THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Ontology and Ethics in the Writings of Philip K Dick

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Phd.

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by

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I owe a debt to the many people over the years who, despite not being involved in sf or academia, have offered friendship, support, shoulders, food and drink and, above all, floors to sleep on: Alex, Allan, Craig, John, Lawrence, Melissa, Nige, Pete, Robert and Sue. Particular thanks should go to my evil landlords, Tina Minett Stevens and Darren Stevens (and his printer), and the beasts Edward the Second and Isaac. Fine companions all: there are no better.

My greatest debt is to my family, to my parents and my brother, whose radical generosity has no doubt been met with ingratitude, for it is a debt I can only hope to repay.
A Note on References, Abbreviations and Editions

Most quotations are referenced in parentheses by author, year and page number. The full reference may be located in the Bibliographies. This system is also applied to uncollected items - poems, essays outlines and letters - by Dick; these may be found in the Primary Bibliography: Short Works. Individual volumes by Dick are listed by initial as set out below. The novels are referenced by chapter and page number, other volumes only by page. An alphabetical listing with complete references is in the Primary Bibliography: Individual Volumes; a chronological listing of first editions may be found in the Appendix.

BB. The Broken Bubble.
CAM. Clans of the Alphane Moon.
C&C. Cosmogony and Cosmology.
CCA. Confessions of a Crap Artist.
C-CW. Counter-Clock World.
CIS. The Crack in Space.
CP. The Cosmic Puppets.
CS (5). The Little Black Box: The Collected Stories of Philip K. Dick Volume 5.
DADOES. Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?
DeI Deus Irae
DHG. The Dark-Haired Girl.
DI. The Divine Invasion.
Dr. B. Dr. Bloodmoney, Or How We Got Along After the Bomb.
Dr. F. Dr. Futurity.
E. In Pursuit of VALIS: Selections from the Exegesis.
ES. Eye in the Sky
In quoting from Dick, I have preserved his misspellings, and the American spellings used even in some British editions of his work. Where this is likely to cause confusion, particularly in the case of the former, I indicate it thus: "[sic]"

The fragments of Heraclitus are cited from Edward Hussey, 1972,
The Presocratics (London: Duckworth), as Dick would have been familiar with this book (if not this exact edition); I also give the fragment number. Quotations from Plato are given by date of edition and the standard system of pagination (i.e. based on Stephanus' 1578 edition). References to the Bible are by book, chapter and verse and are from the New English Bible unless otherwise indicated by the notes; as far as possible in discussing a work I have used the translation which Dick quoted from in that work. I use and give the abbreviations of individual books as used in the NEB. The Nag Hammadi texts quoted in Chapter Eight are cited by the sections and subsections given to the original manuscripts according to James M. Robinson, ed., 1977, The Nag Hammadi Library in English (Leiden: E. J. Brill).
Introduction

By the time of his death in March 1982, the reputation of Philip K. Dick seemed to be fixed as a writer of significant science fiction (hereafter sf). His works offered a marxist critique of capitalist society, or at least offered Marxists a critique of capitalistic society. This view was crystallised by the Dick special issue of Science-Fiction Studies, especially with the contributions of Fredric Jameson and Darko Suvin. In the ten years after Dick's death, or perhaps in the ten years after the original release of the film Blade Runner (based on Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?) this reputation underwent a subtle change. Following in the wake of Jameson's seminal essay "Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism", which galvanised the debate about postmodernism, Dick was viewed as a prophet of postmodernism and Blade Runner became the iconic text of the mix-and-match aesthetic. Postmodernism enabled critics who were broadly marxist to continue the exploration of Dick's writings. Again this attitude was crystallised by a special issue of Science-Fiction Studies.

But political readings of Dick, whilst valid, tend to ignore more fundamental issues. Suvin's essay, "P. K. Dick's Opus: Artifice as Refuge and World View, Introductory Reflections", first published in 1975, is paradigmatic. Dick's writing is divided into three periods: an apprenticeship 1952-62, a mature breakthrough in 1962 with the publication of The Man in the High Castle, and a decline from 1966. Suvin characterizes the period 1970-1974 as one of "creative sterility" (Suvin 1983: 73). His commentary on The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch can perhaps be taken as a guide to how Suvin would view the
period 1974-1982: "[It is] an insufficiently economic novel" (Suvin 1983: 86). Suvin grants Dick's interest in the nature of reality, but feels that he has given undue importance to: "the red herring of ontological-religious speculations" (Suvin 1982: 86). Virtually all of Dick's output in the period from 1974 to his death was taken up with such speculations.

In February and March 1974, Dick had a series of mystical experiences. He spent the rest of his life trying to explain these events, and expended over a million words in self-interrogation, speculation and re-examination of his own novels. Sceptical critics would simply suggest that Dick had claimed to have seen God and therefore he had gone mad; in the last ten years of his life Dick had fallen from being a Marxist prophet to a religious conman.

But I wish to argue that Dick had ontological concerns throughout his entire career, and that one of his major themes is "What is real?". Again and again this ontology has had a theological dimension, although I would argue that the precise nature of Dick's own religious beliefs was always problematic. Even if there is no such thing as "reality", and even if there is no god, Dick's protagonists are somehow compelled to behave in an ethical manner.

I begin with a discussion of Dick's generic status: his peculiar hybrid of realism and the fantastic which provides him with a fictional arena in which to pose ontological questions. In Chapter Two I sketch in some of the philosophical background to such questions, with a brief discussion of four philosophers, three of whom were direct influences upon Dick. I will also examine Dick's position as a postmodernist writer.

The following three chapters explore the question "What is real?" with close reference to five novels. Dick approaches the real by examining the unreal: his characters hallucinate false realities or break
through to an authentic reality. I will demonstrate that there are occasions when it is impossible to distinguish hallucination from breakthrough.

I then shift to examine the nature of Dick's characters within this ontological chaos. This suggests the theme of "What is human?" or rather: "What constitutes the authentic human being?" In Chapter Six I demonstrate how this theme is approached by means of a dialectic between human and non-human, or Human and Android. Whilst this does impact upon Dick's ontology, this distinction is primarily ethical. I will explore this with reference to the post-rational ethics of Emmanuel Levinas. My final two chapters extend this Levinasian reading, first to Dick's fictionalisation of the 2-3-74 events, VALIS, and then to *The Divine Invasion* and *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*. Dick's writings will be shown to be exemplars of both the strengths and limits of Levinas's ontotheological ethics.

In the process of my thesis I draw upon many works by Dick which have been posthumously published or reprinted. I have noted my thanks to the people who have provided me with copies of material in my acknowledgements, and given source details in the bibliographies, but I wish to draw particular attention to the work of Paul Williams, Literary Executor of the Philip K. Dick Estate. His groundbreaking work on the chronology of Dick's writings, based on the records of Dick's agents the Scott Meredith Literary Agency (SMLA), has usually served to provide the dates I give.\(^2\) Williams's bibliographical and biographical work has been supplemented by Lawrence Sutin's excellent full-scale biography *Divine Invasions: A Life of Philip K. Dick* and Gregg Rickman's problematic *To The High Castle*.\(^3\) (Rickman's other volumes, provisionally entitled *The Variable Man* and *Firebright* have yet to
appear at the time of writing). The details (albeit often contradictory) of Dick's life as revealed by these two volumes, have perhaps pervaded my work more than footnotes can document. Sutin has also edited a selection from the *Exegesis, In Pursuit of VALIS*, which also proved invaluable.

Unfortunately his selection of non-fiction by Dick, *The Shifting Realities of Philip K. Dick: Selected Literary and Philosophical Writings* appeared too late to have much impact upon my work. This is an essential collection including almost all the significant essays by Dick. My attempts to define sf would have been speeded up by an earlier appearance of this volume, and I have modified my own work accordingly. There is much useful material, on perception and hallucination (Dick 1995u) and on Gnosticism (especially Dick 1995v: 332-3), which to incorporate would have led to more rewriting than was possible within the given time.

Rather than duplicate references I have cited the earliest publication of an individual work which I have read; where this has been reprinted in *Shifting Realities* the relevant page references are given in the bibliography. (For example, the essay "The Lucky Pet Dog Store" has been published in four places; to have given every citation after each quotation would have proved unwieldy).

I regret that I have only glancingly dealt with Dick's short stories or mainstream works. I have largely viewed the stories as test-runs for his novels, although they have much to recommend themselves in their own right. His mainstream works have yet to receive adequate critical attention. Here I have only been able to concentrate on one work - *In Milton Lumky Territory* - with a few references to the others. It is worth pointing out for the benefit of those who dismiss the theological tone of
Dick’s late works that one of the lost mainstream novels drew on Gnosticism and Kabbalism. From first to last Dick’s fiction demonstrates a remarkable unity.
Dick first came to prominence as a writer of sf, but has had an impact beyond the boundaries of this particular genre. Precisely where to draw the generic boundaries is problematic, for there are probably as many definitions of sf as there are readers of sf. I will largely be viewing sf as a subdivision of the mode of the fantastic, which is to be contrasted with, if not entirely opposed to, the mode of literary realism. It is my purpose in this chapter to examine what sort of writer Dick was: in particular to examine his generic position. I will be considering both sf and non-sf (or "mainstream") material, and so I will make some attempt to distinguish between the two. In Dick's case, this will prove to be difficult. Dick's writings may well be fantastical, at times they are alienating or estranging, but at other times he seems to be striving for some sort of verisimilitude, or to be providing the hypothetical typical reader with some sense of the familiar to hang on to.

Although I began by suggesting that Dick came to prominence as an sf writer, specifically as a producer of sf magazine short stories in the early 1950s, it is now clear that he began his career wishing to be a mainstream writer. The posthumously published Gather Yourselves Together, thought to be Dick's earliest surviving novel, was probably written in 1949 or 1950. With its shifting viewpoints and hallucinations, the novel demonstrates techniques which Dick was to repeat in his other mainstream novels as well as in his sf. His abandonment of his abortive mainstream career had the effect of doubling his published output, with
a series of novels, beginning with *The Man in the High Castle*, which were to cement his reputation. It was not until the 1970s, after a turbulent period of divorces, a break-in, attempted suicides and moves from Berkeley to Canada to Fullerton, that he was to return to something resembling a realist mode. Then he assembled letters and accounts of dreams to form "The Dark-Haired Girl", used autobiography as the basis for *Radio Free Albemuth* and *VALIS* and biography for *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*. But since most of his written output during the 1970s was in the form of a still largely unpublished journal devoted to explaining his mystical experiences of February and March 1974 - the *Exegesis* - even this "realism" must be called into question.

**Realism**

"Realism" is one of the most difficult critical terms to define, and this very difficulty ought to provide a clue as to why in turn it is difficult to define sf. As a genre, realism is often identified with a particular group of nineteenth-century writers who tried to represent or imitate the world accurately in a particular set of ways which I will outline below. But realism did not start with these writers; as a mode it can be used to describe many different pieces of writing in different periods. The idea of representing the world is millennia old; as I will go on to discuss, Plato developed a number of ideas about *mimesis*.

One route into understanding "realism" is to note its obvious semantic link to the word "real". A common-sense consensus about what is real has evolved in the western world over the centuries, particularly within the empirical scientific tradition: that the senses react to objects which are external to the subject, and that these objects interact with
each other according to laws of cause and effect, which can be determined and analysed. Apparently borrowing from existentialist thought (Dick 1975a: 31-2), Dick labelled this consensus the koinos kosmos or "common world". But he also recognised and insisted that all individuals have their own viewpoints, their own set of biases, prejudices and experiences. Again borrowing, he labelled each individual viewpoint the idios kosmos or "private world". Most of Dick's fiction sets up a tension between the idioi kosmoi of his individual characters and the "underlying" koinos kosmos which he has created for a particular novel; this tension is further tightened by its being juxtaposed with the idioi kosmoi of his readers.

But before I can analyse Dick's writings in detail, it is necessary to examine the concept of realism further. If "realism" cannot be satisfactorily defined, then perhaps a number of "realism"s may be described. Of course, there is a danger here of conflating two separate, albeit overlapping, discourses: the philosophical and the literary. To ask the question: "What is real?" is first and foremost a philosophical inquiry, and prior to the nineteenth century, "realism" was a philosophical term. In philosophy, realism came to be used to designate theories which posited an external material world. But to ask the question: "What is real within this particular text?" is to move into the domain of the literary. Dick may wish to examine the intersection of realism and the fantastic within his fiction, but to shift to a consideration of the reality or falsehood of the real world risks a confusion of terms between literary and philosophical discourses. Yet, in his later quasi-realist works, this is the strategy Dick seems to employ. I will return to philosophical ideas about realism in the next chapter, but for now I will attempt to define literary realism.
Literary Realism

The connection between words and the representation of an external reality can be traced back at least as far as Plato's writings upon mimesis. In *The Republic*, the character Socrates complains about poets and tragedians being no more than imitators and that: "the art of representation is something that has no serious value" (Plato 1987: 603b). Aristotle does not demonstrate such distaste, and puts imitation at the heart of his theory of poetics:

> Epic and tragic poetry, comedy too, dithyrambic poetry, and most music composed for the flute and the lyre, can all be described in general terms as forms of imitation or representation. However, they differ from one another in three respects: either in using different media for the representation, or in representing different things, or in representing them in entirely different ways

(Aristotle 1965: 31).

Mimesis can thus be seen to be a mode covering many different sorts of artistic endeavour, and to employ a variety of techniques.

Whilst the history of mimetic literature almost certainly predates Aristotle and Plato, "realism" was not used as a term to designate this mode until the nineteenth century. In reaction to the excesses of the Romantic movement, some writers decided to abandon dreams, visions and the sublime, and turned to mundane everyday life for their inspiration; they attempted to imitate or mirror the world. Chief among these was Emile Zola, who would consider himself a naturalist rather than a realist and who wrote about contemporary and historical French life. His technique involved: "devout observation of nature, and the grafting on to literature of recent scientific theories about natural
phenomena" (Hemmings 1953: 20). These theories included Lucas's ideas about physiological character types, inherited behaviour patterns and the way that environmental pressures act upon individuals.

The events and systems of realistic literature were to be presented as transparently as possible: "the reader should be unable, simply by studying the text in front of him, to draw any conclusions about the author's sympathies or antipathies, his creed or his philosophy" (Hemmings 1953: 24). The realist author therefore attempts only to record what happens without adding any moral, to show what is; the aspiration is towards documentary. According to Stern: "Ontology is not his business, he doesn't ask, 'Why is there Being rather than Nothing?' " (Stern 1973: 77).

But by the end of the nineteenth century, the mood had shifted against realism. For example, Oscar Wilde complained about: "the prison-house of realism" (Wilde 1948: 920) and declared that "Truth is entirely and absolutely a matter of style" (Wilde 1948: 920). Indeed, he felt that: "All bad art comes from returning to Life and Nature, and elevating them into ideals . . . As a method Realism is a complete failure" (Wilde 1948: 930). The emerging Modernist movement evolved a new set of tools and techniques to represent the world, seeing reality as more fragmented, and perhaps even uglier than the realists had described it. Freud's theorizings on the unconscious and Einstein's theories of relativity questioned the possibility of there being a fixed version of reality which could be described as objective.

David Lodge provides a definition of realism which is more based on texts than on any externally existing reality: "the representation of experience in a manner which approximates closely to descriptions of similar experience in nonliterary texts of the same culture" (Lodge 1977:
25). This works within an intentionalist framework: obviously the author may research a book before writing it. But there is no guarantee that a given reader will have been exposed to such non-literary texts. It also privileges the nonliterary over the literary as being more faithful to the real world. Of course, sf is not realistic by this definition, for it often describes experiences which have not been described in nonliterary texts, nor indeed experienced before. I will return to this definition, in relation to Dick’s writings, at the end of Chapter Four.

For Ian Watt, such representation is a matter of degree: "[Realism consists of] a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms" (Watt 1960: 32). If this is viewed in terms of a sliding scale, then sf is towards the nonrealistic end of it. But Watt also suggests a number of narrative strategies which the realist novel employs: a variety of social levels, characters as part of a social framework and an accurate account of the passage of time.

Watt claims that: "[Realism surely attempts to portray all of the varieties of human experience" (Watt 1960: 11). This might lead to a concentration on proletarian and peasant life, at the expense of the aristocracy. Realist authors are also aware of the social interactions between individuals and classes; as Stern argues: "Realism designates a creative attention to the visible rather than the invisible, an unabating interest in the shapes and relations of the real world, the system that works" (Stern 1973: 171). Unlike poetry, drama and the short story, the novel has, in principle, the length or space to explore an entire society.

Characters respond to these interactions and forces: as a result of their memory of their pasts and their self-knowledge, they act in a particular way. They should not be obviously symbolic, especially in terms of their names; as Watt notes: "The early [realist] novelists . . .
named their characters in such a way as to suggest that they were to be regarded as particular individuals in the contemporary social environment" (Watt 1960: 19). This implies that the characters are treated and described as if they were real; they are certainly to be accepted as real within the fictional framework of the novel. This causality of behaviour implies linear time, or duration which unfolds sequentially. Attention is paid to the accuracy of this time - by phases of the moon, positions of the stars and so on. This should be contrasted to the elastic fairy-tale time, which permits incredible acts in a single night, or a princess to sleep for a hundred years.²

In some ways, Dick’s sf does correspond to these criteria. His fiction often depicts a cross-section of society from lowly workers to presidents. Dave Hyde argues that: "the Realists [supplied] the scope and manifold characterology that enlivens the structure - all those people running around at all levels of society" (Hyde 1993a: 30). However the names of his characters often have some sort of meaning to them, or should be taken as a guide to their nature. Nor does Dick’s fiction necessarily correspond to linear time, although with hallucinations and time travel it becomes difficult to ascertain precisely what time is taking place. Laura Campbell (1991) has pointed out that, in *The Man in the High Castle*, Juliana’s trip to visit Abendsen takes only a few days, whilst the rest of the novel takes place over a period of weeks. The time which passes in the novel is that which is necessary for the narrative to work, rather than imitative of some actuality.

Catherine Belsey proposes a structuralist model of realism which would include fantastical texts such as *The Hobbit* or *Watership Down*:

Speaking animals, elves, or Martians are no impediment to intelligibility and credibility if they conform to patterns of speech and behaviour consistent with a recognizable
System. Even in fantasy events, however improbable in themselves, are related to each other in familiar ways. The plausibility of the individual signifieds is far less important to the reading process than the familiarity of the connections between the signifiers (Belsey 1980: 51-2).

Structurally, the reader would recognize the characters as realistic, but this would be a different degree of realness when compared to the environment that these characters are part of. If we were to imagine a novel where the setting is the surface of a planet shaped like two concave cones connected at their circumference, we might see a flaw in this argument when applying it to sf.³ Gravity will vary according to the mass of planet between the surface and the centre of gravity of the planet, and this may well cause time dilation effects. According to Belsey, this novel would still be realistic provided that the characters interacted in a familiar fashion. Of course, if these characters displayed a different psychology, if their mindset was influenced by the extremities of their environment, then this would not be realistic in Belsey’s sense although it would be in Watt’s. Belsey might almost be seen to reverse the terms when these are applied to the sf mode. Alternatively, sf might be seen as a heightened form of realism, where the forces acting upon individuals are foregrounded. It might be thought to be going “beyond” realism. The implications and importance of the familiar will be returned to later in this chapter.

There are therefore several versions of literary realism which may be described. The simplest level is where a realistic novel is a mimetic novel: it is a text which is an attempt to represent the real world. Alternatively, a realistic novel is one which uses certain patterns of conventional behaviour, which are familiar to the reader, and which therefore appear to be realistic. Finally there is the sense that a given
work of fiction resembles another work of non-fiction; non-fiction is assumed to be an accurate reflection of reality. In all three cases there have to be elements of recognition, agreement or consensus: that the novel does represent the real world, that the behaviour described is conventional or that it does resemble it.

But Dick's fiction constantly undermines perceptions of what is thought to be real rather than fake, and draws attention to the importance of the individual's perceptions. I have already mentioned his adoption of the terms idios kosmos and koinos kosmos, to refer to the private and shared worlds respectively. The basic philosophical problem, which will be returned in the exploration of philosophical realism in the next chapter, is how far it is possible to generalize from individuals' points of view of what appears to be external to them to the totality of what is the case. An individual can only perceive so much; anything beyond these senses is open to question. It is an environment which is perceived, rather than an entire world. It could be argued that there can be no total reality because of the primacy of the individual's perceptions, and the inability to know that one idios kosmos is broadly similar to another - for example, that the green of an apple is the same green to two individuals. But just as it is impossible to be certain that it is the same green, so it is impossible to be certain that the greens are in fact different.

There can only be a consensus as to what is real, an agreement or recognition, between a number of individuals. There is also a sense that this is consensual, that it is being consented to, agreed to. At the risk of being oversceptical or over-cautious about what is real, I will henceforward refer to a consensus of reality, rather than a real world, and to an environment rather than an entire world, and therefore to a
consensus environment. To restate one of my rather brief definitions of realism: a realistic novel is one in which the author attempts in words to mimic the consensus environment.

**Author and Reader**

One way of distinguishing the different forms of literary realism is to note that some forms privilege the author’s role and others privilege the reader. In Watt’s definition there is a posited author, who follows a certain form of causality in order to create realistic settings and characters. In Belsey and Lodge’s definitions the onus is upon the reader to recognise particular structures. (Alternatively it might be argued that these effects are entirely textual, but without the reader these would not be noticed, and without the author they would not be there). In discussing whether a book is realistic or not, at some point some consideration must be given to whether an author intends a work to be taken as realistic or not. A work of non-fiction is presented as an account of the real, as is an autobiography. For it to be taken as real, the author must presumably attempt to present it as realistically.

It is of course possible for a critic (by definition a reader) to entirely discount the author from consideration. Indeed the importance of the author in discussion of literature has varied over the centuries. The English word can be traced in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as far back as Wycliff in the 1380s. At that point it had two distinct meanings: an originator or creator and a person who had authority. From the same period Chaucer uses the word to refer to a person on whose authority a statement is made. In the twentieth century the author has also come to
be identified as the owner of a work, with certain controls over the
distribution and interpretation of the work.

Twentieth-century criticism has made several attempts to remove
the author from consideration: the autonomous text proposed by the
Russian Formalists, the rejection of authorial intention by the New
Critics and the polemical "Death of the Author" called for by Roland
Barthes (Barthes 1977: 142-48). Barthes wants to liberate the book - or
rather the text - for the reader or critic, arguing that:

The Author, when believed in, is always conceived of as the
past of his own book: book and author stand automatically
on a single line divided into a before and an after. The
Author is thought to nourish the book, which is to say that
he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it, is in the same
relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child

(Barthes 1977: 145).

Most authors take an interest in their textual children; if these are
violated or misused they will sue to defend them, either to protect their
own investment or for reasons of artistic integrity. Nevertheless, a child
at some point must go out into the world on its own, it must survive
without the parent's aid and protection.

In reaction to the attempts to remove consideration of the author
from criticism, there has been a corresponding move to reaffirm the
importance of the author's intentions, particularly in the writings of E.
D. Hirsch Jr. He argues that: "Unless there is a powerful overriding
value in disregarding an author's intention (i.e. original meaning), we
who interpret as a vocation should not disregard it" (Hirsch 1976: 90, his
italics). Hirsch argues for an ethical commitment to reproducing what
an author has meant to say in writing a given text; he assumes that the
author has had a meaning in mind and that this is retrievable by the
critic. A writer has to mean something when writing, and writing has meaning, therefore the meaning of the writing is the author's original meaning. But how is this original meaning to be found? If it is to be looked for in the text, then the critic may have to judge between several competing meanings of a single text. If it is outside of the text - say in an interview with the author - the critic must decide what authority this appeal to something external can have.

Michel Foucault's discussion of this subject posits the author as little more than a proper name which "permits one to group together a certain number of texts, define them, differentiate them from and contrast them to others . . . [T]he name seems always to be present, marking off the edges of the text" (Foucault 1991: 107). "Edge" is not necessarily a neutral term; the imposition of edges, breaks and ruptures is an exertion of power, as much exclusion as inclusion. Foucault goes on to suggest that the author: "is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses . . . [The author is] the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning" (Foucault 1991: 119).

In this thesis a large number of texts will be identified as being written by Philip K. Dick. The authorship of these works is not in dispute. The adjective "PhilDickian" will be use to describe works which are recognizably in the style or explore themes of the works signed by Philip K. Dick. The author Philip K. Dick has a life which has been described in a number of non-fiction books labelled as biography (for example Sutin 1989a and Rickman 1989b), and this will be accepted as evidence for the context of the writing of Dick's books. I will assume that Dick had a number of intentions when he wrote his works, not all of which he was conscious when he wrote them, and not all of which he was
conscious of after writing the books. On occasions I will speculate as to Dick's motives or intention, derived from the available evidence. On other occasions, I will assume a hypothetical reader, who is reacting to the books in a number of different ways or who might be trying to decide between different readings.

I spell out these assumptions here, in order to anticipate the problem of dealing with Dick's quasi-realistic works. The events of 2-3-74 have already been alluded to in the Introduction, and will be described at length in Chapter Seven. Letters, essays and interviews - all purporting to be non-fiction - testify to the reality of the events. A novel which describes such events, under Lodge's definition, would be realistic. But commonsense - the unlikelihood of there being a God speaking to Dick - would prevent the reader from accepting such a novel as being non-fiction.

*VALIS* is an extreme example of something which will be a problem many times in subsequent pages. The consensus environment includes a large number of works, which in its own terms, would be classed as fictional. The reader may recognize a given work as being fictional. Described within that work may be characters, who again are fictional within the terms of the consensus environment. But the terms of the work of fiction itself, these characters may well be "real" or "authentic", rather than illusions or hallucinations. To the individual character, the world that they inhabit may seem "real" or "authentic", whereas to the reader it is a work of fiction. The textual edges, marking the fiction / real divide, according to Foucault, can be limited by the name of the author. Ironically in this case the proper name of "Philip K. Dick" does not always act as a limit. In the particular case of *VALIS*, the name Philip K. Dick occurs both within and outside of the text. The
problems this poses for criticism will be explored in depth in Chapter Seven.

Realism vs The Fantastic

It is the "real" rather than "realism" which will be the subject of the majority of this thesis. Realism is introduced as a concept to be contrasted with the fantastic mode, which attempts in various ways to misrepresent the consensus environment. Realism and the fantastic have become opposed terms, as if both were defined clearly enough to always be entirely distinguishable. Such an opposition can also be found in Raymond Tallis's polemic *In Defence of Realism*.  

But from the beginning of the book, Tallis is on shaky ground; having lambasted (unnamed) critics for claiming, without supporting evidence, that realistic fiction has been exiled from serious consideration by critics to airport and station bookstalls, he goes on to claim that: "The majority of novels short-listed for the Booker Prize are realistic" (Tallis 1988: 2). Tallis may well be right in this suggestion, but he only names one book which has been short-listed for the Booker Prize; indeed it went on to win the prize. The book was Iris Murdoch's *The Sea, The Sea*, which Tallis describes as "implausible". Tallis provides no supporting evidence for his contention about the Booker Prize; in fact he seems to suggest the opposite.

In part three of *In Defence of Realism*, when Tallis is trying to define realism, he makes an odd attack on the fantastic:

The point is this: we cannot read fantasy critically, in the light of our lives or our knowledge of the world. Fantasy cannot, therefore, illuminate our own lives. The author is in charge and we are therefore denied that interaction between reader and author, between memory and text,
between experience and writing, that lies at the heart of a reading that is more than mere day-dreaming or time-killing. Fantasy imposes a passivity on the reader: he either swallows what he is told or he is excluded from the story altogether.

(Tallis 1988: 192).

Taken in context, it is clear that Tallis includes sf within the mode of the fantastic. But his discussion of fantasy seems to be entirely wrong-headed: it is almost impossible to forget the outside world whilst reading, even if this awareness of the consensus environment is only an awareness of its difference from the fictional environment. Furthermore, it seems to be an overly solipsistic, limiting and selfish view of any sort of literature to suggest that its main or only function is to illuminate its readers' lives. The author is most certainly not in charge, as readers impose their own imagination on a given text. Certainly, it is unlikely that readers have been to Mars, but they can still compare the Mars depicted in Martian Time-Slip or The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch to any other number of depictions of the red planet in works from H. G. Wells, Edgar Rice Burroughs and Ray Bradbury to Kim Stanley Robinson, Ben Bova and Colin Greenland.

Sf

One of the most interesting practitioners and theorists of sf, Samuel R. Delany, has persuasively argued that "Science fiction is not 'about the future'. Science fiction is in dialogue with the present" (Delany 1984: 176). In the same way historical novels - which may be set in a period as unfamiliar to their readers as Mars in the twenty-first century would be - must surely be in dialogue with the present, presenting concerns and behaviour that resonate with current practices. The fantastic is a term
which can cover all kinds of literature which set out to distort, exaggerate or misrepresent the consensus environment; in the case of sf, the misrepresentation might be a revision in the laws of physics, mathematics or logic, a technological development or an alternate course of historical events.

Most of Dick's novels are set between thirty and two hundred years after they were written, a time of which Dick could have no natural knowledge, and therefore these novels must be misrepresentations of the real. For example, *The World Jones Made* (written 1954) is set in 2002, with flashbacks to the 1990s. This remains an index of estrangement, even when the once future date has past, as in the case of *Martian Time-Slip* (written 1962) which is set in August 1994. By way of a contrast, his mainstream novels are either set roughly contemporaneously or in the recent past, for example *Humpty Dumpty in Oakland* (1960) in 1960.

Sf may be thought of as a literature which asks the question "What if something other than is the case, were the case?". To return to the example I used in my discussion of Belsey: "What if there were a planet shaped like two concave cones connected at their circumference?" Of course, there may be mundane examples which are not sf: asking the question "What if an orphan ran away from the workhouse to London and stumbled upon his family?" would not make *Oliver Twist* sf. The revision of "reality" has to be one of the three types outlined above. It is also a matter of degree of revision. As Dick once wrote: "The science-fiction writer sees not just possibilities but wild possibilities. It's not just 'What if -.-' It's 'My God; what if-.' In frenzy and hysteria. The Martians are always coming" (Dick 1983b: 224).
A few years later, he offered a calmer definition:

It is [about] a society that does not in fact exist, but is predicated on our known society - that is, our known society acts as a jumping-off point for it;... this is the essence of science fiction, the conceptual dislocation within the society so that as a result a new society is generated in the author's mind, transferred to paper, and from paper it occurs as a convulsive shock in the reader's mind, *the shock of dysrecognition*.


In this piece he felt that the novelty had to be scientific in some way, but in his somewhat scurrilous essay "Will the Atomic Bomb Ever Be Perfected, and If So, What Becomes of Robert Heinlein?" published in 1966, he had argued: "The real origin of science fiction lay in the seventeenth-century novels of exploration in fabulous lands. Therefore Jules Verne's story of travel to the moon is not SF because they go by rocket but because of *where* they go. It would be as much SF if they went by rubber band" (Dick 1995h: 57).

Darko Suvin, borrowing from Ernst Bloch, called the textual unit which signifies each novelty or misrepresentation a *novum*. In Suvin's argument sf is "[A] literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment" (Suvin 1979: 9). The sf writer constructs a textual environment - only very rarely an entire world - which is conditional upon the reader recognising such nova and the interplay of nova. I will henceforward refer to this as a conditional environment. The novum, being unfamiliar, causes a feeling of estrangement for the reader, which is held in check by the reader's scientific knowledge.
Delany has argued that it is not so much the novum itself which contributes to the reading of sf, but the interplay between nova and the consensus environment:

[At some point an SF reader must put thought to what forces hold a society together - other than the police, law, and politics. An SF reader must be able to consider the relations between, say, the kind of work a people does, the kind of weather they have, and the kind of food they eat, as well as the relations between all three and what their society considers good and bad behaviour, as well as the kind of art that society produces

(Delany 1984: 177).

Readers who are unable to recognise such connections are unlikely to have a rich experience of reading sf. Individual sentences are read within a context of the text being sf.

One example that Delany often gives is "'the monopole magnet-mining operations in the outer asteroid belt of Delta Cygni'" (Delany 1984: 188). A mundane reader would probably pick up upon this sentence as being descriptive of the work of miners, and would compare it with their own experience of mining. But a knowledgeable sf reader would pick up upon the monopole magnet as an example of a novum: magnets in fact have a north and a south pole, making them bipolar. For a magnet to be monopole, a revision in the laws of physics would have to made, and this would effect the sort of conditional environment being described. Further, the mention of "outer asteroid belt" would imply that there is also an inner asteroid belt, that there is sufficient technology to operate a mine off a planet, or on a small planetoid. Finally the use of the nomenclature "Delta Cygni" would indicate to a reader with a knowledge of astronomy that this is the fourth star to be labelled in the constellation Cygnus. Whilst the
mundane reader has picked up upon the fact of the mining, the experienced sf reader would experience something more about the nature of the conditional environment being described. The choice of one set of words over another has led to one set of conventions being invoked: "the monopole magnet-mining operations in the outer asteroid belt of Delta Cygni" has a different set of connotations to "the coal mining operations in the Eastwood seam of Nottinghamshire".

In the short story "The Eyes Have It", Dick dramatises Delany's ideal sf reader. The unnamed protagonist finds a paperbacked book on a bus and reads it at home. Coded within the text is what he thinks of as descriptions of alien invaders: "his eyes slowly roved about the room . . . his eyes moved from person to person" (CS [3]. 27). Rather than taking these phrases as being idiomatic, the protagonist reads them in a literal manner; the eyes can separate from the being described. Given the clues of the text, the protagonist can make shrewd guesses about the nature of the aliens:

Here was a race of creatures capable of removing portions of their anatomy at will. Eyes, arms - and maybe more. Without batting an eyelash. My knowledge of biology came in handy, at this point. Obviously they were simple beings, unicellular, some sort of primitive single-celled things. Beings no more developed than starfish. Starfish can do the same thing, you know.

I read on. . . .

...outside the movie theatre we split up. Part of us went inside, part over to the cafe for dinner.

Binary fission, obviously. Splitting in half and forming two entities

(CS [3]. 28; first ellipsis mine).

Given that the language can be read in this manner, the reader is trapped into doing the same. The protagonist will not warn the
authorities because: "I have absolutely no stomach for it" (CS [3]. 29). He, too, might be an alien.

The habitual sf reader is trained to read texts which are generically identified as sf, as sf. Rather than just drawing on knowledge of the consensus environment, the reader can also draw upon knowledge of other sf texts. Connections made between nova and environments in one novel can be drawn upon in reading others. Of course, this story is on one level a comedy: the reader must surely laugh at the protagonist's failure to follow metaphoric language. But in Delany's version of reading sf, the sf reader must somehow continually fail to get the joke.

Sf only emerged as an identifiable genre in the pulp magazines during the 1920s, in particular in the "scientifiction" magazine Amazing Stories, edited by Hugo Gernsback. In the editorial to the first issue, dated April 1926, he wrote: "By 'scientifiction' I mean the Jules Verne, H. G. Wells and Edgar Allan Poe type of story - a charming romance inter-mingled with scientific fact and prophetic vision" (Gernsback 1926: 3). His inclusion of stories by Verne, Wells and Poe makes it clear that his version of sf owes a debt to the fantastic tradition, especially from Europe, but the pulp magazines quickly gathered their own distinct impetus and community of readers or fans. In the letter columns "scientifiction" and "stf" gradually gave way to "science fiction and sf". Many of the fans, steeped in the fiction of the magazines, went on to become writers themselves; Dick was one such fan.

But sf, like all genres, is not pure, nor is it entirely devoid of realist elements, just as no text is entirely without invention. A lot of sf texts attempt to strive for verisimilitude or to reflect on issues important within the consensus environment, whilst misrepresenting the
environment itself. There is frequently an implicit comparison to be made between the conditional environments and the consensus environment. By dealing with a particular issue in a fictional environment, the author can highlight the issues in a way which would not be available in a mainstream novel. Indeed, when I come to discuss Dick’s *Eye in the Sky* and *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*, it will be necessary to examine the political and historical contexts to his writing. At the same time, some caution must be exercised; Dick’s accounts of himself, of his own idios kosmos, particularly in relation to his own work, are not always reliable. What purports to be non-fiction may at best a personal view, and at worst a work of fiction. It is certainly true that Dick’s sf texts have relevance to the consensus environment, and strive for a sense of the familiar, even his apparently realist texts contain elements of the fantastic. Whilst his texts have relevance for the “real world”, they are “not mimetic of the real world” (Dick 1995g: 44).

**The "New Wave"**

At the time that Dick was writing *The Man in the High Castle*, the novel which was to win him his only Hugo Award, there was a rupture or radical change in the genre of sf. Although American sf pulp magazines such as *Galaxy* encouraged development of characters and literary experimentation in the 1950s, it was only in the New Wave of sf in the mid-1960s that this came to the foreground. The label New Wave sf is generally applied to a group of writers associated with the British magazine *New Worlds* between 1964 and 1971, under the editorship of Michael Moorcock. In an earlier guest editorial in the magazine, J. G. Ballard had argued that: "science fiction must jettison its present
narrative forms and plots . . . it is inner space not outer, that needs to be explored. The only truly alien planet is Earth" (Ballard 1962: 117).

When Moorcock's first issue as editor appeared, dated May / June 1964, New Worlds had become a market for such material, particularly the work of British writers Barrington Bayley, Brian Aldiss, John Brunner, Ballard and Moorcock himself, as well as Americans such as Thomas M. Disch, John Sladek, Pamela Zoline and Norman Spinrad who were sympathetic to this avant-garde project.

The author and critic Fred Pfeil suggests that the New Wave is when "science fiction briefly becomes modernist" (Pfeil 1991: 85-6, his italics). This suggests that somehow sf lags behind the rest of literature, which for Pfeil was at that point becoming postmodernist. Pfeil views Dick, among other writers, as part of the New Wave. This is not entirely convincing, although certainly whilst Dick was alive and writing, he was very much part of an on-going, dynamic, cross-fertilizing tradition of sf writing. Even so, situating Dick as part of the New Wave is problematic.

As is often the case with literary movements, precise influences can be difficult to prove, and the influenced may not be consciously aware of the borrowing. In fact, the perception of an influence may simply be in the eye of the reader rather than the author, due to a recognition of common themes or styles. Cause and effect are thus difficult to disentangle. T. S. Eliot, in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent", noted that: "what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it" (Eliot 1941: 25-6). In other words, each new piece of writing alters how each other piece is perceived.
Borges perhaps put it more elegantly, in his essay "Kafka and his Precursors", when he argued that: "each writer creates his own precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past as it has to modify that of the future" (Borges 1994: 3). The Kafka-esque, and indeed the PhilDickian, can be perceived in literature before, after and during their publishing careers, without there necessarily being a proven causal connection. It is tempting with every writer to perceive a tradition which, step by step, leads inevitably to their work.

Can Dick be convincingly described as New Wave? He was in fact published in the magazine: first there was the abridged serialisation of Time Out of Joint, published in issues 89 - 91 (December 1959 - February 1960), when E. J. Carnell was editor and Dick wrote a very brief pseudo-article for one of the last issues, number 216 (September 1979): "Scientists Claim: We are the Centre of the Universe". However neither piece can be said to be central to the New Wave, and the latter, at least, is not central to Dick's oeuvre. But albeit that Dick was not directly part of the movement, it is clear that he was both an influence on and of interest to several writers who constituted the New Wave. Moorcock has written favourably about Dick's writing in an article for the British Science Fiction Association fanzine, Vector, arguing that: "In virtually all his novels Dick is interested primarily in the workings of the human mind and how these relate to the world in general" (Moorcock 1966: 10). Given that the piece was written whilst Moorcock was editing New Worlds, it seems likely that Dick's writing was indicative of the sort of inner space fiction he wished to promote.

New Worlds 166 (September 1966) featured "The Worlds of Philip K. Dick", written by John Brunner, one of the first sustained assessments of the writer, and the source of the quote which has
appeared on many of Dick's book covers: "The most consistently brilliant sf writer in the world" (Brunner 1966: 142). The same issue contained the novella "Behold the Man" by Moorcock and the title story from Ballard's *The Atrocity Exhibition*, along with works by Aldiss and Disch, and seems to be an almost perfectly representative New Wave collection. It is probably appropriate to suggest that Dick was a precursor of the New Wave, which was partially cast in the image of the PhilDickian.

**Realism or the Fantastic: *In Milton Lumky Territory***

Of course, Dick was writing novels in the 1950s, a full decade before the New Wave began. Just as the New Wave writers wrote sf which would have been barely recognizable as sf a generation before, so Dick wrote a series of realistic novels which paradoxically stretched the boundaries of the fantastic. For example, *In Milton Lumky Territory* was posthumously published as a mainstream novel, and it is realistic in the senses that I have discussed in this chapter. It appears to straightforwardly represent a historically verifiable milieu within the western part of the United States, during the late 1950s. In front of this backdrop Dick's characters experience a series of misfortunes. Bruce Stevens, a buyer for a discount company, returns to his home town and meets Susan Faine. Her typewriter business is failing, and she persuades Bruce to manage it for her. His lack of knowledge about the business soon leads him to be conned into buying Japanese typewriters with nonstandard keyboards, and their hasty marriage to each other becomes shaky. The tone seems grimly realistic, almost to the point of
obscenity in its dealing with aspects of life which might be considered as inappropriate to talk about in literature; for example, Dick portrays Bruce's embarrassment as he buys a packet of Trojan condoms and later his ignorance of Susan's means of contraception.

But the ending casts retrospective doubts over the status of the rest of the book. Bruce had first met Susan in fifth grade, when she was his teacher: "Back in 1944, when he had been eleven years old" (IMLT. 2: 28). She is ten years older than him; at the start of the novel she is thirty-four, putting the year at about 1957. By the end of the novel two years or more have passed: "'And here you are, at twenty-six, with a wife ten years older than you' " (IMLT. 16: 213). The fact that the year is 1959 or even 1960 does not seem odd until it is remembered that Dick had written the novel prior to Autumn 1958; the ending is therefore set in what was then the future. Possibly Dick had made a mistake with the dating; alternatively he may have known enough of the mechanics of publishing to know that the book would have been unlikely to have been in print by 1959.

All the same, something odd is happening in the novel. When Bruce leaves Susan, he goes to a motel, and lies on his bed, thinking back to the time that Susan taught him in fifth grade. She asks them to write a composition about a trip to New York, but the eleven-year-old Bruce has never been there and feels unable to make it up. When she asks him what he wants to write about he says: "I think I'll write about what's going to happen,' . . . I'll imagine ahead into the future a few months. Even more: several years. . . . [I'll] put together an imaginary composition" (IMLT. 16: 204-5). This is ambiguous: does he mean ahead from 1944 or 1957? He imagines making money on the typewriters (which have actually already been sold at a loss), then going down to
Montario on a Sunday to check it out with a view to moving there. In the next scene, it is a Sunday, and he gets back together with his wife; they soon move to Montario and then to Denver.

It is thus difficult to establish the precise generic status of the final nine pages of the novel and of the environment depicted within them. On the one hand, they may well be an accurate account of what happens to the characters. On the other hand, they could represent the imaginary composition of a man lying on a bed in 1957, trying to imagine a pleasant future. Alternatively, they could even be the thoughts of a particularly precocious eleven-year old, imagining the future from the year 1944, already fixated on his young teacher, and the entire novel could be his imaginary composition. There may well be further readings, but it is impossible to choose between even just these three, for the novel will support them all. Such an open, polysemic text will be seen to be typical of Dick's writing. However there are some recurring devices which give the reader some sense of familiarity with his works, as well as giving some sort of anchor to hold on to.

**Familiarization**

As I have noted, Darko Suvin defined sf as a literature of cognitive estrangement; its bizarre settings, impossible inventions and unlikely time periods all lead the reader to engage with a conditional environment that is plainly different to the consensus environment. But to be entirely fantastical, or entirely alien, would leave the reader in a state of bewilderment. In many of Dick’s novels, one estranging conditional environment is replaced with another. There needs to be something to grasp hold of; something which is familiar which will go
some way to counterbalance the estrangement. It seems a natural
gesture to find some structure within what appears to be a chaotic
conditional environment.

