and randomly bombarding the surface with supplies. The conscription policy ensures that Mars is populated with people who are already human kipple [much like the kipple seen in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*]' (Lampe, 2015, 325). This insistence on shuttling unwilling conscripts to a hostile and desolate planet to further the colonization effort is indicative of an uncaring and detached state apparatus. This is made all the more apparent by the extreme isolation the colonists are exposed to, as the Martian surface is bombarded with supplies from a distance, rendering even the act of providing necessary sustenance impersonal and detached. This is seen when Sam Regan, one of the colonists, is awoken by the 'terrific horn' of a U.N ship dropping parcels. Another colonist remarks: 'I'll bet it's all staples, sugar and food-basics like lard' (Dick, 1968: 36). It is unsurprising, then, that they turn to hallucinatory escapes in order to bridge the growing distance between themselves and the world that they have been forced to leave behind.

Conclusion

The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch differs from *We Can Build You* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* in the sense that it does not focus on constructed humanoids, but the underlying nature of the products in the narrative remains the same. The use of drugs like Can-D and Chew-Z and the evolutionary therapy that some characters have undergone fulfil a similar purpose, as they reflect underlying social issues. In this case, the use of hallucinatory drugs highlights the extreme isolation and desire for human connection experienced by the drafted colonists on Mars. This isolation is then exploited by the manufacturers of these drugs, who profit handsomely from the suffering inflicted on the colonists. The use of evolutionary therapy as a product also underscores the financial stratification in the text, as those with financial means are able to purchase access to evolutionary benefits such as greater intelligence. As such, the use of products in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* remains consistent when compared to *We Can Build You* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, as they hold a mirror to these social realities.

Chapter 5:

Conclusion

> **‘**I want to write about people I love and put them into a fictional world spun out of my own mind, not the world we actually have, because the world we actually have does not meet my standards. Okay, so I should revise my standards; I'm out of step. I should yield to reality. I have never yielded to reality.’
>
> (Philip K. Dick)

This dissertation has analysed the presence and effect of several devices (characters, themes, objects) throughout a selection of works by Philip K. Dick. These devices act as ‘mirrors’ that reflect realities in the texts that are not immediately apparent, such as the effects of late-stage capitalism, state over-reach in mental health facilities and the ethics of the treatment of subalternated groups, along with the justifications for such subalternation. While critics like Evan Lampe have discussed the depiction of capitalism in Dick’s work, this dissertation distinguishes itself from the current body of work by focusing primarily on the products manufactured in these texts, and how subalternated groups are treated.

Chapter one engages with the creation and treatment of simulacra in *We Can Build You*, along with the presence of a state-wide apparatus for diagnosing and treating issues with mental health. The experiences of characters like Louis Rosen and Pris Frauenzimmer with these institutions is discussed at length, along with their relationships with the constructed simulacra. This chapter makes use of critics like Umberto Rossi, Darko Suvin, Jill Galvan and Evan Lampe to flesh out the critical discussion of the text. These critics are invaluable in establishing the presence and significance of the mental-health state in the text, and for validating the chapter’s arguments surrounding the capitalist nature of the society in the text. This chapter

draws especially heavily on both Darko Suvin's *P.K. Dick's Opus: Artifice as Refuge and World View* and Umberto Rossi's *The Twisted Worlds of Philip K. Dick*. Suvin introduces the gradual shift in focus from the simulacra to the mental health of Rosen and Pris, and Rossi's work is heavily referenced throughout the chapter, as he lays the critical foundation for many of the points made. One example of this is the continual subalternation of the simulacra, which the title of the text (*We Can Build You*) alludes to. I would argue that while these critics are invaluable, the current critical discourse around Dick does not focus enough on the use of products in his books. A great deal of information can be gleaned about a society by what it produces, and this holds true in this chapter. The main point of focus here is the presence of the simulacra. These products, as argued in the chapter, exemplify the idea of a mirror reflecting the social reality of the society in the text through the way in which they are treated. Their creation should be heralded as a broad step forward for the sciences, but they are instead used as a means to an end, with the ultimate goal of facilitating lunar real-estate speculation. This focus on products and institutions should prove useful for future research on Dick's work, as the increasing spread of product-focused late-capitalism shows no signs of abating. With the current spread of artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms, it is helpful to consider how these constructed intelligences reflect the societies that have produced them. This is a concern in the chapter, as the Lincoln consistently appears more human than characters like Pris or Barrows.

The second chapter, structured around an analysis of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?,* focused mainly on the continued use of constructed humanoids as markers of social reality. These androids and their relationships with both Deckard the bounty hunter and Isidore the 'chickenhead' are crucial for our understanding of the use of products in these dystopian societies. Unlike the simulacra, these androids are not

based on historical figures and are noticeably more agentive in their actions. This is seen in their escape from their original purpose as deep-space mineworkers, as they seek to extend their lifespans by traveling to Earth. The idea of empathy as a marker of one's authentic humanity is used throughout the text, as one's ability to feel affection and care for animals is indicative of whether or not one is human. This empathy dynamic was fleshed out considerably by the works of both Jill Galvan and Ursula Heise, who argue that animals are used as fetishized repositories for human empathy. This is all the more telling as electronic animals are produced and sold for a princely sum in the text. In this way, the chapter on *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* engages with the products of its dystopian world. Electronic animals are produced as markers of status and as fetishized proof of one's humanity, and the androids themselves are often violent, abrasive and narcissistic – a telling reflection of the society that has created them. In this way, this chapter diverges from the established discourse around *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. While a great deal has been said about both the androids and the animals of the text, I would argue that there has not been sufficient discussion of these androids and animals as manufactured products, and what this implies about the society that has created them. The treatment of these androids and the very existence of people like Deckard, indicates the enforced nature of a dichotomy between human and android that has its roots in capitalist production of wealth, as the androids are created and designed for deep-space mining operations that biological humans are physically or mentally incapable of withstanding. By discussing this, the chapter has expanded on the nature of these products as mirrors to the society of the text, as they are not created or produced out of a vacuum.