For example, Dick's fictional locations are not entirely unfamiliar;
he sets novels in places such as Berkeley, San Francisco, Washington
D.C., Oakland and Marin County. These would be familiar to his
American readers, or to readers of books set in these places. The
recurring locations give the reader some sense of a world being explored,
or a fixed starting point which is then to be surreally distorted. Even if
the reader has not been to any of these places, they will become
familiar to some degree as the reader reads more of Dick's novels.

Many of his novels begin with a character waking up, for example:
"From the depths of phenobarbital slumber, Silvia Bohlen heard
something that called" (MTS. 1: 7). As his characters wake up and
become aware of their surroundings, so Dick can describe the conditional
environment to the reader through the bleary eyes of his half-awake
protagonists. Dick is able to familiarize his readers to his conditional
environment quite naturally, as the character and the readers become
acclimatized to the situation.

Character Types

Not only do locations and techniques recur in Dick's fiction, but also
character types. These again give a reassuringly cosy feel of familiarity:
the small number of characters are almost a repertory company whose
faces become known in production after production. I will concentrate
on four of these, although not all four character types occur in all of
Dick's novels, and sometimes several characters conform to the same
I will designate these the Serviceman, the Bitch, the Dark-Haired Girl and the Patriarch. I use the term "Serviceman" in a wide sense, to refer to people whose jobs involve them in serving the public in some, frequently lowly, manner or in repairing and servicing objects for others: they are artisans, engineers and mechanics. Jack Bohlen, in Martian Time-Slip, is a plumber and mechanic, whose job is to help hold off the entropy which faces Mars. Now Wait For Last Year's Eric Sweetscent, as a doctor, is perhaps not quite in the same league, but his surgical expertise and long hours make him a sort of craftsman; he is certainly forced to serve others.

Other characters who may be thought of as serving are salesmen; for example Al Miller in Humpty Dumpty in Oakland, who concedes that: "Nothing was lower than selling used cars" (HDO. 4: 45). Bruce Stevens is a buyer but moves into retail, which travelling salesman Milt Lumky describes as: "the only thing worse . . . Of all the degrading occupations in the world" (IMLT. 5: 69). In Radio Free Albemuth Nicholas Brady works in a record shop. But perhaps the archetypal PhilDickian Serviceman job is the tyre regroover. Jack Isidore, in Confessions of a Crap Artist, prides himself that a regrooved tyre: "looks exactly the way it would look if a machine had done it, and, for a regroover, that's the most satisfying feeling in the world" (CCA. 1: 5).

Jack dehumanises himself, by aspiring to be as good as a machine. Nick Appleton performs the same job in Our Friends From Frolix 8: "[he was] a man who took a bald tire and, with the red hot iron, carved new grooves deeper and deeper into the tire, making it look adequate" (OFFFS. 5: 32). As that final clause suggests, it is a job which forces the Serviceman to deceive and put others in danger, but it is also a highly skilled one.
The Servicemen tend to be unhappily married to or painfully divorced from women who are slightly older than them. A common criticism of much sf is that it has no characters, and that it especially has problems with female characterisation; Joanna Russ once observed that:

There are plenty of images of women in science fiction.
There are hardly any women

(Russ 1972: 91).

Dick is unfortunately no exception: the females are distinctly underdeveloped when compared to the characterization of the males. To some extent he was aware of the problem, as he demonstrates in his 1 February 1961 letter to Eleanor Dimoff:

Wicked women and good men -- this is how some readers have described my straight novels . . . Without agreeing, I do admit I have a suspicion that I'm writing the same woman into one book after another. If I'm to solve this evil-woman problem, I'd better either tackle it head-on -- that is consciously -- or simply edit out of my next book that type of woman entirely. I tend to take it for granted in a novel that a man's wife is not going to help him; she's going to be giving him a bad time, working against him

(Dick 1983a: 10).

A few lines later he notes: "I either romanticize them [female lead characters] or paint them as harpies" (Dick 1983a: 10). Most of Dick's female characters do tend to be treated in one of these two ways. It must be noted that these female characters tend to be described from the viewpoint of the Serviceman, who may sometimes deserve the treatment they receive from the women. At the risk of being politically incorrect, I shall refer to the harpy image of women as "Bitches".
Cussick, in *The World Jones Made*, is temporarily estranged from his wife, as is Bruce Stevens from Susan Faine. When Al Miller flees Oakland with his wife, she quickly decides to abandon him. More negative comments occur in *Galactic Pot-Healer*, where Joe Fernwright describes his ex-wife as: "a frustrated man. And that's the kind which castrates right and left" (GPH. 5: 54). These characters constantly try to push their husbands to work harder, to achieve more, when they are already barely succeeding, and even that much is belittled.

As the alternative to the dissatisfaction with his wife, the Serviceman often turns to other female company, usually a younger, dark-haired girl. For Nick Appleton there is Charley: "a small black-haired girl" (OFFF8. 6: 39). At sixteen, she is less than half his age and describes herself as: "life and when you're [Nick] with me, some of it rubs off on you" (OFFF8. 7: 52). *Martian Time-Slip*’s Jack Bohlen has a brief affair with Doreen Anderton, but returns to his wife, who herself has been tempted into having an affair through boredom. At the end of *Humpty Dumpty in Oakland*, Al Miller, abandoned by his wife, goes off with a black realtor:

> After a moment she reached out and took hold of his wrist. "I think I take you home with me," she said. 
> . . . He reached out and put his arms around her

(HDO. 16: 199).

Such a scene of an older black woman taking the initiative with a white man, without any sense of authorial disapproval, must have been shocking to the editors who read the novel in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and perhaps explains their rejection of the novel.21

The Serviceman finds himself in conflict with the Patriarch, or at best in an ambivalent relationship. These Patriarchs tend to be in their
fifties or older, and are often the heads of corporations. For Al Miller, in *Humpty Dumpty in Oakland*, it is the elderly Jim Fergessen, who decides to sell the land which includes Al’s used car lot. This leads Al to try blackmail, slander, change jobs and lose his wife in an attempt to dissuade and protect him. Jack Bohlen has two Patriarch figures: his biological father Leo, a canny investor in land futures, and Arnie Kott, the megalomaniacal local head of the Water Workers’ Union who buys Jack’s services. For Bruce Stevens, the Patriarch is Milton Lumky, whose advice and knowledge of west coast sales is never quite enough to help Bruce and Susan’s typewriter business.
Conclusion

At least three sets of opposing impulses seem to be at work in Dick's novels: realism and the fantastic, creation and negation, and estrangement and familiarization. His words constitute imaginary worlds, conditional environments, which through the willing suspension of disbelief the reader can accept as "real" within a fictional framework. His recurrent character types form a familiar oeuvre, which helps this process of acceptance. But even Dick's mainstream novels maintain a sense that the reality perceived by the characters is not how things truly are, that the realism is fantastical; *idioi kosmoi* vary from person to person whether the location is Frolix 8 or the outskirts of San Francisco.

The PhilDickian oeuvre is one where downtrodden Servicemen, often cast adrift from their families, confront the universe, only to find it coming apart at the seams. But in spite of this disintegration, the Serviceman carries on, trying to improve his lot rather than giving up. In an essay Dick wrote that: "I like to build universes which *do* fall apart . . . I like to see how the characters in the novels cope with the problem" (Dick 1988k. 11). I will later show that this coping is as important as the falling apart; in the same essay Dick goes on to claim that: "What I am saying is that objects, customs, habits, and ways of life must perish so that the authentic human being can live. And it is the authentic human being who matters most, the viable, elastic organism which can bounce back, absorb, and deal with the new" (Dick 1988k. 12). This will be shown to unite Dick's two themes of "What is real?" and "What is human?", but before this stage can be reached, it is necessary to examine the concept of the "real" further, and to examine Dick in the light of the series of ontological doubts by which I shall characterize the aesthetics of the postmodern.
Chapter Two: 
"Life is turning into a Philip K. Dick Novel": 
Ontology and its Discontents

In my first chapter I examined the concepts of realism and fantasy, and noted how Dick largely wrote within a mode other than realism. Realism was defined variously as a mode which attempts to represent external reality (or what I have called the consensus environment), a mode whose texts resemble other non-fiction texts, or a mode whose readers perceive to operate in a familiar manner. I did not, however, make any attempt to define the "real". In this chapter I will examine the ideas of four philosophers about the nature of the real in order to help rectify this omission. But by writing in a non-realistic mode, Dick can only approach a definition of the "real" through engaging with the "unreal". He investigates the theoretically polar opposite to the "real", and thereby only by logical extrapolation can come to any knowledge of the "real". I will explore this topic in Chapters Three to Five, but in this chapter, I will show how such ontological doubting, or playfulness, is of interest to, and characteristic of, certain theorists of the postmodern.

The Real

Postmodernism has come to represent many different things to many different people, but a recurring obsession is with the nature of the "real". To ask the question "What is real?" is to try to define what is the case. Immediately there arises the problem of tautology: asking "What
is real?" would already seem to invoke or presuppose some sort of concept of "is-ness", or being. Since this is such a vast topic, it is necessary to limit the number of examples of thinkers which I discuss to those who have a bearing upon the issues raised by the aesthetics and theorizings of postmodernism. An extended study of the way the concepts of the real and being have developed since the birth of western civilisation is beyond the scope of this chapter, as indeed is the ontology and metaphysics of non-Western cultures.

I have selected four philosophers whose ideas I wish to examine briefly, two ancient and two modern: namely Heraclitus, Plato, Heidegger and Levinas. These will be seen to fall into two pairs: the earlier one of each couple positing a chaotic or fluid model of being, and the latter - in response - finding an ethical foundation to being. Dick had at least read about the first three of these, and I will use the fourth to provide a critique of Dick in the last three chapters of this thesis. Postmodernism is in part an attempt to break with the paradigm of Western metaphysics which developed after Plato; in his attempt to break from this tradition, Heidegger turned at times to earlier philosophies such as those of the pre-Socratics. Levinas invokes pre-Socratic and Platonic ideas in his writings, as well as providing a critique of Heidegger.

The pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus' writings consist of a number of fragments, gleaned from other philosophers who have quoted him. In one of these fragments, he suggests that: "The nature of things is in the habit of concealing itself" (Heraclitus 1972: 35; Fragment 123). Objects may well be perceptible to the senses, but their true nature is elsewhere. Humanity is able to perceive true reality, but only through interpretation and understanding, which few people have: "Most men do
not have thoughts corresponding to what they encounter; they do not know what they are taught, but imagine that they do" (Heraclitus 1972: 38; Fragment 17).

The true reality is in a state of flux, as suggested in the fragment, probably the most famous, which reads: "Upon those who step into the same rivers, there flow different waters, in different cases" (Heraclitus 1972: 54; Fragment 12). Of course this metaphor works on a literal level: a river is flowing water, and thus by definition it must change in order to remain a river. But there is also the sense in Heraclitus' thought that the same is true of the whole consensus environment. The Heraclitian idea of flux was a source of much inspiration to Dick, particularly in the cosmologies developed in VALIS. The lack of a fixed reality is itself very postmodern.

Plato further developed the concept that true existence was elsewhere, rather than being that which was perceived. In the Allegory of the Cave, he describes the route of a person from accepting the veracity of the surrounding environment to discovering the truth. Using the persona of Socrates, he posits that a group of prisoners have been fettered in a cave since childhood, so that all they can see is the shadows cast on the wall in front of them. This they take to be reality: "'in every way they would believe that the shadows of the objects . . . were the truth' " (Plato 1987: 515c). If one prisoner were to be released and allowed to see the fire and the objects casting the shadows, and then taken out of the cave to see the sun, then this released prisoner would have a new view of reality. However, those without this new perception would think the released prisoner to be mad.

The elements in this allegory are meant to correspond to stages on the path to enlightenment, from the cave shadows of illusion to the
blinding sun of the Infinite Good or God. But although the thrust of the
allegory is the nature of knowledge rather than the nature of reality,
later in *The Republic* Plato again suggests that the perceived world is
fake. Plato's character Socrates discusses a craftsman making a table
and a bed, and argues that these are copies of the idea of tables and
beds: "'what he makes is not "what a bed really is", his product is not
"what is", but something which resembles "what is" without being it'"
(Plato 1987: 597a). The perceived environment is one step removed from
the authentic environment, just as mimetic art - for example, a realistic
painting of a bed - "'stands at third remove from the throne of truth'"
(Plato 1987: 597e).

As in Heraclitus' philosophy, there is some kind of access to
reality for a few enlightened individuals. The individual's perceptions,
however, are likely to be no more than a reflection of true reality, and
realistic art seems more likely to mislead the individual than to reveal
reality. Mimetic art is immoral because it misleads the individual into
thinking that "reality" is being perceived. From Plato's view of being, an
ethical system is developed. The Platonic version of reality, like the
Heraclitian version, underlies much of Dick's work, particularly those
stories in which there is a sense of the authentic reality being elsewhere.
For example, Plato's ideas are central to any attempt to understand
*Ubik.*

If sf is not realistic - in the sense of it not imitating the consensus
environment - then it perhaps forms an analogue to the consensus
environment. For Plato, the consensus environment is an imitation of
an authentic being which is elsewhere: the Platonic world of ideas. If
the writer's imagination taps into this world of ideas and imitates that,
then it is less misleading than the mimetic art which imitates the
already imitating consensus environment. Sf, as analogous to the consensus environment, can thus provide some sort of insight into that environment.

Moving to more recent times, the twentieth-century German philosopher Martin Heidegger has been one of the most influential thinkers on the subject of ontology, particularly in his attempt to break with the Western tradition. His project is to theorize being and the nature of being, and to reach a point which is beyond being, and therefore beyond metaphysics. As Levinas was to attempt after him, he tries to think through "being" without being implicated in "being". In *Being and Time* he makes a distinction between entities or beings [Seiendes] and the actuality of existence or Being [Sein]. A being is thrown into Being: "we call it the 'thrownness' [Geworfenheit] of this entity into its 'there', indeed, it is thrown in such a way that, as Being-in-the-World, it is the 'there'" (Heidegger 1962: 174). A being which thinks about Being is labelled "Dasein", literally "Being-There" (Heidegger 1962: 27). This thrownness of a Dasein puts a limit over its mastery of Being, for if Dasein may be thrown into Being, it may also be thrown out of Being: "The 'end' of Being-in-the-World is death" (Heidegger 1962: 276-7).

Being-towards-death causes an anxiety in the being, from which it prefers to be distracted. The being can turn to care or solicitude in one of three forms: for things or objects [Besorgen], for other people [Fursorge] and for Dasein itself [Sorge]. Objects within the world are to be considered as tools, to be grasped and used in these caring processes. Heidegger's evocation of "an authentic Being-towards-death" (Heidegger 1962: 304) and the "authentic Being of Dasein" (Heidegger 1962: 70) thus links the nature of the authentic reality with the status of the
individual human being. Whilst the entity and Being are distinct terms, the entity can only make sense to itself in terms of Being and Being is only an issue for a (thrown) entity or Dasein. As a thinker who attempts to break with Western metaphysics, Heidegger provides a key to postmodern thought, as subsequent philosophers such as Derrida attempt to push his thought even further.³

Dick appears to have a working knowledge of Heidegger, especially in his later years. Heidegger's ideas are discussed both in letters and the *Exegesis*, particularly with regard to *The Divine Invasion* and *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* as works-in-progress. In a February 2 1980 letter to Göran Bengtson, Dick wrote: "I've been researching Sankara and Eckehart . . . And Heidegger" (Dick 1980a: 1). In a letter dated February 25 in the same year, Dick explained to Uwe Anton that: "One thing I am trying to do is fuse early Hebrew monotheism with the philosophy of Heidegger -- which no one has ever done before" (Dick 1980b: 1). This attempt at fusion anticipates Dick's *Exegesis* notes on Timothy Archer being "involved in a fusion of Heidegger & Sufism" (E. 230). In both cases, Dick seems to be trying to think through Heideggerian ontology in terms of religion.

On the one hand, the coupling of Heidegger and Hebraic thought is ironic, due to Heidegger's political views and his membership of the Nazi party. On the other hand it is appropriate, given the most important critics of Heidegger are Jewish by birth: Jacques Derrida, who has already been briefly discussed, and philosopher and Talmudic scholar Emmanuel Levinas. Whilst Levinas would claim that his own philosophical and religious writings are entirely separate enterprises, there is nevertheless a spillage between the two: for example Biblical examples are often used to illustrate ethical behaviour. His ideas will
become crucial in the last three chapters of this thesis when I move to consider ethics, which will there be discussed as somehow "being" prior to ontology. Although born in 1906 in Lithuania, he moved to Freiborg to study. In 1928 he began attending the lectures of the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl, who in Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology argued that it is impossible to distinguish the object world from how it is perceived. In addition Levinas read Martin Heidegger's Being and Time, which Levinas saw as means to build upon Husserl's work. However, Levinas was sceptical of the later works by Heidegger, in particular those written Heidegger's 1933 acceptance of Naziism.

Levinas altered the Heideggerian terms being used in the discussion of ontology: the being which enters into Being becomes the existent which enters into existing. But more crucially, Levinas argues that Heidegger sees this terminology as "a distinction, not a separation" (Levinas 1987b: 45). As I have already noted, for Heidegger the two terms are always yoked together; Levinas, however, stresses the importance of an existence without existents. In order to describe the possibility of this phenomenon, Levinas proposes a thought experiment: "Let us imagine all beings, things and persons, reverting to nothingness" (Levinas 1988a: 57). This might be thought to result in total darkness and silence, but a nothingness this does not remain: "this universal absence is in its turn a presence, an absolutely unavoidable presence... Darkness fills it [i.e. the empty space] like a content" (Levinas 1988a: 58). Similarly, it does not remain silent, but a rumbling which Levinas would later compare to: "what one hears when one puts an empty shell close to the ear" (Levinas 1985: 48). This absence which becomes a presence was called the "there is" or il y a by Levinas.
The *there is* is encountered in the night, in insomnia, and in "the unreal, inverted city we find after an exhausting trip" (Levinas 1988a: 59). The confusion of and the inability of the perceiver to experience the *there is* properly lead to feelings of horror and uncertainty. Levinas offers two related solutions to this uncertainty: the first is for the subject to enter into material existing, to gain mastery over the impersonal: "An entity - that which is - is a subject of the verb *to be*, and thus exercises a mastery over the fatality of Being, which has become its attribute" (Levinas 1988a: 83). The alternative to this hypostasizing and mastery is to turn to the Other: "the responsibility for the Other, being-for-the-other, seemed to me . . . to stop the anonymous and senseless rumbling of being" (Levinas 1985: 52). This second solution, which I will explore in greater depth in Chapter Six of this thesis, shifts the position of the existent from the solitude of the mastery over impersonal existing to a curtailed position of power within interpersonal existing. Here, the real becomes dependent upon the individual’s perceptions and subsequent behaviour, particularly when confronted with other existents. Ethical behaviour becomes a response to the nature of being; in fact, in Levinas’s thought, it is part of the nature of being.

**Access to the Real: Philosophical Realism**

In their various ways, Heraclitus, Plato, Heidegger and Levinas call the senses into question. Via the senses, each individual perceives the consensus environment, which may or may not have a material existence, or may or may not be entirely the product of sense organs or the brain. Heraclitus and Plato maintain that the senses need not perceive authentic "reality", Heidegger and Levinas introduce a level of
care into the relationship with being. These philosophers may be contrasted with those who have come, in the last century or so, to be known as philosophical realists. In examining how philosophers view that which is external to a given perceiver, it might be possible to gain some insight into the status of a conditional environment being perceived by a fictional character. The characters' relationships to their perceived (fictional) conditional environment is analogous to the individual human being's relationship to their perceived (non-fictional) consensus environment.

In philosophy, the term "realism" has been used to designate a number of theories which accept that objects have a material existence independent from the way that these are perceived by an observer. These theories have no problem with the idea that there is something real which is external to the observer and can be perceived and interacted with. But it is perhaps a measure of how pervasive the postmodern aesthetic has become, that even this so-called "realism" is open to question, that senses may be fooled, that the subject's contact with "reality" is at the very least mediated via the senses.

In its simplest form ("naive realism") the perceiver is thought to have direct access to objects. For example, an apple is green because that is its colour, it tastes a particular way because that is its flavour, and so on. However, the objection could be raised that a red-green colour-blind person would see the apple rather differently to someone with normal sight, that one person's sweet apple may taste sour to another, and so on.⁴

Nevertheless, one trend in twentieth-century philosophy has been toward a common-sense view that objects have a material existence beyond the individual perceptions of a single, individual observer. G. E.
Moore, in "A Defence of Common Sense", argues that: "'There are and have been material things' is quite certainly true... 'There are and have been many Selves' is quite certainly true" (Moore 1959: 58-9). He accepts the veracity of the external world which he senses, but thereby inevitably shifts importance from the object to its perception. When the perceiver says: "This is an apple," the perceiver may well have an incomplete knowledge of that particular apple - its flesh, pips and so on - whilst still knowing about the characteristics of previous apples. Only a particular part of one apple is being perceived.

Whilst this does not set out to be phenomenological, it may be considered in this way: the perceiver becomes the centre of the perceived environment. A sceptic, having read Time Out of Joint or Ubik, might agree that the perceiver is indeed seeing something, but doubt the veracity of everything beyond the reach of the senses. In both of these novels only enough of the environment is constructed in order to fool the protagonists - in the latter novel nothing exists beyond this. "There are and have been apples" is not so much true as an act of faith.

According to the "critical realists" movement, there is no direct access to objects, although there is direct access to perception; they considered perception to be a mental existent. The perception of the object is: "irresistibly taken, in the moment of perception, to be the characters of existing outer objects" (Drake 1920: 20). The critical realists accept that any perception may turn out to be a misperception: "there is never a guaranty... that they really are the characters of any outer existent; there is always the theoretic possibility that they are merely imaginary or hallucinatory data" (Drake 1920: 20). The implication is that these hallucinations are the exceptions, rather than
the norm; it is argued that the perceiver can normally derive an accurate picture of the consensus environment from sense-data.

It is possible to define "reality" as that which is perceived as a result of the sense-data being taken to be the characteristics of posited external existents. Any sense-data can only be proven to be true through more sense-data, which is equally unreliable. The parallel lines of railway tracks which appear to meet at the horizon can only be proven to be parallel when measured; it can only be taken on trust that the measuring device remains the same through the exercise.

Access to the "Real": Dick's use of viewpoint

But I am here more concerned with literature than the nature of the consensus environment. In literature it is possible to be granted access to someone else's perceptions, or to their viewpoint. Depending upon the chosen viewpoint, the reader will be given a different version of a conditional environment. Assuming that sf is analogous to the consensus environment, then the lesson to take from the philosophical realists (albeit against their intentions) is that perceptions are not necessarily of an entire environment, and that sense-data is not definitively accurate or trustworthy. It might be that the writer describes something which appears as a consensus environment to the characters within a given conditional environment. But that the viewpoints of different characters are of the same conditional environment can only be taken on trust by the reader.

To take one example, Willis Gram's thoughts are given in Our Friends From Frolix 8, as are Nick's and Kleo's, and the book is also told from the point of view of several other characters. This shifting third
person subjective viewpoint is at the heart of Dick's narrative technique. He describes the conditional environment from their points of view, rather than from a totalizing, omniscient position. The reader assumes that a unified environment is being described. But what may be an authorial slip could also be taken to point out that perceived environments do not in fact overlap. In one early scene, described from Nick's point of view, the year is 2135: "It had been this way for fifty years, now, since 2085" (OFFF8. 1: 18). But later in the novel, in the words of Willis Gram, the year is 2190: "'In 2103 I was eighteen. Now I'm one hundred and five' " (OFFF8. 8: 18). The conditional environment may be so dysfunctional that for one character it is 2135, and for another 2190.

_Galactic Pot-Healer_ maintains a third person subjective narrative, albeit solely focused through Joe Fernwright throughout, but draws attention to the implications of this:

"a phenomenon perceived is done so in the structural percept-system of the perceiver. Much of what you see in perceiving me . . . is a projection from your own mind. To another percept system I would appear quite different. To the police, for instance. There're as many world views as there are sentient creatures"

(GPH. 4: 40).

In other words, it is difficult to construct a _koinos kosmos_ from the individual _idioi kosmoi_, and the conditional environment may well appear differently to different characters. In this particular novel, there is only Joe's view of things and people; he may be being unfair to his wife or wrong in his assessment of his skills as a potter. Very rarely, Dick will use a first person narrator. _Radio Free Albemuth_ is one example, although it actually has two first person narrations; Parts One and
Chapter Two

Three are told from the point of view of a character named Phil Dick, Part Two is told from the viewpoint of Nicholas Brady. The narrator may be deluded, and thus is again unable to give a definitive description of the "reality" within a given conditional environment.

The failure of one character's idios kosmos to match up with another character's idios kosmos may have devastating consequences. In *Humpty Dumpty in Oakland*, Al is convinced that property developer Chris Harmon is a crook, and is out to swindle Jim. Al thus tries to prevent their partnership, and believes that Harmon has then taken revenge by having Al's wife fired from her job. But Harmon is actually an honest man and Al's wife had in fact quit. The reader, who has only really had Al's word for Harmon's crookedness feels a similar sense of dislocation and shock to that experienced by Al.

* Martian Time-Slip is told from the points of view of Jack, Silvia, Doreen and Arnie, as well as several other minor characters. The viewpoint during the desert encounter between Arnie and Jack shifts from Arnie's to Jack's, but when the scene recurs at the climax of the novel, after Arnie has travelled back in time, it is only told from Arnie's viewpoint (MTS. 16: 206-7). One crucial scene - when Jack goes to Arnie's office knowing that his father is going to cost Arnie his position of power, that Arnie may have found out about Jack's affair with Doreen and that Arnie may sack him - is repeated several times. At first there is just a brief snatch of dialogue, involving Manfred, the autistic child whom Arnie is trying to use to predict the future (MTS. 9: 125), then a fuller version of the scene occurs, from Arnie's point-of-view (MTS. 10: 126-31). The scene repeats, described through Jack's eyes, but this time the smell and sexual tension of the scene is much more apparent (MTS. 10: 133-7). Textures become prominent in the fourth version of the
scene, told via Doreen’s perceptions (MTS. 11: 141-2). In the final
version, at last in the proper chronological position within the narrative,
the narration shifts from Arnie’s point of view to Manfred’s to Jack’s.
But none of the previous versions, and possibly not even the last,
constitutes an authentic account of events, because they are all filtered
through Manfred’s confused perceptions of future possibilities.

The reliability of a viewpoint as a means of accessing the "real"
within a conditional environment is further undermined by the
characters’ use of drugs. On occasions, it becomes impossible to
distinguish a genuine perception of something exterior to the subject
from a hallucination within the subject’s percept system. For example,
in Now Wait For Last Year, there is the drug JJ-180 taken by Kathy and
Eric Sweetscent which apparently allows the user to travel in time, or
may just allow them to perceive something which appears to be the
future. In Humpty Dumpty in Oakland, Al takes a concoction of
Dexymil, Sporine and Anacin to give him courage to face Harmon (HDO
9: 101-2). In other words, character’s emotions and perceptions may not
be genuine. It also seems that a certain amount of drug use is natural
behaviour for his characters.

Dick’s name became synonymous with drug use within the sf
subculture, particularly after the short story “Faith of our Fathers” was
described as having been written on LSD. Although Dick certainly
exaggerated his intake of LSD, it seems that he did use amphetamines
to help him write from about 1951 to about 1972, when he went to a
heroin rehabilitation centre in Canada. Whilst Dick never actually used
heroin, he felt that in his depressed state he would commit suicide, and
that rehabilitation doctors would give him the best care. (Dick 1988h.
194-6). It is interesting to note that The World Jones Made, complete
with heroin use, was published by the same company that just three years earlier had published Burroughs’s confessional novel *Junky* in an Ace Double. Dick’s most considered novel about drugs, *A Scanner Darkly*, is hardly a pro-drugs novel, given the horrific effects he depicts.7

**Postmodernism**

The twentieth-century explorations of ontology have resulted in a culture of doubt and scepticism. The perceiving subject, already decentred by Darwin’s ideas of evolution, Freud’s writings on the unconscious and Einstein’s theories of relativity, now has to see itself as something which has been thrown into existence or has had to justify its existence in the face of a howling nothingness or absence which is somehow actually a presence. Indeed, some theorists of the postmodern would push this decentring of the subject to the point of the end of a concept of the subject at all.

The French philosopher Jacques Derrida has rigorously unsettled many of the assumptions and binarisms that he feels western metaphysics to be built on: presence v. absence, culture v. nature, male v. female and so on.8 Jean-Francois Lyotard has suggested that the forces of legitimization - which define how knowledge is accepted to be true and why certain individuals are granted power over others - have broken or are breaking down.9 The ideas of Derrida, Lyotard, and cultural commentators such as Fredric Jameson, Jean Baudrillard, Michel Foucault and many others together constitute a mood which may be described as the postmodern.

But postmodernism is notoriously difficult to define; each theorist seems to invent their own version. It has been seen both as a
development of modernism (Hassan 1971) and a reaction against modernism (OED XII: 201c). Of course, one of the problems lies in the interdisciplinary nature of postmodernism and an inability to define the precise "modern" which it is "post" to. Modernism in literature is not necessarily chronologically identical to modernism in the visual arts or architecture, and covers a narrower period than modern history or modern philosophy.

In general, postmodernism has been characterised by a blurring of boundaries, between genres, between the self and the not-self, between high and popular culture, between legitimacy and illegitimacy, between original and copy. A mood of anxiety or a mood of celebration, albeit often ironic celebration, arises from this collapse of distinctions. My own view is that these blurrings are ontological problems, and that postmodernism is characterized by a mood of ontological doubt. There is doubt as to what is good taste (the celebration of kitsch and camp), as to the boundaries of the self (for example in Baudrillard, to be discussed in this chapter), in the metanarrative of progress which legitimates scientific progress (as discussed in Lyotard's The Postmodern Condition) and the value of authentic originals (again Baudrillard, in his idea of the simulacra). I find support for this emphasis on ontology in Brian McHale's attempt to situate sf as paradigmatic of postmodern literature: "SF is openly and avowedly ontological, i.e., like 'mainstream' postmodernist writing it is self-consciously 'world-building' fiction, laying bare the process of fictional world-making itself" (McHale 1992: 12).

Some have seen the postmodern age as a product of a historical rupture at the end of the 1950s or in the 1960s (Lyotard 1984: 3; Jameson 1991: 1). Postmodernism becomes in this model a more or less
linear successor to modernism. It is perhaps no accident that this period frequently designated as being the beginning of the postmodern epoch coincides with Dick’s coming to maturity as an sf writer; the phenomena of teenagers, the expanding popular culture, the start of the space age, Cold War paranoia and the infancy of the global village are as much a part of Philip K. Dick’s oeuvre as part of a postmodern society. Dick has been cited by many postmodern theorists; it is part of the unsettling irony of postmodern philosophy that a writer from a marginalized genre is as much of an authority as Plato. As Dick Hebdige wrote of Baudrillard in "A Report on the Western Front: Postmodernism and the 'Politics' of Style": "Baudrillard has introduced Philip K. Dick into the body of 'serious' social and critical theory rather like a mad or malevolent scientist might assist the Invasion of the Body Snatchers by introducing a pod from outer space into a small, quiet mid western town" (Hebdige 1986/7: 9). The inverted commas around "serious" demonstrate how this concept has become undermined. But despite Hebdige’s rather exuberant metaphor, he himself implies that Dick is not himself a serious writer and his use of the iconic mad scientist is evocation of pulp rather than PhilDickian sf, where mad scientists are in short supply. The choice of film is interesting: one of the most politically charged sf movies of its day.

Hebdige’s juxtaposition of lifestyle, consumerism, the media landscape and Disneyland is fascinating, but a foreword which presents the essay is flawed. The foreword is written as by someone called Ubik (presumably Hebdige, or the editor of Block), and situates the essays as a parallel to Dick’s introduction to I Hope I Shall Arrive Soon. Ubik notes that Hebdige had not read the introduction when he started the article, gives some biographical material culled from the introduction
and erroneously claims "I Hope I Shall Arrive Soon" as Dick's last short story. Such mistakes are, unfortunately, characteristic of many postmodern readings of Dick.

**Fredric Jameson on Dick**

Jameson's influential essay "Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism", first published in 1984 in the *New Left Review*, and then reprinted with related articles in a book of the same name, located the postmodern as a logical development in aesthetics after realism and modernism, and with its post-imperial politics as a successor to nationalism and imperialism. He suggests that: "this latest mutation in space - postmodern hyperspace - has finally succeeded in transcending the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world" (Jameson 1991: 44). This confusion of the individual in "the world space of multinational capital" (Jameson 1991: 54), which puts that individual at risk, will be seen to be applicable to a reading of Dick.

Jameson devotes a third of one chapter of *Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* to Dick, as a prelude to discussing the nostalgia for the 1950s in several films of the 1980s. The faked 1950s environment in *Time Out of Joint* serves to question the authenticity of any historical depiction of the 1950s: in postmodernism, historicism is replaced by historicity or nostalgia.¹⁰ It seems that the sort of emotions and ideas that are part of Jameson's conception of the postmodern aesthetic are prefigured by Dick in works written prior to, or at the point of, the rupture.
In Damien Broderick’s book *Reading by Starlight*, Jameson’s essays are used as a guide to five parameters of postmodernism: lack of depth, the end of subjectivity, the triumph of pastiche and nostalgia, schizophrenic writing and the hysterical sublime. The fourth of these, "schizophrenic écriture, especially jumbled collage and a radical breakdown in reality-testing" (Broderick 1995: 110), provides Broderick with a starting point for a brief discussion of Dick; he demonstrates how Dick’s sensibility seems to inform Jameson’s exploration of the postmodern. Introducing the scene from *Time Out of Joint* where the soft-drink stand vanishes, Broderick notes that:

\[
\text{The ontologically devastating fact . . . is that luckless Ragge Gumm’s experience is not, at the diegetic level, a metaphor, not a psychotic hallucination. This is the stuff of his being-in-the-world. It is a postulate possible only in an sf text, the concretisation of what elsewhere, even in the postmodern, would almost inevitably have to be read as figurative. (Broderick 1995: 110).}
\]

Postmodernism is being put forward as an aesthetics of ontological doubt, but even a postmodern reading of Dick’s *Time Out of Joint* would, it seems, take Ragle’s experiences as figurative, as representative of something else. Sf, however, would be able to present the experiences as experiences, on a literal level, prior to any shift to allegory or metaphor.

From Broderick’s conception of Jameson’s postmodernism, it would seem that sf is even more suited to posing ontological questions than postmodern fiction is. Dick’s writings may well be paradigmatic of the postmodern aesthetic, but somehow they go beyond even postmodernism in their exploration of the "real". This peculiar gesture of having an aesthetics which is the result of a historical period or philosophical state, and then having a number of texts which are both
central to the aesthetics and even more typical of the period or state than the aesthetics seems to be a feature of postmodernism.

For example, in Jameson's footnoted comments on cyberpunk, he sees cyberpunk as: "henceforth, for many of us, the supreme literary expression if not of postmodernism, then of late capitalism itself" (Jameson 1991: 419). For Jameson, postmodernism is supposed to be the aesthetics of late capitalism. Cyberpunk is first situated as "the supreme literary expression ... of postmodernism", but not only that, it is "the supreme literary expression ... of late capitalism itself". In this case there is no contradiction, but perhaps there is an excess of hypebolic rhetoric which the book Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism fails to live up to.

**Jean Baudrillard on Dick**

The other major postmodern theorist of the to have written about Dick is the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard. Like Jameson, Baudrillard suggests that the subject exists in a new sort of space, which he dubs "hyperreality". "Space" is perhaps not the right word as: "the new universe is 'anti-gravitational,' or, if it still gravitates, it does so around the hole of the real, around the hole of the imaginary ... It is not a question of parallel universes, or double universes, nor real nor unreal. It is hyperreal" (Baudrillard 1991: 311). In his discussion of the hyperreal in "Simulacra and Science Fiction", it is Dick's short stories which he suggests as mapping this "space". In the next three chapters, I will examine Dick's approach to this "space" in some of his novels, where the real becomes impossible to distinguish from the unreal and thus becomes a meaningless term. Baudrillard is perhaps over-optimistic in
his choice of terminology and hypostasizes the hallucinatory; he is, after all, interested in the hyperreal rather than the hyperfake - indeed for Baudrillard the concept of fake would be meaningless.

In the essay "The Ecstasy of Communication", Baudrillard goes further in describing the experience of hyperreality, where the subject becomes schizophrenic:

> today we have entered into a new form of schizophrenia - with the emergence of an immanent promiscuity and the perpetual interconnection of all information and communication networks. No more hysteria, or projective paranoia as such, but a state of terror . . . an over-proximity of all things, a foul promiscuity of all things which beleaguer and penetrate him, and no halo, no aura, not even the aura of his own body protects him . . . [the individual is] open to everything

(Baudrillard 1988: 26-7).

This terror can certainly be traced through Dick's novels: for example, in Richard Kongrosian's fear that he is being turned inside out in The Simulacra, a book which Baudrillard has read and cites in "Simulacra and Science Fiction", in the horror of becoming Palmer Eldritch, in the confusion caused by the Lies, Incorporated satellite in LIES, Inc. and in Joe Fernwright's rejection of merging with the Glimmung in Galactic Pot-Healer. Perhaps only in VALIS is there a welcoming of this interconnectedness, and, indeed, a mourning of its loss by Horselover Fat.11 Martian Time-Slip's autistic Manfred Steiner, who is overwhelmed by his misperceptions of his surroundings, is a case of Baudrillard's version of schizophrenia.

It is clear that Baudrillard was influenced by Dick's writings, possibly even to the extent that he was inspired to write of "simulacra" - the copy with no original12 - by Dick's frequent use of the word. Baudrillard's musings on Disneyland seem positively PhilDickian, and
seem to be contemporaneous with Dick's thoughts on Disneyland.

**Baudrillard suggests that:**

Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the "real" country, all of "real" America, which is Disneyland... Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle

(Baudrillard 1983: 25).

This is very much in the spirit of Dick: paranoia on a global scale (or at least national), and an interest in the pervasive influence of the media (Disney, again). In a speech, Dick discussed the result of replacing the faked copy with the faked fake or the real original. He discusses an exhibit of mechanical birds:

Suppose some night all of us sneaked into the park with real birds and substituted them for the artificial ones. Imagine the horror the Disneyland officials would feel when they discovered the cruel hoax. Real birds! And perhaps someday even real hippos and lions. Consternation. The park being cunningly transmuted from the unreal to the real... They would have to close down

(Dick 1988k. 13-4).

Baudrillard would perhaps argue that Disneyland would have to close down because it has been contaminated by the so-called "real".

However, Baudrillard was probably unaware of this piece by Dick; it seems that Baudrillard has only read Dick in French. That this is so may be deduced from a mistake made by the translator of Baudrillard's *Seductions* into English. Baudrillard quotes from *We Can Build You,*
but the translator renders this as *The Schizophrenic’s Ball* from the French title *Les Bals des Schizos.*

**Other Postmodern Readings of Dick**

But whilst Jameson and Baudrillard seem like helpful starting points for (postmodern) readings of Dick, the critics who have followed in their footsteps have not been so perceptive. Most of these critics cannot come to terms with *VALIS* and the novels which followed it, being uncomfortable with the religious angle of his writings. This could be because they are working in a Marxist or post-marxist tradition and so dislike transcendental solutions to earthly problems.

Scott Bukatman's comments in *Terminal Identity* are typical. He is quite happy to write about *The Simulacra* and *Martian Time-Slip* in terms of Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle,* but is uncomfortable with the later works: "despite recoveries in individual works, Dick's later writing (from about 1966 onward) is increasingly grounded in an elaborate theological framework (which Dick referred to as his Exegesis)" (Bukatman 1993: 54). Bukatman unfortunately does not indicate which books are the "recoveries" and which (by implication) are sick.

Theology *does* underpin Dick's work after 1966, but it also underpins most of his work from the Zoroastrianism of *The Cosmic Puppets* onwards. Indeed it seems that Dick was researching Gnosticism, Zoroastrianism and other similar religions as early as *The Earthshaker,* a novel written in the late 1940s but now lost (Sutin 1989a: 64). When Bukatman comes to discuss *Ubik,* he writes about the importance of the adverts which form the epigraphs to each chapter,
suggesting that Ubik is the "ur-commodity" (Bukatman 1993: 97). But nowhere in his discussion of the final chapter of *Ubik* does he consider the implications of the final epigraph's Biblical tone and allusion to the Word.16

Bukatman dismisses *VALIS* in arguing that: "With a reduced emphasis on the broader social formations through which 'reality' gains meaning, works such as *VALIS* (1981) are, to my mind, less compelling and surely less relevant" (Bukatman 1993: 55). This seems perverse, in that *VALIS* is filled with attempts to give meaning or explanations for reality: through its deconstruction of autobiography, its satire of the American psychiatric system and the finding of divine meaning in popular cultural productions such as adverts, cartoons and films. For someone so interested in television, the spectacle and "blip culture", the appeal of *VALIS* should be great. It also seems absurd that a novel which is concerned with the problems of coping with life in Nixon's America and its aftermath is not seen as political.

Eric Rabkin has problems with *VALIS* because it contains the wrong kind of politics. He appears to have taken on board the death of the subject alluded to by Jameson and Baudrillard, but without the former's concept of a self coming to terms with its potential death, and the latter's finely tuned sense of irony. Rabkin writes:

> Rejecting again and again rational post-industrialism, having the irrational expectation that in our world the individual still mattered, he had a "vision" that reversed - replicated in the mirror - the key terms: he embraced the irrational as fundamental and then, poor child of our too rational world, he decided to build a rational structure on this evanescent base. He called it "orderly and beautiful," but that was because he was mad

(Rabkin 1988: 171).
Rabkin elides the difference between irrationality and clinical madness, and indeed between Dick-as-author and Dick-as-character. The idea that the individual does not matter is debateable, given a decade of Reaganomics and Thatcherism, as is the concept that the post-industrial society with its unfathomable networks of media, multinational corporations and computers is somehow rational.¹⁷

It does appear possible to discuss Dick sympathetically in terms of a Marxist tradition, but only if Dick is read more carefully, and with a sense or irony or humour. With the rise of evangelism in recent years, as well as fears about fundamentalism and cults, Dick's attitude to religion is certainly relevant today. In an article in the socialist journal Monthly Review, Paul Buhle and Thomas Fiehrer discuss the history of Christianity and Marxism, and the impact liberation theology has had in Central America: "this theology tells the story of a perpetual cultural revolution . . . a new comradeship with the deity can be discovered for the strength and patience needed to make a revolution" (Buhle and Fiehrer 1985: 19). Both VALIS and Radio Free Albemuth yoke religious belief with attempts at overthrowing evil regimes; The Divine Invasion tells a similar story but in sf terms. The Transmigration of Timothy Archer also hints at a different, more revolutionary Christ. Indeed Buhle and Fiehrer quote VALIS: "'The Empire never ended,' in the gnostic observation of late science-fiction writer Philip K. Dick, and again, 'whoever defeats a segment of the Empire becomes the Empire.' The tendency remains until the last revolution against class society has been won" (Buhle and Fiehrer 1985: 20).

This can be contrasted with another commentator, Veronica Hollinger, who I believe misreads Dick when she describes him as being: "within the project of antihumanist SF" (Hollinger 1991: 208), in other
words he celebrates the end of the individual human being as an organic entity and its invasion or replacement with electronic or artificial components. This is difficult to square with the anxious tone that creeps in when the body is infiltrated in novels such as *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, although they do run counter to Rabkin's argument that Dick irrationally celebrates the individual. Perhaps in his seemingly Levinasian revisioning of Heidegger - or a coincidental Hebraic version of Heidegger - Dick's version of reality is constituted by individuals, and that reality only has meaning in terms of organic individuals, whether human or animal.

Brian McHale's survey *Postmodernist Fiction* similarly has more insights into postmodernism than Dick, although he discusses Dick alongside Nabokov, Spark and Borges. Seeing sf and postmodernist fiction as both parallel and overlapping, he shows that *Ubik* draws on devices or topoi from popular fiction and discusses *The Man in the High Castle* as a parallel-world story. Unfortunately, he misreads the latter when he comes to discuss Abendsen's novel within the novel and claims, "The parallel world of a parallel world is our world" (McHale 1987: 61). Enough of Abendsen's book is quoted to demonstrate it is in this case a further parallel world. His more recent work, *Constructing Postmodernism*, does little more than name a few Dick novels in footnotes.

**Cyberpunk**

McHale does, however, pay some attention to cyberpunk, and comments that "if cyberpunk did not exist, postmodernist critics like myself would have had to invent it" (McHale 1992: 13). The cyberpunk movement,
like the New Wave twenty years before it, drew much inspiration from Dick's work, in particular from its fusion of reality with illusion. Dick has thus been discussed in passing by several critics more interested in cyberpunk than in Dick himself. Cyberpunk, with its mixture of drugs, high technology, computer networks, street culture, multinational corporations and religion is a cocktail of Dick, William S. Burroughs, Dashiell Hammett, J. G. Ballard and Alfred Bester. Indeed in Bruce Sterling's introduction to *Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology*, Dick is listed among the roots of cyberpunk as one of "SF's native visionaries". (Sterling 1988: 344). Cyberspace, the computer-generated virtual arena which underlies much cyberpunk writing, defined as "consensual hallucination" (Gibson 1986: 67) sounds like a definition of reality from Dick, or of hypereality in Baudrillard.

William Gibson, whose 1984 novel *Neuromancer* for many people *is* cyberpunk, wrote the introduction for *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1974*, the first of the volumes to be published. Gibson suggests that: "Most of the postmodern esthetic is prefigured in Dick's best work - in his sleepless deconstructions of generic science fiction's shopworn tropes, in his lively sense of pastiche and in a certain abiding tone of exhaustion" (Gibson 1991: x). In an earlier piece for the fanzine *Wing Windows* Gibson was similarly enthusiastic in his praise: "He was the only product of the American sf scene you could give to hardened Burroughs and Pynchon fanatics without wincing a little. Because, at his best, he was truly Dread, the poplit equivalent of certain moments in rock when an improvised guitar line comes scything out at you" (Gibson 1985: 3). Although in the late 1980s and early 1990s dozens of academic articles found Gibson to be a significant writer, not all of these acknowledged the inspiration he appears to have drawn from Dick.18
**Dick as postmodern icon**

Dick himself has become a postmodernist icon, providing not only the source material for films such as *Blade Runner*¹⁹ and *Total Recall*²⁰ and inspiration for novelists and dramatists, but also his own name to be used as a character in other people's fiction. This character is somewhere between that which readers have constructed from their reading of his works, the character which he presented people with when he met them and the character he presented himself as in *VALIS*. Although Dick himself is dead, his name has acquired a life of its own.

The collection *Welcome to Reality*, edited by Uwe Anton, contains both parodies of Dick's writings and stories which feature Dick as a character, for example Thomas M. Disch's short story, "The Girl with the Vita-Gel Hair". Disch notes that he had come up with the premise for the story before he had thought of appropriating Dick's character for it: "the story needed a male character who is (a) sympathetic, (b) slightly comic, and (c) a little flaky. By Dick's own droll accounts of how he falls in love he seemed a perfect candidate. Not only did he fit the bill, but I had the chance to render my own fictional homage" (Disch 1988: 14). In the story, Deborah revitalises her hair with Vita-Gel mousse, to the extent that it becomes sentient and starts talking to her. This is reminiscent of the sentient objects throughout the PhilDickian canon, such as the talking door in *Ubik* and the adverts in *Now Wait For Last Year*. Deborah meets a middle-aged man whose name is Phil; like Dick, he is an expert in classical music and is obsessed with secret messages from God. Deborah and Phil have sex and afterwards he accidentally eats the gel, mistaking it for a dessert mousse. This results in his
stomach becoming sentient. The story does work perfectly well without
the knowledge of the in-joke or references being apparent, but for the
reader with extra-textual knowledge there is an added layer of meaning
and metafictional playfulness.

In Michael Bishop's novel *Philip K. Dick is Dead, Alas*, Philip K. Dick takes on a life, or rather an afterlife, of his own as a character. It begins in an alternate 1982 where Richard Milhous Nixon has remained president. Philip K. Dick, author of such classics as *The Broken Bubble of Thisbe Holt*, *In Milton Lumky Territory* and *Puttering About in a Small Land*, has fallen out of favour after the publication of a partly sf novel *Nicholas and the Higs* and the disastrous - and banned - *VALIS*, and dies in 1982. Cal Pickford is a Phil Dick fan, and owns several other Dick novels which circulate in samizdat form: sf titles such as *Do Androids Dream of Electric Veeps?*, *The Doctor in High Dudgeon* and *The Dream Impeacement of Harper Mocton*. But Dick is not entirely dead and gone; he returns in various guises such as the amnesiac Kai (Dick's middle initial) and the dwarf Horsy Stout (an echo of Horselover Fat). This undead Dick is part of a conspiracy to dream this particular reality, along with Richard Nixon, out of existence.

Whilst this novel is twice as long as most of Dick's, it has elements of pastiche: the use of a variety of viewpoint characters, hallucinations, throwaway lines building up a picture of an entire environment and an obsession with Richard Nixon. Figures who were important in Dick's life become strangely transmuted; for example, Paul Williams, the literary executor of Dick's estate becomes "Wilhelm Pauls, a professor of Contemporary American Literature" (Bishop 1988: 47). Other names are familiar: Bishop Marlin after Jeanette Marlin, Dick's first wife, Colonel Hudner after his step-father, Joseph Hudner, Major
Levack after Daniel H. J. Levack, one of Dick's bibliographers and Robinson, after sf writer Kim Stanley Robinson who wrote a PhD. on *The Novels of Philip K. Dick*. The references to Dick are obviously an integral part of the novel.
Conclusion

The postmodern aesthetic has come to dominate late twentieth-century thought and art, but is not in itself an entirely new development. If postmodernism can be characterized by ontological doubts and speculations, then it is part of a history of inquiries into being that predate the pre-Socratic philosophers. Whilst some philosophers have described the consensus environment in terms of chaos or flux, others have attempted to find some ethical basis to this being.

Philip K. Dick's exploration of ontology within his fiction can be seen to be part of this tradition. He has been a direct influence upon some of the theorists of postmodernism, and he has been cited by many postmodern commentators, if not always accurately. The postmodern blurring of boundaries can be seen in the way that Dick's writings cut across genres and modes, in the way that he expresses serious ideas in a form too often considered to be trivial and in the blurring of author and character. In the following three chapters I will explore Dick's investigations of the question "What is real?" within his fiction in a much greater depth, before shifting to an examination of ethics.
Chapter Three:
"Can a person hallucinate without being psychotic?":
Hallucinatory conditional environments

Basic Plots

As I have already suggested, forms of false experiences recur throughout the PhilDickian canon. These may take the shape of faulty viewpoints, hallucinations, drug trips, and even entire fake worlds. Again and again Dick addresses the problem of defining what is real and of ascertaining whether a given object or experience is authentic. Since his work is predominantly fiction, and usually sf - a genre which I have noted largely misrepresents the consensus environment whilst being analogous to it - this theme can be approached in terms of a comparison of the real with the fake. Indeed in 1966, Dick wrote that: "If I knew what a hallucination was I would know what reality was" (Dick 1995h: 60). Two basic plots can thus be generated: a shift from a real world to one which is false, and a discovery of an authentic reality masked by a faked one.

In the former characters begin to have hallucinations or begin to experience an inauthentic "reality". This can be seen in Eye in the Sky, where the characters pass through a series of hallucinatory conditional environments and in Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said, where Jason Taverner wakes up in a world where no-one has heard of him and he tries to prove his true identity. It is not that any of these characters are
necessarily psychotic; they simply strongly perceive the environment around them in a particular manner. Both of these novels will be examined in this chapter. The two novels that the next chapter is based on - *Time Out of Joint* and *The Man In The High Castle* - demonstrate the reverse of this plot. In the first Ragle Gumm discovers that the environment he perceives is manufactured to keep him subdued and in the second characters break through to other realities or suspect the one they inhabit is false.

In all four cases, Dick complicates the plot from this simple template so that the ontological status of both the hallucinatory and authentic environments - from the perspective of the fictional characters - becomes problematic. As the novels discussed in Chapter Four were written between the two discussed within this one, it is impossible to make a generalization about Dick's chronological development as a writer. Indeed, even though nearly twenty years separate the publication of *Eye in the Sky* and *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*, there is a remarkable degree of similarity between the two texts, which I hope to delineate. Starting with an examination of the way in which the individual novels were written, I will place them both within the context of the consensus environment, in particular that of the politics of the American Left and civil rights movements. This will be followed by an examination of the novels' hallucinatory conditional environments and their ambiguous nature.

**Eye in the Sky**

*Eye in the Sky* was written in a two-week burst, under the title *With Opened Mind*, and received by Dick's agents on February 15 1955. In
theory the manuscript was too long to be published as it stood; Dick's usual book company Ace had strict word limits since their practice was to publish two novels in a back-to-back format, each title being around forty thousand words in length. But despite being nearer to eighty-thousand words, *Eye in the Sky* was liked enough by Dick's publishers to be printed largely uncut.

The novel opens with the explosion of the Bevatron - a sort of particle accelerator - on 2 October 1959, about four-and-a-half years into the future from the point that Dick was writing. It then flashes back to an interrogation of Jack Hamilton about the pro-Left sympathies of his wife, Marsha. Jack, although now suspended from his job, goes with Marsha and the security guard McFeyffe to see the Bevatron being tested, and they are caught up in the explosion along with Bill Laws, a black guide, and four tourists. At first it seems that everything is fine and that they have all survived; instead they are all unconscious and experiencing hallucinatory environments conditional upon the idios *kosmos* of one of them. In the first, that of Arthur Silvester, the environment is dominated by a religious cult, where sins are immediately punished and where miracles can happen. As Hamilton notes: "The free energy of the Bevatron beam turned Silvester's personal world into a public universe. We're subject to the logic of a religious crank, an old man who picked up a screwball cult in Chicago in the 'thirties'" (ES. 8: 114). As a result of knocking Arthur Silvester out, this hallucinatory conditional environment is replaced by what transpires to be another hallucinatory conditional environment. After passing through four of these, Jack discovers that McFeyffe is a Communist agent but cannot prove it. They all seem to return to the original conditional environment and Jack goes into business with Bill Laws.
The Left and McCarthyism

The charges made against Marsha in *Eye in the Sky* include the following: "'She signed the Stockholm Peace Proposal. She joined the Civil Liberties Union . . . She signed the Save the Rosenbergs Appeal . . . she spoke at the Almeda League of Women Voters in favor of admitting Red China to the U.N. - a communist country . . . she contributed money to the Society for the Advancement of Coloured People'" (ES. 1: 10-11). These were all genuine issues in the politics of the consensus environment in the 1950s. The paranoia of the time was such that the supposed disloyalty of Marsha might mean that her husband Jack posed a security risk. This was all part of the spirit of McCarthyism that had swept America in the five years prior to the writing of the novel. President Truman had established loyalty oaths for government employees, but wished to keep any investigations confidential. Senator Joseph McCarthy demanded that they be made public and started making allegations about the number of Communists working in government. McCarthy was censured by the Senate for his behaviour on 2 December 1954, and then further discredited a few days later for his attack on President Eisenhower. It seems almost certain that Dick wrote *Eye in the Sky* in the immediate aftermath of these events, with McCarthy discredited, but McCarthyism still in progress.

Whilst the media spread McCarthy's allegations and Hollywood had its blacklists of untouchable writers, sf was able to confront such issues relatively head on. Admittedly this was not always from a position sympathetic to Communism or even liberalism; C. M. Kornbluth, who with Frederik Pohl had satirised consumerism in *The
Space Merchants, wrote Not This August, a novel about a Sino-Russian invasion of the United States. Heinlein showed his suspicion of the Soviet Union in The Puppet Masters. Generally, in sf, there was (and still is) a distrust of the interference of any government into the conscience of the individual; this distrust can be traced in the standard sf plot of the hero working alone to save an entire society. James Blish, no socialist, made a thinly veiled attack on McCarthy in They Shall Have Stars, written 1952-4: "only McHinery had the privilege of lying, never his witnesses" (Blish 1981: 7). Dick's security agent character in Eye in the Sky, McFeyffe, is another perjurer and turns out to be a spy himself.

In retrospect, a speech designed to indicate McFeyffe's loyalty is rather undermined by the following revelation: "'My God, Jack, there's a file on me - there's even a file on Nixon' " (ES. 1: 10). To a reader in the 1950s, Nixon's loyalty to the American ideal was theoretically beyond dispute, as he was Eisenhower's Vice-President. McFeyffe is suggesting that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with having an FBI file as even the Vice-President has one. For the post-Watergate reader, Nixon stands discredited, and McFeyffe stands discredited by default. This shift in reputation is anticipated by the novel: McFeyffe is a spy. Dick's interest in Nixon dates back to August 1948, when Nixon had been one of the principal prosecutors of Alger Hiss. The first American to be tried for alleged Communist affiliations, Hiss sued one of his accusers for libel, lost his case and was thus convicted for perjury in 1950. After Nixon's narrow defeat in the 1960 presidential election and for the 1962 governorship of California, most people thought his political career was over, but Dick had a character remark in "What the Dead Men Say", a story written by 15 April 1963: "'Miracles in politics do happen; look at

Nixon was also to appear, briefly, in *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*, when Dick describes a room with a: "wall-to-wall carpet, which depicted in gold Richard M. Nixon's final ascent into heaven amid joyous singing above and wails of misery below . . . [God] was smiling a lot as He received his Second Only Begotten Son back into His bosom" (FMTPS. 12: 117). The blasphemy of the hyperbole and the paradox of "Second Only" is an indication that this is to be taken ironically; the status that such a figure would have is more suggestive of the paranoid tyrant that Nixon becomes (as Ferris F. Freemont) in *Radio Free Albemuth*.²

Some examination of Dick's relationship with the Left needs to be made at this point. Dick had settled in Berkeley with his mother in June 1938 and, with the exception of the school year of 1942-3, he lived in that town until September 1958. He graduated from Berkeley High School in 1947, the same year as Ursula Le Guin but several years later than would be typical, due to continual periods of ill health and phobias. He spent a single term at the University of California, Berkeley, apparently in autumn 1949, before dropping out.³ This would have been the period of a controversy over staff loyalty oaths.⁴ In addition, the campus had a history of student unrest: it had seen trouble as early as 1885 in the form of an uprising against moral controls, and in 1964-5 the first student sit-ins occurred at Sproul Hall on campus. In *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*, Dick was to spare Berkeley the oppressive treatment meted out to other university campuses which were ringed by security cordons; the policeman Felix Buckman studied there: "I got my master's at Berkeley" (FMTPS. 10: 107). It is hard to be certain
whether Dick's sympathy for Felix causes his \textit{alma mater} to be spared, 
or whether some residual distaste for the institution causes him to see it 
as collaborationist.

I have shown how Dick used recent historical events from the 
consensus environment to extrapolate the conditional environment of 
\textit{Eye in the Sky}; in addition, the hallucinatory conditional environment 
engages with issues of the consensus environment. Damon Knight 
commented:

\begin{quote}
In the mundane sections, Dick has something to say, but all 
too little time to say it, about the Negro in America, about 
security systems, Communists and Liberals. Perhaps the 
deepest fault of the book is that, in the dream sections, it 
dodges such living issues to tilt at straw-men: back street 
cults, 19th century prudery, paranoid maiden ladies, 1930s 
parlor pinkery

\hspace{2cm} (Knight 1967: 234).
\end{quote}

This is somewhat misleading. All of these four dream sections are 
dominated by totalizing systems which \hspace{2cm} \begin{quote}
can be used to form 
critiques of McCarthyism: religious fundamentalism, the moral 
majority, American family values and Communism. Chapman (1975) 
has drawn a link between the fear of Communism - perceived as 
atheistic and sinful - and the growth of the churches and figures such as 
Billy Graham. The prudery is the result of the desire for the censorship 
of anything which challenges American values. Joan Reiss's paranoia is 
a parody of the attitudes displayed by McCarthy and Nixon, and the 
communist misperception of America in the novel shows these attitudes 
to be ridiculous.
Black Politics

More importantly, the novel explores the position of blacks in society. Dick had portrayed an all-black society in "Time-Pawn" (written by June 1953) and had written about interracial love in *Mary and the Giant*, a novel written roughly contemporaneously with *Eye in the Sky*. The black character in *Eye in the Sky*, Bill Laws, is a "graduate student in advanced physics" (ES. 4: 43) forced to work as a guide around the Bevatron because no one will give him a better job. In the hallucinatory conditional environment of white Arthur Silvester, he has to shift his behaviour to fit in with how blacks were misperceived: "[Silvester] thinks all Negroes shuffle" (ES. 7: 110). When the characters gather at Silvester's hospital bed, the racism could hardly be more overt: "Is that, he [Silvester] said thinly, 'a person of color standing there? . . . Before we continue . . . I'll have to ask the colored person to step outside. This is the private quarters of a white man" (ES. 8: 119). This causes Jack to become angry enough to attack Silvester, with the help of Bill and the others, and to cause that particular environment to be erased, only to be replaced by another.

In Edith Pritchet's hallucinatory conditional environment - where anything unpleasant, including racism, is abolished - Bill is allowed to speak for himself:

"You try being colored awhile. You try bowing and saying 'Yes, sir,' to any piece of white trash that happens to come along, some Georgia cracker so ignorant he blows his nose on the floor, so moronic he can't find the men's room without somebody to guide him there. *Me* to guide him there. I practically have to show him how to let down his pants"

(ES. 11: 157-8)
Whereas Jack is continuing in his father's footsteps as a scientist, Bill has had to take menial jobs to fund his studies, and is not in a job commensurate with his qualifications. In this hallucinatory conditional environment, however, Bill is in charge of research for an invented soap company, and feels happier. Jack demands the authenticity of the originary conditional environment, despite the fact that his privileged job there is in jeopardy.

Bill and Jack reach a rapprochement; given the erasure of Edith's hallucinatory conditional environment and its subsequent replacement by a paranoiac and then a communist one, Bill agrees to the need for authenticity. In the conditional environment they return to, they go into business together making phonographs, with the help of Edith's investment. Such an interracial alliance would be almost unheard of in the consensus environment of the 1950s. Jake Jakaitis agrees with this view, but provides an alternative slant: "Eye in the Sky's resolution resolves little more than Hamilton's middle-class guilt . . . [it offers] a privatized gain through entrepreneurial vision validated through interracial cooperation for personal gain through the exploitation of white elitism" (Jakaitis 1995: 180). However, there is a further statement by Bill, that Jakaitis fails to consider, and one which perhaps undermines the nature of the resolution.

**Return to Reality?**

Dick wrote some additional material for *Eye in the Sky* which was excluded from the published novel: a prologue where characters complain about the amount of sex in the novel or the lack of moral
lessons. Bill Laws writes, "A kind of rosy, optimistic glow seems to hang over this, an anachronistic faith that things will somehow turn out all right. In real life that simply doesn't happen" (Dick 1987d: 11), much the most perceptive comment of the eight. The key word, of course, is "seems", implying that this might not be the case. The book seems to end in the real conditional world of the first chapter, with one attempt at a plot twist: "'An earwig. Crawled up my sock and bit me.' Grinning uneasily, Laws added, 'Just a coincidence'" (ES. 16: 255). For a second the characters fear that they have returned to Arthur Silvester's *idios kosmos* where sins are immediately punished.

But there is more than a binary opposition being set up here between one *idios kosmos* and the originary conditional environment; eight people were involved in the Bevatron explosion but only four hallucinatory conditional environments are described. In other words, there may be four more hallucinatory conditional environments to pass through before the originary conditional environment is reached. In Chapter 14, Jack sees Bill, Marsha, McFeyffe, David Pritch and himself as realists and therefore as being unlikely to generate a hallucinatory conditional environment. Since he is wrong in the specific case of McFeyffe, there is no reason to accept the veracity of the statement.

Of course it would help if there could be a proven difference between the conditional environments of the opening and closing chapters. It is difficult to be certain in the brief amount of text available, but it seems there is at least a hint that there is a difference. Jack has talked early on about: "'the Hamilton Trinural Sound System, the Hamilton Musiphonic Ortho-circuit!'" (ES. 3: 30), as if these were feasible, and these seem more advanced than the hi-fi sets he is
proposing to manufacture with Bill. The two are portrayed as visionary at the end of the novel, anticipating listening to music as a mass leisure activity. However in the consensus environment there had already been the hits of Elvis Presley, Gene Vincent and Buddy Holly, as well as the explosion in jazz recordings over the previous decades. With such an environment in mind, Bill and Jack no longer seem quite so foresighted as might be first thought. If the conditional environment at the end of the novel is indeed hallucinatory, there arises the question of whose idios kosmos has generated it. Again, there is very little textual evidence to answer this. I would speculate that it is the hallucinatory conditional environment of David, the youth of the novel, who has built a radio set and is interested in electronics. However it might equally have been, Jack's, Marsha's or Bill's idios kosmos transmuted into a seemingly real hallucinatory conditional environment, as each of them would have a particular view of the conditional environment.

**Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said**

Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said was started in March 1970 and put to one side by August. Dick's usual practice was to take notes on ideas and characters over a period of weeks and perhaps produce a plot outline to sell the novel to a publisher. He would then write the novel in a period of a month or less, diverting from the outline where necessary, before reading over the draft and producing a second, clean, draft, which revised spelling and was submitted. But in this case he revised the novel heavily: "in one case 7 times" (Dick 1986e: 3). Such a diversion from usual practice might be attributable to writer's block - it was his first novel since Our Friends From Frolix 8 was submitted on 2
July 1969 - save for the fact that he could still write a great deal in a short space of time: "At one point in 48 hours I wrote 104 pages" (Dick 1986e: 3). It seems that he had set out to write an extremely well-crafted novel, in contrast to Our Friends From Frolix 8 which had been (in Dick's own opinion) somewhat of a potboiler. But in August he stopped, exhausted, feeling that the novel simply needed a clean submission draft. His fourth wife, Nancy Hackett, left him in September, and, following further personal problems, he placed the manuscript with his attorney. It was not until 1973 that he returned to the novel. In a letter to Art Spiegelman and Michele Gross, dated January 7 1973, Dick wrote: "[The attorney's] secretary finally located it [the rough draft]. . . . we will stay here while I type it up, which should take about two months, I guess (or maybe more)" (SL [1972-73]. 132). However, despite a bout of flu, he was able to finish the revisions by the time he wrote to Nancy Hackett on February 4 1973: "I finished my novel that I'd been working on and sent it off to Scott. I also wrote a short story over the weekend" (SL [1972-73]. 136). Although the nature of these revisions is unclear - the mothballed draft, if it survives, would be the only source of evidence for this - it is likely that Dick only took a few days to complete this work, which might not have been extensive.8

Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said is set eighteen years after 1970, in August 1988, in a police-state America. Jason Taverner, a successful television personality, is attacked by an ex-lover and wakes up in an environment where no-one has heard of him. He manages to find Kathy Nelson, a forger and police informer, who fakes the identity cards he needs. Taverner is arrested, but General Felix Buckman quickly discovers that there is no Jason Taverner in any of their records. He decides to let Taverner go free, rather than send him to a forced
labour camp. Taverner meets Felix's lesbian twin Alys, who dies just as evidence of Taverner's existence is finally found by the police.

The Left by 1970

Dick would have been well aware of the nature of communism and the left in California during the 1950s and after, although he was never a party member. In the late 1960s he would have also been aware of the student sit-ins, strikes and demonstrations across the country, which were in reaction to issues such as civil rights and involvement in the war in Vietnam, as well as teaching methods in universities. He would have seen that the campaigning of broadly Left activists had simply led to the escalation of the policing and political powers of the Right, as one commentator noted: "The Berkeley disturbances were credited with having played an important role in electing Ronald Reagan in California in 1966. The Chicago demonstrators helped elect Nixon in 1968" (Lipsett 1972: 250). Dick retrospectively formed a link between the besieged American Left of the 1950s and the world of the late 1960s and early 1970s counterculture:

Consider the 50s. The concept of "unamerican" held power. I was involved in fighting that; the spirit (counterculture) of the 60s evolved successfully out of the (basically) losing efforts by us "progressives" of the 50s - we who signed the Stockholm Peace Proposal, & the "Save the Rosenbergs" etc. - losing, desperate efforts. Very unpopular & very unsupported. Berkeley was one of our few centres; this takes me back to EYE IN THE SKY etc.

(E. 174).

Indeed the conditional environment of Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said is a police state which could have resulted from a continuation of
McCarthyism; it is a "betrayal state" where forgers inform on their clients and everyone must prove their identity.

In this near-future conditional environment, the campuses across the country have been cordoned off: "the rabbit warrens of Columbia University, . . . the smelly, bearded students kept subsurface lifelong by the pols and the nats. The police and the national guard, who ringed every campus, keeping students from creeping across to society like so many black rats swarming out of a leaky ship" (FMTPS. 1: 10). The tone of this passage is not sympathetic to the students, but this represents the thoughts of Taverner who is, at the beginning of the novel at least, sure of his status as one of the have-nots. By the end of the novel, the reader presumably has sympathy for the students and their plight, emphasized by the unexpected sympathy that the policeman character attracts. In May and June 1970 protests were held against the incursion across the Cambodian border; on May 4 at Kent State University, Ohio, four students were killed by the national guard. Dick was presumably aware of this incident during the writing of the novel; the treatment of students in the conditional environment was not so very far from that in the consensus environment.

**The Position of Blacks**

*Flow My Tears the Policeman Said* takes the apartheid examined and condemned in *Eye in the Sky* a stage further. Jason is being driven to Kathy Nelson when he sees an elderly black man:

> Seeing him, Jason felt an odd emotion. There was [sic] so few blacks alive, now, because of Tidman's notorious sterilization bill passed by Congress back in the terrible
days of the Insurrection. . . . [They have] to surrender their birth coupon when their first and only child came

(FMTPS. 1: 24).

This has the result of halving the black population every generation. By 1988 there are only a few blacks left, and those are protected by law; however it appears that Tidman's Act remains in force. Whilst Taverner's distaste for students shows his unpleasant character, and to a certain extent is challenged by the rest of the novel, the issue of racism does not go unchallenged. Even Taverner is sorry about the position of blacks in society; Dick did not want to be accused of racism.

At the end of part three of *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said* Felix encounters a black man, Montgomery L. Hopkins at a petrol station, and hands him a drawing of an arrow-pierced heart. After a brief conversation, he embraces the man. This gesture of agape cheers him, stops the tears. Because of this section, which could be read as a homoerotic encounter between a latent homosexual (Felix) and a presumably heterosexual man (Montgomery), Dick felt moved to write a prescript to the novel. In a letter dated February 24 1974 to Philip Jose Farmer, a fellow sf author, he explained his reasons:

> When I originally told it [the title of the novel] to a girl in our field she said, "That's a Harlan Ellison\textsuperscript{10} title," and when I told her the plot she said, "And the protagonist is a homosexual." Then she left. I actually wrote an introduction defending the protagonist against her slanders, but later threw it away, deciding that the hell with it, which is what I said at great length in the introduction


It seems to me that the embrace is a purely platonic act; Felix needs a human contact, whatever the source. Dick writes that "he does not care
whether General Buckman is homosexual or not; he cares only that rising out of and transcending this terrible day General Buckman shows himself able to love, and in fact able to love a stranger" (Dick 1986e: 2). Dick goes on to suggest that the novel deals with several kinds of love; for example Taverner's encounters with seven different women, Alys's lesbianism, the apparently legal sexual encounter between Allen Mufi and a thirteen-year-old boy (FMTPS. 12: 117-20) and the cherishing of a pot which is considered a work of art (FMTPS. Epilog: 231).

This discussion of different sorts of love was at one point clearly there in the novel itself, in a conversation between Ruth Rae and Jason Taverner in the 1970 manuscript, but subsequently cut:

"Sex without love, love without sex, paternal love, universal sublimated transcendental love, unnatural love - " Ruth counted.

... Jason said. "A relationship in which there's neither sex nor love."

... "terribly strong urgings toward strangers. I wanted to go up to them and - men and women both - and hug them, and I wanted them to hug me . . . "love, maybe merely of a sort, for the author as you come in contact with him, the person, through the book . . . "Love for an animal . . . "

(Dick 1992a: 3).

Ruth goes on to discuss male-male relationships and their limitations, again mentioning hugging:

"Any love felt by one man for another is considered homosexual. Men can't embrace, even. They can't hug one another. Haven't you ever felt like hugging another man? Out of non-homosexual love? Out of love for him pure and simple?"

"No," he said

(Dick 1992a: 4).
The effect of this conversation would have been to foreground the possible homosexual nature of Felix and Montgomery’s hug at the end of part three of the novel. It seems likely that Dick would want to see their embrace as an example of, first and foremost, agape, rather than as a physically sexual encounter. Perhaps he feared that noting that such behaviour “is considered homosexual” might be taken as suggesting that Dick himself thought such behaviour is homosexual.

Until recently, overt homosexuality was rare as a subject in sf, despite the rarity of female characters. An early exception is the 1953 short story "The World Well Lost" by Theodore Sturgeon. It is difficult to assess how many gay writers are in the field. It would be problematic to use Dick’s strong opposition to a gay reading of *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said* as evidence that Dick was homophobic; the area he grew up in had a strong tolerance for different sexualities as well as different forms of politics. Indeed when he moved out of his mother’s house he went to live in a largely gay household with the poets Jack Spicer, Philip Lamantia and Robert Duncan. In the end it seems that he decided to let the novel speak for itself; that love in all its forms can transcend the worst of all possible worlds.

Perhaps Dick was overreacting in his response as Leslie Fiedler has traced a recurring trope of interracial male bonding throughout American literature. It is found in books such as *Huckleberry Finn*, it can be located in mismatched cops films such as the *Lethal Weapon* trilogy and *Renegades*, in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and even in *Star Trek*, between Kirk and Spock. This male bond, no matter how close, always remains platonic.

In an essay exploring the hidden ideology in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, John Osborne notes that this often means a hearkening
back to an earlier state of man, of innocence or the noble savage. The bonding is associated with a journey without a destination: "The journey has and can have no actual destination; it is, rather, a travelling towards male psychic wholeness" (Osborne 1984: 61). Such a pattern is clearly at work in this gas station encounter. But the scene differs from the model in one important manner: "[In One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest] McMurphy provides the chief with a liberational model, not the other way round. . . . non-white men are patronized by being depicted as subservient" (Osborne 1984: 62). Here it is clearly Montgomery who is liberating Felix.

The Nature of the Conditional Environment

The revelation of the precise nature of the hallucinatory conditional environment perceived by Taverner is delayed until late in the novel. A false explanation is suggested towards the start of the novel: after finishing making a television programme watched by thirty million people, Taverner visits Marilyn Mason, an ex-lover who throws a "gelatinlike Callisto cuddle sponge with its fifty feeding tubes" (FMTPS. 1: 13) at his head. He wakes, briefly, in hospital, and there is the suggestion that not all of the tubes have been removed; their infiltration will cause a disturbance or "'somatic violation' " (FMTPS. 1: 14-5). When he next reaches consciousness, he is in a hotel bedroom and stripped of his celebrity status. The reader makes a link between the incidents which is not at first contradicted by the text.

An alternate, competing explanation is provided by forger Kathy Nelson who spent eight weeks in Morningside Mental Hygiene Relations psychiatric hospital where:
"I had the delusion that they [other patients] were famous people like Mickey Quinn and Arlene Howe. . . . I thought this boy named David was really Mickey Quinn, and it was a big secret that Mickey Quinn had lost his mind and he had gone to this mental hospital to get himself back in shape and no one was supposed to know about it because it would ruin his image"

(FMTPS. 4: 46).

Later she claims that the actor Jeff Pomeroy was in Morningside (FMTPS. 5: 56). It is quite possible that Taverner might in fact be a nobody, labouring under the delusion that he is a famous star; this would be a neat reversal of Time Out of Joint where Ragle Gumm's paranoia that he is the centre of importance turns out to be correct.12 The first chapter could thus be read as a glimpse into Taverner's idios kosmos.

In later chapters this explanation is given a chemical angle; Taverner has taken a synthesized drug (possibly a form of mescaline), which causes him to believe that he is famous: "Maybe I am only one of a great number of people leading synthetic lives of popularity, money, power, by means of a capsule. While living actually, meanwhile, in bug-infested, ratty old hotel rooms. On skid row. Derelicts, nobodies. Amounting to zero. But, meanwhile, dreaming" (FMTPS. 22: 178). This recalls the Whale's Mouth colonists of Lies. Inc., who are drugged to believe that they are living in paradise rather than in a concentration camp.13 As the drug wears off Taverner would awake from the slumber and be confused as to his true identity; Taverner could just be an alias and thus not on any computer record.

The final explanation is more complex, and involves a further decentring of Taverner. Stripped of his media image, Taverner lacks a true identity, beyond the self-assurance which comes from his nature as
a Six, a genetically manipulated human. Taverner is the first named character in the novel, and is the focal point for much of the third-person subjective narration. However, rather than initiate action, he is a largely passive figure to whom things happen; for example the Callisto cuddle sponge is thrown at him, and this is an event which he can control or avoid. Despite his sudden reversal of fortune, he is no tragic figure; he does not seem to learn anything from his experience, and survives into old age.

It is hardly surprising then that Taverner is not responsible for the hallucinatory conditional environment; it is generated by Alys Buckman, Felix's lesbian twin who has had an affair with Taverner's ex-lover Heather Hart. The drug is an experimental one, KR-3, which causes the user: "to perceive irreal universes, whether they want to or not. . . . trillions of possibilities are theoretically all of a sudden real; chance enters and the person's percept system chooses one possibility out of all those presented to it" (FMTPS. 27: 208). The user chooses, albeit possibly unconsciously, what sort of environment to perceive and that changes from being a potential to an actual environment. Alys chooses one where Taverner is stripped of identity and influence, but his perceptions, unlike everyone else's, continues to function as before. From chapter two, to her death in chapter twenty the hallucinatory conditional environment is based upon her perceptions. However her thoughts are never presented to the reader directly.

There is a second focal point of view beyond Taverner's, that of Felix Buckman. As a policeman, he might be considered part of the oppressive state apparatus and thus an evil character, but he is part of a lineage that starts with the sympathetic police bounty hunter Rick Deckard in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and ends with the
experiences of S. A. Fred in *A Scanner Darkly*. Indeed Felix has managed to close some of the forced labour camps and gets supplies secretly into the campuses (FMTPS. 20: 153-4) despite the risk to his own livelihood and even life. In the last nine or so pages of part three, he becomes the emotional core of the novel. He drives his quibble - Dick's neologism for a sort of flying car - away from the city, debating whether or not to take revenge on Taverner. He also ponders why he would want to punish Taverner. Felix does not know of the link between Alys, Heather and Taverner, so he has no idea why Taverner has come to Alys's attention.

There is a further biographical link between the two men that neither of them are aware of. A narrative strategy that Dick was to use with S. A. Fred and Bob Arctor in *A Scanner Darkly*, Nicholas Brady and Phil Dick in *Radio Free Albemuth* and Horselover Fat and Philip K. Dick in *VALIS* was to divide his leading character into two aspects and to have one or both commenting on the actions of the other. *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*, as the first of this sequence of novels, might be considered as the source of this technique. Taverner and Felix have separate existences which interconnect and finally come to a crisis in part three; after this the narration becomes omniscient, almost as if the rift in Dick-as-narrator has been healed. It is now known that Dick was the survivor of twins, and occasionally he fantasized that his lost sister was a lesbian; the parallel between this and Felix and Alys is obvious. As has already been noted, both Dick and Felix attended Berkeley. The links between Taverner and Dick are even more striking. Dick was born at home in Cook County, Illinois on 16 December 1928, Taverner at the Memorial Hospital in Cook County on 16 December 1946. Dick was forty-one when he wrote the first draft of the novel, Taverner is coming
up to that age when the novel is set. He has had his agent Al Bliss for nineteen years, a similar period calculated from 1970 for Dick coincides with his joining the Scott Meredith Literary Agency. This is a structure external to the novel, but has a dynamic within it. Extra-textual knowledge of Dick's life enriches the reading of the text.

A more obvious structure is provided by the ayre "Flow My Tears" or "Lachrymae" set by John Dowland which is used as an epigraph to the four parts, and has been described as "the most popular blues song of the early seventeenth century" (Smith 1952: 278). The policeman who cries the tears, and twice identifies the title of the ayre is Felix, ironic since his name is Latin for "happy". However the ayre has five stanzas and the book has four parts, so the following has been excluded:

From the highest spire of contentment
My fortune is thrown,
And fear, and grief, and pain for my deserts
for my deserts
Are my hopes since hope is gone

This could equally well apply to Taverner's movement from being a famous star, largely isolated from a police state, to someone who is subject to its whims.

A second text is also part of the external structure of the novel: The Acts of the Apostles. The name Jason only appears twice in the Bible, once as part of a list in Romans, and then in Acts: "the Jews were jealous [about the early Christians], and taking some wicked fellows of the rabble, they gathered a crowd set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the people" (Acts 17: 5). This bears a resemblance to Felix's electronically induced dream: "they all moved toward the house . . . A man had sealed himself up inside the
house, a man alone, Jason Taverner, in the silence and darkness" (FMTPS. 27: 218). The reversals must be noted; the Biblical Jason gives refuge rather than receives it, and is briefly imprisoned rather than killed in a vision. "Felix" is also the name of a Biblical character, the Governor at Caesarea before whom Paul is brought for trial. Felix was a reformer (Acts 24:2) who delayed his questioning and allowed Paul a certain amount of liberty whilst keeping him under surveillance (Acts 25: 22-3). The parallel with Felix Buckman’s interrogation of Taverner in chapters fourteen to seventeen is strong. There is another parallel in Acts (8: 26ff), where Philip (a name of obvious significance) encounters and converts an Ethiopian on a desert road. Here there is a reversal of Biblical material; in the novel the black can be seen to convert the white when Montgomery reaches out to give solace to Felix at the gas station.

The novel may still be read as a straight narrative, but these three structures seem to continue the movement of dislocation which is set in motion by the plot. The "Flow My Tears" dynamic is the most obvious, identified openly within the text. The autobiographical strand requires some extra-textual knowledge, about the author within the consensus environment. The Acts material, with its reversals and blurring of characters, is even less obvious. Indeed Dick later claimed that it was accidental rather than deliberate: "I had never read Acts, I must admit . . . A careful study of my novel shows that for reasons which I cannot even begin to explain I had managed to retell several of the basic incidents from a particular book of the Bible, and even had the right names" (Dick 1988k: 18-9). I am doubtful of the veracity of this. It seems unlikely that someone so well versed in esoteric religious and philosophical materials - he refers to Anaxagoras, Aristotle, Gnosticism, Heraclitus, David Hume, Parmenides, Plato, Spinoza, Xenophanes and
Zeno in this one essay alone - should not have read a central text of Christian belief. Admittedly he did read much more of this material after February 1974, but even so he already had a substantial knowledge. As will be discussed in the next chapter, he had some knowledge of *I Corinthians* 13; possibly he had come across the incidents discussed above whilst flicking through the New Testament. Whatever the truth, an effect of these three external structures is to locate the novel outside of the consensus timeframe; it is simultaneously c. 50 CE, 1970 and 1988, with elements of seventeenth-century sensibility. This echoes the collapsed chronology, in *Our Friends From Frolix 8* and *The Man in the High Castle*, which have already been briefly discussed. A further example will be discussed with regard to *Time Out of Joint* in the next chapter.

Another effect is to concentrate attention on the passage dealing with the garage encounter, to see if it yields any further significance. It must be remembered that Felix has discovered that the previous few days were controlled by the hallucinations of his twin, and that these have ended with her death. The assumption is that the real world - the original conditional environment of chapter one - returned. However Montgomery shows Felix some family photographs. He tells Felix, "You must drop over. . . . You can meet my wife and kids. Three in all" (FMTPS. 27: 222). Assuming that the three is referring to the number of children (and it must unless "kids" is a misprint for "kid"), this flatly contradicts material in the first chapter which I have already cited, that black people have: "to surrender their birth coupon when their first and only child came" (FMTPS. 1: 24). Whilst it has to be noted that this does come from a sequence set in the hallucinatory conditional environment, Jason's knowledge of the world seems to remain otherwise intact and
accurate. Unless Montgomery has somehow evaded the law, there has been no return to the originary conditional environment; the explanation that Alys has been hallucinating the environment or that she has died must be treated with suspicion. The text is silent over this; it remains incomplete in itself. With this ambiguity over whether the hallucinatory conditional environment was Alys's after all - given that it seems likely that the originary conditional environment has not returned - the whole novel seems suspended between what are, from the point of view of the character, "real" and "false" conditional environments.
Conclusion

In both of these novels there is a movement from an originary conditional environment extrapolated from the contemporary politics of the consensus environment to a hallucinatory conditional environment, or to a series of such hallucinatory conditional environments. However there is no corresponding movement of return to that originary conditional environment. Indeed, in *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*, it is possible to be sceptical about the reality of the environment described within the opening pages. In one letter Dick suggested that the only constant thing is love, even if love is not real. This love takes many forms: heterosexual, gay, for children, for pornography or even works of art. The connection between love as empathy and the nature of reality will form the basis for Chapter Six.

*Eye in the Sky* operates within the mode of satire, showing how totalizing belief systems are dangerous extremes, and how these systems can control the way the observer perceives the surrounding environment. Not only does a belief system shape the way that an individual perceives, but it also provides self-legitimation for the actions of that individual. It maybe that the individual happens to be benign, but this need not be the case. The solution, as far as there is one, is to refuse to participate in the strategies of such systems. Firstly Jack refuses to resort to McCarthyite condemnation; his charge that McFeyffe is a spy is on the record but Jack knows it is McFeyffe's word against his own and so leaves it up to the consciences of Colonel Edwards and McFeyffe. Additionally Jack rejects the offer to continue working in an industry which bolsters the Cold War and goes into business for himself with Bill Laws. This might be construed, as Jakaitis has suggested, as
being capitalistic; but whilst Jack respects Marsha's rights to hold the socialist views she does, he does not necessarily share them. However the phonograph and music industries were to serve as a medium through which values central to the counterculture of the 1960s could be promulgated, and these values challenged traditional American values. This much would have been already clear in early 1955. By 1974 and the publication of *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*, the downside of the challenge was also apparent, or at least its failure to remove the dominant culture.

Ethical behaviour and concern for others remains apparent, despite the doubtful authenticity of the conditional environments which Dick's characters find themselves thrown into. Authenticity and falsehood, defined largely in terms of each other, have already become hard to distinguish in these two novels. The next chapter will deal with two novels where the initial setting proves to be false. It will examine whether these hallucinatory conditional environments veil an underlying, authentic reality.
Chapter Four: "Skim milk masquerades as cream": Attempts to penetrate the veil.

_Time Out of Joint_

Despite starting off from a similar point - America in the 1950s - _Time Out of Joint_ in fact reverses the basic plot of _Eye in the Sky_. Whilst in the latter novel the characters move from what must appear to them to be a "real" conditional environment to a series of hallucinatory ones, in the former it is the 1950s which is fake. In _Time Out of Joint_ 's conditional environment the actual time is 1998 rather than April 1959. Since the novel was written in the 1950s and it is now the 1990s, the way the novel is perceived has shifted, irrespective of Dick's original intentions for it. In addition the novel as artifact has shifted, from the original Lippincott edition, which was published as "a novel of menace", to the last British Penguin edition, labelled as Classic Science Fiction.¹ This shift in emphasis has two implications for the 1990's reader. As well the respecification of genre, the change in the novel's imprint implies a qualitative evaluation; not only is the novel of sufficient worth to be published by Penguin,² but it has remained in print or been reprinted in one form or another for over thirty years.

The 1950s readers would have been reading a novel which apparently accurately depicts their present, complete with the Kinsey Report on sexuality and: "The recession . . . Five Million unemployed as of this February of this year" (TOJ. 1: 6). Eisenhower is President, and the Cold War is just beginning; Marge worries about: "H-bombs and
Russia and rising prices" (TOJ. 1: 11). None of this would be news to
the novel's original readers, but in the 1990s anyone under thirty would
have to reconstruct the 1950s; anyone over thirty would have to rely
upon their memory. There is room for endless scepticism about the
novel's accuracy, about whether Dick is guilty of misrepresenting the
period or whether it is a correct depiction of the period. A 1950s reader
would be able to immediately detect this; today things are not so simple.