The third chapter, focusing on *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, follows the stories of Barney Mayerson and Leo Bulero and focuses on the use and proliferation

of two separate but similar types of hallucinatory drugs, Can-D and Chew-Z. This chapter differs from *We Can Build You* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* in that it does not focus on constructed humanoids, but rather on the use and implications of hallucinatory drugs for the purposes of escape from an unpleasant reality. While this chapter does not focus on androids or simulacra, the argument remains the same as the products of this society are analysed as reflectors of social reality. In this case, the consistent and pervasive use of drugs that allow for an escape into an idealised world is most important, as these products are manufactured with the explicit purpose of allowing for an escape from the society of the text. Darko Suvin's writings on Dick are discussed at length in this chapter, as he argues that the character of Palmer Eldritch is a late capitalist demiurge, who allows or activates '…the bestial or alien inhumanity within man' (Suvin, 1975:14). This positioning of Eldritch as the representation of the social ills in the text is important, as he is representative of the isolation, solipsism and social stratification that are present throughout the text and discussed in the chapter. Evan Lampe's work is also helpful in this analysis, as it fleshes out the discussion surrounding several key topics, such as the use of hallucinogenic drugs and the use of products like the portable psychiatrist to avoid being drafted to Mars. Umberto Rossi's discussion of the finite subjective realities caused by the drugs in the text is also important to note, as it helps to establish a contrast between the problematic but communal use of Can-D and the isolating and solipsistic experience of Chew-Z. This assists in deepening the chapter's discussion of these two products as reflectors of social realities throughout the text.

Dick's own lived experiences undoubtedly influenced his work, as shown in the introduction. From his experimentation with LSD to the crucial role that amphetamine abuse played in the writing of many of his texts, this preoccupation with substances

and the subjectivity of reality is present throughout his works. The three texts discussed in this dissertation offer a perspective into the creative process and headspace of one of the founding minds of speculative fiction. *We Can Build You's* establishment of simulacra as narrative devices, along with the clear disdain that the narrative voice has for late capitalists like Sam Barrows reflects Dick's identification with the 'freaks' (read: counterculture) of society, along with his own paranoia around institutional power that stems from this identification with counterculture elements. The barbarity of state-sanctioned violence depicted in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* practiced by the bounty hunters (most notably the character of Phil Resch) bears a resemblance to any despotic law-enforcement regime. Resch, much like any baton-swinging harbinger of authority, consistently dehumanizes and 'others' the androids. While they are not by definition human, these androids are depicted in the text as more-than-machine, as they are agentive enough to seek to preserve their own lives. This spectre of state-sponsored violence may have bled into the work from Dick's own paranoia at the idea of being kept under surveillance by the governments of both the United States and the Soviet Union and his fear at possible repercussions for his vocal protest against the war in Vietnam, along with his aforementioned identification with counterculture movements. The use of psychedelic drugs in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* echoes Dick's own experiences with drug use. While he himself admits that LSD did not influence the writing of the text, his own eventual experiences with the drug and the 'tomb world' in which he found himself while under its influence are strikingly similar to the finite subjective realities induced by Chew-Z, wherein the drug user is at the mercy of Eldritch, an embodiment of late capitalist solipsism and communal disconnection. Eldritch functions here as a representative of the social malaise that grips both Earth and Mars in the narrative.

The argument can be made that Dick, by virtue of being a science fiction author, existed for most of his life at the fringes of literary society. While undoubtedly brilliant, he was forced to churn novels out at an unbelievable rate, relying on amphetamines to maintain such a breakneck pace. This was due to the low level of income gained from each novel sold, as science fiction was not considered a prestigious or serious field of literature. It is important to consider this, as Dick was not writing from a position of prestige or success. In the same way that many of the characters in his novels were forced to pursue financial success, so too did Dick have to sequester himself in his shed to churn out novel after novel. While he did find some success and acclaim in his life, he never truly broke into the critical mainstream until after his death, with the release of Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, an adaptation of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. This sense of dislocation is felt throughout the texts discussed in this dissertation, as the characters struggle to survive in the face of late capitalism. As one of the 'freaks' himself, Dick expresses his affinity for characters like this throughout his work, as characters like Rosen, Deckard and Mayerson are seemingly perpetually down on their luck.

To conclude, this dissertation aims to establish the importance of the use of products in Dick's works. As these three texts take place in capitalist societies, the products produced by such a society are inherently reflective of that society and its values. The contemporary discourse around overproduction and rapid technological growth ensures that this discussion is relevant, as the shift to artificial intelligence and machine learning in many fields heralds a new set of questions that must be asked and considered. The implications of these new technologies on a societal and individual level have already been discussed by Dick, several decades prior to these technologies being created. The effect of technologies like this may isolate and

disconnect many people and push many towards escapism through drug use in search of some sense of community. The idea of products reflecting social realities is hardly limited to Dick's work, as one must ask the question: with the recent explosion in machine learning and artificial intelligence set to replace or invalidate many jobs, what do these technologies say about our contemporary society, and its priorities?

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