In the novel it transpires that a war is under way, between the
Luna colonists and Earth, with the so-called Lunatics launching atomic
weapons from the far side of the moon towards Earth. Ragle Gumm, hat
designer and owner of several artificial aluminium making factories, can
somehow predict the pattern of the falling bombs, but becomes
disenchanted with working for Earth rather than supporting the Luna
colonies:

"He got himself into a dilemma, and the only way he could
solve it was to go into a withdrawal psychosis. . . .
"He withdrew into a fantasy of tranquillity," Black said,
winding the clock that Junie had brought over. "Back to a
period before the war. To his childhood. To the late 'fifties,
when he was an infant"

(TOJ. 14: 176).

Ragle has travelled in time mentally, and so a whole town has had to be
constructed in order to accommodate his psychosis and maintain his aid
to the Earth cause; Ragle is restricted to a small town, with any effort to
leave being thwarted. It is surely no accident on Dick's part that Black
has a clock in his hands when he is explaining the deception, nor that
Ragle learns part of the truth about himself from the 14 January 1996
issue of Time rather than any other magazine; for example the
magazines Look or Life. Dick's manuscript of Time Out of Joint called
the novel *Biography in Time*, quoting the end of chapter thirteen: "Ragle began to read his biography in *Time*" (TOJ. 13: 169).

This withdrawal psychosis is mentioned as early as the second chapter of the novel, when Black attempts to explain a strange experience of Vic, Ragle's apparent brother-in-law, who has reached for a non-existent light cord: "A reversion to infancy due to stress. Your feeling ill. The tension of the subconscious impulses to your brain warning you that something was amiss internally. Many adults revert to infancy during illness" (TOJ. 2: 24). Even Ragle thinks that "I'm dragging away in a protracted childhood" (TOJ. 3: 39). This reverting to the past, to a safer childhood, is parallel to the readers of the 1990s imagining the 1950s.

**Representing the 1950s**

In chapter nine of *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Fredric Jameson draws parallels between *Time Out of Joint* and the films *Blue Velvet* and *Something Wild*, where the utopian image of a golden age and a violent underbelly are juxtaposed. In the 1980s and since, depictions of the 1950s, or evocations of 1950s style, have become immensely popular. As a fashion designer³ has been recorded as commenting:

Retro fever... is a response to troubled times: a subconscious reaching out to a past that is both comforting and reassuring. "When the future seems uncertain, people look back to the past for something more reassuring. Even the kids, who weren't alive in the Fifties, have been affected by the culture of that time from American films and TV series"

(Tredre 1991: 41).
To the two films already named, might be added David Lynch and Mark Frost's postmodern soap opera *Twin Peaks*, which shares the star, a small town setting and some of the mock-1950s look of Lynch's earlier *Blue Velvet*. There is also Bob Balaban's film of small town cannibalism *Parents*; more well-known is Robert Zemickis's *Back to the Future*, where the hero travels back from 1985 to the time of his parent's courtship and has a hand in inventing rock and roll. This is a cleaner, more nostalgic version of the 1950s than David Lynch's versions.

Jameson questions whether such portrayals are accurate, whether it actually was an idyll, or whether the past is being constructed in the image we require. But what evidence exists that shows exactly how the 1950s were in the United States? American film and TV was to some degree censored - black characters, for example, were rarely shown in a positive or unexploited role. Obscenity trials, such as the one surrounding *Naked Lunch*, demonstrated that there was a legal risk in publishing sexually explicit materials. Several decades on, and chronology collapses as the attempt is made to reconstruct the period: it is neither the 1950s nor the 1990s in the postmodern nostalgia movie, but both.

Dick's version of the 1950s - actually written in the 1950s, although this again does not necessarily imply absolute accuracy - is a grimier portrait of the times than that normally seen. In addition to the then-contemporary settings of *Eye in the Sky* and *Time Out of Joint*, Dick wrote around a dozen mainstream novels in the 1950s and early 1960s, mostly chronicling despair and sexual angst in small town settings. These remained unpublished at the time, whereas his sf was available. It is unclear how much of Dick's mainstream fiction Jameson has read, but he has declared: "of the great writers of the period, only
Dick himself comes to mind as the virtual poet laureate of this material" (Jameson 1991: 280). This may just be referring to the sf as some kind of poetics of the 1950s. Perhaps publishers in the 1950s looked at the contemporary environment with the same rose-tinted spectacles which are now part of the nostalgic impulse.5

Given the nostalgia current in our consensus environment, even with the negative connotations of withdrawal psychosis, it is natural for the 1990s readers to identify with Ragle's desire to escape from an unpleasant present to a mythical past. But Dick was not writing for the 1990s audience; he would not have been thinking of a time when his settings had become current and thus open to historical criticism. One of the problems inherent in treating sf as a prophetic, predictive genre, is the specific issue of dates.

For example, Masson has objected that the conditional environment described by Dick in *Counter-Clock World* would be unlikely to have become true in the timescale between date of publication (1967) and the chronology of the novel (1974), as time has been reversing for twelve years since a fictional 1986 (Masson 1976). This is dependent upon the assumption that the authorial intention was to produce an accurate history of the future. This naturally causes problems with a novel such as *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, which is set firmly on January 3 1992, for since that date has passed, the accuracy of the prophecy has been tested. Whilst it could be argued that both novels remain prophecies of the future from the books' origins in the 1960s, the passage of historical time in the consensus environment has apparently invalidated their accuracy. Such a position means that inserting a new date, or removing one altogether, would somehow make the novels "true".6 Instead, it seems much more sensible to see
dates as part of the narrative strategy to denote the otherness of the conditional environment. For a 1990s audience, Ragle has regressed to a constructed 1950s from a 1990s imagined in the 1950s; this is a formidable series of chronological displacements, and certainly serves as a means of defamiliarization, negotiated hand in hand with nostalgia. This is another example of the collapse of linear chronology.

**Misrepresenting the 1950s**

The postmodernisation of *Time Out of Joint* as symptomatic of the collapsing of chronology or history is, in some senses at least, a misleading appropriation of the novel. For example, it means that the readers have to shift generic allegiances during the reading of the text, from viewing it as part of some nebulous mainstream, or from a genre of menacing thrillers, to reading the novel as sf. It may be the case that intergenreification is a staple of postmodernist literature, but there may be other readings of the novel. This may be approached by asking at what point does this genre crossing occur? Vic's experience of reaching for a light cord which is not there (TOJ. 2: 23) is apparently explained away, without any need for sf, although the tone becomes more sinister when during an experiment his employees instinctively run for a door which is not there. At the end of chapter three, Ragle sees a soft-drinks stand dematerialize and be replaced by a slip of paper; this could be ascribed to paranoia, but it is a shared psychosis since Vic has a similar experience (TOJ. 6: 61) when a bus fades away whilst he is travelling in it. The apparently out-of-date phone book and the magazines from the future hint at a time shift, but these could be fakes. Not even the radio messages overheard by Ragle necessarily require an sf inspired
explanation. The breakthrough into sf would thus seem to come only when Vic and Ragle finally manage to drive out of the town.

However evidence of the novel’s generic status is given in the first chapter:

A lovely shiny red Tucker sedan sailed majestically by her. Both she and Sammy gazed after it.

"I do envy that woman," she murmured. The Tucker was as radical a car as the VW, and at the same time wonderfully styled. But of course it was too large to be practical. Still...

Maybe next year, she thought. When it’s time to trade in this car.

(ToJ. 1: 12. Ellipsis original.)

As the Tucker motor car never went into production, such an encounter is unlikely to have happened. In 1978, Dick noted that "JOINT opens with a telltale anachronism" (E. 188), which is surely a reference to the Tucker, which would not be seen as late as 1959. The reader in the 1950s would be more likely to pick up such a reference than a present day reader, and accordingly read the rest of the novel as sf. However the novum can suggest two different readings. On the one hand, the Earth authorities who constructed the faked 1950s may have not been aware of the non-production of the Tucker, having also left out Marilyn Monroe in another error of research (ToJ. 4: 50-1, 5: 66). On the other hand, this conditional environment may have been one where the Tucker was in fact manufactured; this second reading allows the whole book to be read as sf rather than just the last few chapters. But it is impossible to choose between the two readings.

This is similar to the difficulties with the status of In Milton Lumky Territory which I identified in Chapter One; there the problem was more one of authenticity of experience than one of genre, although
this did involve a hesitation between realism and fantasy. Separated by
decades from the time of the writing of both these novels, the present
day reader may well miss anachronisms, absences or improper
presences. In his analysis of *Time Out of Joint*, Fredric Jameson notes
that: "Dick used science fiction to see his present as (past) history"
(Jameson 1991: 296). By undermining the verisimilitude of an
apparently authentic or realistic depiction of the (then) present, Dick is
able to suggest a scepticism about the authenticity of the consensus
environment: he shows an environment, which appeared to be real, to be
a fake, and thereby invites doubts as to the authenticity of the consensus
environment, which appears equally real. The conditional environment
turns out to be "a deliberately Fake world, designed to occlude one" (E.
76), and by implication the same is true of the consensus environment.
In a 1978 *Exegesis* entry cited above, Dick went on to write: "Symptoms
- or signs - unveiling the world as spurious abound. Strip the fake world
away & another one appears, even set in a different time" (E. 188-9).7
For example, the incident in *Time Out of Joint* of pulling a light cord
which was not there was one which Dick claimed to have experienced
himself.

Dick seems to be constantly sceptical of the reality of the
consensus environment, and this was to be the crucial to the 'Divine
Trilogy'.8 In his novels it may be suggested that the character doubting
reality is paranoid - as is the case with Ragle Gumm - but the text
refuses to allow this interpretation, since it is told from a variety of
points of view, notably Ragle's sister's and his brother-in-law's. If the
situation is psychosis or hallucination, then this is shared by several
characters. Since sf is a genre which takes as one of its starting points a
deliberate misrepresentation of the consensus environment, then it is
the ideal vehicle for anyone who wishes to dramatise a doubt about reality. *Time Out of Joint* is a novel which looks at the consensus environment through sf eyes; it imitates the mainstream because that is a part of Dick's aesthetics, and gradually forces readers to respond to the text with an sf reading, until it finally becomes sf. This is ironic since the shift from apparent representation to misrepresentation of reality corresponds to Ragle's journey from fake world to a real one. It is clear in the novel that there is a feeling of irreality about the 1950s realm:

And her intuition, then, grew. A sense of the finiteness of the world around her. The streets and houses and shops and cars and people. Sixteen hundred people, standing in the centre of a stage. Surrounded by props, by furniture to sit in, kitchens to cook in, cars to drive, food to fix. And then, behind the props, the flat painted scenery. Painted houses set farther back. Painted people. Painted streets. Sounds from speakers set in the wall. Sammy sitting alone in a classroom, the only pupil. And even the teacher not real. Only a series of tapes being played for him

(ToJ. 14: 174).

Through the narrative thrust of the novel, the 1950s segment is to be considered irreal, but due to the passage of time, it now feels real, as a depiction of the historical consensus environment and it is the 1990s segment which does not reflect the consensus environment. This mirrors Dick's experience: "Back in the Fifties when I lived at 1126 Francisco St actually, as expressed in JOINT that world seemed unreal; in actuality, 'it was decades later' (in JOINT). But now that it is decades later, that past time & place seems real (or anyhow the past somehow) & this a fake" (E. 1991 168).
**From *Time Out of Joint* to *The Man in the High Castle***

Whilst in terms of kudos, style, concerns and the mixing of genres, *Time Out of Joint* was a breakthrough novel for Dick - it was also his first American hardback - it failed at first to reach a sizeable readership. To the mainstream audience who would have read books published by Lippincott he was an unknown author and the sf community largely ignored book publishers beyond the two major sf imprints, Ace and Ballantine. *Time Out of Joint* was effectively out of print in the United States until the 1965 Belmont paperback edition. To the sf audience a once promising sf author must have appeared to be in decline in the late 1950s. Since *Eye in the Sky*, Dick had published only half a dozen short stories and three novels, *The Cosmic Puppets*, *Dr. Futurity* and *Vulcan's Hammer*. But even these were expanded versions of earlier works printed in magazines: "A Glass of Darkness", "Timepawn" and "Vulcan's Hammer" respectively. Whilst the scarcity of the material was partially a result of the then dwindling size of the sf market - in terms of magazines and readers - the recycling of material enabled Dick to bring in royalties for little work, at the time when he was concentrating on writing mainstream novels.

In 1957 Donald A. Wollheim, then editor at Ace, wrote to Dick:

> I was pleased to hear from you, even though the news that you have ended your s-f writing for the nonce does come as a disappointment. I won't argue with your reasons, although I am of the opinion that you still have within you the potential which will eventually produce an American s-f novel to stand alongside the works of Stapledon, Huxley and Wells

(Wollheim 1988: 5).
Wollheim was proved right fairly quickly, although with a novel he himself disliked and did not publish.⁰ The Man in the High Castle is without doubt one of the major works of modern sf. Like Time Out of Joint, it originally appeared in hardback from a mainstream publisher, Putnam's, in October 1962, but this time it was quickly reprinted, by the newly formed Science Fiction Book Club. This edition garnered Dick enough votes to win the Hugo Award for Best sf Novel.¹¹

**The Man in the High Castle**

**Alternate Worlds**

Again like Time Out of Joint, The Man in the High Castle is a hybrid, set in the present with few immediately obvious sf elements; but it is clearly not a straight representation of the consensus environment. The Axis powers have won World War Two and split the United States between them, with a buffer zone in the Rocky Mountains. Despite a few novella "a cup of instant tea" (MHC. 1: 7), "the exploration of the planets, the billion chemical heaps in Africa that were now not even corpses" (MHC. 1: 16), "The Mediterranean Sea bottled up, drained, made into tillable farmland, through the use of atomic power" (MHC. 2: 25) - the conditional environment is not based on a process of extrapolating technological developments, but on an alternative course of historical events. Dick researched in the archive of Nazi papers at the University of California, Berkeley, and acknowledges reading William L. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany, Alan Bullock, Hitler: A Study in Tyranny and The Goebbels Diaries 1942-3 edited and translated by Louis P. Lochner. But the principle inspiration
for the form he gave to the material - as an sf novel - seems to have been Ward Moore's *Bring the Jubilee*, which is set in an alternative world where the South won the American Civil War.

As if anticipating charges that *The Man in the High Castle* was not pure sf, two of the novel's characters debate the issue:

"[I]nteresting form of literature possibly within genre of science fiction."

"Oh no," Betty disagreed. "No science in it. Nor set in future. Science fiction deals with future, in particular future where science has advanced over now. Book fits neither premise."

"But," Paul said, "it deals with alternate present. Many well-known science fiction novels of that sort."

(MHC. 7: 96)

Indeed several sf stories had already used an Axis victory as a springboard. But this is not the only starting point for an alternate world; *The Alteration* by Kingsley Amis, describes a conditional environment where the Reformation never happened, and, indeed, includes a scene where the characters discuss *The Man in the High Castle*:

"A strange name. It is TR, I suppose?"

"If you count CW as TR."

"CW, is it? Yes, indeed I do. Say, then."

"The story starts in the year, 1976, but a great many things are different"

(Amis 1976: 26).

TR is Time Romance, analogous with our own sf - especially to the extent that both are routinely dismissed by the literary establishment - but specialising in time travel. CW is Counterfact World, Amis's term for the more familiar Alternate World. This version of *The Man in the High Castle* is radically different to the one we know, serving a similar
function in The Alteration as The Grasshopper Lies Heavy does in Dick's The Man in the High Castle. But rather than questioning the reality of Amis's conditional environment, the novel-within-a-novel enables Amis to describe his conditional environment more fully. Michael Moorcock's "Oswald Bastable" trilogy is another example of the alternate world novel, dependent upon the continuation of the British Empire and the development of airship technology. Many of Howard Waldrop's short stories are masterpieces of the form.

To argue that a text can only be sf if it is set in the future must take into account the fact that the future is always relative and, once the fictional time setting has passed, the text can be seen to shift from future history to alternative history. Fiction about moon landings written prior to 1969 now falls into that category, because it is fiction written about an alternative to the consensus environment events. In fact any sf has the potential to become an alternative history story, given a sufficient passage of time. Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, which I have already cited in this chapter as being "out-of-date", could be viewed in this way. However the usefulness of the term must depend on an understanding of the author's perceived intention.

The "reality" of the conditional environment

The Man in the High Castle differs from much alternative world fiction by apparently undermining the reader's belief in its conditional environment. Circulating illegally is a novel called The Grasshopper Lies Heavy, which describes a world where the Axis lost the war. By the reversal of the conditional environment, the reader is reminded of the consensus environment and that the novel is a piece of fiction. But
rather than being a straightforward history of the consensus environment, *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* forms a conditional environment to the conditional environment of *The Man in the High Castle*; Russia has been divided between the United States and Britain, the latter being economically the more powerful nation and there has been no Communist revolution in China. In the United States, Tugwell succeeds Franklin D. Roosevelt and there is no race problem after 1950. This novel has been written by Hawthorne Abendsen, with the aid of the *I Ching*, a Taoist oracle: "'One by one Hawth made the choices. Thousands of them. By means of the lines. Historic period. Subject. Characters. Plot. It took years.'" (MHC. 15: 219) This process is an exaggeration of Dick's method of writing *The Man in the High Castle*; every time one of his characters consulted the *I Ching*, so did he.

At the climax of *The Man in the High Castle*, Juliana Frink asks the *I Ching*, "'Oracle, why did you write *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*? What are we supposed to learn?'" (MHC. 15: 220) The answer - Chung Fu or Inner Truth - is one of the most misinterpreted incidents in the PhilDickian canon. Juliana seems to believe that this indicates that the Axis powers lost the war, and that *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* is a true description of reality. Dick has endorsed this viewpoint, and in 1979 he wrote in the *Exegesis*: "A close reading of MITHC shows it is not an alternate world novel. There is only one real world: ours. Juliana finds (figures?) this out & tells Abendsen that his book is true. By implication, their world is a pseudo-world" (E. 191). As our world (the consensus environment) and the one described by Abendsen (a conditional environment to a conditional environment) are not identical, this is not consistent. If our world is the real one, then the conclusion of *The Man in the High Castle* that theirs is a pseudo-world is something
we already know and is therefore anticlimactic. Alternatively, Hayles (1983) has suggested that if the characters within *The Man in the High Castle* are fictional - because *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* is true - then it follows that the readers of *The Man in the High Castle* are potentially fictional.

But Dick's 1979 interpretation of *The Man in the High Castle* also neglects the parallel experience of Nobusuke Tagomi, Imperial Government Consultant at the Pacific Trade Mission in San Francisco. Following his shooting of two Nazi secret service assassins in order to save Wegener's life, he wanders the streets and tries to sell the murder weapon, a Colt .44. Instead he is sold a triangular pendant made by Frank - Juliana's ex-husband - and drifts into another world, where, again, the Axis Powers have lost. Since he is abused there, it would appear that it is not the racially integrated conditional environment of *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*; however it is not definitely a straightforward representation of the consensus environment. Tagomi has interrogated the *I Ching*, although his question is not specified - and also gets *Chung Fu* as his answer. He is uncertain as to what the answer means: "The book means me. I will never fully understand; that is the nature of such creatures [i.e. pigs and fishes, mentioned as stubborn in the *I Ching* text]. Or is this Inner Truth now, this that is happening to me? [Death - Tagomi is having a heart attack] . . . Perhaps it is both" (MHC. 14: 206). The significance of Juliana's answer must be partially based upon an accurate analysis of what *Chung Fu* or Inner Truth means, and whether any text can be taken to adjudicate on whether another text is an accurate depiction of ultimate reality.
False Identities

But before this investigation can take place, it is necessary to consider the rest of the book, and to see if its thematic thrust is indeed the penetration of falsehood in order to reach an underlying truth. For a start, Abendsen is thought of as the man in the high castle: "'I heard someone say that he's almost a sort of paranoid; charged barbed wire around the place, and it's set in the mountains. Hard to get to'" (MHC. 6: 78). In fact Abendsen has left this place due to his phobia of the lift and now lives in "a single-storey stucco house with many shrubs and a good deal of garden made up mostly of climbing roses" (MHC. 15: 214). This is simply the last in a long line of penetrated false identities.

Joe Cinnadella, who planned to assassinate Abendsen, poses as an Italian truck driver. Rudolf Wegener travels to San Francisco under the name of Baynes14 in order to meet Tedeki, who in turn is disguised as Shinjiro Yatabe. Frank Frink, who has suppressed his Jewish origin in order to survive and who also has manufactured fake Colt .44s, disguises himself to visit the American Artistic Handicrafts Inc. shop run by Robert Childan and used by Tagomi. Even Tagomi feels: "I am a mask, concealing the real" (MHC. 14: 202).

Childan's shop specializes in apparently authentic pre-War American memorabilia such as Mickey Mouse watches. More valuable than these are those with historical significance or historicity. Since most of these are undoubtedly fakes - like the relics of Saints - only a consensus to their authenticity can keep the trade going. As Wyndham-Matson, head of a factory manufacturing fakes, explains to his mistress:

"One of those two Zippo lighters was in Franklin D. Roosevelt's pocket when he was assassinated. And one
wasn’t. One had historicity, a hell of a lot of it. As much as
any object ever had. And one had nothing. Can’t you feel
it?” He nudged her. “You can’t... And I know which it is.
You see my point. It’s all a big racket; they’re playing it on
themselves. I mean, a gun goes through a famous battle,
like the Meuse-Argonne, and it’s the same as if it hadn’t,
unless you know. It’s in here.” He tapped his head. “In the
mind, not the gun”

(MHC. 5: 57).

Wyndham-Matson does have a certificate to show the authenticity of the
Zippo lighter in Roosevelt’s pocket, but that simply shifts the burden of
proof onto a document, text, rather than the object. Of course, in the
consensus environment, Roosevelt was not assassinated, so the Zippo
lighter and the certificates are fakes, assuming the consensus
environment is real. If the conditional environment is false, within its
own narrative framework, both are again fakes. This leads to a blurring
of the categories of "authentic" and "fake", these becoming labels of belief
rather than ontological certainties.

This is again in the realm of Baudrillard’s hyperreal, where the
copy is better than the original, or there are copies, but no original. As I
have already partially quoted: "Disneyland is there to conceal the fact
that it is the ‘real’ country, all of ‘real’ America, which is Disneyland... The Disneyland imaginary is neither true nor false; it is a deterrence
machine set up in order to rejuvenate in reverse the fiction of the real”
(Baudrillard 1983: 25). The Mickey Mouse watches exist to give the
impression of an American past, an American history, which can be
respected by the Japanese in the conditional environment’s present.
Culture is commodified, is bought and sold. To take the parallel case of
the relics of the Saints: these provided an anchor to a Catholic faith for
thousands, if not millions of people. It would be unthinkable to question
their authenticity; an authenticity which becomes confirmed with each
new prayer. Once more Dick anticipates Baudrillard's thoughts by twenty years.

But this is a discussion of the fake in relation to post-industrial, postmodern capitalism. An earlier model serves equally well to describe the novel. Authenticity can be seen in terms of economics, via Gresham's Law: "the fakes would undermine the value of the real" (MHC. 4: 44-5). If real items can be duplicated, then according to the law of supply and demand the value of each copy drops according to how many there are. A fake or a copy is likely to be cheaper to produce than the original, and consequently can be sold more cheaply in order to compete, thus driving prices down in a free market. In addition it becomes increasingly difficult to tell if an item is authentic; I have already suggested that the revelation in \textit{Time Out of Joint} that the 1950s environment is spurious could lead to a scepticism as to the authenticity of the 1990s, even within the fictive framework of the conditional environment. To borrow a title, it may simply be the penultimate truth.

\textbf{The I-Ching}

Given that the thrust of \textit{The Man in the High Castle} is as much towards undermining the dialectic of authentic / false as it is to finding authenticity behind a fake veneer, it might not be necessary to use the I Ching to adjudicate between the authenticity of competing conditional environments after all. By Dick's admission that he used the \textit{I Ching} in the composition of \textit{The Man in the High Castle}, he can absolve himself of the responsibility for what might be seen as a weak, anticlimactic or ambiguous ending: "When it came to resolve the novel at the end, the I
Ching didn't know what to do" (Quoted in Williams 1990b: 4). But although Dick certainly relied on the I Ching to decide that Juliana and Abendsen must meet, much of the novel is plotted by his own decisions. Dick is responsible either for an ambiguous ending or a complex one. 

Williams argues:

It's a riddle, a koan; it doesn't have a single or reductive meaning; it isn't meant to be deciphered easily. And when it is deciphered, the answer is a personal one, not necessarily to be shared. If two students have the same koan, it's not the same koan. One student's correct answer cannot be overheard by the other and then repeated to the Abbot.

(Williams 1990b: 7).

This suggests that my interpretation of the ending is based on my own understanding of the I Ching, and is only the one I choose to privilege for an apparently multivalent novel.

The I Ching is one of the major Taoist texts, the others include the Lao Tzu or Tao Te Ching and the Chuang Tzu. These suggest that through yielding or being passive when appropriate, a person is more likely to survive. The Tao is the way, but it cannot be fully described in words:

The way that can be spoken of
Is not the constant way;
The name that can be named
Is not the constant name

(Lao Tzu 1963: I).

As well as meaning "way", Tao also means "speaking"

.. (Longxi 1985: 391), so the opening of the Lao Tzu quoted above can read "The Tao that can be Tao-ed / Is not the constant Tao". Much of Taoist philosophy appears paradoxical or illogical, and is as much to
be felt as to be thought about. The first element of the title *I Ching - Yi -* can mean "conciseness", as well as "change" and "constancy". This acknowledges that there is a problem in having a fixed, text-based system such as the *I Ching* validly represent a shifting environment.

Two polar terms are fundamental to Taoism: yin and yang. These map onto a whole series of binary oppositions, notably black / white, feminine / masculine, passive / active and south / north. The universe is in a state of flux between each pole, each one being defined in terms of its opposite:

he who wants to have right without wrong,
Order without disorder,
Does not understand the principles
Of heaven and earth . . .
They are correlative

(Merton 1975: 880).

The end result of this is a form of deconstruction, since every concept contains a trace of its contradiction; the terms become relative rather than absolute. As Wyndham-Matson observes: "the word 'fake' meant nothing really, since the word 'authentic' meant nothing really" (MHC. 5: 58). In this conditional environment fake and authentic are relative terms.

The *I Ching* is an oracular text, originally developed to answer questions yes or no, by an apparently random process which either yields an unbroken line (yang) or a broken one (yin). The system proved to be inadequate, and evolved over the centuries into groups of three lines (trigrams) and then six (hexagrams). By manipulating fifty yarrow stalks or tossing three coins, the questioner can access one of sixty-four (i.e. $2^6$) hexagrams and the advice of that text; this includes the Image -
the current state of the questioner - and the Judgement - the oracle's advice on what to do according to the situation:

the hexagram, brought forth by the passive chance workings of the vegetable stalks. Random, and yet rooted in the moment in which he [Frank] lived, in which his life was bound up with all other lives and particles in the universe. The necessary hexagram picturing in its pattern of broken and unbroken lines the situation. . . . all connected in this moment of casting the yarrow stalks to select the exact wisdom appropriate in a book begun in the thirtieth century B. C. A book created by the sages of China over a period of five thousand years, winnowed, perfected, that superb cosmology - and science - codified before Europe had even learned to do long division

(MHC. 1: 16; second emphasis mine).

In addition, reflecting the ongoing flux of the universe, each line may be moving - from yin to yang or vice versa - and that line yields further advice, along with the Hexagram generated by the changing line.

Taoism is thus the "science" which, if further proof be needed, makes *The Man in the High Castle* sf. Dick had used the *I Ching* in his personal life since 1960, having discovered it through his longtime interest in Carl Jung. In 1949, Jung had written the introduction to Cary F. Baynes's English translation of Richard Wilhelm's 1923 German translation of the *I Ching*. Jung linked it to his theory of synchronicity, and each of the hexagrams can be seen as one of the archetypes, recurring patterns of characters or situations. Dick makes a link to quantum mechanics: "Several physicists use it [the *I Ching*] to plot the behavior of subatomic particles - thus getting around Heisenberg's unfortunate principle" (Dick 1987f: 6). The synchronicity displayed by the *I Ching* and the a-causal connections of sub-atomic particles appeals to Dick's sense of the interconnectedness of people, and to the feeling that every action has cosmic consequences: "It's the fault of those
physicists and that synchronicity theory, every particle being connected with every other; you can't fart without changing the balance of the universe" (MHC. 4: 47). Modern chaos theory provides a new way of viewing the Heraclitian flux: it is not that events are necessarily random, simply that all the causality cannot be measured and taken into account.

The characters of *The Man in the High Castle* interrelate at a distance, apparently a-causally; for example Wegener / Baynes's rocket ship passes over Juliana in Colorado. The two characters Frank and Tagomi are frequently linked. At the end of Chapter 1: "Frank Frink wondered who else in the vast complicated city of San Francisco was at this same moment consulting the oracle" (MHC. 1: 17). He is answered in the opening of the next chapter: Nobusuke Tagomi. In Chapter 6 Tagomi inquires "'as to the moment' " (MHC. 6: 89) and obtains Hexagram Forty-Seven, *K'un* or Oppression / Exhaustion. On the next page Frank consults the oracle about his planned jewellery business, and gets a virtually identical hexagram; he has a moving line which Dick quotes, although the new hexagram *Hsieh* or deliverance which *K'un* is moving to is not mentioned and will only assume importance later in the novel. Despite the hexagram's suggestion that Frank is oppressed, it is not all bad, for it indicates that things will get better if he makes "offerings and libations" (MHC. 6: 91, 92; c.f. Wilhelm 1989: 184).

As well as the Colt .44 used by Tagomi, Frank makes the triangular pendant he purchases. The pendant unites opposites: it is metal and from the earth - yin - and yet reflects light from the sun - yang. It is neither a fake nor a copy, but an original piece of craft: "'[It has] no historicity, and also no artistic, aesthetic worth . . . It is authentically a new thing on the face of the world' " (MHC. 11: 152). But
the piece has *wu* or non-being: through having non-being, it is the most real item in the novel, underlining how real has shifted from an absolute to a relative category. *Wu* means being free of desire, being filled with *Tao*. An object with *wu* means that its owner has the potential of being filled with the *Tao* and its wisdom. Just as Tagomi finds metaphysical wisdom in *HMS Pinafore*: "'Things are seldom what they seem - Skim milk masquerades as cream'" (MHC. 2: 22; Gilbert 1994: 28), so is *wu* found in unexpected places.21

"*Inner Truth*"

Now that I have examined how the *I Ching* describes an instant or a moment in a shifting environment and provides advice, and how Taoism blurs binary oppositions, the significance of Hexagram Sixty-One - *Chung Fu* - to Tagomi and Juliana can be shown. Tagomi's moment is one of doubt, of disrupting his ethical system; he has taken two lives to save one. Desperate to find the system, he methodically examines the pendant: "I must be scientific. Exhaust by logical analysis every entree. Systematically, in classical Aristotelian manner" (MHC. 14: 196). Naturally this fails, it is alien to the Taoist system; he must become a passive receiver rather than an active inquirer. It is only then that he passes over to the other realm - which resembles the consensus environment - and experiences racist xenophobia, which reverses his position of power.

When he returns to the office he is confronted with an ethical choice: should he acquiesce in the deportation of Frank Frink, a man he does not know, to certain execution, or risk further disturbing the political status quo. Tagomi has just experienced racism at first hand;
in addition he is aware that the Nazis have been planning to start liquidating the non-Aryan Japanese. He thus follows the advice of the I Ching:

Thus the superior man discusses criminal cases
In order to delay executions

(Wilhelm 1989: 236).

This echoes the Image of Hexagram Forty, or Hsieh, received by Frank Frink:

The image of DELIVERANCE.
Thus the superior man pardons mistakes
And forgives misdeeds


The Superior Man is a sage or a wise man, imbued with Tao, which Tagomi is on the verge of becoming after his experiences. Through saving Frank's life, he has saved a second one, thus corresponding to the two he has killed. Taoism is not intended to produce a world without evil, but to keep a balance of good and its opposite.

The Judgement of the Hexagram is:

Pigs and fishes.
Good fortune.
It furthers one to cross the great water.
Perseverance furthers


The animals mentioned are considered the most stubborn, and require the most convincing. Perhaps there is a reference to the Taoist parable which concludes:

All the fish needs
Is to get lost in water.
All man needs is to get lost
In Tao

(Merton 1975: 893).

In other words, a person's natural element or state is in Tao, and all
Tagomi needs to do is embrace it. The crossing mentioned in the third
line of the Judgement may be a literal one - perhaps he should return to
Japan - or it may refer to crossing into another realm - the afterlife - or it
may refer to taking on responsibility - for example, for Frank.

Juliana has also killed, in order to save Abendsen, but does not
seem as disturbed as Tagomi. She learns that *The Grasshopper Lies
Heavy* has Inner Truth - inherent value and dependability - something
which is not expected in a piece of "cheap popular fiction" (MHC. 8: 109).
*The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* describes a world which seems better than
the one she inhabits, if only because the racism issue has been solved; in
her world it is only likely to be solved with the Nazi's Final Solution.
Despite *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*’s position of being fiction,
describing things which are by definition untrue, it is nevertheless true.
Like the best sf, it is about the real world - in this case, her world, to us
merely a conditional environment - particularly because it uses the
authentic advice of the *I Ching*, common to all three environments. The
conditional environment of *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* is fiction, after
all, not an authentic consensus environment. In turn *The Man in the
High Castle*, with its emphasis on the interdependence of humanity, has
Inner Truth for the consensus environment.

This suggests that *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* does not describe
an authentic environment, which is then obscured by the false one of *The
Man in the High Castle*. In this reading, Abendsen's book is merely a
part of the fabric of the latter. However, there is a scene where Tagomi
passes over into a different realm, which suggests at the very least that the conditional environment is not the only realm, unless Tagomi is hallucinating. He considers a line from the Bible: "For now we see through a glass, darkly" (1 Cor 13: 11) and thinks of it as a description of the perception of reality: "St. Paul's incisive word choice . . . astute reference to optical distortion. We really do see astigmatically, in fundamental sense: our space and our time creations of our own psyche, and when these momentarily falter - like acute disturbance of middle ear" (MHC. 14: 200). Like Time Out of Joint, the conditional environment of the novel is a false one intended to occlude authentic reality. But unlike in Time Out of Joint, the occluding world is not serving a purpose, it just is. In later works, such as VALIS, Dick was to suggest that the consensus environment is a divinely (or diabolically) imposed occlusion.

Fiction and Reality

Dick is well known for the hallucinations his characters experience, and in Time Out of Joint and The Man in the High Castle the process appears reversed; a hallucinatory world is replaced by an apparently real one. But only apparently: for if "skim milk" truly "masquerades as cream", than the reverse may be true, and it may be impossible to distinguish the two from each other. The explanation in Time Out of Joint that the town Ragle lived in was structured to accommodate his withdrawal psychosis does not explain everything; for example the recurrent phenomenon of objects disappearing and being replaced by slips of paper.

Dick was familiar with a great deal of philosophy, but it is unclear
how much he would be aware of literary or critical theory. His character
Ragle claims to have read Bishop Berkeley and the Idealists, and
debates with himself what is going on:

Central problem in philosophy. Relation of word to object
... what is word? Arbitrary sign. But we live in words.
Our reality, among words not things. No such thing as a
thing anyhow; a gestalt in the mind. Thingness ... Sense of
substance. An illusion. Word is more real than the object it
represents.

Word doesn't represent reality. Word is reality. For
us, anyhow.

(TOJ. 4: 44. Ellipses original.)

In a certain metafictive sense Ragle is right; as he is a character in a
work of fiction, the only way by which he may be experienced is through
words or the memory of the reading of those words.

Following Ferdinand de Saussure's Course in General Linguistics,
it has become traditional to divide individual words - signs - into two
parts. One part is the signifier, the visual or oral component of a word,
which may be distinguished from other signifiers. For example the word
"bat" consists of the phonemes b-, -a- and -t. The other part of the sign is
a concept - for example, a small flying mammal. Although I have stated
that the sign consists of two parts, there is not necessarily a one-to-one
relation between them. The signifier "bat" could equally apply to a
number of pieces of sports equipment. The concept of the bat could be
represented by a number of terms, for example the names of individual
species of bat. The sign does not exist in isolation, but as part of a
network of signs. The meaning of an individual sign is governed by
distinguishing it from other signs, by its position within the grammar of
sentences, and by the fact of its used rather than the use of a synonym.
The crucial point here is that the language is used to distinguish between concepts rather than really existing objects. It is not an actual bat that is being defined, but an imagined bat. The language used in an sf novel does not represent an external "reality" but an internalised concept, held first by the author and then by a number of readers. This can perhaps be used to distinguish sf further from realism: sf is a literature composed of signifiers (including nova) representing a conception which is alternative to the typical conception of the consensus environment.

But it is perhaps naive to assume that realism is therefore any closer to the consensus environment or "reality". To return to David Lodge's definition of realism, which was dismissed in relation to sf in Chapter One: "the representation of experience in a manner which approximates closely to descriptions of similar experience in nonliterary texts of the same culture" (Lodge 1977: 25). Realism is not here a matter of a description of reality, but of its approximation to other signifiers which somehow represent experiences.

Saussure went as far as to suggest that: "There are no pre-existing ideas before the appearance of language" (Saussure 112). Language and concepts thus become intertwined: books give access to conceptions of "reality", and "reality" cannot be mediated except through language. This view may even be taken to go as far as suggesting that there is no external consensus environment, no koinos kosmos, but only a series of idioi kosmoi accessed through language. Words are not so much "reality", as the only reality that can be reached.

In the consensus environment there is no Axis-dominated world, save in the conditional environment constructed via the medium of words, given the name The Man in the High Castle, and labelled as being written by Philip K. Dick. In most of Dick's novels there are conditional
environments which are false or real, or at least cannot all be
simultaneously real because they are contradictory. Since they are all
composed of signifiers - as parts of works of fiction - they are all false. But
the framework of the texts fight against this; each conditional
environment has its own set of nova and interrelations of nova signified or
implied by signifiers, and these environments can be nested due to the
narrative thrust. The beginning of *Eye in the Sky* is a realist depiction of
the 1950s, but this is followed by a series of hallucinatory experiences. In
*Time Out of Joint* this order is reversed; the 1950s is a constructed
artifact in the 1990s. *The Cosmic Puppets* starts with characters in a
conditional environment which is accepted as real, who move into a town
which turns out to be a fake, until the characters are able to replace the
town with its 'real' counterpart. Theoretically there could be a novel
which begins in falsehood, moves to a 'real' conditional environment and
returns to a false one; Tagomi seems to do this in *The Man in the High
Castle* and the Axis-dominated world remains very much in place.

But all of these environments are described with words, and it is
difficult to distinguish words describing fakes from those describing
authenticity. A parallel can be drawn with some of Magritte's paintings,
in particular, *The Human Condition*. It shows a canvas on an easel,
obviously blocking out some of the landscape behind it, save for the fact
that the painting within the painting depicts that portion of the
landscape. If it is a painting of a painting, then it appears a second step
away from reality in comparison with the rest of the picture. But the
same medium is used across the canvas - paint - just as Dick has to use
words throughout his fiction. It is perhaps naive, and ill-informed, to
assert that any signifiers, whether in sf or realism, have any relation to
the consensus environment.
Conclusion

It is impossible to be certain that *Time Out of Joint* or *The Man in the High Castle* describe characters penetrating the veil of illusion and reaching what would be to them authentic reality; in particular *The Man in the High Castle* comprehensively blurs the distinction between the terms fake and authentic. From the reader's privileged point of view, it is just about possible to draw the distinction, although *Time Out of Joint* would still remain a polysemic text. However in some of Dick's novels, the line distinguishing the two is impossible to locate, because the narrative does not allow the distinction to be made. It is these which I will now go on to examine.
Chapter Five: "Where are we really?": The Failure of Authenticity

In the previous two chapters I have examined the authenticity of the conditional environments within the framework of four individual novels. In *Eye in the Sky* and *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*, the narrative begins in what could be designated as an authentic conditional environment: Dick has provided a number of interlinked nova, which the reader constructs into a conditional environment which may be accepted as authentic within the framework of the fiction. In both novels, several characters experience a series of hallucinations and enter what I have designated a hallucinatory conditional environment. Again in both cases, the characters appear to stop hallucinating by the end of the novels, but a sceptical reader might question whether this is indeed the case. In *Time Out of Joint* and *The Man in the High Castle*, the narrative begins in what transpires to be a fake conditional environment, or at the very least one which is not authentic, and characters break through to what appears to be an authentic conditional environment. However, again, a sceptical reader might question this authenticity.

This scepticism leads to a point where it is impossible to distinguish the authentic from the inauthentic in any close-reading of Dick's fiction. But Dick has also written several novels where even a non-sceptical reader would be hard-pressed to label one character's experiences as real, rather than as hallucinated. Most of Dick's fiction is open-ended; but some of the novels are almost entirely open, refusing to
admit to a single, stable, unitary meaning. In this chapter I will investigate three examples of this type of novel: *Lies, Inc.*, *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* and *Ubik*.

**Lies, Inc.**

**Textual Problems**

It is somehow appropriate that one of texts which is most difficult to read in terms of its meaning, is also one of the most difficult in terms of Dick's final intentions for the text. In fact *Lies, Inc.* has been published in four differing versions, only one of which was published in accordance with Dick's wishes at the time. Without access to the manuscripts or without some difficult reconstruction it is impossible to read an authorized version of *Lies, Inc.* It is necessary to examine these variant versions prior to any discussion of the multiple meanings.

The first version of *Lies, Inc.* was a novella called "The Unteleported Man", which Dick had written by 26 August 1964, and which appeared in the December 1964 issue of *Fantastic*. The story concerns Rachmael ben Applebaum, the archetypal impoverished PhilDickian protagonist, who is convinced that the idyllic colony planet of Whale's Mouth is not all that it seems, and is in fact some sort of prison planet or Final Solution to Earth's overcrowding. Applebaum owns the last spaceship in private hands and plans to travel to the colony to expose it, rather than risk the one-way teleport. He enlists the help of Matson Glazier-Holliday, head of Lies, Incorporated, to protect him and his ship whilst he prepares for the eighteen-year space journey to Whale's Mouth. Matson teleports across to see the situation for
himself, but is killed. However, his assistant Freya is able to send a coded message back about the gulag they have found, and about the army which is being trained there to invade Earth. The United Nations intercept the message and close the teleport down.

"The Unteleported Man" is straightforward, if open-ended. Applebaum is in love with Freya, but they have formed no relationship and there is no guarantee that they will ever meet again. Theodoric Ferry, head of Trails of Hoffman Limited (THL) and mastermind and controller of the colony, remains at large, and in power on the colony world. As there are hints that a scientist named von Einem has developed some new form of deadly weapon, there is still the possibility that the U.N. forces will be defeated. But in terms of the authenticity or otherwise of a conditional environment, the novella is not terribly interesting. It has three of Dick's four recurring character types: I have already mentioned the protagonist, who is in love with the spirited Freya and is threatened by Matson and Theodoric, both Patriarch figures. This familiar matrix organizes a narrative about the penetration of a media generated illusion, but there is scarcely any room for scepticism about the true state of affairs.

But things became more complicated when Donald Wollheim gave Dick the chance to write an additional thirty thousand words to form the Ace book edition of The Unteleported Man. Dick excised the final three paragraphs of the novella and continued with Applebaum's experiences when he teleports to Whale's Mouth to join the battle. Applebaum, however, is shot with an LSD-tipped dart and hallucinates a series of strange environments - here called paraworlds - before travelling backwards in time and experiencing the events of the novella again. It would appear that he is trapped in a closed time loop. But Wollheim
rejected this material and printed the novella version as it stood, as part of an Ace Double with Howard L. Cory's *The Mind Monsters* in 1966. It was not until 1983, after Dick's death, that the complete version was published by Berkley; and even then the text is faulty in that four manuscript pages had been misplaced in the interim, leaving three gaps.¹

But what Berkley Books had no way of knowing was that Dick had made further, if incomplete, revisions of the novel in 1979.² This version cut the final six pages of the Berkley edition, along with the two-page gap, and the opening eighteen paragraphs. It restored the three paragraphs which had been cut from "The Unteleported Man" and added a new opening chapter, along with a few paragraphs elsewhere. More importantly it shifted the position of the LSD trip from being part two of the novella to a point in what was now chapter seven. Gollancz published this version as *Lies, Inc.*, with short linking material written by John Sladek to bridge the two remaining gaps in the manuscript. Ironically, this 1984 publication was contemporaneous with the rediscovery of all the missing pages, which had been misfiled with the manuscript for *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. These pages were printed in the *PKDS Newsletter*, but no edition has yet incorporated them into a complete version of the text.³

**Paraworlds**

In *Lies, Inc.*, Applebaum changes his mind about going on the eighteen-year trip and teleports to Whale's Mouth instead. He is then shot by the LSD-tipped dart and after that point it is impossible to tell whether his experiences are genuine or hallucinations. Having killed the soldier who
shot him, Applebaum finds himself in a building which has pleasant views out of its windows. His new companions tell him that they have each had hallucinations, eleven kinds so far, apparently as a result of disorientation during their teleportation. They hope that their current perceptions, which are more pleasant, are genuine experiences of the world and that Applebaum’s vision of a garrison state, perceived before he had been shot, is simply a delusion:

"If your delusional gestalt, when you present it to the computer, comes out on those lines, I can assure you that a true bi-personal view of a world will have been established ... and this, of course, is what we fear, as you well know. Do you want to see the garrison state world established as the authentic reality?"

(LI. 15: 194; ellipsis Dick’s).

As long as only one colonist has perceived a particular realm, then it is a hallucination; Applebaum is the second to perceive the garrison state. The colonists would rather continue to believe that they are living in a paradise surrounded by paraworlds rather than discovering the stark truth: that they are being imprisoned in a hallucinatory conditional environment. To avoid facing the truth, they decide to execute him, but Applebaum escapes by travelling back in time with a time machine disguised as a tin of Phrophos, a brand of condoms (LI. 15: 195).

**The Unteleported Man?**

Applebaum’s next appearance in the novel is on board his ship, the *Omphalos*, part way into his eighteen-year voyage to Whale’s Mouth. The ship is intercepted, as it has become apparent that there is a garrison state at the colony, rather than paradise. This section is
identical to the equivalent scene in the novella, but the reader comes to it with different expectations this time. In the novella, Applebaum has been trying to evade the U.N. and Theodoric's men, and it had seemed that he was being thwarted in his plans for his journey. But in *Lies, Inc.* Applebaum has already been to Whale's Mouth by teleport, rather than set out on the space journey alone. And yet he is in the ship in this scene, with no apparent knowledge of having been to the colony.

Normally the reader can assume that events occur in a novel with some degree of cause and effect, but in this case causality, as well as authenticity, appears to have broken down. It is of course possible to argue that the text is faulty, that further revisions by Dick would have taken account of the apparent continuity error. It is not precisely clear when the pages went missing: the cut removing the third gap perhaps suggests that the pages were already absent when Dick made the revisions, and he simply never got around to revising the two other gaps. Alternatively, the manuscript may have been complete when Dick had come to revise it, and what we have when the two missing pages are restored represents Dick's final intentions for the novel. But whatever these were, there are several competing explanations for the seeming discontinuity.

It is possible that Applebaum is indeed hallucinating, as the colonists suggest. Applebaum may have teleported to Whale's Mouth and been shot by an LSD-tipped dart, going on to hallucinate the rest of the novel's events. To this may be raised the objection that not all of the scenes are written from Applebaum's point of view, and therefore this cannot be a hallucination. But, as I have previously discussed, in *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said* Alys Buckman takes a psychedelic drug
and draws other people into her hallucinations. A hallucination shared is still a hallucination.

However, the hallucination need not be drug-induced: it may be the result of madness, and Applebaum has only imagined going to Whale’s Mouth, whilst still being on board the Omphalos. The Lies, Incorporated pilot who has helped to protect Applebaum prior to his journey suggests that he keep a diary of the voyage: " 'Of a mind . . . deteriorating. It'll be of psychiatric interest' " (LI. 6: 66). Whilst Applebaum’s experiences on Whale’s Mouth do seem to be those of a deteriorating mind, the period on ship seems to be too short to allow it. Again the objection must be raised that there are scenes described from other characters’ points of view.

Applebaum may be subject to telepathic interference. The first chapter of Lies, Inc. describes a SubInfo - subliminal information - computer owned by Lies, Incorporated which, via a satellite, has beamed information about the experiences of a rat to Applebaum’s brain. Every experience which follows should be treated with caution, for it may be the result of the computer’s intervention. This single fact undermines any claims to authenticity of any experience within the conditional environment and opens up the possibility that all of the novel might be a series of hallucinatory conditional environments. Information might be being beamed into other character’s brains as well as into Applebaum’s.

This element adds to the sense of paranoia which pervades the opening chapters, for example by suggesting that Applebaum has not sought out Lies, Incorporated of his own freewill. In the novella version of his first meeting with Freya, she says:
"What . . . would you accomplish by your trip?"

He said, honestly, "I - don't know."

(UM. 1: 10).

However in the Gollancz version this has been expanded to become:

"What . . . would you accomplish by your trip?"

He thought, This is Lies Incorporated that I am sitting here talking to. The last people in the world I should be talking to. I may have been programmed by them to come here, programmed subliminally, in my sleep, my dreams . . . which explains the word lies [in my dreams]

(LI. 2: 14).

Indeed, to take the paranoia one stage further, Lies Incorporated may have even programmed him to realize that he has been programmed by them, to unsettle him further. All thoughts and experiences must be thought of as suspect, and thus possibly as lacking in authenticity. Once the innocent acceptance of reality as that which is observed is disputed, it is near impossible to accept any "reality" as being authentic.

Rather than a hallucination of a different "reality", the discontinuity may be explained away by the use of time travel. U.N. scientists are in the process of inventing someone they call Charley Falks, who will be a childhood friend for von Einem, a German scientist and ally of Theodoric, in an attempt to remould his world view and his mature thinking. If their plan succeeds, this would create an alternative timetrack where von Einem is no longer a menace. Similarly, Applebaum's journey back through time might erase all events between the time of his starting point and the opening of chapter eight. Applebaum and the other characters then travel along an alternative course of history, where he does not teleport across secretly, but stays in his spaceship. In this explanation, "reality" is mutable even after events
have occurred. There can be no authentic "reality", because with time travel all "reality" is subject to subsequent - or even prior - revision.

**Dr Bloode's Book**

The mutability of history is apparently challenged by the introduction of a book within the novel, *The True and Complete Economic and Political History of Newcolonizedland* by Dr. Bloode. This is a history of the Whale's Mouth colony, including events which have not yet happened. When Applebaum receives and begins to read a copy, he finds, among other insights, two extracts about Freya, the first being a quotation from later in the novel (LI. 15: 201). This suggests that the future is fixed or predetermined, after all, because its entire history has been set down in ink.

Freya is lent a copy of the book, following her arrest by THL (Trails of Hoffman Limited) agents after an attack on a teleport station. The first quotation she reads is where Applebaum has just read about his own death, linking back to the previous chapter (LI. 12: 152). She then goes on to read about U.N. agents Lupov and Weiss watching him on a video screen, and learns, "'It's only a book. . . . A version of the text, not necessarily the right version'" (LI. 13: 162). At first sight, this undermines the authority of Dr Bloode's book and its claims to chart the future and the past: if there are various versions of the book, then there would seem to be various versions of the future and the past. But this idea of variant editions is itself raised in a passage which is one of the interpolations by Sladek. It is somewhat ironic that talk about variant editions of a text occurs in a variant edition of a text.
In the restructured version, her captors confiscate the text and she threatens to kill herself. Freya either does not know about the variant versions, or accepts the book's veracity enough to read about her forthcoming meeting with Theodoric, which occurs as it was described. This again confirms the truth of the book. However her behaviour is based on incomplete information, because she has not read far enough in the book to learn about this Theodoric's true nature. The Theodoric encountered by Freya seems to be the offspring of an aboriginal denizen of Whale’s Mouth and Ferry, via the paraworld which has been labelled The Clock.

This Theodoric Ferry must be distinguished from another one, who teleports to the colony and discovers that the planet has changed since his last visit. He too is given a copy of Dr. Bloode’s text, and reads a page of speculation as to which page he will turn to next. This is a weapon designed by Lupov and Weiss to hypnotise him, but von Einem has already learned about their plan and rescues him. With Lupov and Weiss presumed dead, this Theodoric is free to fight back and confront the captured Freya for the first time in order to track down Applebaum.

The agents try to shoot Freya, but time stops and she notices twelve tadpoles in a small bowl. One of the tadpoles informs her that she is trapped in Paraworld Silver. Earlier it was suggested that there were twelve paraworlds, (LI. 10: 117) if the paradise world were to be included; one for each 'tadpole'. This recalls the hallucinatory conditional environments of Eye in the Sky where the only escape was the termination of the controlling consciousness. Freya sets the auto-destruct switch on the ship, and steps in front of the laser beam to restart time by her own death, which in turn would destroy the ship and Theodoric. However, the entire section from Theodoric nodding to the
four THL agents (LI. 13: 162) is an interpolation by Sladek. In the restructured version Freya simply realises that her flapple - her semi-intelligent mode of transport - has tricked her: "It was my enemy... and I failed to identify it as such - in time" (Dick 1985c: 2; Ellipsis Dick's). She prays for her life, and the assumption is that she is killed, although Applebaum has previously read in Dr. Bloode's text that Freya meets Lupov which contradicts this. Either she survives, or Dr. Bloode's text is unreliable.

An explanation of the nature of Dr. Bloode's text may be found in the two manuscript pages deleted from the restructured version:

There were several editions of the Text. And evidently not all were accurate. Like the range of paraworlds, the texts were mutually exclusive; one replaced the other, supplanted and abolished earlier versions...

Not everything which he read in the Dr. Bloode Text was true...

An important insight... Simply because it was written down - that in no sense made it binding, on him or on anyone else. It could become valid - if he let it. But the choice, that remained totally with him... and with the other humans involved. For better or worse.

(Dick 1985c: 13; Final ellipsis Dick's)

This puts the onus onto the reader to decide what is authentic or false. Like The True and Complete Economic and Political History of Newcolonizedland, Lies, Inc. exists, or potentially exists, in a number of different versions and it is up to the reader to decide which one constitutes the authentic version of the novel. After the magazine appearance of the novella, none of the published versions reflect Dick's desired text. His preferred book version was rejected, and has still not been published in its complete form. His revisions in 1979 either represent a work-in-progress or have been incompletely published.
Even setting aside the problem of textual corruption, it seems impossible to declare one section of the narrative as authentic and another section as fake. Applebaum may be hallucinating on LSD, mad, subject to subliminal interference in his mind or a victim of the paradoxes of time travelling. There can be no appeal to an authorial intention in this case, as Dick's state of knowledge of the text he was revising cannot be established. The novel as it stands, or with the missing pages restored, will support all of my readings. The reader becomes involved in an ontological nightmare, albeit much more minor than Applebaum's, of being unable to distinguish the real from the fake.

**The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch**

*The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* dates from one of Dick's most fertile periods: in the year leading up to the receipt of its manuscript at the SMLA in March 1964, Dick had written *The Game-Players of Titan, The Simulacra, Now Wait For Last Year, Clans of the Alphane Moon, The Crack in Space*, at least fourteen short stories and written an outline on commission for *The Zap Gun* (Dick 1988a). On the same day as its receipt, another outline, this time for *The Penultimate Truth*, was received. Although Dick's creative juices were obviously flowing, a certain amount of material was being recycled; *The Penultimate Truth* was to take elements from "The Defenders", "The Unreconstructed M", "The Mold of Yancy" and *The Man Whose Teeth Were All Exactly Alike. The Simulacra* drew on "Novelty Act". *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* was no exception to this.

Set in a post-hydrogen war San Francisco, "The Days of Perky Pat" deals with the way the survivors, or Flukers, are coping. One
settlement or Fluke-pit spends much of its time playing with Perky Pat dolls, recreating middle class consumer life before the war. Having heard rumours of another, better doll, Connie Companion, Norm Schein contacts its owners and challenges its owners to a game. He wins, and gains Connie. But Connie is a more advanced doll than Perky Pat: Pat simply has a boyfriend named Leonard, but Connie has been married to Paul for a year, and is pregnant. The owners of Perky Pat feel that this behaviour is too advanced for the world they want to recreate, and exile Norm from their Fluke-pit. The basic idea of recreating western civilisation with dolls, and some of the names of the characters, is repeated in The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch.

Plot

The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch predates the writing of both parts of The Unteleported Man, and is an earlier version of a plot involving a colony and hallucinogenic drugs. The Earth is overheating and the U.N. has been drafting people to emigrate to colonies elsewhere in the solar system. The only means of solace for the settlers is the use of Perky Pat dolls and a layout - a miniaturised version of an idealised Earth - along with an illegal drug Can-D which allows the user to imaginatively enter into the layout. Leo Bulero, head of the company which supplies both layouts and drugs, learns that an entrepreneur and explorer named Palmer Eldritch is returning from Proxima Centauri with a new drug that has no need for a layout. Although Leo has been warned by Barney Mayerson, one of his precognitive employees, that he will be arrested for the murder of Eldritch, he still visits the latter. Eldritch traps Leo and gives him Chew-Z, the new drug. Having passed
through a series of hallucinatory conditional environments - including one where he is a hero for having slain Eldritch - Leo first sacks Barney and then re-employs him as a spy who will go to Mars in order to discredit Chew-Z. Barney's experience under the drug is to go back in time, where he tries to remould such events as his divorce. He also develops a fear that he has become Eldritch and so will be killed by Leo. The novel ends with Leo travelling back to Earth from Mars, uncertain whether he is still hallucinating, and seeing everyone as Palmer Eldritch.

Characters

The important characters more or less correspond to the four major character types which I delineated in Chapter One. Barney Mayerson, the precog, is a Serviceman, and third-person subjective narrator of much of the book. In fact, the novel proper opens with him in bed:

His head unnaturally aching, Barney Mayerson woke to find himself in an unfamiliar bedroom in an unfamiliar conapt building. Beside him, the covers up to her bare, smooth shoulders, an unfamiliar girl slept on, breathing lightly through her mouth, her hair a tumble of cottonlike white

(3SPE. 1:9).

The repetition of "unfamiliar" allows the reader to empathize with Barney; as he discovers where he is, so the reader is given details of the novel's conditional environment.

Barney's ex-wife Emily, who is introduced in the next scene, along with Richard Hnatt her new husband, does not quite correspond to the Bitch stereotype. A talented potter, she does not seem to be at fault in
their former relationship. In fact, he is partly sorry he divorced her:
"She was always smart about things like this; she saw through the self-justifying delusions that I erected to obscure the reality inside. And of course that just made me more eager to get rid of her. In fact that alone was reason enough, given a person like me" (3SPE. 8: 97). These thoughts read just like the sort of self-justification the reader is being told that Emily can see through. There is an even less justifiable reason for their divorce: "I kicked [her] out because she became pregnant" (3SPE. 8: 101). This relationship seems to demonstrate a negative side to Barney's character. Although he claims to still love her, Emily remains somewhat marginal to the plot. She and Richard undergo E-Therapy, like Leo, in an attempt to become hyperevolved, and she seems content with her new life, making pots. She is last shown with Richard in a Palmer Eldritch vision, apparently contented (3SPE. 10: 144-6) and then disappears from the plot, rating barely another mention (3SPE. 11: 168).

Anne Hawthorne, who travels to Mars on the same ship as Barney, approximates to the Dark-Haired Girl:

Glancing at her, he realized that she was really overwhelmingly attractive to him, except that she was just a little too thin, wore no makeup, and had as much of her heavy dark hair as possible covered with a round, white veil-like cap . . .

   . . . In fact - was this improper? - he hoped even to find himself participating with her in the corporate act of taking Can-D

(3SPE. 7: 110).

As well as being a neighbour and potential lover for Barney, she is able to discuss transubstantiation and ontology with him, highlighting the novel's exploration of the "What is real?" theme.
Leo Bulero and Palmer Eldritch are clearly both Patriarchs; in fact, in a note written in 1979, Dick was explicit about linking the characters to his memories of his own father:

> my father appears as both Palmer Eldritch (the evil father, the diabolic mask-father) and as Leo Bulero, the tender, gruff, warm, human, loving man . . . in 1963 I was reliving the original isolation I had experienced upon the loss of my father, and the horror and fear expressed in the novel are not fictional sentiments ground out to interest the reader; they come from the deepest part of me: yearning for the good father and fear of the evil father, the father who left me

(CS [4]. 378).7

But as usual in Dick's writings, things are not quite as clear-cut: Leo, after all, does use, abuse and sack Barney to further his own ends, and Palmer may well be acting as he does because he has to be true to his nature, a nature possibly forced onto him through some alien or divine entity: "[It is] an out-of-dust created organism [attempting] to perpetuate itself" (3SPE. 13: 182).

**Transubstantiation**

The experience whilst under the influence of the drug sold by Leo is seen in terms of a reversed transubstantiation; it transforms female colonists into the doll Perky Pat and males into her boyfriend Walt: "'In essence [I'm a colonist] . . . But the accidents . . . they're Pat' " (3SPE. 3: 44; Second ellipsis Dick's). This is a play on the Mass where the accidents are wine and bread, but the essence becomes the blood and body of Christ. In case this reference is missed, it is repeated: "'blood and wafer; you know, in the Mass. Is very much like the takers of Can-D; have you noticed that affinity?' " (3SPE. 5: 60). In the Can-D
experience, a communal activity, the colonists maintain their essences but are translated in their accidents. Although there is an illusory exterior, there remains an authentic core. Anne Hawthorne makes a further linkage between the two:

"Christ specified that we observe two sacraments," Anne Hawthorne explained patiently. "Baptism - by water - and Holy Communion. The latter is in memory of Him ... it was inaugurated at the Last Supper."

"Oh. You mean the bread and the wine."

"You know how the eating of Can-D translates - as they put it - the partaker to another world. It's secular, however, in that it's temporary and only a physical world"

(3SPE 7: 108; Ellipsis Dick's).

It is a secular transubstantiation, that makes the world briefly bearable for the users of Can-D.

Chew-Z, however, may even alter the essence of the taker. It is possible that Barney may be able to change his past, thus becoming a different person, just as Applebaum may have unwittingly appeared to in Lies, Inc.. In fact, the user is first controlled by Eldritch - who is God in each hallucinatory conditional environment because he creates them - and then risks becoming Eldritch. Eldritch makes a blasphemous claim that although: "GOD PROMISES ETERNAL LIFE. WE CAN DELIVER IT" (3SPE. 9: 127). This is not in the form of an afterlife, or immortality, but as a result of hallucinations which may be infinite in duration to the perceiver but last only a few seconds in the external conditional environment. More long term users can achieve eternal life by fusing with Eldritch, but as a result lose any personal identity which could be classed as immortal.

His first name, "Palmer", is the name given to pilgrims who have returned from the Holy Land, usually with a palm leaf. In this case the
Holy Land is Proxima Centauri and the leaf is the base from which Chew-Z is formed. His surname is more of a warning to beware of him, meaning ghostly, weird and hideous. His appearance is indeed hideous, with the three stigmata of a false arm, metal eyes and a mechanical jaw or, more metaphysically: "the evil negative trinity of alienation, blurred reality, and despair" (3SPE. 13: 10).

Yet despite this blasphemy, horror and what Dick would later perceive as absolute evil, there is at least one chance of having sympathy for Eldritch:

That thing, which we know only in its Terran body, wanted to substitute me [Barney] at the instant of its destruction; instead of God dying for man, as we once had, we faced - for a moment - a superior - the superior power asking us to perish for it.

Does that make it evil? . . . It seems to be nothing more or less than the desires of . . . an out-of-dust created organism to perpetuate itself; we all have it, we all would like to see a goat or lamb cut to pieces and incinerated instead of ourselves

(3SPE. 13: 182).

Palmer Eldritch - or rather the God-like entity which has taken him over and engulfed his essence - is acting first to preserve and then to reproduce itself by taking over the Martian colonists.

The Status of the Conditional Environment

A few pages previously, Anne talks to Barney about Palmer Eldritch's true nature, refusing to allow him to be taken as God:

"The key word happens to be is. Don't tell us, Barney, that whatever entered Palmer Eldritch is God, because you don't know that much about Him; no one can. But that living entity from intersystem space, may, like us, be shaped in
His image. A way He selected of showing Himself to us. If the map is not the territory, *the pot is not the potter*. So don't talk ontology, Barney, don't say is"

(3SPE. 13: 180-1; Italics Dick's).

The suggestion is that there is a realm which is God's, or a nature of God, which humans cannot comprehend. What is commonly taken to be reality, is something shaped by a God external to it, and which appears as he wishes. The universe is therefore not real, not ontological, because only God possesses Being entirely.

It is of course possible to extrapolate from the conditional environment described here to the nature of the book within it is contained: the conditional environment is only a sign system, with potentially little relation to the referent, and therefore it is not ontological. To write of "is", of authentic being, is in some senses pointless. But suspending disbelief, the novel does have things to say about ontology and the nature of Being.

The reference to "out-of-dust" (3SPE. 13: 182) ought to remind a careful reader of the memo that stands as an epigraph to the novel:

I mean, after all; you have to consider we're only made out of dust. That's admittedly not much to go on and we shouldn't forget that. But even considering, I mean it's a sort of bad beginning, we're not doing too bad. So I personally have faith that even in this lousy situation we're faced with we can make it. You get me?

(3SPE. Epigraph: 6).

This is dictated by Leo, after he returns to Earth, but it is no guarantee that he has survived the journey; Palmer could have taken over him and still speak of being "made out of dust". In Leo's final appearance in the novel, he sees his companions as versions of Palmer Eldritch, but
wonders whether: "This is some private world of mine" (3SPE. 13: 189).

It is unclear if he has killed Palmer Eldritch after all - or if, rather, he has killed Barney in the shape of Eldritch. Equally unclear is the status of the visions of the future, which after all were part of hallucinatory experiences. But part of what Leo is saying in his memo seems to be that everything is built from dust, and is fashioned by some unseen deity who is external to the universe, that there is no way that the universe that can be perceived is authentic. This should not deter people from trying to get on with their lives.

Early in the novel Richard Hnatt has a vision:

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. Heaven or hell, not after death, but now!

(3SPE. 5: 63; Dick’s italics).

A trinary view of the universe is not uncommon - it underlies Christianity, and could be viewed in terms of Buddhist karma - but here the other layers may be reached whilst still in the same life. It is perhaps closest to the neoplatonist, Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola, who wrote that:

[God placed Man] in the middle of the world, [and] spoke to him as follows: "...you may from there the more conveniently consider whatever is in the world. We have made you neither celestial nor earthly, neither mortal nor immortal, so that, freely choosing and for your own honour, as it were the moulder and maker of yourself, you may form yourself in what pattern you choose. You will be able to degenerate into the lowest ranks, which are those of the
brutes. Through the judgment of your soul you will be able
to be reborn into the highest ranks, those of the divine"

(Mirandola 1978: 67).

Mirandola's ideas are heretical, in that they suggest that heaven and
hell are Earthly products of the individual's choosing during life. Hnatt's
neoplatonic vision may or may not be an authentic vision of the way the
universe operates, but it is a model that seems to fit Dick's recurring
motif of the universe as flux for each individual perceiver. Hnatt sees
that the ethereal plane can be reached: "Through empathy" (3SPE. 5:
63), an idea almost lost amongst the ontological nightmare of the rest of
the novel, and one which I will return to in future chapters.

Ubik

Plot

But first a consideration of Ubik is necessary: to demonstrate further
the impossibility of distinguishing the authentic from the fake. Ubik
has a deceptively simple narrative; the reality or otherwise of its
conditional environment may be rationalised until the final chapter,
which throws into doubt all that has gone before. Whereas Leo only
employed precogs, Ubik describes a conditional environment where
psionic powers - such as precognition and telepathy - invade privacy.
Glen Runciter, a PhilDickian Patriarch, runs a company supplying
"inertials", individuals who can counter psionic powers. He takes a
party of ten inertials for a mysterious client to Luna City; there he is
critically injured in an explosion. Joe Chip, permanently penniless and
frequently depressed, is a typical Serviceman protagonist. He takes
charge and tries to get the body in cold-pac back to Earth, to the Beloved Brethren Moratorium where Runciter's wife Ella is already frozen in half-life.¹⁰

The surviving inertials experience a series of strange events: perishable items such as food and cigarettes go stale, and machines metamorphose into earlier models. Several of the inertials die and their bodies rapidly decay; this is put down at first to Pat Conley, a potentially dangerous inertial recruited by Joe and Runciter just before the trip to Luna, with the ability to change the recent past. Pat seems to be the PhilDickian Bitch and Dark-Haired Girl in one character. Meanwhile, Joe has been experiencing another phenomenon as well: receiving messages scrawled on walls and in cigarette packets from Runciter. These seem to be aiding him, and urging him to find an entity named Ubik, which manifests itself as various kinds of medical remedies, and is a universal panacea which can somehow undo the entropic process going on around him. Joe realises that it is he and the inertials, rather than Runciter, who are dead, and that they themselves are in cold-pacs. The regression of their environment from 1992 to 1939 is the fault of Jory, an adolescent boy who is also in half-life, who feeds on the life forces of the others, causing them to decay. Ubik is something manufactured within half-life by Ella and others, which can repel Jory's manipulation of the hallucinatory conditional environment.

At the end of the penultimate chapter, Joe seems resigned to his existence, with the aid of Runciter and a potentially unlimited supply of Ubik, and "raised his arm to slow to a grumpy halt a passing 1936 Graham cab" (U. 16: 189). Such a resignation, a travelling towards an inevitable or accepted event, or the rejection of an escape from such an event, is typical within the canon. Compare for example the close of The
Unteleported Man: "The taxi, expertly maneuvering among all the other vehicles, directed itself toward the bar on the east side of town; it knew its way, too. It, also, knew its task" (UM. 9: 100) or The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch: "The ship rushed on, nearer and nearer Earth" (3SPE. 13: 191). Novels outside the scope of this chapter have similar endings, for instance: "The cab soared on toward Tijuana Fur & Dye Corporation" (NWFLY. 14: 224). This practice gives the impression that the characters have a life outside the confines of the seventy-thousand or so words of the novel.

However Ubik has an additional chapter, which could almost be labelled as an epilogue: Glen Runciter wants to talk to Ella in half-life, and tips an official with a coin bearing Joe Chip's head. Earlier in the novel money bearing Runciter's head was one of the pieces of evidence that something abnormal was going on. The chapter problematizes the way that the novel is to be read; as Runciter observes to Joe Chip: "This situation is very complex, Joe. It doesn't admit to simple answers" (U. 14: 166).

Simple Answers

One answer regarding what is to be considered reality within the novel is that the conditional environment is authentic up to the point of the explosion. Runciter, believing himself to be fully alive, visits the inertials who are in half-life, within his hallucinatory conditional environment, before he himself is visited by Joe. Joe's visit indicates that he is in half-life, after all. This provides a model of the narrative as a set of nested Russian Dolls, or as Peter Fitting observes: "an endless series of illusory realities" (Fitting 1983b: 156), for there is no guarantee
that the Joe contacting Runciter who has himself contacted an illusory
Joe is the final point in the sequence.

A competing explanation is that the Runciter of the final chapter
is not the same as the Runciter who has been intruding into their
half-life, but an illusory creation of Joe Chip's. Jory is able to create
people within half-life and now Joe Chip, strengthened with Ubik, takes
control and does the same. As I have already written, Joe has
tremendous difficulties with money, evidenced by the argument between
him and his conapt door (U. 3: 25). Later in the novel, when rebuffed by
a coffee machine, he declares:

"One of these days . . . people like me will rise up and
overthrow you, and the end of tyranny by the homeostatic
machine will have arrived. The days of human values and
compassion and simple warmth will return, and when that
happens someone like myself who has gone through an
ordeal and who genuinely needs hot coffee to pick him up
and keep him functioning when he has to function will get
the hot coffee whether he happens to have a poscred [coin]
readily available or not"

(U. 7: 75).

It seems likely that if Joe were in control of how an environment is
perceived, then he would create coins of his own, stamped with his own
authority.

**The Nature of Ubik**

Whatever the status of the environments within the novel, it is clear
that two opposing forces are work: "I think these processes are going in
opposite directions. One is a going-away, so to speak. A going-out-of-
existence. That's process one. The second process is a coming-into-
existence. But of something that's never existed before" (U. 8: 96).
Jory is feeding on the energy of the half-lifers, in order to shape the environment which is perceived around the inertials, and this manifests itself as decay and older versions of devices. The aim of this is to frustrate and annoy; it is part of Jory's immature character. Set against this are the guiding hands of Glen and Ella, and the various manifestations of Ubik.

The epigraphs to each chapter present Ubik as a household commodity which will vastly improve the quality of life given careful usage, for example as beer (U. 2:14), a stomach remedy (U. 5: 45), a bra (U. 13: 152) and even a breakfast with aphrodisiac qualities (U. 12: 142). Amongst the debris of everyday trash of consumer goods, this is the ideal item. In the penultimate chapter it is explained in terms of science (U. 16:187-8), mocking the jargon of scientists and sf writers, as Fitting has noted (Fitting 1983b: 157). The explanation is so complex that it actually does not explain anything, and is further undermined by Joe's pedantic picking of a hole in the explanation: "To say "negative ions" is redundant. All ions are negative" (U. 16: 188).

Religious Explanations of Ubik

After this failure of scientific language, Ubik is then described in a religious register:

I am Ubik. Before the universe was I am. I made the suns. I made the worlds. I created the lives and the places they inhabit. I move them here, I put them there. They go as I say, they do as I tell them. I am the word and my name is never spoken. The name which no one knows. I am called Ubik, but that is not my name. I am. I shall always be

(U. 17: 190).
This bears a striking resemblance to the opening of *The Gospel According to John*:

When all things began, the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was. The Word, then, was with God at the beginning, and through him all things came to be; no single thing was created without him. All that came to be was alive with his life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines on in the dark, and the darkness has never mastered it

(John 1: 1-15).

Darkness in the PhilDickian canon frequently manifests itself in the form of trash, but within the rubbish there is the trace of renewal. Here Dick fuses Taoist thought with the Judeo-Christian tradition. The "name [which] is never spoken" is the true name of God, from which the Tetragrammaton, YHVH, is derived and often transliterated as Jehovah or Yahweh.

Shortly after having claimed in a letter not to have understood *Ubik*, Dick was reading the novel as a religious allegory:

Yeah, Runciter was the leader of a small band of people (ten) and they depended on him and he suddenly died and they stood around confused and grief-stricken, and then to their surprise they found the tomb empty (no half-life in other words) and at first they said, "It's even worse than we had feared," and then suddenly they understood - by virtue of the fact of discovering him unexpectedly


Runciter, then, is an analogue for Christ or the Word, a fusion of God and Human. Whilst noting that this is, consciously at least, a retrospective interpretation, if *Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said* is analogous to *Acts of the Apostles* then *Ubik* can be read as a Gospel.

However, this explanation must somehow account for the confusion
experienced by Runciter in the final chapter. Possibly it is there to obfuscate the religious message, to disguise it, or in the words of Heraclitus: "The nature of things is in the habit of concealing itself" (Heraclitus 1972: 35; Fragment 123). The religious musings about the true nature of the universe are concealed within a marginalized genre, sf, often considered to be trash. In 1977, Dick wrote that: "God is as near at hand as the trash in the gutter - God is the trash in the gutter, to speak more precisely" (Dick 1991b: 3). Alternatively it could be that Runciter, although he is a manifestation of the Godhead, does not know everything, that the Godhead is somehow divided. This is a theme that Dick was to return to in the Divine Trilogy.13

Another, albeit related, explanation given credence by Dick is that the novel is an illustration of Plato's Allegory of the Cave: "Did you know that UBIK is true and we're in a sort of cave, like Plato said, and they're showing us endless funky films? And now and then reality breaks through, as in UBIK, from our friend who was here once and then dies, but has turned back?" (SL [1974]. 260). As I have already discussed, the Allegory is a metaphor for the developing conscious of an individual from illusion to total knowledge. Ubik is perhaps written from the point of view of the prisoners remaining behind in the Cave - Joe and the inertials - the "friend" is Runciter. But Runciter has not found the ultimate reality after all, or rather has not reached total enlightenment, for his friend is Joe, sending him messages of some further reality.
Conclusion

The uncertain nature of authentic reality within *Ubik* is in line with the other six novels concentrated on in this and the previous two chapters. A single, unitary reading is impossible. Dick seems to be inconsistent within his novels, as to what is authentic; he violates the unstated contract between writer and reader that the text will maintain continuity. Such a violation is too frequent to be accidental, what Suvin has described as "rabbits-from-the-hat carelessness" (Suvin 1983: 92), if only because it is so difficult to pin down where the rupture occurs. It could be that these works, complicated even by Dick's standards - are simply the result of his mindlessly applying A. E. van Vogt's "eight hundred word rule". Van Vogt, an sf writer who was a definite influence upon Dick's writing, used to work on the principle that a new idea, character or scene should be introduced every eight hundred words or so.

But Dick does have some serious things to say about the nature of being, rather than just playing with false worlds or environments. In Chapter Two I suggested that sf is an ontological genre, because of juxtaposition of conditional environments with the consensus environment. World-building demonstrates how things could be different to that which is the case. Dick is capable of using the tropes of sf uncritically and he can be fitted firmly into a tradition of genre sf. But by the introduction of fake and hallucinatory experiences, Dick undermines the world-building that is considered central to the sf genre. He also parodies the attempts of science to explain phenomena; he undermines the cognition which Suvin sees as central to sf. According to Fitting, Dick's texts deconstruct sf (Fitting 1983).
Dick's texts, both part of and outside the ontological genre of sf, have proved of interest to the postmodernist writers whom I have characterised by a mood of ontological doubt. But this risks reducing Dick's fiction to little more than ontological games. It is necessary to investigate whether Dick is solely interested in the question of "What is real?", or whether he has additional concerns. These concerns, which turn out to be ethical, will be discussed in the next chapter.
In the previous three chapters I have examined several novels by Philip K. Dick in order to ascertain what the status of the conditional environments was to the characters within them. A conditional environment was often defined as authentic in relation to other, false environments, if there was any sense of authenticity at all. In many cases it was no longer possible to declare a given conditional environment authentic - as opposed to hallucinatory - within the confines of the novel. Authenticity seemed to vary according to the individual. But if one of the two basic themes in the PhilDickian canon is "What is reality?" then the other is "What is human?" As Dick wrote in 1979: "Over the twenty-seven years in which I have published novels and stories I have investigated these two interrelated topics over and over again." (Dick 1988k: 8). So far, I have concentrated on the first basic theme of "what is reality?". I will now turn, using the ideas of Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas, to an anatomy of the second, which involves a similar strategy of defining an authentic human in comparison to a number of false humans. As progress can be made on this second theme, I will then make an attempt to examine how the two themes interrelate; to investigate what - taking as a given that reality may be illusory - constitutes the authentic human being.
What is Human?

In the consensus environment, items can be divided into two broad categories: the animate and the inanimate. The former category may be subdivided into plants and animals, and the category animals into humans and non-humans, bringing with it the ethical question of whether non-humans should have the same rights as human beings. In sf there is often a further problem involving the positions of aliens or mechanical devices; I propose here to discuss the position of the latter. Given sufficient technological development, it is theoretically possible to construct a device which may pass for human. The problem is to define at what point the construct stops being an object and may - or should - be treated as human.

In *We Can Build You* robots or simulacra of Abraham Lincoln and Edwin Stanton are built and seem almost human. Their designer is Pris Frauenzimmer, a cold schizophrenic. The critic Darko Suvin sees the two plot elements of the simulacra and Pris as separate: "The erstwhile characteristic Dickian theme of the simulacrum Lincoln is left to fizzle out in favor of the Jungian theme of Pris" (Suvin 1983: 93) Patricia S. Warrick also locates two themes, but sees Louis Rosen rather than Pris as central to the second, which concerns: "The legal and ethical rights of artificial intelligence and the transformation of a human into an unfeeling machine" (Warrick 1983b: 210). Both critics claim this lack of thematic unity as evidence for the failure of the novel, which they see as belonging to a period of sterility in Dick's writing which lasted between 1969 and 1974.¹

However *We Can Build You* was actually written in 1962, between *The Man in the High Castle* and *Martian Time-Slip*, in other
words it was the product of a fertile period when Dick wrote many novels. It would be more accurate to suggest that *We Can Build You* found a publisher when it did because there was little new material available compared to the saturation of the period 1960-65 when Dick wrote around sixteen novels. Further, the theme of the simulacrum is linked to that of Pris: the warmth of the artificial person is to be contrasted to the coldness of the organic person. Similarly Warrick's theme is really of the question of how individuals should be treated, and how it is possible to label entities as human or android. In fact, the novel undermines the distinction between human and android, just as other works undermine the reality / illusion divide.

The Turing Test and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

Distinguishing human from android is a vital issue in the study of Artificial Intelligence; the problem is ascertaining when a machine can be said to be thinking rather than just manipulating a set of on/off switches which correspond to binary code. The computer scientist Alan Turing devised a test to decide whether a machine is thinking - or whether it only appears to think. A machine (A) and a human (B) are placed so that an interrogator (C) is only communicating with them via typed messages. (A) has been instructed to imitate a human and (C) must decide whether (A) or (B) is the human by questioning both. Turing believes that the question of whether machines think is finally meaningless: "'May not machines carry out something which ought to be described as thinking but which is very different from what a man does?' " (Hofstadter 1980: 597). The question of whether a machine can
think seems to be a matter of semantics: whatever the end result of the process the machine is going through, it is only thinking if humans designate it as such.

But there is more to being definitively human than the ability to think; behaviour also has an emotional component. Hofstadter, in an invented dialogue about the Turing Test, has one of his characters observe: "I simply can't believe emotions and thought can be divorced. To put it another way, I think emotions are an automatic by-product of the ability to think." (Hofstadter 1986: 502). Pris, in _We Can Build You_, can think but shows little emotion; emotion is at the core of Dick's division between the human and the android.

The technology in the conditional environment of _Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?_ has advanced to the point where there is little physical difference between humans and androids. But the question of emotions remains; the Voigt-Kampff Test has been developed to measure emotional response. The interrogator is face-to-face with the testee - although this is little help in distinguishing androids from humans - and asks a series of questions involving the mistreatment of living things, and measures eye-muscle response and capillary reaction. The android is able to fake even this. It will be seen that this test is a version of the Turing Test with (C) uncertain whether (A) or (B) is being tested. One objection to the Turing Test is that responses can only be sent in a complete form, whereas face-to-face conversations between people involve interruptions, assumptions and answers based on incomplete data, but the Voigt-Kampff test, which is measured in real-time, overcomes this problem. Any testees who fail the test are considered to be androids and can be 'retired', because they lack the empathy and emotions which that conditional environment considers to
be definitively human. Androids are "[E]quipped with an intelligence
greater than that of many human beings . . . [But they have] no regard
for animals . . . no ability to feel empathic joy for another life form's
success or grief at its defeat" (DADOES. 3: 29). Any emotional
response in an android is a programmed reflex and therefore not the
result of genuine empathy for others.

It should be underlined that two distinctions are being made here:
organic / mechanical and with / lacking empathy. To show how this
works within the context of a novel, characters from Do Androids Dream
of Electric Sheep? may be mapped onto this diagram:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ORGANIC</th>
<th>MECHANICAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WITH EMPATHY</td>
<td>Rick Deckard</td>
<td>Rachael Rosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LACKING EMPATHY</td>
<td>Phil Resch</td>
<td>Pris Stratton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 6.1: The four types in Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?.

Pris Stratton, a Nexus-6 Robot, should not be confused with Pris
Frauenzimmer of We Can Build You.\(^5\) The diagram also simplifies
Deckard's position; he is accused of being an android, and risks showing
no empathy for others. His wife, Iran, who is artificially angry because
of the Penfield Mood Organ setting, sees the Nexus-6s he must kill in a
humane way:

"You're a murderer, hired by the cops."
"I've never killed a human being in my life."
... "Just those poor andys"

(DADOES. 1: 7).

She appears to have empathy for the Nexus-6s whereas Deckard cannot
afford to have such feelings. He briefly falls in love with the Nexus-6
Rachael Rosen, who is identical in looks to Pris Stratton. The drama of the novel arises partially through the shifting position in the table of the protagonist.

With the understanding that characters can shift between polarities, I will henceforth privilege the ethical pole over the ontological one, and label those characters who display empathy as Human and those who lack it as Android. There will inevitably be some slippage between being Android and being an android - most of the andys in the novel are Android. At one point Deckard is accused by androids, posing as human beings, of being an android:

"Are you an android, Mr Deckard? The reason I ask is that several times in the past we've had escaped andys turn up posing as out-of-state bounty hunters here in pursuit of a suspect . . . "This man - or android - Rick Deckard comes to us from a phantom, hallucinatory, nonexistent police agency allegedly operating out of the old departmental headquarters . . . The list he carries around isn't of androids; it's a list of human beings"

(DADOES : 88, 92).

He tests another bounty hunter, Phil Resch, who is also accused of being an android. Phil passes the test, he is a human being, but in behaviour he is almost Android. I want to argue that in Dick's writings this behaviour takes precedence over being, although it does impact upon being. But first I need to theorize the idea of empathy and ethics.

**Martin Buber and Responsibility**

With empathy for others comes a degree of responsibility for them, an idea developed by Martin Buber, a Jewish theologian whom Dick had
certainly heard of, as indicated by a reference in *The Divine Invasion*:
"That dear and gentle man. The Arabs, too, placed flowers on his grave. Even the Arabs loved him" (DI. 8: 97). Buber argued that the subject I does not exist in isolation, but in relation to the world or to the Other. This may be a mutual, two-way relationship with other subjects (*I-Thou*) or one-way with objects (*I-It*):

Whoever says *Thou* does not have something; he has nothing. But he stands in relation.

... Those who experience do not participate in the world. For the experience is "in them" and not between them and the world.

The world does not participate in experience. It allows itself to be experienced, but it is not concerned for it contributes nothing, and nothing happens to it... The world as experience belongs to the basic word *I-It*.

The basic word *I-Thou* establishes the world of relation

(Buber 1970: 55-6).

Both of these relationships are with something which is not the Self. The *I-It* relationship is with objects which may be sensed or used, and the relationship emphasizes the separateness and difference between the I and the It. The It does not really have any relationship with the I: it remains distinct. The *I-Thou* relationship, on the other hand, emphasizes sameness through a mutual responsibility that the I has for the Thou and the Thou has for the I. The I empathises with the Thou, and vice-versa. The world is not sentient, it does not empathise or care, it is simply a collection of objects. But when the I as a subject is in a relationship with a Thou, the I is in a relation with another I and the I is a Thou in relation to the Thou.
Buberian Human vs Android

However these relationships cannot be directly mapped onto the Human / Android axis. An ideal Human-Human relationship should be I-Thou, empathic, whereas an Android-Human relationship - because the Androids lack empathy - is I-It. Since I-Thou relations are mutual, two-directional, and I-It is one-directional, it follows that a Human-Android relation is also I-It. An I-Thou relationship cannot be empathic in one direction only. In other words, classifying a Human as Android is in itself an Android act. It is not helpful to a schizophrenic (who in Dick's writings treat other people as objects) to be treated as an It, and it is this aspect which means these distinctions are dangerous to draw in the consensus environment. Having empathy is not an absolute state as Dick usually portrays it, but rather a series of choices made by individuals according to their circumstances. Most people fail to empathize at some point in their lives.

Between two Humans and two Androids there are twelve possible one-to-one relationships (See Fig. 6.2, next page). Only two of these, Human₁-Human₂ and Human₂-Human₁, are I-Thou in nature. This indicates that, assuming there are equal numbers of Humans and Androids there are five times as many I-It relationships as I-Thou relationships. Such an imbalance is likely to lead to more Humans becoming Androids; this can be seen as entropy within an ethical system because as I-Thou is superior to I-It, Androidization can be seen as decay in terms of the level of empathy.
Fig. 6.2: The twelve possible one-to-one relationships between two Humans and two Androids.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
<th>RELATIONSHIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>Human&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>I-Thou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Android&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>I-It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Android&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>I-It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>Human&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>I-Thou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Android&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>I-It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Android&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>I-It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Android&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>Human&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>I-It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>I-It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Android&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>I-It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Android&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>Human&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>I-It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>I-It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Android&lt;sub&gt;1&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>I-It</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Deckard must have an *I-It* relationship with the Nexus-6s, he must see them as objects in order to countenance killing them; however his love for Rachael, at times virtually *I-Thou*, causes a conflict within his emotions. To be true to his profession, Deckard must treat all escaped robots as objects. The danger of this approach is seen in Phil Resch, who is, as I have already, a Human who seems virtually Android, although he passes as being Human on the Voigt-Kampff Test. Not only does Phil have no difficulty in treating the Nexus-6s as objects, but also he enjoys retiring them: "'You like to kill'" (DADOES. 12: 106). If Deckard enjoys the retiring too much, he risks becoming like them, Android.

Androids have no empathetic feelings for Humans, nor indeed for other Androids:

"You're a great man, Isidore," Pris said. "You're a credit to your race."

"If he was an android," Roy said heartily, "he'd turn us in about ten tomorrow morning"  

(DADOES. 14: 125).

It is clear from this that a world composed mostly or entirely of Androids would be one of betrayal and distrust, lacking altruism, empathy and responsibility for others; in fact it would resemble the police states of *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said* and *Radio Free Albemuth*, and the vision of a realm discussed in the Exegesis, the Black Iron Prison, the worst of all possible worlds. One Android's actions leads to the "creation" of more Androids, who may be unaware of the change in their behaviour because of the lose of empathy:

Becoming what I call, for lack of a better term, an android, means as I said, to allow oneself to become a means, or to be pounded down, manipulated, made into a means without one's knowledge or consent - the results are the same. . . .
Androidization requires obedience. And, most of all, predictability. It is precisely when a given person's response to any given situation can be predicted with scientific accuracy that the gates are open for the wholesale production of the android life form

(Dick 1988e: 134).

The inhabitants of the Black Iron Prison-type realm would find it necessary to inform on law-breakers before the law-breakers inform on the potential informers in order to protect themselves - it could even extend to a point where to prove one's own loyalty it seems safest to inform on oneself. The results of this ethical entropy were described by Buber: "When man lets It have its way, the relentlessly growing It-world grows over him like weeds, his own I loses its actuality" (Buber 1970: 95-6). Because informing on others demonstrates a lack of empathy for their plight, the informer is viewing them as objects, as Its, thus further increasing the level of ethical entropy, and the loss of Human identity. Certainly S. A. Fred in A Scanner Darkly loses his I-identity when he is forced to spy on Bob Arctor, his alter ego.

But just as a Human can become Android, so there is the corollary that an Android may become, if only briefly, Human; this could only arise through the creation of an I-Thou relationship. Pris Frauenzimmer is Android because of her schizophrenia; similar mental deterioration can arise through an addict's use of heroin. The addict becomes a reflex machine only operating in two modes: desiring or using heroin. But Dick recalls an incident where a junkie became Human:

[He] heard the jack slip while a junior high school kid was changing a tire on the car... this guy who thought he had bugs all over him, who had almost no brain circuits left, ran out of that living room, out into the garage, and knocked the kid out of the way of the car... Then he went back and sank into the incredible brain suffocation of heroin, and
lived only another year. He not only did the right thing, he knew why it was the right thing.

... He was still a human being, with the finest attributes a human can display

(Apel and Briggs 1985: 14)\textsuperscript{9}

The machine state of the junkie is emphasized by the use of the phrase "brain circuits" and the irony implicit in the adjective in "living room". Androids would have no wish that another would become Human; Humans on the other hand would be in danger of becoming Androids if they did not hold out this hope for Androids.

The junkie's action could be seen as an act of altruism, of self-redemption, which increased the level of caritas as opposed to entropy in the world even though he himself did not benefit ultimately. In opposing empathy or caritas to entropy, or situating Humanization in opposition to Androidization, Dick develops a cosmology; high levels of Androidization create a Black Iron Prison realm. A link to his "What is reality?" theme can be made here; reality depends upon the relative levels of the opposing forces of empathy and ethical entropy. Dick is able to demonstrate this in dramatic terms.

**Emmanuel Levinas and Responsibility**

According to Buber, the perception of reality is dependent on the I-Thou and I-It relationships. Emmanuel Levinas, a Jewish philosopher and Talmudic scholar whom I discussed in relation to Heidegger in Chapter Two, objected that Buber does not adequately explain how the Self or Ego can exist as a being in its own right. Levinas developed his own theory to account for the separation of the subject (the I) from the object world, and in addition to justify the existence of the I. If the I has
complete freedom in acting then the I may attempt to assimilate the not-I or the Other into the I, to undermine this alterity with sameness. The result of such a grasping of the Other may be - in addition to the violence to the Other - ennui and alienation, since it leads to pure self-contemplation. According to Levinas: "The ego is in itself like a sound that would resound in its own echo" (Levinas 1989: 92). This is hardly a pleasant description; it recalls the painful scream of feedback which occurs when a microphone picks up speaker hum which is then re-transmitted through the speaker. This could be compared to S. A. Fred's assignment to spy upon Bob Arctor, which leads to a breakdown into the simpleton Bruce. Paradoxically self-awareness has often been seen as a factor which distinguishes Humans from animals or machines, but here pure self-awareness or self-absorption without recourse to the Other is an Android act.

In order to escape the ennui, it is necessary for the I to retain the alterity, the radical difference of the Other, and to have empathy for the Other:

One has to respond to one's right to be, not by referring to some abstract and anonymous law, or judicial entity, but because of one's fear for the Other. My being-in-the-world or my "place in the sun", my being at home, have these not also been the usurpation of spaces belonging to the other man whom I have already oppressed or starved, or driven out into a third world; are these not acts of repulsing, excluding, exiling, stripping, killing?

(Levinas 1989: 82).

The I becomes aware that simply by existing there is an obligation to the Other, because the I is using resources that the Other could have used.

This encounter of the I with the Other is what Levinas terms a face-to-face encounter, with a face which is naked and helpless, but
which utters the commandment: "Thou shall commit no murder".
Because of the harm the I has caused to the Other, there is already an
obligation, a one-way relationship which distinguishes this I-Other
relation from the reciprocity in the I-Thou Levinas criticises in Buber.
Originally Levinas saw this encounter in terms of exteriority and height:
"the Other is at the same time higher than I and yet poorer than I, the I
is distinguished from the Thou not by the presence of specific attributes,
but by the dimension of height" (Levinas 1989: 72). The encounter is
written of in two ways, in terms of light (the glance\textsuperscript{10} of the face) or
sound (the call for help of the Other).

Derrida, in his long discussion about Levinas suggests that the
latter refer to the Postscript to \textit{I and Thou} for an indication of how "the
man who turns toward him [God] need not turn his back on any other
I-Thou relationship, quite legitimately he brings them all to God and
allows them to become transfixed 'in the countenance of God" (Buber
1971a: 182; cf. Derrida 1978: 314), in other words an analogous position
to the concept of the absolute Other of God present in all relations.
Derrida corrects Levinas; Levinas tries to avoid "the ridiculous
pretention of 'correcting' Buber" (Levinas 1979: 69; cf. Derrida 1978:
314). But Derrida has located a potentially more damaging
contradiction within Levinasian thought: if ethics, as first philosophy, is
prior to any consideration of being, then the face-to-face has to "occur" in
some paradoxical sort of non-space. Yet Levinas writes using spatial
terms; according to Derrida's reading of Levinas: "The infinitely other is
the invisible . . . the invisible is the most high . . . No matter how high it
is, height is always accessible; the most high, however, is higher than
height. No addition of more height will ever measure it. It does not
belong to space, is not of this world" (Derrida 1978: 93; cf. for example
Levinas 1979: 34-5). It is difficult to see how a height can be higher than height. The transcendental implications of this height seem to be pointing toward the possibility of a transcendental entity "beyond" ontology: the theology of The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch. This theological angle of Levinas's thought will be discussed in Chapter Seven in relation to VALIS.

But height is not the only term to be criticised; when Levinas writes of the exteriority of the Other, Derrida asks:

Why is it necessary still to use the word "exteriority" . . . in order to signify a nonspatial relationship? And if every "relationship" is spatial, why is it necessary still to designate as a (nonspatial) "relationship" the respect which absolves the other? Why is it necessary to obliterate this notion of exteriority without erasing it, without making it illegible, by stating that its truth is its untruth, that the true exteriority is not spatial, that is, is not exteriority?

(Derrida 1978: 112).

The answers to these questions boil down to the problem that whilst Levinas's thought may be prior to ontology, the language which is used to describe it is not. In breaking with the metaphysical tradition, as Levinas in some senses attempts to do, he remains part of that tradition.

Later writings by Levinas describe the encounter in terms of proximity, which is still a spatial term. The relation between the Self and the Other is also described in terms of the trace. The self is in a peculiar ontological position: since it can only perceive that which is not itself or an extension of itself, it cannot perceive the perceiving part of itself - its awareness of its Being cannot be separated from its awareness of Being. The Self can therefore be said to be absent to itself. However the Self is there, since something is obviously being perceived. As the self is neither present nor absent to itself, it is what Levinas terms
"otherwise than being". This seems to result in a lack within the Self which is filled by recourse to the Other, or the trace of the Other within the Self. This does not mean that the Other is present within the Self, nor that the Self contains, or grasps, the Other; like the Self, the Other is neither present nor absent but otherwise than being. The trace seems to be the mark left by something that has never been there.

Perhaps the idea of Yin and Yang discussed in Chapter Four may be used to delineate this difficult concept. Because there is Yin, so there is Yang; if the Self is to have any meaning there must be an Other. The comma-like area of black that represents Yin in the Taoist Yin-Yang man dala contains a small circle of white that is Yang, to demonstrate that one pole contains a trace of its opposite. Similarly the I "contains" a trace of the Other. To pursue this metaphor too far however would commit a violence on the thought of Levinas; whereas the mandala is reciprocal like Buber's I-Thou relation - the Yang also contains a trace of the Yin - the Other need not contain a trace of the I, nor is the I the Other for the Other. The Self can only respond to the Other, to have concern or empathy for the Other, there is no other Other.

**Levinasian Responsibility in Dick's Novels**

An example of concern for the Other comes at the end of *The Man in the High Castle* after Mr Tagomi has killed two agents in order to protect Mr Baynes, which I have already discussed at length in Chapter Four. Tagomi is asked to allow the extradition of Frank Frink to his certain death. Whilst Tagomi and Frink are frequently linked by the narrative, they never actually meet, and it is difficult to see what Tagomi would
gain through pardoning Frank, beyond the effects of karma and relief of karma. It could be a result of his reading of the *I Ching*:

> Thus the superior man discusses criminal cases
> In order to delay executions

(Wilhelm 1989: 236).

But Tagomi, although he has never personally met Frink, has a responsibility which he must fulfil, simply through his own existence. The Self exposes itself to this responsibility, this ethical demand, and since there is no other Other onto whom responsibility may be shifted, it becomes what Levinas terms a hostage to the Other, a substitute for the Other. Thus through empathy Tagomi can contemplate Frink's plight, he becomes a hostage; Frink's concerns are substituted for Tagomi's: "It is through the condition of being hostage that there can be pity in the world, compassion, pardon and proximity - even the little there is, even the simple 'After you, sir' " (Levinas 1989: 107). Tagomi's compassion extends to the release of Frink.

A further striking example of this substitution is to be found in *Now Wait For Last Year* where the Terran leader Gino Molinari takes full responsibility for the war he has involved Earth in, the ultimate contravention of the "Thou shall commit no murder" commandment. Each time a member of his staff becomes ill, he displays identical symptoms and suffers with them. Not even the termination of his Being through death can prevent this, as another Molinari is then brought from a parallel universe to take his place; literally to substitute.

Molinari has no wish to be the Other's other, as he has caused enough suffering already. Here the relation becomes partially two-way, it is a: "vortex - suffering of the other, my pity for his suffering, his pain over my pity, my pain over his pain, etc." (Levinas 1989: 122) - the *I* returns
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to itself, but differently, to the hither side of the Self. The isolated I could be compared to a jar of water and sand in suspension; left to itself, the sand would eventually settle out and silt up the bottom. Given the vortex of relationships, the jar would be continually stirred and the sand would remain suspended. The obligation of the I always forms the final term, even in an infinite regress. Levinas's mythic model is the unending exile of Abraham rather than the cyclic voyage of Ulysses; he draws on a Hebraic rather than Hellenic tradition: "the story of Abraham who leaves his fatherland forever for a yet unknown land" (Levinas 1986b: 348).

Levinasian Responsibility in Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

I have already discussed the importance of empathy in Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, in terms of Buber's I-Thou relationship. In the same way, the Levinasian I-Other relation may be used, with the rejection of the call for help standing as a symptom of ethical entropy. In addition substitution may be demonstrated, on a religious level. This is of course a step beyond where Levinas himself would take it, since he never prescribes a totality of morals based on his ethical relation: "My task does not consist in constructing ethics; I only try to find its meaning. In fact I do not believe that all philosophy should be programmatic" (Levinas 1985: 90). With this proviso in mind, Dick can be seen to have created a parallel to substitution in the shape of Mercerism.

The character Mercer is trying to climb a hill whilst under attack from an unidentified menace. He is an analogue to Christ; believers
share in his suffering via their empathy boxes. In Christian terms, Christ died for the sins of humanity; here all empathising humans are invited to be hostages to the Christ figure's plight. This plot strand is lifted from Dick's short story, "The Little Black Box" where Mercerism is perceived as a threat - possibly alien - by various governments who attempt to outlaw the empathy boxes and believers. But despite the crackdown, boxes continue to be available.

However in the novel the governments condone the activity, for it is a way of distinguishing Human from Android. Whilst ever more sophisticated technology threatens the validity of the Voigt-Kampff test, Androids and Robots still lack the empathy which is essential to fuse with or substitute for Mercer. It is therefore in the interests of the Nexus-6s to expose the cult of Mercerism as a fraud. A Robot reveals that Mercer is no more than an aging actor on a disused filmset in an attempt to deny empathy to others.

Mercer was alleged to have the power of rejuvenation by reversing time; when this process is applied to the dead it involves resurrection. Discounting the collaboration The Ganymede Takeover, the novel before Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? was Counter-Clock World, which dealt with the effects of time reversing. The essence of Mercer is outside of time, the body in which he exists is arbitrary although the fact of his incarnation is not: "The body is neither an obstacle to the soul, nor a tomb that imprisons it, but that by which the self is susceptibility itself. Incarnation is an extreme passivity; to be exposed to sickness, suffering, death, is to be exposed to compassion, and, as a self, to the gift that costs" (Levinas 1989: 121). Without suffering there can be no compassion nor alleviation of suffering; similarly suffering serves no purpose unless there is compassion and alleviation.
When Isidore learns of the fakery, reality seems to be undermined by this removal of the controlling ethical system. But just before the instant of absolute decay - as Isidore enters a tomb world - he appeals to Mercer. Isidore's dismembered spider is healed and a status quo restored; his compassion for the spider, as well as that for the Robots, allows for alleviation of suffering and resurrection. When Deckard is in danger of becoming emotionally an Android, Isidore warns him that he will never be able to fuse with Mercer again, but Mercer accepts the killings. In fact Deckard seems to become hostage to Mercer without the use of an empathy box: "I'm Wilbur Mercer; I've permanently fused with him" (DADOES. 21: 175). This is partly because his actions are for the greater good, but also because he has had to face the self-contradictory nature of much of ethical existence. Deckard's course through the novel can be compared with climbing a hill whilst under attack; his difficult mission earns him the money to buy a goat, which is killed by Rachael. He finds a toad - thought to be extinct - but this turns out to be fake, although he will care for it. Accepting life as a series of difficulties to be overcome, he returns to his wife and their difficult marriage, rather than trying to escape.

It is not just an acceptance of the status quo: the difficulties have to be confronted, even if this means death. This is typical of Dick's Human heroes:

The authentic human being is one of us who instinctively knows what he should not do, and, in addition, he will balk at doing it... even if this brings down dread consequences to him and to those whom he loves. This, to me, is the ultimately heroic trait of ordinary people; they say no to the tyrant and they calmly take the consequences of this resistance... I see their authenticity in an odd way: not in their willingness to perform great heroic deeds but in their
quiet refusals. In essence, they cannot be compelled to be what they are not

(Dick 1988k: 32).

For example, at the end of The Man Who Japed, Allen Purcell has the opportunity to leave a police state tyranny and save himself, but instead of retreating from the situation he refuses to escape and returns to the fray.

Ethics and Ontology

A similar choice is presented to Eric Sweetscent at the end of Now Wait For Last Year. His wife Kathy is a drug user and gets hold of a highly addictive drug JJ-180 which has the property of sending the user either forward or backwards in time. In her Android state of addiction, she gets Eric hooked on the same drug in order to force him to locate a supply or an antidote. This he does, but it is too late to reverse the damage done to Kathy. He has the choice of returning to her, or leaving:

To the cab [he was riding in] he said suddenly, "If your wife were sick -"
"I have no wife, sir," the cab said, "Automatic Mechanisms never marry; everyone knows that."
"All right," Eric agreed. "If you were me, and your wife were sick, desperately so, with no hope of recovery, would you leave her? Or would you stay with her, even if you had traveled ten years into the future and knew for an absolute certainty that the damage to her brain could never be reversed? And staying with her would mean -"
"I can see what you mean, sir," the cab broke in. "It would mean no other life for you beyond caring for her."
"That's right," Eric said.
"I'd stay with her," the cab decided.
"Why?"
"Because," the cab said, "life is composed of reality configurations so constituted. To abandon her would be to
say, I can't endure reality as such. I have to have uniquely special easier conditions."
    "I think I agree," Eric said after a time. "I think I will stay with her."
    "God bless you, sir," the cab said. "I can see that you're a good man."
    "Thank you," Eric said.
    The cab soared on toward Tijuana Fur & Dye Corporation

(NWFLY. 14: 224).

Eric by this decision remains Human; it remains an open question as to the fate of Kathy because the novel ends there.

The irony of course is that the cab has given sound moral or ethical advice to the hero of the novel. The cab does not resemble a human, but is in some senses more Human than Kathy. It is not obvious whether the cab is programmed to make such a response from a repository of set phrases or whether it does actually think. Here again is a Turing Test in action, where the result is that (A) is either thinking or appears to think. It does have the ability to extrapolate from partial information and interrupt Eric. But to an arch-sceptic the result can never be proven.

Just before he hailed the cab, Eric has come across a Lazy Brown Dog cart. Lazy Brown Dogs are manufactured by the Tijuana Fur & Dye Corporation to use as command guidance structures for interplanetary spacecraft. If the Lazy Brown Dog has too slow a reaction time then it is rejected; however Bruce Himmel wires rejects into carts and sets them free rather than destroying them. As a drug user, Himmel might be considered an Android himself, but he enters into what appears to be an I-Other relationship with these robots. The Lazy Brown Dogs become part of the ecosystem:
Even these things, [Eric] decided, are determined to live. Bruce was right. They deserve their opportunity, their miniscule place under the sun and sky. That's all they're asking for and it isn't much. . . . that thing that's taken refuge there in that zinc bucket, without a wife, a career, a conapt [i.e., a condominium apartment] or money or the possibility of encountering any of these, still persists. For reasons unknown to me its stake in existence is greater than mine

(NWFLY 14: 222).

Eric, too, has an I-Other relationship with the Lazy Brown Dogs. Currently they have a survival of the fittest existence, but sooner or later they will learn to create social structures and show concern for the Other.

The conditional environment of a PhilDickian novel constantly changes and evolves through the actions of the characters who inhabit it. The result of too many unethical choices, the Black Iron Prison of an It-world, has already been described; but there is also the polar opposite, the Palm Tree Garden:

He saw to his amazement palm trees. All at once he stopped, stood clasping his basket of string beans and beets. The warm air, the palm trees ... funny, he thought, I never noticed any palm trees growing around here. And dry dusty land, as if I'm in the Middle East. Another world; touches of another continuum. . . . As if my eyes are now opened, in a special way.

(DeI 18: 215)

He sat under palm trees and knew he had entered the Garden. . . . Buildings and vehicles, but the people did not hurry. They sat here and there enjoying the sun.

(DI 12: 147)\textsuperscript{14}

This is the end result of the operation of total empathy: the instigation of a paradisiacal realm.
But the Black Iron Prison and Palm Tree Garden are more than simply the natural result of the interplay of individuals on the I-Thou and I-It planes, or the result of an ethical commitment to or a rejection of the Other. Dick is writing fiction - usually sf - where no one conditional environment can be any more real than any other conditional environment. Dick, like a God, is able to intervene in the course of his fiction to alter his conditional environment. In the infamous Metz Speech "If you find this world bad, you should see some of the others" (Dick 1991b) he suggests that God created an imperfect universe and is gradually recreating it in order to achieve perfection, whilst being thwarted by some sort of counter-player. He writes of the black iron prison world which had been; our intermediate world in which oppression and war exist but have to a great extent been cast down, and then a third alternate world which someday, when the correct variables in our past have been reprogrammed, will materialize as a superimposition onto this one . . . and within which, as we awaken to it, we shall suppose we had always lived there, the memory of this intermediate one, like that of the black iron prison world, eradicated mercifully from our memories

(Dick 1991b: 36).

The dualism of two opposing game-players who stand for two opposing forces, for example creation and destruction, can be seen several novels; for example in the early work The Cosmic Puppets they were Ormazd and Ahriman, in A Maze of Death they were the Mentufacturer and the Form Destroyer.

It can therefore be seen that in thirty years of writing, divine beings were a recurring concept in Dick’s exploration of ontology and ethics. Without wishing to suggest a causal relationship between Dick and them, Levinas and Buber both had room for a God in their philosophies. Both posted the Eternal Thou as underlying and possibly
validating all *I-Thou* relations. Levinas, as a Talmudic scholar, has obviously been interested in exegesis of theological material. This aspect of his work is currently neglected (in English at least), although ironically it is in this area that I have found the only previous linkage between Dick and Levinas.\(^{16}\) Levinas has also argued that: "The impossibility of escaping God lies in the depths of myself as a self" (Levinas 1989 118).

It is here that I can return to *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* and two quotations cited in the previous chapter. Firstly in Richard Hnatt’s hyper-evolved view of trinary realms:

> And yet the possibility of ascent lay before him; any aspect or sequence of reality *could become either*, at any instant. Hell or Heaven, not after death, but now! Depression, all mental illness, was the sinking [to the lower realm]. And the other ... how was it achieved? Through empathy. Grasping another not from outside but from the inner.

(3SPE 5: 63; ellipsis original)

This appears to be a Levinasian thought; Hnatt had seen Emily’s pots as merchandising, as something to grasp and sell for personal gain rather than as expressions and extensions of her personality. Through empathy he can show a greater respect for her abilities and wishes.

Later in the novel Barney rejects substitution - and therefore Levinasian ethics - in his encounter with an Other, with Eldritch. Of course, the ethical relation is not obligatory; wars and killings happen despite the command "Thou shall commit no murder". Barney is rightly worried here that in this encounter with a God he will lose his self-hood, either by death or by permanent loss of identity or substitution.\(^{17}\)
Conclusion

Whilst Dick was widely read in terms of philosophy, I have found no evidence that he ever read Levinas, nor does it seem likely that Levinas has heard of Dick, although the latter’s popularity in France must be noted. It is obviously misleading to claim an influence of one upon the other, but the parallels are striking. At the same time it would be a violence to Levinas and reductive of Dick to suggest that the two are identical thinkers, which is why I have taken pains to point out the differences, to maintain their radical difference. Simon Critchley, in his book *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, suggests the figure of the chiasmus to negotiate the similarities and differences between Levinas and Derrida. Such a metaphor may be useful here. The ideas of Levinas and Dick overlap and meet chiasmatically, but are never identical. With Levinas's ideas in mind a provisional answer to Dick's question "What is reality?" could well be "The result of the Human or Android actions of people or the intercession of a higher being," or "The environment perceived by an I as a result of the response to the cry for help of the Other." "Reality" is constructed within Dick's fiction so that choices of actions are presented where a Human can either display empathy or add to the entropy of the world. Because Dick is writing sf he has the opportunity to exaggerate the change.

The attempt to continue onwards, to retain Humanity despite flux, is part of Dick's ethical code. Naturally there are some occasions where the Human action will fail, or where the I's attempt to intercede on behalf of the Other is not enough either to save the Other or even the I. In the late novels where cosmologies and ethics are foregrounded, this involves a series of theophanies, and in the case of *VALIS* an ethical commitment on the part of the reader.
Chapter Seven:
"My life is a fantasy":
VALIS

Criticising VALIS

I wish to examine Dick’s novel VALIS in relation to the Levinasian ethics I have begun to outline in the previous chapter. I hope to demonstrate both the striking parallels between Levinas’s ideas and Dick’s philosophy as it is presented in VALIS, as well as the problems which arise from Levinasian ethics in action. But I feel that the question of ethics should be part of every critical act: if not thematically then as an intrinsic part of criticism itself.

By writing about a text, by shaping arguments about that text to my own ends, I risk committing an act of violence against the author’s original intentions for the piece. To reject the author’s intentions out of hand, to declare with Barthes that the Author is Dead, is hardly an ethical act. To deny that the author has intentions is deny that the author is another human being. Yet to presume that one can reconstruct the author’s intentions solely from the work is to risk presuming to speak for the author. Between rejecting and assuming intentions, an ethical impasse is reached.

This question of authorship is especially relevant to VALIS, where the boundary between author and text becomes increasingly complex. Arguably Dick’s most difficult work, VALIS features Dick as one of the characters in the novel. It weaves sf and autobiography, speculations on Greek, Buddhist and Gnostic philosophies and the modes of satire and
tragedy. It blurs generic boundaries, and stubbornly refuses to admit to a stable, single, unified meaning. It is a distinctively postmodern novel.

One example of criticism which has considered VALIS in terms of meaning and ethics was written by Christopher Palmer (Palmer 1991), in reply to an article by Scott Durham (Durham 1988). Palmer argues that "[VALIS is] the record of a painful blockage. . . . [M]eaning has an ethical dimension and Valis clearly has an ethical dimension, if it exists at all. The achievement of Valis' is to suggest how painful it can be when pursuit of the ethical collides with the proliferating textuality of meaning" (Palmer 1991: 340). I will return to Palmer's comments later in this chapter.

The pursuit of meaning can be dangerous, particularly when entire theories can be built on the misreading of a text or of its author's intentions. Yet the alternative to this violence of literary criticism, a careful, faithful, accurate interpretation need not be any more ethically justifiable. Levinas has written little about criticism, and so his early comments in "Reality and its Shadow" must stand: "Is not to interpret Mallarmé to betray him? Is not to interpret his work faithfully to suppress it? To say clearly what he says obscurely is to reveal the vanity of his obscure speech" (Levinas 1987a: 1). Going only as far as a paraphrase seems not to be enough, but a translation into clearer terms risks being a condemnation of the original speaker.

Yet Levinas plainly views criticism as vital. A work of art is for him an act of communication, and the public desires to speak of it, even when the artist remains silent. The critic is the one who is authorised to and is able to speak for the public: "He can be defined as the one that still has something to say when everything has been said, that can say about the work something else than that work" (Levinas 1987a: 2). This
is not dissimilar to Levinas's later conception of "the gift", where the writing is the gift-work, and has to be met with ingratitude.² A faithful reading is simply a return of the gift: "Gratitude would in fact be the return of the movement to its origin" (Levinas 1986b: 349). The critic has to somehow alter, to change the work, to imbue it with new meaning, perhaps demonstrating that what the writer has written is not enough as it stands.

But when VALIS is considered as an autobiography, an account of actual events which Dick experienced, the critic may find little in practice to say. In finding a structure or pattern to these events, the critic risks the suggestion that there is in fact nothing to find: that these events are purely happenstance and nothing more. To this there is the counter-objection that the author has obviously chosen which of these events to recount, and the language in which they are recounted or spoken.

In Foucault's "What is an Author?", the author is used as a proper name to group a number of texts together, and to mark off the text from the world. In the specific case of VALIS, it should be noted that the novel does not exist in isolation; along with The Divine Invasion and The Transmigration of Timothy Archer it forms part of the thematic series which I will refer to as the "Divine Trilogy".³ Additionally, an earlier version of VALIS has been posthumously published as Radio Free Albemuth and notes exist for a further novel, never written, which was to have been called The Owl in Daylight.⁴ Finally there is the Exegesis, which consists of almost two million words of notes, mostly handwritten, which Dick made in the last eight years of his life. The problem is in negotiating these texts, without getting hopelessly lost. One useful
precautionary step is to defer discussion of the rest of the "Divine Trilogy" to the next chapter.

Before engaging upon a biographical reading of Dick's work, in which the work illuminates the life and vice versa, it is worth noting that Dick once wrote: "It is one of the cardinal errors of literary criticism to believe that the author's own view can be inferred from his writing; Freud, for instance, makes this really ugly error again and again" (Dick 1995i: 66). To speculate if it is Dick's view that his own views cannot be inferred from his writings would be to court a particular kind of painful proliferation of meaning.

The Paratext

To position the remaining works (VALIS and the Exegesis), I will use Genette's idea of the paratext before I reintroduce Levinasian ethics to provide a reading of the text VALIS itself. According to Gerard Genette:

> text rarely appears in its naked state, without the reinforcement and accompaniment of a certain number of productions, themselves verbal or not, like an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations. One does not always know if one should consider that they belong to the text or not, but in any case they surround it and prolong it, precisely in order to present it

(Genette 1991: 261)

These "productions" constitute what Genette dubs the paratext. This in turn breaks down into two categories: the epitext and the peritext. The epitext consists of the book's binding and cover, with a title and an author's name plus any preface. This latter may be by the author, the book's editor or be an allographic preface by a third party, designed to
add further authority to the text. The peritext consists of author’s interviews, essays, the text’s treatment by the media, including reviews. The paratext may be iconic (illustrations), historic (positioning the text in time), factual or biographic (positioning the text in its author’s life), generic (positioning in the market place), materialistic (the materials the text is printed on) or typographical (the typefaces it uses). Aspects of the paratext may be public, private (such as letters to individuals) or intimate (diaries, notes, early drafts).

The first British edition of VALIS, indeed the first world hardcover, was produced by a small press named Kerosina, in a series of limited editions. This suggests a certain degree of quality, and that it was aimed at a small coterie of fans or collectors. These editions include an allographic afterword by Kim Stanley Robinson, which locates the novel within the context of Dick’s life and discusses its generic status. The anonymous blurb, whilst not mentioning sf, designates some of Dick’s novels as mainstream. In the case of VALIS two parts of the presentational epitext cause problems: the title and the author.

**VALIS and the Titular Epitext**

The title of a novel is important in summing up what the novel is about, and how it should be approached: "Titles may work on the principle of inclusion, appealing to as wide a cultural code as possible, like Lace or War and Peace. They may, on the other hand, deliberately exclude, as does V. or Do Androids dream of Electric Sheep?" (Maclean 1991: 275). It is clear that VALIS fits into the excluding category. It is not even clear if VALIS is the title of the novel (as it is on the spine, blurb and title page) or Valis (as it is on the dust jacket).
The first indication of what VALIS means is the book's epigraph:

VALIS (acronym of Vast Active Living Intelligence System from an American film): A perturbation in the reality field in which a spontaneous self-monitoring negentropic vortex is formed, tending progressively to subsume and incorporate its environment into arrangements of information. Characterised by quasi-consciousness, purpose, intelligence, growth and an armillary coherence.

- Great Soviet Dictionary

Sixth Edition, 1992

(V. 7).

The citation is self-evidently spurious, given that it is to a book published eleven years later than the original edition of VALIS.

There is no further reference to what is taken to be an acronym until the character Kevin takes Horselover Fat and narrator Phil Dick to see a science fiction film called *Valis* (V. 9: 138) which depicts an alternate present where president Ferris F. Fremont feels threatened by Nicholas Brady, an electronics expert, and a satellite called "VALIS". The film, by means of allegory, suggests that U.S. President Richard Nixon was overthrown by "VALIS" - the events of the film *Valis*, the theophany of VALIS and the fall of Nixon being contemporaneous. Kevin suggests that the existence of "VALIS" as a satellite is used because of the movie's generic status: "They wanted to make a sci-fi flick; that's how you would handle it in a sci-fi flick if you had such an experience" (V. 9: 152). There is therefore a further meaning to VALIS, an entity which has been apparently communicating with the film makers, and which may or may not have also been communicating with Fat.
The title VALIS may thus refer to one or more of four items: an entity labelled VALIS known to the Soviets, the film Valis from which the label derives, the eponymous satellite "VALIS" and the god-like entity VALIS. It is impossible to decide which one the title refers to, or whether the Soviet VALIS is identical to the one known to the film makers; in fact VALIS leaves open the possibility that the film makers are cranks or fraudsters. The title, rather than stabilising the book, hints at the "proliferating textuality of meaning" within the text proper.

**VALIS and the Authorial Paratext**

As I suggested in Chapter One, the author is considered not only as the source of a piece of writing, but also as the authority for it. In this case the author is Philip K. Dick. But just as the title of VALIS refuses to stabilise the novel, so does the author's name refuse to act as an anchor here. The first person narrator of the novel is called Philip K. Dick; there is a problem as to whether Philip K. Dick the character and narrator is identical to Philip K. Dick the author of VALIS. The narrator tells us: "I am by profession, a science fiction writer. I deal in fantasies. My life is a fantasy" (V. 1: 12). The use of the word "fantasy" is ambiguous, suggesting that his life is totally involved with fantasy because of his writing, or that he cannot tell whether his experiences are real, or that he is fulfilling his desires in his life, or even that he is making his life up.

DICK asserts his authority in the text by claiming the status of an author; but he immediately subverts this by his reference to fantasy. According to Barthes: "If he [the Author] is a novelist, he is inscribed in the novel like one of his characters, figured in the carpet; no longer
privileged, paternal, aletheological, his inscription is ludic" (Barthes 1977: 161). Indeed Dick is being playful in asking the reader to believe in the events of his novel, to suspend disbelief, and to follow the twists and turns of truths and untruths, whilst he neither confirms nor denies these truths.

To complicate matters further, the narrative structure is more complicated than the author being isomorphic with the narrator. In *Radio Free Albemuth* the narrative focus switches from Phil as narrator to Nicholas, and then back, but it is Brady who has the theophany. In *VALIS* it is Horselover Fat who has the experience, but Phil explains: "I am Horselover Fat, and I am writing this in the third person to gain much-needed objectivity" (V. 1: 11). There are occasions when he slips: "I - I mean Bob and Horselover Fat" (V. 1: 12), "mailed me . . . mailed Horselover Fat" (V. 1: 15) and "In all my reading I have - I mean, Horselover Fat has" (V. 3: 39). However, it is all-too-easy to be seduced into reading Fat and Phil as two separate characters. Whilst Fat speculates wildly, Phil is sceptical, continually doubting Fat's sanity.

It seems sensible to keep Dick-as-writer, Dick-as-narrator and Dick-as-alterego-Horselover distinct, but it seems that they have shared similar experiences. One perception of authors is that they transform the commonplace into art. If we are to take *VALIS* at anything approaching face value, we have to accept that Dick is transforming something extraordinary into art. Certain scenes may be unconvincing but such an event may in fact have happened. Autobiographical fiction or *romans à clef* are nothing new, of course; for example Jack Kerouac's novels together constitute the Duluoz legend, which is a sort of autobiography. But Dick is surely unique in the level of credulity the
text demands from its readers. It is now necessary to look at these autobiographical events.

**VALIS's Peritext**

VALIS did not come into being fully formed and finished; it was written and rewritten over a period of several years. There is a vast peritext which testifies to the events which Dick transforms in his fiction. But no single complete account of his theophanies of February and March 1974 exists that might be privileged as the authentic account of what Dick terms "2-3-74" and therefore as the original "draft" of VALIS. Dick's own testimony, in letters, essays and interviews is available, but never comprehensive, and there is no guarantee that he is writing or speaking the truth, or that he is not himself deluded. Interviews have been conducted with his fifth wife Tessa and his friends K. W. Jeter, Tim Powers and James Blaylock, but they are more often witnesses to what Dick said he witnessed rather than necessarily what he did witness. These are no more than texts; these are not authenticating documentation. It is difficult to privilege one version rather than another. Yet, at the risk of conflating the peritext into a new text, it would be useful to give here an account of the 2-3-74 events which served as the basis for VALIS and to examine some of the theories that attempt to rationalise the theophanies, before examining how VALIS evolved. The following is a mosaic which does not ignore all of the anomalies in the accounts.

In February 1974 Dick was living with his fifth wife Tessa and their son Christopher. *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said* had just been published and Dick had completed a first draft of *A Scanner Darkly*. 
However, before the latter could be revised, Dick felt he needed to do some more research into the theory of the split brain. This work was delayed whilst Dick had an operation on his impacted wisdom teeth under sodium pentathol. When he returned home, he was still in a great deal of pain, and so Tessa phoned his surgeon who arranged for a nearby pharmacy to deliver painkillers. The delivery girl was wearing a necklace with the Christian symbol of the fish; this caught the light and fascinated Dick when he answered the door to her:

I suddenly experienced what I later learned is called anamnesis - a Greek word meaning literally, "loss of forgetfulness". I remembered who I was and where I was. In an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, it all came back to me. And not only could I remember it but I could see it. The girl was a secret Christian and so was I. We lived in fear of detection by the Romans. We had to communicate with cryptic signs. She had just told me all this, and it was true

(Dick 1988k: 23).

Dick subsequently purchased a fish windscreen sticker and put it on a window where it could catch the light. Visions of books, voices and nightmares continued into March, as if he were possessed; he seemed to be picking up Greek words and on one occasion started praying in Latin in his sleep (T. Dick 1985: 7).

In the April edition of *Psychology Today* - which would have been published in early March - Dick read an article on water soluble vitamins and how they had been used to stabilise schizophrenics by bringing their right and left brain hemispheres into phase (Ross 1974). Dick tried the recipe which was included in the article, with remarkable results, as described in a letter to Peter Fitting, dated 28 June 1974:

I found myself flooded with colored graphics which resembled the nonobjective paintings of Kandinsky and
Klee, thousands of them one after the other, so fast as to resemble "flashcut" use in movie work. This went on for eight hours. . . . I was certain that these tens of thousands of lovely, balanced, quite professional and esthetic harmonious graphics could not be originating with my own mind or brain


Possibly this manipulation of his brain chemistry and perceptions had made him more receptive to whoever or whatever was in contact with him. By now he had begun to see ancient Rome superimposed over Fullerton (T. Dick 1984: 7).

Into this series of what could have been no more than hallucinations, came something external: two letters. These frightened Dick into starting a largely one-way correspondence with the FBI:

The first [letter] came on Monday the 18th this month [i.e. March]: the registered letter from Russian-occupied Estonia, which my wife signed for. . . . Knowing that I should not be receiving this registered from Estonia I was quite worried and although I opened it, read it, I did not understand it, did not know the man, and did not know what to do. I felt it was a trap, frankly, by the KGB, and not what it appeared to be. But I was not sure; I did not call the Bureau that day, being confused; but today the second enclosure came, the Xerox from New York, also from no one I'd ever heard of


The first letter was from someone in Estonia who was asking for an autograph and a photo. This is how Dick fictionalises the receipt of the letter in VALIS:

a registered air mail letter arrived from the Soviet Union, which shocked Fat into a state of terror. The letter had been sent by a man, who Fat had never heard of (Fat wasn't used to getting letters from the Soviet Union anyhow) who wanted:
In the novel, Fat decides that this letter is safe, and answers it, and this seems to represent Dick's reaction. The correspondent was Martin Roogna, an sf fan: "I sent Phil a letter, asking for his autograph" (Johnson 1994: 4). Dick's reply, dated 19 April 1974, shows no sign of any suspicions, although he explains that: "I can't seem to locate your letter" (SL [1974]. 60). Perhaps he had dealt with Roogna's letter in the same way that he dealt with the Xeroxed letter, by sending it to the FBI. According to Tessa the Xeroxed Letter was a photocopy of two reviews from a New York left wing newspaper - perhaps the Daily Worker - with all words relating to death or decay underlined (Reynolds 1987: 7). It has been suggested that on Tessa's evidence, the newspaper is actually more likely to be the Weekly People, which had a monthly review column with the title "The Capitalist Carousel" (Santiago 1987: 14). Fearing either a plot or a mistake by the KGB, or a loyalty test by the FBI, Dick sent the Xeroxed Letter to the FBI. He felt that what he was beginning to view as a tutelary spirit within him had protected him from this "attack".

However Dick had further health problems. During this period his blood pressure was high and rising, and in April Dick was briefly hospitalised. Here he spoke to a priest about "how the Holy Spirit (die heilige Geist) had recently taken me over" (SL [1974]. 49). Other candidates for this invading presence included the Prophet Elijah, an early Christian named Thomas, Saint Sophia or Sacred Wisdom, scientists from Leningrad conducting telepathic experiments, aliens
from Sirius and the late Bishop Pike. Dick began to make notes about these experiences, and to speculate on their causes, as well as to what extent he had already prefigured them in his fiction. This project, given the overall title the Exegesis, was to obsess Dick for the rest of his life, eventually running to some two million words, much of it handwritten or undated.

The tutelary spirit provided another useful piece of information for Dick, in the shape of a warning about Christopher:

I was sitting there listening to "Strawberry Fields Forever", with my eyes shut, when all of a sudden this tremendous light hit me . . . All I could see was a pink haze, and the words (of the Beatles song) got all changed around. It was like "Your eyes are closed to your son's birth defect. Your son is in danger. He has a right inguinal hernia"

(Rickman 1985: 43).

This particular incident is the hardest to explain away, and it is ironic that Dick cites Tessa as a witness, as she remembers the event slightly differently:

one morning Phil thought that - Chris was lying in his crib babbling - and Phil thought it sounded like the words of Christ on the cross . . .

Phil went back to sleep until about ten o'clock, and by then I was up and so was Chris, and Phil got up out of bed and walked out to the living room, and said "Chris has a right inguinal hernia. Call a doctor"

(Reynolds 1987: 4).

Of course it is possible - given that Dick had been listening to music on his headphones - that he was in bed and not asleep as Tessa had thought, but Christopher did have a hernia that needed an operation in October. Tessa had confided her suspicions about a possible hernia to
her doctor before Dick's diagnosis, but had been reassured and claims not to have discussed the matter with her husband (Rickman 1985: 62). As he had not been involved in changing Christopher’s nappies, Dick seems unlikely to have seen any specific symptoms.¹²

Tessa also provides an alternate chronology for 2-3-74, stating that the Xeroxed Letter "came probably in February. It came on a Thursday" (Reynolds 1987: 6) and says that this predated the tooth extraction; in addition she claims that the medication the girl brought was for blood pressure. Dick’s published letters from February merely comment that "the flu has worn me out" (SL [1974]. 13) and "I have a terrible flu" (SL [1974]. 15). No mention of his mystical experiences is made until a letter to Ursula Le Guin dated 14 April (SL [1974]. 49-50) after his discharge from hospital and mention of the delivery girl is not made until the 23 September letter to Le Guin (SL [1974]. 247).

The medical problems which plagued Dick during this period of theophanies - the combined influences of sodium pentathol, codeine, Darvon, vitamin supplements, high blood pressure and a medication for the latter which caused a catastrophic drop in Dick’s bodily potassium level - provide the basis for a series of sceptical explanations for the 2-3-74 events. Kim Stanley Robinson wonders if the high blood pressure led to a series of minor strokes (Robinson 1987a: 249-50). Crampton disputes this: "the symptoms . . . are not those of a stroke victim" (Crampton 1988: 13) and goes on to favour the effects of vitamin overdose, which could have caused Dick to hallucinate as a result of impulses passing between his left and right brain hemispheres. This is echoed in a comment Dick made:

In the past year I've had many dreams which seemed - I stress the word 'seemed' - to indicate that a telepathic communication was in progress somewhere within my
head, but . . . I would imagine that it is merely my right and left hemispheres conferring in a Martin Buber I-and-Thou dialogue

(Dick 1976: 217).

Alternatively, the condition of Temporal Lobe Epilepsy has also been suggested, with its symptoms of: "a blinding flash of light, confusion, a disembodied voice . . . fear . . . hypergraphia . . . hyperreligiosity" (LaPlante 1989: 6-7). This seems to be a fair summary of Dick's symptoms; perhaps the attacks were brought on by vitamin usage.

But what these medical explanations ignore is the accurate diagnosis of Chris's hernia, the Xeroxed Letters and a radio which played even when unplugged, that Tessa was a witness to. These could be put down to coincidence - or the thought that if someone is paranoid for long enough, then they are bound to hit on some truth sooner or later. The happenstance viewpoint is a position which author K. W. Jeter notes that Dick would reserve the right to hold the minimum hypothesis: "Things happened, coincidences, a poor broke writer down on his luck after a lot of stressful experiences, who had a history of drug involvement and crazy ideas and bad marriages, going out of his mind with anxiety and grief" (Watson 1984: 14). Jeter was working on a night shift and would often be phoned by Dick in the middle of the night to discuss or dismiss his latest theories. The exact nature of 2-3-74 is undecidable; it cannot be proven either way. What is certain is that it formed the basis for the novel VALIS.
The Writing of VALIS

The actual production of the novel took four years, the final manuscript arriving at the SMLA in December 1978. Originally, Dick had planned a sequel to The Man in the High Castle, as if written by Hawthorn Abendsen, under the title "A Man For No Countries" for an anthology by Philip José Farmer. By June 1974, Dick had retitled it VALISYSTEM A, but in February 1975 he had abandoned it to make notes for another novel, to be called To Scare the Dead. He then decided to combine both projects. The plot involved one Nicholas Brady, who had an Essene personality named Thomas awaken within him, as the Final Days and the Second Coming occur (SL [1975-6]. 127-9). But Dick kept on changing the plot, as he worked on the Exegesis. In October 1975 the plot consisted of an extraterrestrial invasion, with a faked Second Coming. Brady in this version was a record company owner who spotted continuity errors in reality, before God finally arrived (SL [1975-6]. 238-9).

Then in August 1976 Dick wrote VALISYSTEM A:

in order to raise money via DAW Books. It is not a very good novel, but I need the money and have no choice. It is in the first person, by me, about my friend Nicholas Brady who has all these weird religions/paranormal [sic] experiences. . . . I make the spirit an s-f entity out of necessity .

(SL [1975-6]. 326).

Brady experiences a series of hallucinations, similar to those reputedly experienced by Dick in 2-3-74, and finds himself the focus of attention from the secret service in a police state run by Ferris F. Freemont. He explains his theories to his friend, sf writer Philip K. Dick. The
hallucinations are being channelled from a satellite and instruct Brady to release a record with subliminal lyrics discrediting Freemont. The satellite is destroyed, Brady executed and Dick sent to a prison camp, but not before another record is released by a different group.

In fact the novel was submitted to Bantam rather than DAW, where the editor Mark Hurst asked for a rewrite. Instead of making the minor changes that were actually called for, Dick went back to the drawing board and continued making notes. It was not until 1978 that the next version was written, when Russell Galen an agent at SMLA expressed an interest in putting a collection of Dick's non-fiction together. Dick also wrote an introduction to the story collection, *The Golden Man*, and a Guest of Honour speech at a convention which hinted at his experiences. This attention to non-fiction finally gave Dick the voice he needed to forge a novel directly out of his autobiographical experiences, and provided the model for the palimpsest of texts that constitutes *VALIS*.

This lengthy diversion into Dick's biography emphasises that *VALIS* cannot be traced to a single point of origin, but rather went through a series of false starts, as much to do with the necessities of fulfilling contracts as inspiration. *VALISYSTEM A* was finally published posthumously as *Radio Free Albemuth* and should be considered separately to *VALIS*. The film *Valis*, within *VALIS*, retains the characters Brady and Freemont, but has a different plot.

**VALIS and Dick's Novels of the 1970s**

*VALIS* can be seen as a consolidation of the novels written immediately prior to it. The dual central character can be seen in the previous three
solo novels by Dick: *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*, *A Scanner Darkly* and *Radio Free Albemuth*. As I have already discussed in chapter three, Jason Taverner and Felix Buckman share several biographical similarities with Dick's life. A similar thing happens in *Radio Free Albemuth*. It is Nicholas Brady who has the mystical experiences of 2-3-74, but Phil Dick who is the sceptical sf writer.

But it is in the divided character of Bob Arctor and Special Agent Fred that the closest model to *VALIS* is to be found. Having slipped autobiographical material into *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*, Dick drew more deeply on personal experiences in *A Scanner Darkly*, with an examination of the Californian drug scene in the late 1960s and 1970s. However it would be a mistake to argue that Dick is Bob / Fred; Dick does not correspond to any single character within the novel. In the Author's Note he explains: "I am not a character in this novel; I am the novel. So, though, was our entire nation at this time" (SD. Author's Note: 254).

This novel could be read as a contemporary conspiracy thriller, fitting neatly into the post-Watergate paranoia and the renewed interest in the Kennedy assassination. The amount of drug use within the conditional environment is only slightly exaggerated, compared to the media's coverage of the sixties in the consensus environment. One sentence in the novel attempts to date it: "It was midday, in June of 1944" (SD. 1: 9), but that must surely be a misprint. Given that a magazine clipping is mentioned which includes the date 1992 (SD. 14: 220) it seems a nominal date is 1994. But is that future setting enough to make the novel sf? Under the definition I have advanced, an sf novel is one which describes an environment conditional upon the interplay of various scientifically plausible - or pseudoscientifically plausible -
innovations or differences from the consensus environment. Here the drug Substance D. and the scramble suit are the innovations, and the environment is posited upon their existence.

In *A Scanner Darkly*, the drugs enforcement agent S. A. Fred is assigned to spy upon Bob Arctor, his undercover identity within the drugs subculture. When meeting each other as agents, or talking to the general public in their professional capacity, they wear scramble suits, a high tech device which preserves their anonymity by projecting a series of different faces onto the outside of the suit. There is therefore no way that his bosses can tell that Fred and Bob are one and the same. Fred as Bob buys, sells and uses drugs in order to convince the real junkies that he is also a junky. It is possible that he can be busted by other agents for his illegal use of drugs, and addiction would be severely dealt with. The distinction between drug enforcement agent and junkie is further undermined by the existence of junkies who inform on their fellows. In fact at one point Bob discusses the impossibility of telling them apart:

"I talked one time to a big hash dealer who'd been busted with ten pounds of hash in his possession. I asked him what the nark [narcotics agent] who busted him looked like. You know, the - what do they call them? - buying agent that came out and posed as a friend of a friend and got him to sell him some hash."

"Looked," Barris said, winding string, "just like us."

"More so," Arctor said. "The hash-dealer dude - he'd already been sentenced and was going in the following day - he told me, 'They have longer hair than we do.' So I guess the moral of that is, Stay away from guys looking the same as us . . .

"How would a guy do that? . . . Pose as a nark"

(SD. 12: 183).
The irony is that Bob himself is posing as a junkie and is funded by his agency wage. This is further emphasized by the fact that this is one of the scenes that Fred is watching with his video bugging equipment.

This erasure of the distinction between roles is mirrored by Bob’s personality breakdown; although it has to be noted that there is no evidence that Bob is necessarily his real name, and when the breakdown is complete he is known as Bruce. The separate identities he needs to maintain to pursue his work become an actual split; Bob forgets that he is also Fred, and vice versa. This cleavage is probably worsened by the side effects of Substance D.: "‘In many of those taking Substance D., a split between the right hemisphere and the left hemisphere of the brain occurs’" (SD. 7: 103). Each half of the brain specialises in particular activities, and it is possible for them to operate, to a low level, independently of each other. The left side is especially concerned with logic and linguistics, and the right with imagination and spatial awareness. Fred and Bob, as two halves of a split brain personality, can be seen as approximating to the division of the hemispheres: the rational, logical law enforcement agent and the imaginative junkie.

Occasionally one of them hears a brief passage of words, or is somehow aware of the words, from the opposing half of the brain. For Fred these are speculations or discussions about split brain theory, an imaginative theory; for Bob these are passages from Goethe’s Faust and Beethoven’s Fidelio in the original German, which is a linguistic feat. The reader, presented with these juxtaposed, indented texts shares his - or their - sense of confusion.

The similarities with VALIS should be clear: Horselover Fat is the wildly imaginative one, forever theorizing about the nature of his mystical experiences, Phil the narrator is the down-to-earth doubter. A
similar hierarchy of authority is maintained: Fred spies on Bob, who is unaware of this, and Phil records Horselover's ideas, who seems to be ignorant of this. Such a careful narrative structuring enables Horselover's wilder theories to be rejected, or at least questioned. After reproducing journal entry 37, Phil adds: "To which I personally am tempted to say, Speak for yourself, Fat" (V. 2:23). Scepticism is further encouraged by the reactions of the Catholic David and the cynical Kevin. Galbreath has suggested that these two are further "projected personae" (Galbreath 1982: 119), and that the trinity of Phil, Kevin, David correspond to Dick's initials PKD. However unlike with Horselover, there is no fusion between Phil and David or Kevin.

As I have already indicated, Dick suggested that his mystical experiences could be explained by the interaction of his left and right hemispheres: "I would imagine that it is merely my right and left hemispheres conferring in a Martin Buber I-and-Thou dialogue" (DHG. 222). The chemical experimentation discussed above, and referred to in both A Scanner Darkly (SD. 2: 24) and VALIS (V. 7: 106-8), would have effected the phasing between his two hemispheres. But as I have already suggested, the Phil / Horselover duality is not reciprocal. Rather than the model of Martin Buber's I-Thou relationship, where the I and Thou may swap places, it is like Levinas's asymmetric I and Other relationship. It is at this point that I can turn to a Levinasian reading of VALIS.
A Levinasian Reading of VALIS

Ethics and the Other

Phil must maintain his distinction from Horselover, in order to escape the charge of being mad himself. At the same time he does show concern for his literal alter ego, even if he is not entirely sympathetic. Early on, Phil writes: "I wish I could have helped him" (V. 1: 17), but he is fallible, and seems unable to help. It is significant that Phil and Horselover become fused into one personality when they visit Sonoma and the Lamptons. Horselover's persona is defined by his quest for God. When this is completed there is no further need for him: Horselover, and therefore Phil, has proven to be sane after all and so Phil has no further need for the objectivity he can gain by distancing himself from Horselover. This is further supported by the fact that when the presumed Messiah is killed, the split reappears.

I will return later to the treatment of God in VALIS - and particularly to the Levinasian idea of God as infinitely other or infinitely high - but first I wish to discuss Horselover Fat's relations to other people. It seems clear that one cause of Horselover's madness is his relationship with Gloria, who wishes to commit suicide by overdosing, and who finally achieves her wish by throwing herself off a building. In fact, the first sentence of the novel proper is: "Horselover Fat's nervous breakdown began the day he got the phonecall from Gloria asking if he had any Nembutals" (V. 1: 9). He is put in a difficult ethical dilemma: as a friend he is obliged to help her and respect her feelings, but in this particular case to help her would be to indicate that he desires her annihilation. Phil notes: "it is sometimes an appropriate response to
reality to go insane. To listen to Gloria rationally ask to die was to inhale the contagion" (V. 1: 10).

In Levinas's philosophy, suicide is seen as a course for someone who has lost control of everything, and who is trying to assert some power or mastery over existence, as well as seeking a meaning for existence. Such a loss of control over the utilizable world is seen as an entry into the realm of the absurd, because death is the ultimate loss of control. Levinas discusses Hamlet and tragedy and argues that: "[Hamlet] understands that the 'not to be' is perhaps impossible and he can no longer master the absurd, even by suicide" (Levinas 1987b: 50).

Death for Levinas is always a future event; for if it is in the present there can be no subject to be dead. Death is the limit of mastery of existence, over being-in-the-world. Suicide is in the realm of the absurd, the insane, for it puts at risk the very being of the subject, to forever remove that subject's powers over existence.

In *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, Roy Batty and Rachel Rosen both appear to give up all hope shortly before the end, in the face of certain defeat. And yet rather than meekly surrendering, there is a final resistance: Roy defends the andys and Rachel kills Deckard's animal. This too fits in with Levinas's thoughts on suicide in *Time and the Other*. He cites the final battle of Macbeth, when Macbeth refuses to fight Macduff at first, and then fights to the death. There is always one last hope to grasp at. In facing death, perhaps these Androids become briefly Human.19

The suicide of Gloria is not the only doomed relationship that Horselover is part of: he is also friend with a cancer patient named Sherri Solvig. She seems resigned to death, but has gone into remission:

[Horselover] had become a professional at seeking out pain; he had learned the rules of the game and now knew how to
play. . . . [Sherri] expressed fury and hatred, constantly, at the doctors who had saved her. . . . Fat said to himself in the depths of his fried mind. I will help Sherri stay healthy but if and when she gets sick again, there I will be at her side, ready to do anything for her

(V. 5: 73).

Horselover's kindness, his concern to look after her, does not lead to any personal reward; in fact he suffers and is abused for it. To be a self is to care, despite the cost to oneself, perhaps even because of the cost to oneself:

A work conceived in its ultimate nature requires a radical generosity of the same who in the work goes unto the other. It then requires an ingratitude of the other. Gratitude would in fact be the return of the movement to its origin . . .

The departure without return . . . [would] lose its absolute goodness if the work sought for its recompense in the immediacy of its triumph, if it impatiently awaited the triumph of its cause

(Levinas 1986b: 349).

As well as the uncaring response of Sherri, this cost to the self recalls the Levinasian idea of substitution, as echoed by Molinari in Now Wait For Last Year and the followers of Wilbur Mercer in Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?.

It should be noted that in this case it is not Phil that cares, who puts himself at risk, but Horselover. Although Phil is concerned for Horselover's health, his dismissal of Horselover's concern as a "game" seems callous. But, after all, Phil is the rational persona, refusing to take responsibility for the Other's responsibility. In this sense Phil rejects a Levinasian relation, or at least does not respond to the Other's call. At this point he risks becoming Android.
It is necessary to put a limitation on any Levinasian reading of a text. Levinas is concerned purely with the ethics of a one-to-one encounter, a single face-to-face where the self is called into question. He writes of the:

Responsibility for the Other, for the naked face of the first individual to come along. A responsibility that goes beyond what I may or may not have done to the Other or whatever acts I may or may not have committed, as if I were devoted to the other man before being devoted to myself. Or more exactly, as if I had to answer for the other's death even before being. A guiltless responsibility, whereby I am none the less open to an accusation of which no alibi, spatial or temporal, could clear me

(Levinas 1989: 83).

This responsibility occurs - if occurs is the correct word for this context - in a sort of ethical non-space. The event is prior to ontology, anarchic (an-archic); indeed it is the actual act of concern for the Other that allows the self to escape into being from self-absorption.

It could be argued that a book, as a text, is a non-space, a virtual arena in which ethical encounters may be enacted. In Dick's fiction, the status of the conditional environments is doubtful, possibly to the point of being non-ontological "spaces". But, just as in the consensus environment, there is more than a single face-to-face encounter in these writings; very few books are solely concerned with two characters. There is always a third character, and a fourth and so on. In an interview Levinas argues: "with the appearance of the third - the third is also a face, one must know whom to speak to first. Who is the first face? And, in this sense, I am led to compare the faces, to compare two people. Which is a terrible task" (Bernasconi and Wood 1988: 174). This leads to the system of justice, and probably to the "painful blockage" (Palmer
1991: 340) of which Palmer writes. The self has to contend with a number of demands and cannot choose which one to respond to, or, having chosen, must neglect the other others.

I have set up a series of one-to-one concerned relationships in my reading of VALIS. To repeat these: Phil-as-character << Horselover, Horselover << Gloria and Horselover << Sherri. Additionally there is Dick's concern as an author for his characters - Dick-as-author << Phil-as-character and so on - and for the knowledgeable reader, a certain fear for Dick's sanity - Reader << Dick-as-author. These can be linked together in various ways, for example Reader << Dick-as-author << Phil-as-character << Horselover << Sherri or Reader << Horselover << Gloria. Such a linkage risks misrepresenting Levinas's ideas - which he insists refer only to the one-to-one - but underlines the ethical complexity of the novel. But there is one further relationship to which I now wish to turn: Horselover << God.

God and the Infinitely Other

At the outset it has to be admitted that there is no proof that Horselover or Phil has had an encounter with God, and a series of competing alternative explanations are provided for Horselover's mystical experiences: from insanity to Leningrad scientists experimenting with telepathy to aliens. It is ambiguous as to whether the Lampton's daughter, Sophia, is the Messiah or not. In other words VALIS does not have to be read as an sf novel - in the sense of being a novel whose conditional environment is dependent upon the proven existence of a God. Similarly the ethics do not require the underpinning of a theology to call the self into question over its responsibility to the Other. As
Levinas writes: "the idea that I am sought out in the intersidereal spaces is not science-fiction fiction [sic], but expresses my passivity as a self" (Levinas 1989: 105).

All the same, just as Horselover cannot abandon his search for God, and just as ethics cannot be totally divorced from theological questions raised in and by this novel, so Levinas always already returns to the concept of a God. In fact, despite the privileging of ethics over ontology which I have emphasized, Levinas always seems to presuppose a God in his ethics, albeit a god forever out of reach of the individual and limited in power. In his philosophical writings, Levinas is careful not to fixate upon the God of any particular religion - reserving this for his Talmudic exegesis. However God has never been entirely absent from his texts, and the role of God has grown in importance in recent years. But it must be admitted that Levinas's philosophy is at least partially inspired by Rene Descartes, who presupposes a God.

In early works, however, such as *Time and the Other*, the discussion of God appears to be purely in terms of Levinas's interest in Heidegger. For example, the Heideggerian distinction in *Being and Time* between Being (Sein) and beings (Seiendes) - or in Levinasian terms existing and existents - facilitates a distinction between an object and its act of being and implies a philosophy: "where one started with existing to arrive at the existent possessing existing fully, God" (Levinas 1987b: 44).

In its discussion of the face-to-face, Levinas's *Totality and Infinity* presupposes a God: "The dimension of the divine opens forth from the human face. . . . There can be no 'knowledge' of God separated from the relationship with men" (Levinas 1979: 78). The face of the Other is separated from the self by the dimension of height; if the Other is to be
graspable then it has to be infinitely high. This idea of infinity slides into the concept of a god: "The idea of Infinity is neither the immanence of the I think nor the transcendence of the object. The cogito in Descartes rests on the other who is God" (Levinas 1979: 86).

This idea of Infinity is taken from Descartes' "Third Meditation" of "Meditations on First Philosophy":

I clearly understand that there is more reality in an infinite substance than in a finite one, and hence that my perception of the infinite, that is God, is in some way prior to my perception of the finite, that is myself. For how could I understand that I doubted or desired - that is, lacked something - and I was not wholly perfect, unless there was in me some idea of a more perfect being which enabled me to recognize my own defects by comparison

(Descartes 1984: 31).

In Levinas's writings "knowledge" usually implies the sense of grasping, of interiorizing, of reducing that which is not the self to the self. But for the knowledge or idea of the infinite to be within the finite, within the I or subject, according to Levinas, it has to have been put there by God. Here Levinas follows Descartes. It seems that it is God - or the idea of God - that causes the subject to feel guilty, although "cause" may well be too strong a word. It would be more accurate to shift the emphasis onto the subject, who both fears to murder the Other and fears the judgement of God.

This God, this infinitely Other being, is simultaneously absent, because of this irreducible infinity, and present in the face. To put it in a paradox: the perfect being is otherwise than being. In his 1963 essay "The Trace of the Other", Levinas begins to consider this ontological conundrum, and ends with a discussion of God: "The revealed God of our Judeo-Christian Spirituality maintains all the infinity of his absence,
which is in the personal order itself. He shows himself only by his trace" (Levinas 1986b: 359). The trace is that peculiar concept of the mark which has been made by something which has not been there to make a mark; the trace is always in the past, never present.

In three recent essays, Levinas again considers God and the Idea of the Infinite. In "The Old and the New" (1980), the idea of the Infinite is seen as the relation to God or the à-Dieu: "We think that the-idea-of-the-Infinite-in-me - or my relation to God - comes to me in the concreteness of my relation to the other person, in the sociality which is my responsibility for the neighbour" (Levinas 1987b: 136). The commandment of God comes from the unknown, within an interpersonal relationship of concern. "Diachrony and Representation" (1982) presents this authority as: "an authority that there commands indeclinably, but also refuses to compel and command entirely while renouncing the all-powerful" (Levinas 1987b: 120). This is again paradoxical: an irresistible but non-coercive force, an infinite but self-limiting power. However this is typical of the position of the Other as simultaneously weak and commanding.

In "Beyond Intentionality", Levinas suggests: "[The face] signifies to-God [à-Dieu], not as a sign but as the questioning of myself" (Levinas 1983: 112). God is not a sign, is not signified by the signifier of the face, because he is never present, because he 'is' a trace, because he is infinitely other or elsewhere. The same essay discusses an incident in Genesis 18. This chapter begins: "The Lord appeared to Abraham" (Genesis 18: 1) but goes on to discuss three men who arrive at his tent and whom Abraham feeds. This chapter becomes problematic when the men are addressed as "Sirs" (Genesis 18: 3) which can also be read as "My Lord" or "YHWH". Levinas resolves the ambiguity of these people.
being both God and men by suggesting that the encounter is an ethical one, and that the encounter with and concern for the Other should be linked to the encounter with God. He goes on to ask: "might not there have been more revelation of God in greeting the travellers than in the tête-à-tête with the Eternal?" (Levinas 1983: 115). Any act of kindness seems revelatory of Good, of the Good Beyond Being or God.

With this conception of God in mind, it is now possible to discuss the treatment of the divine in VALIS. Certainly there are Horselover's acts of kindness, which may be thought of as being in fear of the judgement of God. But Horselover does have a personal relationship with this God, albeit indirectly. After the end of the theophany with VALIS, he is filled with a desire to experience it again:

"I miss him, Phil; I fucking miss him. I want to be with him; I want to feel his arm around me. Nobody else can do that. I saw him - sort of - and I want to see him again. That love, that warmth - that delight on his part that it's me, seeing me, being glad it's me: recognizing me. He recognized me!"

(V. 8: 130).

To understand what the entity VALIS is in this encounter, it is necessary to examine the Appendix to VALIS.

This Appendix is entitled "Tractates: Cryptica Scriptura" and is a version of one of Dick's own speculations about the nature of God and the universe. Within the novel it is presented as an exegesis written about his experiences by Horselover and is quoted from and discussed throughout the book by Phil. It consists of fifty-two numbered sections, varying in length from the gnomic: "6. The Empire never ended" (V. Appendix: 229) to an eight-hundred word section "47. Two source Cosmogony" (V. Appendix: 236). The Tractates cites philosophers such
as Boehme, Pascal, Plato and Parmenides, and religious figures such as Buddha, Zoroaster, Elijah and Jesus. Such a diverse array of sources reflects the rest of the novel; at points it becomes a collage of philosophical and sacred texts discussed by Dick-as-narrator.

To attempt a summary of this material: in the beginning there was the One, which generated two twins who would act as teachers to new life forms which the One went on to create. Unfortunately the female twin was born too early and separated off into a different universe of "illness, madness and disorder" (V. Appendix: 237). This became our universe. The male twin formed a healthy universe, and sent a smaller version of itself into our sick universe in the form of Christ, in order to heal the female universe. This attempt failed when Christ was killed. Then, in 70 C.E. another crisis occurred: "Real time ceased . . . with the fall of the temple at Jerusalem. It began again in 1974 C.E.. The intervening period was a perfect spurious interpolation aping the creation of the Mind" (V. Appendix: 231). In other words, the period after Christ's crucifixion, where God seemed to be absent from the world, was not authentic reality.

In fact, the universe is not real in the sense we would understand it as real: "The universe is information and we are stationary in it, not three-dimensional and not in space or time. The information fed to us we hypostatize into the phenomenal world" (V. Appendix: 230). Each subject is given information - presumably in the form of sense-data - which is then used to constitute the perceived world. This information should come from the One, as part of the teaching machine. The One, in the form of Christ, is described as; "a plasmate, because it is a form of energy; it is living information. It replicates itself - not through information or in information - but as information" (V. Appendix: 231).
After the birth of Christ the plasmate had the power to fuse with a human - becoming a homoplasmate - but all of these were killed in 70 C.E.. The plasmate remained dormant in the Gnostic library abandoned near Chenoboskion and Nag Hammadi until its rediscovery in 1945. It spent nearly thirty years, presumably gathering strength, until it was ready to create new homoplasmates. Horselover believes that he has become a homoplasmate.

It should be noted that this narrative has been assembled from different parts of the Tractates. This is simply one of the theories advanced in the Exegesis proper, and even within the Appendix to VALIS there is no consistency. Section 18 and 26 claim that real time ended in 70 C.E., and section 18, supported by the preceding two sections, suggests that time began again in 1974. But, according to section 27: "If the centuries of spurious time are excised, the true date is not 1978 C.E. but 103 C.E." (V. Appendix: 232). If time did begin again in 1974 then 1978 should correspond to 74 C.E.; for the year to be 103 C.E. it would have had to have restarted in 1945, with the discovery of the Gnostic library. Additionally it seems difficult to square the idea of time being spurious with section 11 which suggests that: "we are moving backward in time" (V. Appendix: 230).

There are some links that can be made between this narrative about cosmogony and the author Dick's own life, beyond it being an obvious, if rather incredible, explanation of why Dick saw first-century Rome superimposed over twentieth-century America during the events of 2-3-74. For example, the twin created by the One, with the female being sick, is autobiographical. One section of the Tractates suggests that: 'The changing information which we experience as World is an unfolding narrative. It tells about the death of a woman. This woman,
who died long ago, was one of the primordial twins" (V. Appendix: 233). When this is quoted within the novel itself the second sentence is italicized and Dick-as-narrator adds: "If, in reading this, you cannot see that Fat is writing about himself, then you understand nothing" (V. 3: 37). Although the context is of Dick-as-narrator arguing that Fat is simply turning grief into a cosmogony, and Fat and Dick-as-narrator are in some senses the same person, it seems to be Dick-as-author who is turning his own grief into a cosmogony. Although this information is not present within the novel, Dick was indeed the survivor of a set of twins; his sister Jane Charlotte Dick died shortly after their birth.24

The "two-word cypher signal KING FELIX" (V. Appendix: 231) which was taken as a sign of the reappearance of the plasmate can be found in Dick's novel Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said (FMTPS. 27: 218). It is not clear why this phrase is so significant to Dick; since it follows Felix's dream, which was one which Dick himself had dreamt, it is possibly a phrase that he had dreamt.25 In the novel VALIS, the two Tractates sections 18 and 19, which mention the cypher, are discussed in chapter ten:

"Is this cypher real?" I asked Fat.
A veiled expression appeared on his face. "Maybe."
"This two-word secret message was actually sent out?" David said.
"In 1974," Fat said. "In February. The United States Army cryptographers studied it, but couldn't discern who it was intended for or what it meant"

(V. 10: 163).

Two-hundred-and-thirteen copies of Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said were apparently sold to the army after its publication on February 1 1974 (SL [1974]. 25). The cypher is used in VALIS by Eric Lampton: he sends a one-word letter "KING" to Dick-as-narrator and Phil replies by
adding the word "FELIX". Here KING FELIX is the newly returned happy king, VALIS, the plasmate reborn who will overthrow: "the tyrannical reign of the king of tears" (V. 10: 165). After the apparent saviour is accidentally killed off, the cypher is seen twice more, once by Horselover in a postcard sent from Portland, Oregon (V. 14: 221) and once in the juxtaposition of an advert for Food King and the cartoon of *Felix the Cat* (V. 14: 225). Dick-as-narrator, sceptical to the last, allows the possibility that this is simply another coincidence.

The king of tears is equated with Richard Nixon, who in turn is identified with Ferris F. Fremont, the dictator in the film *Valis*. The end of his presidency is equated with the end of the Black Iron Prison: "16. The Sibyl said in March 1974, 'The conspirators have been seen and they will be brought to justice.' . . . In August 1974 the justice promised by the Sibyl came to pass" (V. Appendix: 230-1). August 1974 was "the month and year Nixon resigned" (V. 9 153) over the Watergate break-ins and the subsequent cover-ups.

I have already documented Dick's dislike of Nixon from the period of *Eye in the Sky* to *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*, but in 1974 Dick wrote at least three letters to Nixon. The first, dated April 20, is uncharacteristically charitable: "I admire your courage and I am proud of you" (SL [1974]. 64). But by May 2 Dick's opinion has shifted: "I still think you are a man and should be treated with respect, but evidently you have done dreadful things" (SL [1974]. 78). Finally, on July 26, Dick sent Nixon a fortune cookie motto he had found in Nixon's home town:

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DEEDS DONE IN SECRET HAVE A WAY OF BECOMING FOUND OUT
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(Dick 1988k: 28).
The religious encounter is thus part of a political upheaval that effected all of the United States and had an impact upon the rest of the world: Nixon as the King of Tears presides over the Black Iron Prison or hell.

To summarize the cosmogony in VALIS: the God is a sick one, or at least partially sick. This God is thus one we should feel concern for, with its problematic well-being. Its inability to heal itself suggests that it is not omnipotent. The universe which it indirectly created is a delusion of a sick mind and is not actually real, but things are beginning to heal with the "overthrow" of Nixon. Some links can be drawn between the One and the Levinasian idea of God. Both oscillate between an absence or being out of reach, and direct personal encounters.

Horselover's quest to find VALIS takes him around the world and seems unlikely to end, much like the pattern of "the story of Abraham who leaves his fatherland forever for a yet unknown land" (Levinas 1986b: 348). The limitation on the One's ability to heal its female twin 'daughter' because she does not wish to be healed recalls that in Levinas the God "refuses to compel" (Levinas 1987b: 120).

Most striking of all is Horselover's characterization of the universe as a: "phenomenal world [which] does not exist; it is a hypostasis of the information processed by the Mind" (V. Appendix: 233). Levinas, of course, came out of the phenomenological tradition of Husserl, modified by his knowledge of Heidegger's ideas about Being-in-the-world. The fifth chapter of Levinas's early work *Existence and Existents* is called "The Hypostasis" and defines this as "the transmutation, within the pure event of being, of an event into a substantive" (Levinas 1988a: 73). In other words, that which is present, here, observed, is transformed into something solid, with substance, by an act of the human being. Earlier in the same chapter, Levinas writes:
''Coenesthesis'' is made up of sensations, that is, of elementary bits of information'' (Levinas 1988a: 71), which recalls Horselover's teaching machine model of the universe. An editorial footnote in Time and the Other takes its definition of hypostasis from the Encyclopaedia of Philosophy which notes that the word: ''occurs principally in controversies among early Christian theologians about the real nature of Christ'' (Edwards 1972: [volume xviii] 36). Dick certainly had access to the 1967 edition, as he read its entry on Gnosticism. With VALIS's speculations on the nature of theophanies, it seems entirely possible that Dick also read the section on hypostasis.
Conclusion

Both Levinas and Dick describe intersubjective realms, where several subjects receive sense data. In the case of Dick, this data is coming in the form of information from the One or one of the twins; if it is from the sick female twin then the perceived environment is not authentic. With Levinas's Heideggerean sense of a utilizable world of tools, authentic being is something a subject acquires for itself in the encounter with the other. However there remains the possibility of a transcendental being putting an idea of itself - the Cartesian Idea-of-the-Infinite - into the subject, from a realm 'beyond' the perceived universe.

Horselover, the possibly deranged persona of Dick-as-narrator, certainly puts his self at risk in his relation to the other, indeed to several others. But he also has a concern for God which may be equally destructive to his self. After the passage about missing the VALIS discussed above, Dick-as-narrator discusses Wagner's opera Parsifal. The character Amfortas is wounded by the same spear that had wounded Christ on the cross. Parsifal takes the spear, and cures the wound with it. What has damaged can also heal, and vice versa; Christ's absence is a wound but his return would heal. The Grail is discovered after Amfortas is cured, and in the libretto voices sing "Erlösung dem Erlöser!" [which translates as] 'The Redeemer redeemed!' (V. 8: 131). The one who saves must be saved, by him or herself.

But the saver or Saviour can also destroy: VALIS allowed Chris to be cured, but not Sherri. All of humanity, as part of a sick universe, is wounded and has to be saved; unfortunately it could just as easily be destroyed. Dick-as-narrator discusses early medicine: "Poisons, in measured doses, are remedies; Paracelsus was the first to use metals
such as mercury as medication . . . [but] medicines can be poisonous, can kill" (V. 11: 177-8). The spear which wounded Amfortas can kill as well as cure him. Horselover can kill or not kill Christ when he meets Him; this same Christ can kill or not kill Horselover.

Yet to overstate the reciprocity in the previous sentence would be alien to Levinasian ethics; although the self is responsible even for the Other's responsibility, it is not the concern of the self whether the Other treats the Self as an Other, whether the Self is the Other's Other. Unlike the Buberian I-Thou, relation, reciprocity is not necessary for the face-to-face encounter. Horselover can suffer for his God in order to save Him, he can substitute for the Other, but there risks losing the very self-identity he would gain from the process. Paradoxically this identity is only ever hypostasized by putting it at risk in the concern for the Other; in Horselover's case it is further put at risk by the competing claims of further Others.

As I have shown, VALIS can be read as a case study of Levinasian ethics. Horselover's identity is constantly being called into question by his encounter with the Other: "I become a responsible or ethical 'I' to the extent that I agree to depose or dethrone myself - to abdicate my position of centrality - in favor of the vulnerable other" (Cohen 1986: 27). The problem for the I comes when God is the Other: "we could say that God is the other who turns our nature inside out, who calls ontological will-to-be into question" (Cohen 1986: 25). If God is "present" as a trace in all Others, it is tempting to reduce this to a single I-Thou encounter, where Thou is the Eternal Thou or God. But, in fact, there are a number of demands, some simultaneous, which Horselover must respond to. Here he risks madness due to his inability to respond.
To return to the discussion of VALIS by Christopher Palmer, which I partially quoted earlier:

It's the record of a painful blockage. The ethical problems which the novel straightforwardly poses, such as how one helps those who need but refuse help, are not solved . . . [M]eaning has an ethical dimension and [the entity] Valis clearly has an ethical dimension, if it exists at all. The achievement of [the novel] Valis is to suggest how painful it can be when pursuit of the ethical collides with the proliferating textuality of meaning


This statement needs some unpicking. Palmer rightly notes the inconclusive nature of VALIS, even down to questioning whether the entity VALIS is real or not. This uncertainty leads to a plurality of theories to account both for VALIS and VALIS. Such theories are textual - written down to gain meaning as a narrative - and are multiplying, leaving the possible unity of a single account of a theophany far behind. The revelation that the universe itself is a text is presented in a text, a text which must be approached via the peritext and epitext. This is of course postmodern: the whole universe becomes a text, or a number of texts, read (perceived) by individuals who each are unable to come to a single, fixed meaning. The universe is polysemic.

As I suggested at the start of this chapter, meaning has to be ethical, particularly when interpreted from another's words. The critic has a responsibility in representing that writer's words. A straightforward, and apparently ethical, approach to a text is to uncover its meaning, using the author's intention as a guide to the correctness of that meaning. This can be seen as a simple linear narrative of hunting and discovery. Levinas has argued that this need not be ethical: paraphrase can be an insult. But this narrative assumes first that the
author has an intention in writing, and is clear about this intention. It also assumes that an author can be identified to have an intention. If VALIS demonstrates one thing, it is the difficulty of identifying the author as distinct from the text.

VALIS, with its confusion of title (title, dictionary definition, film, entity) and author (author, narrator, character) will not admit to an unified intention: it is autobiography, metaphysical tract, political thriller, supernatural mystery and satire. The critic's approach to it, forced to accept several contradictory meanings simultaneously, cannot yield a unified meaning, and instead constructs a series of "conspiracy theories" which are almost as arcane as the novel VALIS. The critic speaks and finds it impossible to say everything.

If Palmer is correct in suggesting that VALIS does not solve "ethical problems" then this seems only appropriate. Levinas also constructs a series of ethical problems in his re-examination of ontology, in his insistence on responsibility. However he does not specify how to respond: "My task does not consist in constructing ethics; I only try to find its meaning . . . One can without doubt construct an ethics in function of what I have just said, but this is not my own theme" (Levinas 1985: 90). Asking the sort of questions Levinas does is vital; and Dick asked similar questions, with similar materials as sources and, allowing for the distinction between modes of philosophy and fiction, arrived at similar answers.

I have used Levinas's ideas to provide a reading of VALIS and also shown how VALIS seems to demonstrate the scope of Levinasian ethics; in the next chapter I wish to shift the focus to his last two novels. Dick's obsession with the VALIS events did not end with writing VALIS; he continued with the Exegesis, recast his experiences in sf clothing in
The Divine Invasion and re-examined the scriptures in The Transmigration of Timothy Archer. But VALIS remains his most difficult and rich work. Derrida argues that: "the thought of Emmanuel Levinas can make us tremble" (Derrida 1978: 82). In VALIS and the rest of the "Divine Trilogy" it is clear that Dick can do the same, as are presented with a text which resists any unitary reading.
The Nature of the Trilogy

At the beginning of the previous chapter, I suggested that VALIS should not be considered in isolation, but rather as part of a sequence. I have deferred the discussion of this sequence until this chapter. The two novels which followed VALIS - The Divine Invasion and The Transmigration of Timothy Archer - can be read as continuing the examination of a dialectical struggle between reason and irrationality, and as investigating the nature of revelation and knowledge of the divine. They also continue the exploration of an ethics which appear to be analogous to those outlined by Levinas.

The novel VALIS ends after the death of the supposed child Messiah Sophia, with Horselover still travelling the world in search of further signs of God's presence, and the character Phil Dick staying at home, watching for signals on television: "I sat; I waited; I watched; I kept myself awake. As we had been told, originally, long ago, to do; I kept my commission" (V. 14: 228). This is not so much a conclusion as a convenient place to pause. Just as the first century Christians expected the Second Coming within their own lifetimes, so Phil Dick awaits for another incarnation of VALIS.

This sense of events continuing beyond the novel's ending is hardly unique to VALIS in the PhilDickian canon but, unusually, in this case he did actually write a sequel. Dick had spent two years
researching Judaism: "to the point where I was thinking of converting . . . I was so into it" (Rickman 1988: 191). He then wrote a novel using this material, which was to be called VALIS Regained. However its title was changed to *The Divine Invasion* when the novel was sold to a company other than the one which had published VALIS, Bantam (Rickman 1988: 186, 191). This change of title obscures the novel's status as sequel.

At one point in his *Exegesis*, Dick considers the ways in which the two books are linked: "DI is not so loose a sequel to VALIS as it might seem (by [sic] in the shift from Gnosticism, the present, realism, to Kabbala, the future, fantasy)" (E. 195). In fact this looseness is not apparent at first sight, as the sequel opens:

> The time you have waited for has come. The work is complete; the final world is here. He has been transplanted and is alive.

- *Mysterious voice in the night*

(DI. 5).

It looks as if Phil-as-character / narrator's wait is over, but it quickly becomes apparent that his story is not being continued. Unlike VALIS, *The Divine Invasion* is definitely sf, being set in the CY30-CY30B star system and on an Earth ruled by alliance between the Communists and the Christian-Islamic Church, roughly two hundred years into the future. In one early scene, Herb Asher, a domer in the CY30-CY30B star system, is called upon to help his neighbour, who is dying of multiple sclerosis. This is a variation on the opening of VALIS, where Horselover is called upon to help a woman to commit suicide. In both cases the male characters are reluctant to help, and in both cases the
women die, despite the men's efforts. Later in the novel Herb has a theophany:

A beam of pink light blinded him; he felt dreadful pain in his head, and clapped his hands to his eyes . . . [There] came an understanding, an acute knowledge . . . This was not a real world he was in; he understood that because the beam of pink light had told him that.

(II, 14: 177).

Such an experience also occurs in VALIS, to Horselover, and in both cases the invading divine presence is an entity named VALIS. Both are fictionalized versions of the 2-3-74 theophany. But if The Divine Invasion only has a few plot elements which mark it as a sequel, it is even harder to unravel the status of The Transmigration of Timothy Archer, Dick's next and final novel. It is not sf but a mainstream novel. Nor is it a chronological sequel to The Divine Invasion, being set roughly contemporaneously with VALIS. Being Dick's final novel, it can tempt the readers to read it as his final words.

However, just as Phil Dick-as-character / narrator in VALIS must be distinguished from Dick-as-author in VALIS, so caution must be exercised in suggesting that the author is speaking directly to his readers. Although it should be clear by now that there is no single, unitary narrative thread running through VALIS, The Divine Invasion and The Transmigration of Timothy Archer, they can be considered to be a trilogy. Indeed, in 1989 the three novels were published together as The VALIS Trilogy; in that edition the material paratext forges a link for the reader between the three books. This connection is in accordance with Dick's stated intentions, who at least once in the Exegesis refers to "the VALIS trilogy" (E. 199). In a letter to one of his daughters, Dick gives his own view of the sequence: "[The Transmigration of Timothy
Archer] is the third and presumably final novel of the Valis trilogy. The topic of the trilogy is Christ; it is a study of the essence of Christ, what the term means, and how Christ is encountered and - in a certain real sense - brought into being" (Dick 1988i: 235). As I have noted before, Dick is by no means always the best authority on his own work, but in this case his analysis is helpful. The novels certainly are an exploration of the embodiment or incarnation of God as a mortal being. In dealing with the trilogy, it is perhaps worth bearing Dick's own 1966 thoughts in mind: "God as a character, ruins a good SF story; and it is as true of my own stuff as anyone else's" (Dick 1995h: 58).

Several critics have echoed this linkage and designation; see for example Galbreath's article "Redemption and Doubt in Philip K. Dick's Valis Trilogy" or Robinson's comment on: "what has come to be called the 'VALIS Trilogy'" (Robinson 1987: 253). But two dissenting voices have to be noted. Firstly there is Jean-Noel Dumont's article "Between Faith and Melancholy: Irony and the Gnostic Meaning of Dick's 'Divine Trilogy'" which provides a different title for the sequence. I have chosen to follow his lead, both as a more convincing thematic title - VALIS is not mentioned in The Transmigration of Timothy Archer, for example - and to avoid confusion with the novel, film, entity and definition which already are all designated by "VALIS". The second objection requires more attention: Warrick's suggestion that The Transmigration of Timothy Archer is not, after all, part of the trilogy. She corresponded with Dick in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and argues that: "The writing of Timothy Archer gave him a chance to catch his intellectual breath" (Warrick 1987: 185). Dick was then to write a novel which he
wanted to call *The Owl in Daylight*, and which would then have been the third volume of the trilogy.

Unfortunately, very little information is available to indicate what sort of novel this would have been. In a letter to Gregg Rickman, Dick wrote that he was going to use the cosmology from Dante's *Divine Comedy* as a model for viewing the world. The *Inferno* corresponds to the Black Iron Prison, *Paradiso* to the Palm Tree Garden and *Purgatorio* is a realm "where time runs backwards" (Rickman 1988: 241). This was one of the ideas that Dick had already been exploring when he was planning *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*: "I'm going to assign to him [Archer] as his major view my *Commedia* 3-coaxial realms view . . . He is convinced that Dante's 3 realms . . . are available in this life" (E. 228). But even in this *Exegesis* entry, Dick's ideas are shifting, and it is clear that the final novel would have been a very different one from any of his surviving notes or comments.³

Given that the trilogy can only be read as it exists, then some attempt must be made to see how it forms a trilogy as it exists, in particular how the final two books can be linked to *VALIS*. Steve Brown, in a perceptive review of *The Divine Invasion*, published before the appearance of *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, makes another linkage, arguing that: "[It] is a book not by the author Philip Dick, but by the character last seen staring at his television [in *VALIS*]. The character, Dick, has written the book to fictionalize his confusions and conclusions regarding the nature of God" (Brown 1981: 11). In *The Divine Invasion*, then, Philip José Farmer's suggestion that Dick write a novel as if by a fictional character has finally come to fruition.

Kim Stanley Robinson's thesis on Dick makes a similar point to Brown's, and relates this to the final novel as well: "We could say, then,
that *The Divine Invasion* . . . [was] written by Horselover Fat, while *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* . . . [was] written by 'Phil Dick' " (Robinson 1984: 111). He repeats this idea in his afterword to the Kerosina edition of VALIS: "*[The Divine Invasion]* is the novel that Horselover Fat would have written on his own . . . [The Transmigration of Timothy Archer] on the other hand, is 'Phil Dick's' book" (Robinson 1987a: 253-4). The inverted commas around " 'Phil Dick' " are crucial, as they serve as a reminder that "Phil Dick" is as much an invented character as Horselover.

The left / right, visionary / rationalist split, which has been present in *A Scanner Darkly*, *Radio Free Albemuth* and VALIS, remains a split in the final two novels; there is no final synthesis. Robinson may argue that: "[Dick] has plumped down firmly, definitely, in fact you must say religiously, on the side of hard-headed rationalism" (Robinson 1987a: 254), but - even with the equivocation of Robinson's third adverb - this position of rationality is only an arbitrary cut-off point. It seems likely that Dick would have moved on from rationalism in any further works.

**The Divine Invasion**

**Gnosticism**

Even if *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* is not part of the trilogy, it is clear from my comments so far that *The Divine Invasion* is. Although Dick claims that his ideas shifted from Gnosticism to Kabbalism between the two novels, *The Divine Invasion* does in fact contain a good deal of Gnostic imagery and concepts. I will now try to demonstrate this particular thematic link between VALIS and *The*
Divine Invasion. By his own account, Dick's knowledge of Gnosticism was great: "I am now som[e]thing of an authority" (PKD letter to Uwe Anton, 1980). It is clear that he studied Hans Jonas's article in The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (Jonas 1967) and quoted part of "On the Origin of the World" from The Nag Hammadi Library in English in VALIS (V 5: 64; cf. Robinson 1977 161-79 [II: 5 and XIII: 2]).4

The quoted passage is about Samael, a blind creator god, who is distinct from the true Gnostic God. In Gnosticism the true God is alien to the universe; in fact it is the precise opposite to the apparently existing universe, with God as light and the universe as darkness. One Gnostic account of the creation of the universe prefigures Dick's "Two Source Cosmogony" which I discussed in Chapter Seven:

The Soul once turned toward matter, she became enamored of it, and burning with the desire to experience the pleasures of the body, she no longer wanted to disengage herself from it. Thus the world was born. From that moment the Soul forgot herself. She forgot her original habitation, her true centre, her eternal body

(1963: 63).

Other Gnostic texts describe similar falls into being for female deities. These pre-cosmic - indeed pre-ontological - falls have a parallel in The Divine Invasion: "'the primordial schism occurred in the cosmos, when part of the damaged cosmos fell into darkness and evil' " (DI. 1: 15). Whilst this fall is already within a cosmos, the cosmos is already "damaged", suggesting an even earlier crisis of similar proportions.

The Gnostic fallen cosmos is considered to be a prison. This idea should be compared with the Black Iron Prison of VALIS. It is also reflected in the police state of Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said and in the perceived tyranny of Richard Nixon or Ferris F. Freemont. The
prison remains in place two hundred years or so after the events of
VALIS: "This is a prison, and few men have guessed" (DI. 10: 123).
Being a realm of darkness, which is to say away from the light, the
prison has to be considered as a hallucinatory conditional environment
rather than as an authentic one.

The prison realm has wardens - Archons - who prevent the escape
of humanity from the darkness to the light. These are not apparent in
VALIS, but Belial would appear to fulfil this role in The Divine Invasion.
His name is taken from the Hebrew word for "worthlessness", via a
fallen angel in Paradise Lost (Milton i 490). Dick further associates
Belial with Lucifer by quoting Isaiah: "How have you fallen from
14: 12). It is significant that this quotation, which continues in The
Divine Invasion for a few lines more, breaks off before the lines:

Is this, they will say, the man who shook the earth,
. . . who never let his prisoners go free to their homes,

(ISA. 14: 16-7).

This later passage seems to confirm Belial / Lucifer as prison warder or
Archon.

In Gnosticism, the human prisoners are viewed as a combination
of both the mundane and the divine: in each person there is a divine
spark. This concept is slightly shifted in the novels to the concept of the
homoplasmate, a crossbonding between the human and divine. In
VALIS Dick writes that "the Empire destroyed all the homoplasmates
before they could replicate" (V. A: 232). In The Divine Invasion it turns
out that such crossbondings have continued, for example with Jakob
Boehme and Martin Buber (DI. 8: 97). The divine spark within humans
has to be remembered: this remembering is the Gnosis or knowledge
which gives Gnosticism its name. In VALIS this remembering manifests itself as anamnesis - literally "unforgetting" - a word Dick took from Platonic thought. In The Divine Invasion, Emmanuel, Elias and Herb all forget who they truly are and have to remember their respective roles.

Humanity's remembrance of its divine origin is aided by the return of the "Alien Man", who calls humanity to its senses. Like God, he is a stranger, from outside the universe, and comes willingly to Earth. He analogous to Christ in the New Testament, possibly to Sophia in VALIS and to Emmanuel in The Divine Invasion, but in the latter case the role is divided between Emmanuel and Elias. Elias intends to send out a message on a radio station: "'sleepers awake... Wake up! Yahweh is here and the battle has begun..." (DI. 19: 222). This is similar to various versions of the call, for example from "The Concept of the Great Power": "[You] are sleeping, dreaming dreams. Wake up and return, taste and eat the true food! Hand out the word and the water of life!" (Robinson 1977: 286 [VI 4 39: 34 - 40: 6]). It is significant that the return of God, albeit in the form of his son, is associated with the real.

But this Alien Man, this Saviour, has himself to be saved. For example in the Gospel of Philip, it is written that: "He who was redeemed in turn redeemed (others)" (Robinson 1977: 142 [II 3 71: 2 - 3]). The Saviour is part of a damaged Godhead in a damaged cosmos, who needs to be healed before he can heal. It is clear that Dick had this in mind when he wrote VALIS, having read and deciding to quote from Jonas's article:

The fact that in the discharge of his task the eternal messenger must himself assume the lot of incarnation and cosmic exile, and the further fact that, at least in the Iranian variety of the myth, he is in a sense identical with those he calls - the once lost parts of the divine self - give
rise to the moving idea of the "saved savior" (salvator salvandus)

(Jonas 1967: 340; cf V. 8: 131).

Phil-as-character, in VALIS, wonders if Horselover-as-Saviour has the power to save himself. In The Divine Invasion, Emmanuel's memories are damaged and have to be healed by Zina. Emmanuel, like Yah from the CY30-CY30B system, is a cruel god. Yah is willing to let Rybys suffer and die whilst bearing his son; Emmanuel goes along with Old Testament revenge: "'Did I not say..."An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth'?...I should wish them dead. It is the sacred law of Israel. It is my law, my word'" (DI. 10: 125-6). By the end of the novel, Emmanuel is healed enough by Zina to show mercy and pity: "we must intervene...To protect the small" (DI. 18: 210).

Thus the Gnostic influence can be seen to permeate both of these novels and, taken together, they suggest that the perceived world is no more than a hallucinatory environment, and that real, authentic existence is elsewhere. This is certainly the case within the conditional environment, and is implied to be the case with the consensus environment. The narrative of The Divine Invasion constantly reminds its readers of this idea: they have to remember what is real or what is illusory. It alternates between Emmanuel's experiences at the age of six and Herb's dreams whilst in cryonic sleep. Herb relives his life in the CY30-CY30B star system: his neighbour Rybys Romney dying of multiple sclerosis, the visit of Elias Tate or the prophet Elijah, and an encounter with the local god Yah who has impregnated Rybys.

Herb, whose job is to record music from a relay satellite, has flashes of déjà vu: "I had the strangest, most weird sensation for just a second, there," Asher said. 'It's gone now. As if this had all happened
before' " (DI. 2: 18). Of course Herb is right, and in more ways than he can possibly know. In addition to being in suspended animation, dreaming, Herb is also "reliving" another story. In Dick's short story, "Chains of Air, Web of Aether" there is a man named Leo McVane whose job is to record music from a relay satellite, and whose neighbour Rybus Romney [sic] is dying of multiple sclerosis. In the short story, Leo learns this from the food man: " 'She's dying,' the food man said, and sipped his coffee" (CS (5). 335). In the novel, Herb Asher learns this from the foodman: " 'She's dying,' the foodman said, and sipped his Kaff" (DI. 2: 17). In the short story, Leo helps her, albeit reluctantly at first, and she is eventually cured. In the novel, Herb is blackmailed by Yah, they meet the mysterious old man named Elias Tate and they return to Earth. As Brown suggests: "The Dick reader who has encountered the short story months before the novel has the same problem; the events seem as strangely familiar to the reader as they do to Asher" (Brown 1981: 12). Dick cunningly draws his readers into the novel and into identifying with Herb and Rybys; whole passages in the novel and story are virtually identical.5

A further plot element is introduced with Cardinal Fulton Statler Harms and Procurator MaximusBulkowsky's attempts to have Emmanuel aborted (DI. 7: 80-9, 8: 105 - 9: 112, 9: 118-9). These intertwine with Herb's memories of coming to Earth during the same period. Herb is (apparently) revived, but the Herb we encounter later in the novel is part of Zina's realm rather than Belial's prison realm. When Belial is released into Zina's realm, things become even more complicated for Herb. He is arrested, and tries to persuade the police that they can not do this because the action is not real:
"[I am] living on a planet in the star system CY30-CY30B . . . the prophet Elijah and I own a retail audio components store in Washington, D.C."

"Plus the fact," the cop beside Herb Asher said, "that you're in cryonic suspension."

"All three," Herb Asher said. "Yes."

"And God tells you things," the cop said.

(DI. 18: 217-8).

The world he is in at this point - Zina's realm - only becomes real after Belial has been defeated and Emmanuel transmutes it to reality. In this case, that which is present, here, observed, is transformed into something solid, with substance, by an act of a divine being.

**Kabbalism**

Just as it is an unorthodox Christianity that Dick draws on for *The Divine Invasion*, so it is an unorthodox Judaism: Kabbalism. The Kabbalists emerged from a twelfth century Spanish school of Jewish mystics, who are best known for writing the *Zohar*. This text combines exegesis of the Pentateuch and *The Song of Songs* with further theological speculations. God or *En Sof* (literally "endless", "infinite") created ten Sefiroth as a way of making his presence perceptible. Only one of these, the Shekhina, is female, and she is the divine spark in people. With the appearance of evil, the Shekhina became lost, only rarely manifesting herself in individuals or locations.

This story underlies *The Divine Invasion*, for one of Zina's identities is Shekhina and Emmanuel is En Sof:

"When the primordial fall took place, the Godhead split into a transcendental part separated from the world; that was En Sof. But the other part, the female immanent part, remained with the fallen world, remained with Israel."
These two portions of the Godhead, he [Emmanuel] thought, have been detached from each other for millenia. But now we have come together again

(环氧. 17: 202).

Emmanuel has had a vision of this healing previously in the novel: "I have restored the Shekhina to En Sof" (环氧. 5: 62). However at this earlier point, the two terms are not defined; in fact it seems likely that the six-year old amnesiac son of God does not truly know what this means.

Zina has an additional identity, that of being the Torah. The Torah can refer either to the entire Old Testament or simply to the Pentateuch (the first five books). In the Kabbalistic tradition, the Torah is seen as a young woman; for example in the Zohar's tale of: "'a beautiful maiden living alone . . . [who] hides her face behind a veil'" (环氧. 16: 194). This has echoes in more mainstream Rabbinical tradition, for example in the Tanhuma: "God created the world by the Torah: the Torah was His handmaid" (Montefiore and Loewe 1963: 170).

Zina-as-Torah was created by God as a living blueprint of the universe and as his companion. This much was hinted at by Zina in her first meeting with Emmanuel: "'When there was yet no ocean I was born . . . At the beginning, long before earth itself'" (环氧. 4: 44), an allusion to Proverbs 8: 22-31, which ends:

Then I was at his side each day, his darling and delight.

It seems that in The Divine Invasion, the universe was to be created for the Torah, but then some disaster or schism occurred within the Godhead. According to Elias, there are six hundred thousand versions or readings of the Torah, one for each of the Jews at Mount Sinai. These
were all reincarnated and represent six hundred thousand fragments of the Godhead (DI. 8: 99-100).

In *The Divine Invasion*, Elias turns out to be the prophet Elijah, who has wandered the world, searching for the Jewish messiah. In Jewish lore he is believed to be present at the birth of every child, in case this is the messiah. This explains why he visits Herb and the pregnant Rybys. Rybys has been watching a soap opera, called "The Splendor of Elias Tate", featuring Elias; the title is surely an echo of the translated title of Zohar: "The Splendour". In an interview with Gregg Rickman, Dick suggests that Elias is the most important element of *The Divine Invasion*: "I was taken over by the spirit of Elijah, and that's what shows up in *Divine Invasion* . . . [The novel's purpose] was mostly to tell about Elijah" (Rickman 1985: 217-8). Elijah was another possible candidate for being the entity which possessed Dick in the 2-3-74 events. However, the narrative of *The Divine Invasion*, whilst including a pink light experience reminiscent of Dick's own theophany, can hardly be read as suggesting that Elijah has possessed Dick.

Elias / Elijah is also significant in his roles as guide and caller, and for his discussions of the Torah. In one scene he tells Herb an anecdote about how Rabbi Hillel was asked to teach the Torah to a man. Hillel responded: " 'Whatever is hateful to you, do not do it to your neighbor. That is the entire Torah. The rest is commentary' " (DI. 8: 98-9). This is a version of the Golden Rule, more familiar from *The Gospel According to Matthew*: "love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 19: 19). However, as Elias points out, this has an Old Testament source in *Leviticus*: "You shall love your neighbour as a man like yourself" (Lev. 19: 18). This commandment is thus both one of the
Logia or sayings of Christ and part of the God-given oral law, and forms the basis of ethical behaviour.

Levinas and Jewish Revelation

In his discussion of Judaic mysticism and The Divine Invasion, Georg Schmid discusses this particular rabbinical passage and then cites Levinas in French: "The pact concluded, then, is an authentic one, made in the presence of all the people, members of a society . . . in which everyone can observe everyone else" (Levinas 1989: 215, cf. Schmid 1987 F2). This refers to the six hundred thousand Jews at Mount Sinai who are witnesses to God's teaching in the Torah. Here there is total mutual responsibility, with "observe" being a translation of "regarde", which has connotations both of observation and caring. As I have already noted, the ethical relation between the I and the regarded other - even if the other is out of physical sight - is the basis for the hypostasized self, and thus for the authentic reality, both in Dick and in Levinasian thought. The Covenant is the point where the divine - or the Idea of the Infinite - enters into the face-to-face relation, compelling ethical behaviour. This seems to be taken to extremes towards the beginning of The Divine Invasion, when Yah threatens to burn down Herb's dome if he does not respond to Rybys's call for help (DI. 3: 34-5). The demand even applies to Emmanuel, who is at the very least an incarnation of God, when he is obliged to help the weak and forgive those unwilling to help.

Whilst the ethics underlying The Divine Invasion do fit into a Levinasian scheme, it has to be admitted that Levinas would be uncomfortable with Dick's textual inspiration. Although Levinas is on occasion mystical in his language - see for example his invocation of
ghosts and spectres in his account of the *il y a* - he does not seem to approve of the Kabbala. In fact he attempts to put a rational gloss on the encounter with God in his article "Revelation in the Jewish Tradition". Judaism has a living written tradition, based on an oral tradition, apparently traced back to an actual face-to-face encounter between Moses and God, with six hundred thousand witnesses. Levinas does see this meeting as problematic: "From the outset we are told that it is an abnormal and extraordinary relationship, able to connect the world we inhabit to something which is no longer of this world. How is it thinkable? Which model can we appeal to?" (Levinas 1989: 191). Of course, one model is that of insanity: "Pious people spoke to God, and crazy people imagined that God spoke back" (DI. 7: 89). This puts the emphasis back on the status of the listener, which is in fact what Levinas does. Humanity is an irruption into being, and is also the irruption of God into being; the site of Revelation is *in* humanity.

Just as the Other cannot be assimilated into the Same, so God as infinitely other cannot be assimilated. There remains only the Idea of the Infinite. Both the God and the Other are irreducibly exterior, and worry the Self. Levinas argues that "The Revelation, described in terms of the ethical relation or the relation with the Other, is a mode of the relation with God and discredits both the figure of the Same and knowledge in their claim to be the only site of meaning" (Levinas 1989: 208). The Self as self-identical, as self-coinciding, risks becoming "drowsy in his identity" (Levinas 1989: 209) and thus must awaken, by obedience to Revelation: "Surely we should think of the Revelation, not in terms of received wisdom but as this awakening?" (Levinas 1989: 209). Ironically, by this formulation, which Levinas constantly insists on as being rational, he comes to a quasi-Gnostic conclusion.
For Levinas this awakening leads to the freeing of the self into being, the salvation of the I, but it also introduces an unfulfillable obligation. In Gnosticism this awakening is also viewed as the salvation of the self, from the prison of false experience into true existence, which by definition is an ethical space. It can be seen then that The Divine Invasion, for all its irrationality, for its palimpsest of esoteric Middle Eastern religion and mysticism, remains within the realm of Levinasian ethics. Dick introduces Yah as a character, but it is a God who commands rather than compels, just as the worrying Idea of the Infinite commands within the Levinasian ethical face-to-face encounter.

**The Transmigration of Timothy Archer**

**Completing the "Divine Trilogy"**

Elsewhere in his essay, "Revelation in the Judaic Tradition", Levinas discusses the act of exegesis: "our studies must take us, in every case, beyond the obvious or most immediate meaning of the text . . . There is not one verse, not one word, of the Old Testament, if the reading is the religious one that takes it as Revelation, that does not open up an entire world, unsuspected at first" (Levinas 1989: 193-4). Such a process describes Dick's actions in the writing of his *Exegesis*, with seemingly endless speculations on his own experience of revelation, how his experience connects to other faiths and is prefigured in his own works. *VALIS* is obviously part of his general desire for exegesis, and *The Divine Invasion* continues this. But the position of *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, as I have already suggested, is more problematic.
Its setting is California during the 1970s and early 1980s, contemporaneous with VALIS, although beginning a little earlier. But the novel shares no characters with the rest of the trilogy, and Valis is not mentioned in any of its forms. However at least one minor incident is carried over from The Divine Invasion: Timothy Archer uses the Bishop's Discretionary Fund to support his mistress. This parallels Fulton Statler Harms, who wonders: "why there wasn't a sufficient amount of money in his Special Discretionary Fund to cover his mistress's expenses" (DI. 7: 80). Towards the end of the novel, Bill Lundborg describes an incident akin to 2-3-74: "Lights and colors and then an alien presence in my mind. Another personality" (TTA. 15: 229). But the most sustained linkage is stylistic: the novel uses and quotes from Biblical and poetic texts, so that it, like VALIS and The Divine Invasion, becomes a mosaic of esoteric knowledge.

Bishop Pike

To understand how the novel fits into the thematic trilogy described earlier, it is first necessary to read beyond its immediate meaning. The Transmigration of Timothy Archer is in fact a roman à clef based upon the life and death of Bishop James A. Pike of the diocese of California. In 1965-6, Pike and his son Jim spent six months on sabbatical in Cambridge, England, researching the Dead Sea Scrolls and aiding the church in Africa. Pike returned to America separately from his son, whom he never saw alive again: alone in New York, Jim committed suicide. On Pike's next visit to Cambridge, with his mistress Maren Bergrud, Jim appeared to be making some sort of psychic contact: he moved postcards around and burned some of Maren's hair. Pike went to
several mediums, both in Britain and back in the United States, and through them contacted what he assumed to be his son. Such behaviour did not help Pike's reputation; he was already being tried for heresy. Although he was ultimately cleared, Pike felt unable to continue his bishopric and joined an interfaith foundation in Santa Barbara and, continuing his interest in the Dead Sea Scrolls, went to Israel, where he died in the desert in September 1969.

Dick knew and respected Pike, presumably from around the time of his conversion to Episcopalian Christianity and afterwards, whilst being married to Anne Rubenstein. In fact it was he who introduced Pike to Maren, who was the step-mother of his fourth wife, Nancy Hackett. In *Counter-Clock World*, Pike plays a minor role:

[T]he Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of California, James Pike, had been arranging to have jazz masses performed at Grace Cathedral. . . . A former lawyer, active in the ACLU, one of the most brilliant and radical clerical figures of his time, he had become involved in what had become called "social action," the issues of the day: in particular Negro rights. He had for instance been at Selma with Dr. Martin Luther King

(CCW. 4: 42).

Dick links King and Pike again in the Appendix to *VALIS*: "In the first century C.E. she [the Sibyl of Cumae] foresaw the murders of the Kennedy brothers, Dr. King and Bishop Pike. . . . they stood in defense of the liberties of the Republic; . . . each man was a religious leader" (V. A: 230). Dick's own friendship with Pike is discussed briefly in the body of the book:

Fat had known [Bishop] Jim Pike, a fact he always proudly narrated to people given a pretext. . . . "Jim and his wife had driven out onto the Dead Sea Desert in a Ford Cortina. They had two bottles of coca cola with them; that's all."
For years Fat had brooded about Jim Pike’s death. He imagined that it was somehow tied in with the murders of the Kennedys and Dr. King, but he had no evidence whatsoever for it

(V. 5: 76).

As indicated by the foreword to *A Maze of Death*, Dick and Pike had had theological discussions together, and presumably they must have also talked about the paranormal events experienced by Pike. In October 1966, Dick attended and took notes at a seance with Nancy and Maren (Dick 1986d.). This sitting, where it seemed that Jim appeared, formed the inspiration for the seance scene in *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* (TTA. 9: 148 - 10: 158).

The novel is set in the early 1970s rather than the mid-1960s, Pike becomes Tim Archer, his son Jim becomes Jefferson Archer, Maren Bergrud becomes Kirsten Lundborg and Alan Watts was the inspiration for the character Edgar Barefoot. The novel can thus be seen to pose the same sort of problems for critical analysis as *VALIS* does: where does biography end and invention begin? There is of course Pike’s own account of the events, *The Other Side*, but this is a version of events rather than an objective account. For example, he describes Maren as someone who: "had, on occasions, helped me as an editorial assistant when I was trying to meet deadlines on manuscripts" (Pike 1975: 69). But no mention is made of the fact that she was his mistress, although their relationship had ended before her suicide in June 1967. Whilst admitting to paranormal experiences, Pike remained discreet over their relationship. It is difficult not to wonder if Pike has made any other elisions.

Pike did die in the Israeli desert, but it seems that he was hunting for manuscripts rather than the *anokhi* mushrooms. However Pike did
spend some time in Manchester with John Allegro, author of *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross* whilst in England and so may have been exposed to Allegro's contentions that the New Testament was nothing more than a coded text about the ritualistic use of psychedelic mushrooms. Allegro's book was not published until 1970, after Pike's death, so the extent of his knowledge is uncertain. Even if the historical Pike was not aware of Allegro's theories, Dick was, and used them in *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*. But Pike, like Tim, was certainly interested in the modern relevance and meaning of Christianity.

Dick wondered whether Pike's beliefs may have had anything to do with the November 1971 break-in: Christian activists may have thought that he had heretical documents (Williams 1984: 112). Dick also wondered if Pike was the invading presence at the heart of 2-3-74 and its aftermath: "What has been happening to me for over three months is that a man [Pike] I knew who died has been breaking through" (E. 3). It therefore seems fitting that the final novel of a trilogy about the meaning and being of Christ should be about an acquitted heretic, who died during his search for religious texts to define the origins of Christianity.

**Knowledge**

It is Tim's quest for knowledge which causes his death. He is determined to locate the original authority - the *arche*, as it were - for the Bible, in particular for the Gospels, the centre of his religion. But rather than supporting his faith, what he finds undermines it. The recently discovered and translated Zadokite scrolls contain what appear to be the teachings of Christ, but predate his life. These particular
scrolls were invented by Dick, although, as Galbreath notes: "there is a Zadokite Document (singular), known from two twelfth-century copies and from fragments found at one of the Quram caves... Its contents are entirely different from those ascribed by Dick to his own fictional documents" (Galbreath 1983: 114). There is a posited text, designated Q, which is the common source for some of the Gospels. The invented Zadokite scrolls are meant to be the texts which formed the basis for Q: the ur-Quelle. These scrolls, in addition to including the Logia or sayings of Christ, allude to a saviour called the Expositor. Tim fears that: "If the Logia predate Jesus by two hundred years, then the Gospels are suspect, and if the Gospels are suspect, we have no evidence that Jesus was God, very God, God Incarnate, and therefore the basis of our religion is gone. Jesus simply becomes another teacher" (TTA. 5: 81). By this new reading of the Gospels, then, Christian Revelation is undermined. The historical Christ is not the awaited Messiah after all, and Christianity is no more than a human-made code of behaviour.

But further shocks await him: the Zadokites were users of anokhi, psychedelic mushrooms, held to be sacred. What has been taken as Holy Communion for two millennia is actually a bastardised or disguised form of the rituals surrounding drug trips. The transcendental experience of Christ, is apparently a chemical high from taking mushrooms. Tim does not stop at this discovery, but insists on trying to find the actual mushrooms: "I have read all the documents and the answer isn't in them" (TTA. 13: 206). The emphasis is now on practical, direct action, during which Tim dies. This idea is itself taken largely unacknowledged from the wild theorizing of John Allegro which I have already mentioned. Early in the novel, Tim says: "I wish John Allegro were involved" (TTA. 4: 53). Towards the end of the book, the possibly
possessed Bill says: "Tim stole that idea [about mushrooms] from a scholar named John Allegro" (TTA. 14: 224). However Allegro's book is curiously absent from the novel's bibliography.\textsuperscript{11}

In addition to devising the scrolls with which the bishop becomes obsessed, Dick invents two characters: the narrator of the novel, Angel Archer, and Kirsten's hebephrenic son, Bill Lundborg. Angel Archer is only the third example of Dick maintaining a first-person narrator throughout an entire novel,\textsuperscript{12} and she perhaps stands as his supreme achievement in creating a character. This was in part a successful response to Ursula Le Guin's criticisms of his female characters. Dick's own feeling about Angel, was that "[She] is the best character I have ever created in almost thirty years of writing. I feel that in creating her I have created my own soul" (Dick 1988i: 235).

Angel is a Berkeley intellectual, a perpetual student. She cites Yeats, Proust, Carroll, Koestler, Dickens and Joyce, amongst other writers, in the first chapter alone. But this is only impractical book learning: "It did me no good, all those years in the library waiting for my number to light up, signifying that my book had been carried to the desk" (TTA. 1: 9). Such knowledge she feels is useful only for intellectual conversation, but no use in wider living. She views knowledge as being a commodity which can be bought and sold: "In California you buy enlightenment the way you buy peas at the supermarket, by size and by weight. I'd like four pounds of enlightenment, I said to myself. No, better make that ten pounds. I'm really running short" (TTA. 1: 10). This is a rather postmodern thought: in postmodernism information is a product to be bought and sold.

Bill, in contrast, has difficulties in thinking abstractly, although in one memorable scene, he is able to win an argument with Tim. Tim
argues that the paranormal events he and Kirsten have experienced - burnt hair, books appearing and pins under nails - are manifestations of Jeff's spirit, in much the same way that a puddle of water found under a car is a sign of the radiator leaking. Bill, with his practical knowledge, is able to name several other possible causes and points out that the puddle of water is not necessarily absolute proof of a leaking radiator. He says: "You can't know right away, but you can find out" (TTA. 8: 127). Knowledge is the product of rational deduction. However, by the end of the novel, the once sceptical Bill is convinced that he is possessed by Timothy Archer's spirit, and Angel is holding onto her rationality.

Irrationality v. Reason

This is another version of the left / right brain, rational / irrational split begun with Bob and Fred in A Scanner Darkly. I have already mentioned how critics divide the final two novels of the Divine Trilogy as endorsing irrationality and reason respectively. Robinson suggests Dick endorses rationalism at the end of The Transmigration of Timothy Archer; elsewhere he has argued that Dick: "plumps down solidly on the side of the real" (Robinson 1984: 124). Aldiss and Wingrove comment that: "For some it represents a more balanced Dick than that displayed in Valis and The Divine Invasion" (Aldiss and Wingrove 1986: 521). Unfortunately they do not specify who the "some" referred to are, but on the preceding page it is clear that Aldiss and Wingrove consider The Divine Invasion to be the work of a mentally unbalanced Dick, who: "took a step off the edge" (Aldiss and Wingrove 1986: 520). In his frequently Jungian survey of Dick's novels, Douglas Mackey argues that: "It is perhaps fitting that the commonsensical Angel Archer is his last
spokesperson... Dick's feminine side speaks at last... grounded in earthly reality" (Mackey 198: 126-7). The consensus is clear, if possibly erroneous. The assumptions here are that Angel's behaviour is indeed rational and, more importantly, that Dick endorses this viewpoint. But as Dick has noted: "Everything is seen through her eyes" (Dick 1988i: 236). In other words, the conditional environment is presented through Angel's idios kosmos, and she may well be deluded in her outlook. After all, the hebephrenic Bill seems rational enough about cars, but cannot cope with the decisions needed for everyday life. It is a dangerous course to assume that authors agree with their characters' views.

The Transmigration of Timothy Archer ends, as it begins, with Angel's visit to Edgar Barefoot's houseboat. He gives her a rare record, which she decides to sell: "I had outsmarted Edgar Barefoot and I felt happy. Tim would have enjoyed it. Were he alive" (TTA. 16: 250). By these last eight words, it is clear that Angel has rejected any possibility that Bill is possessed by the reincarnated spirit of Tim. However this does not mean that the reader has to reject it as well, nor that Bill is not possessed. Bill says that: "I am Bill Lundborg... But also I am Tim Archer" (TTA. 15: 229) after describing his version of the 2-3-74 experience. Tim is very much a tutelary spirit within Bill; Bill does not know Greek or Latin, but is able to recite it when he hears what is assumed to be Tim's voice dictating in those languages. Bill recites part of the Divine Comedy in Italian for Angel, something he would be unlikely to know, but Tim and Angel would. It seems difficult to account for this knowledge unless it is accepted that Tim has indeed been reincarnated. Angel may be rational, but that does not mean that she is right.

There is perhaps another hint that Tim is reincarnated, in a reference that Angel makes at the end of the first chapter: "it would be
nice if no one went the way they [i.e. Jefferson, Kirsten and Tim] collectively went, volunteering to die, each of them, like Parsifal, a perfect fool" (TTA. 1: 15). As I noted in Chapter Seven, Dick was familiar with Richard Wagner's opera *Parsifal*, alluding to it in VALIS when talking about the *Salvator salvandus*: "[Parsifal is] the pure fool who abolishes the delusion of the magician Klingsor and his castle, and heals Amfortas's wound" (V. 8: 131). Parsifal is "a perfect fool", a "pure fool", even a wise fool, but this is not necessarily a derogatory term, for Parsifal does, in fact, find the Holy Grail when most other knights have failed. In other words, by having Angel compare Tim to Parsifal, Dick is on one level informing the reader that Tim is a fool, but on another, less immediate level, he may also be suggesting that Tim has succeeded in his quest in the Israeli desert.

To willingly go to death, to assume death by suicide, is in Levinas's philosophy an act of the absurd. Death is in some senses impossible. Through Bill, Tim says that: "I came back to this world. From the next world. Out of compassion" (TTA. 14: 226). This suggests that Tim has not in fact found death, but that there is another world beyond being. It also suggests that Tim's responsibilities for others extend beyond the being and existence of his originary body.

**The Gift**

In a strict Levinasian sense, Angel is wrong in her treatment of Bill and in her actions at the end of the novel. She has looked after Bill, to the best of her ability, for no immediate reward. But Edgar - perhaps misguidedly, perhaps as a test - offers her the gift of a record in return. Angel accepts his gift, and then plans to sell it. This contradicts her
original work of charity; if she sells it: "The work, confronting its
departure and its end, would be absorbed again in calculations of deficits
and compensations, in accountable operations" (Levinas 1986b: 349).
Her act of kindness is first bartered for, and then given a cash value.
Her act of humanity paradoxically dehumanises Bill, by locating him
within an economic transaction.

Levinas is not the only philosopher to discuss the gift in terms of
the economy. In his theorizing on the subject of the gift, Jacques
Derrida argues that:

One cannot treat the gift, this goes without saying, without
treating this relation to economy, even to the money
economy. But is not this gift, if there is any, also that
which interrupts economy? . . . It must not circulate, it
must not be exchanged, it must not in any case be
exhausted, as a gift, by the process of exchange, by the
movement of the circulation of the circle in the form of the
return to the point of departure

(Derrida 1994: 7).

Of course, Edgar's gift does not return to him; he will reap no benefit
from Angel's sale. His gift is not even really in return for Bill's aid, from
his point of view, because Angel would have looked after Bill anyway
(TTA 16: 248-9). But the crucial gift, the one at issue, is Angel keeping
an eye on Bill; this gift does return to her, in fact ceases to be a gift.
From this position it is necessary to question whether Dick is right in his
assessment of Angel. But this is hardly a new position to be in, as I have
demonstrated earlier. Nor do we necessarily have to choose whether
Angel is right or wrong; in previous chapters I have examined the
undecideabilities inherent in distinguishing authentic experiences from
hallucinations. If, indeed, *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* can be
interpreted as Dick's last testament - or the final text which could go to
construct an author labelled "Dick" - it seems unlikely that he would abandon ambiguity at such a late point in his career. Or, alternatively, this approval for the rational could be viewed as a temporary gesture, made permanent by Dick's death.

The novel certainly suggests that Angel has become human again. In the period between Tim's death and her visit to Edgar on the day that John Lennon is shot, Angel becomes a machine, stuck in the rut of Berkeley: "I became ill like a machine... That soul I lost during that week never returned" (TTA. 13: 210). With Tim's apparent return, her soul returns. On the penultimate page of The Transmigration of Timothy Archer, Angel thinks that: "maybe we do have Tim with us...

It depends on how you define 'Tim Archer': the ability to quote in Latin and Greek and Medieval Italian, or the ability to save human lives. Either way Tim seems to be still here. Or here again" (TTA. 16: 249).

There is some room for irrationality, after all. She considers that Edgar is in some ways like Tim, ignoring the fact that she fits her own description of "Tim": she can quote Latin, Greek and Medieval Italian, and in looking after Bill, she is saving his life, as well as saving herself. She becomes the Salvator salvandus.
Conclusion

The payment Angel receives does make her actions problematic, and even pointing out that the thirty dollars that she will get for the record - or perhaps thirty pieces of silver, if it is viewed as a betrayal - is no comparison to the amount she will spend looking after Bill, only further enmires it within an economy. But the crucial point is surely that Bill is indeed being looked after. The novel demands our sympathy, for Bill who may be deluded and for Angel who has been left behind by those she has loved. To accuse Angel - as she herself does - of being Android, is not itself a Human or humane act. This is exactly the same Chinese Finger Trap as the one the reader faces in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*: Rick risks his own humanity by treating androids as objects, and we risk our own humanity in turn if we fail to empathise with them.

*The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* and *The Divine Invasion* can, like VALIS before them, be read in the light of Levinas's ideas. In addition to demonstrating the concern that the I shows for the Other, they also can be illuminated by a knowledge of Levinas's theories of God, Jewish Revelation and the gift. The implications of Levinas's ethics, for Dick's characters, for understanding Dick's writings and for illuminating our own lives by analogy, seem to be identical, whether Dick is writing in the realistic or fantastical modes.
Conclusion

I began by attempting to situate the fantastic (which I take to include sf) in relation to the mode of realism. A number of author and reader-based definitions of realism were discussed, some of which allow sf to be a realist genre, some of which would not. For example, sf can differ from the nineteenth-century literary genre of realism as regards its techniques of representing characters and time, although, like realism, sf often describes a broad cross-section of society and emphasizes the forces and social interactions at work within that society. In terms of the transhistorical sense of a mode which represents an external reality (or consensus environment), sf is a-mimetic or, rather, not mimetic of the consensus environment. Dick argued toward the end of his life that sf "is not mimetic of the real world" (Dick 1995g: 44), perhaps leaving the way open to arguing that it is mimetic of something other than the real world.

Two of the philosophers I used in Chapter Two to define "the real" - Heraclitus and Plato - in fact situated authentic being in somewhere other than the perceived consensus environment. Heidegger and Levinas, on the other hand, situated authentic being in the actions and relationships of the individual. These millenia-old ontological doubts and ponderings suggest that the postmodern mood dates back further than is normally thought. I argued that it is possible to see sf as analogous to the consensus environment.

In the five novels I explored in depth in Chapters Three to Five of this thesis, it became increasingly difficult to distinguish an authentic fictive (conditional) environment from a fake one. Authentic and fake,
defined largely in terms of each other, cease to be useful ontological terms. In theory, the authentic implies the fake, and vice versa. Of course, Baudrillard has popularised the idea of the simulacrum, the copy with no original, and argues that copies may be better than the originals. In the age of hyperreality, a fake does not imply something else which is authentic. (Of course, with the collapse of chronology, all ages are the age of hyperreality).

This problem certainly predates Baudrillard and Dick. In his discussion of the gift and Baudelaire's story "Counterfeit Money", Derrida cites part of the following passage from a piece Edgar Allan Poe wrote for *Graham's Magazine*, November 1846:

Counterfeit coin is said to prove the existence of genuine: - this, of course, is no more than the truism that there can be no counterfeit where there is no genuine - just as there can be no badness where there is no goodness - the terms being purely relative. But *because* there can be no counterfeit where there is no original, does it in any manner follow that any undemonstrated original exists? In seeing a spurious coin we know it to be such by comparison with coins *admitted* to be genuine; but were *no* coins admitted to be genuine, how should we establish the counterfeit, and what right should we have to talk of counterfeits at all?

(Poe 1965: 113-4).

To return to Dick's fiction, there are counterfeit conditional environments which are seen to be so in relation to admitted genuine conditional environments, but there is no proof that the latter are actually genuine. There appears to be no position to appeal to, within the texts, that will guarantee the genuineness of any conditional environment.

Nevertheless, on occasions Dick has given some indications of what he considers to be real. A number of times he has written that
"Reality is that which, when you stop believing it, doesn't go away" (Dick 1988k: 10). In "The Android and the Human", he writes that: "Reality, to me, is not so much something that you perceive, but something you make. You create it more rapidly than it creates you. Man is the reality that God created out of dust; God is the reality man creates continually out of his own passions, his own determinations" (Dick 1988e: 154). Ideally what is produced is ethical behaviour, concern and care for others, even at the expense of the individual's own interests.

Reality (within Dick's writings) is therefore always already provisional, dependent upon the ethical actions of individuals. This forms a striking parallel with the philosophy of Emmanuël Levinas. Fusing together elements of the philosophies of Husserl and Heidegger, Levinas argues that the Self or I becomes an existent in an ethical encounter with the Other. The Other says to the Self "Thou shalt commit no murder". The Self must maintain the radical alterity of the Other, rather than treating the Other as an object, a tool to be used or as an extension of the Self.

In Chapter Six I examined this set of ideas, particularly in relation to Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?. I introduced two ethical categories: the Human and the Android. The Human traits are those of humaneness, empathy and concern. The Android traits are those of treating others as objects, of lacking empathy and concern. Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? is a drama of one being, Rick Deckard, who strives to be Human and risks becoming Android. These ethical categories take precedence over the ontological categories of human being and robot, although there are moments when Rick fears that he is himself a robot. Levinas presents his ethics as prior to, more important than, being. I suggested that one answer to Dick's question
"What is reality?" was "The result of the Human or Android actions of people or the intercession of a higher being," or, more phenomenologically: "The environment perceived by an I as a result of the response to the cry for help of the Other." Within Dick's fiction "reality" is constructed so as to present a series of ethical choices which can lead to an increase of either caritas or entropy within the conditional environment.

There are some reservations to be made about Levinas's ideal of ethical commitment. In practice the Self is met from demands from all directions, from more than one Other. VALIS demonstrates how great the cost can be to the Self when faced with demands from Others. Horselover's encounters with suicidal or dying women lead him to the brink of madness, and perhaps into madness. It may be Human to respond to calls for help from the Other, but choices need to be made between different calls for help and different Others.

But VALIS, in its dealing with a Self's encounter with the infinitely other or God, demonstrates that there is a religious dimension to this ethics. It is God who commands, albeit without powers, and it is God who is encountered in the face of the Other. The face-to-face encounter is also a theophany. This idea can be glimpsed in a passage cut from Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said, written before Dick's own theophany, but nevertheless relevant. Taverner and Ruth are discussing love, and different types and stages of love:

Ruth said, "The love of a man for a man - a human for another human - is mystical. . . .

"It isn't based on anything rational. Any real relationship. It's an insight, like a religious vision. That's all I can say; it's a mystical and reverent comprehension by one man about another"

(Dick 1992b: 4).
Again the crucial word "real" appears: the authentic is irrational, religious and mystical.

_The Transmigration of Timothy Archer_, supposedly ends in favour of the rational. Angel Archer will care for Bill, and has gained a record which she can sell at a profit. It may well be that to make money, to seek for a reward in return for an action of kindness, is a rational act, but that sort of "rationality" is not part of Levinas's ethics. Certainly Dick's fiction is at its best when it is not rational, when it resists logical comprehension. As I have already quoted in Chapter Two, in a letter dated February 25, Dick explained to Uwe Anton that: "One thing I am trying to do is fuse early Hebrew monotheism with the philosophy of Heidegger – which no one has ever done before" (Dick 1980b: 1). In the parallels of Dick's ideas, as expressed throughout his canon of work, with the philosophy of Levinas, it is clear that he succeeded in this aim.
Appendix:
First editions of Volumes by Philip K. Dick

1965. Dr. Bloodmoney, Or How We Got Along After the Bomb. New York: Ace.
Now Wait For Last Year. Garden City, New York: Doubleday.
The Unteleported Man. New York: Ace.
Counter-Clock World. New York: Berkley.
1972. We Can Build You. New York: DAW.
<table>
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<td>1984</td>
<td>The Man Whose Teeth Were All Exactly Alike.</td>
<td>Willamantic, Ct.: Mark V. Zeising.</td>
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<td>Puttering About in a Small Land.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Dark-Haired Girl.</td>
<td>Willamantic, Ct.: Mark V. Zeising.</td>
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Bibliography

"The only exact knowledge there is", said Anatole France, "is the knowledge of the date of publication and the format of books"

(Benjamin 1992: 62).

The process of producing sf bibliographies is fraught with problems: ephemeral editions, low circulations, reprints, delays and mistakes all mean that certitude about accuracy is impossible. It has often been impossible to use first editions of works by Dick in this thesis; a list of these may be found in the Appendix. The editions I have actually used are listed below in alphabetical order in the "Primary Bibliography" and are mostly British paperbacks. Dick is now largely published in Britain by HarperCollins. Previously this company has been known as Grafton, Granada, Panther, Triad-Grafton and other combinations, based at either Frogmore or London. Spine, cover and copyright pages are not necessarily consistent, especially between printings. For example one printing of *Ubik* says "Published by Grafton 1973" when the 1973 edition was printed by Panther. Pagination *appears* to be common to all such editions, although this is not the case with all hardback and paperback editions when the publisher is different. Additional volumes to which I have referred if not quoted - such as Gregg Press reprints, American editions and French translations - are listed in the appropriate alphabetical place, indented and placed in brackets.

Articles by Dick, which have appeared in obscure fanzines, are usually listed by their most convenient publication point - often the *PKDS Newsletter*. Where possible I have also given the likely date of writing. I have listed the items in *The Dark-Haired Girl* separately where this is my earliest source; if I have seen an earlier publication I note that is has been reprinted under the entry for that item. Items reprinted in *The Shifting Realities of Philip K. Dick* are noted; if it appeared in a fanzine and was reprinted in *Shifting Realities* but not the *PKDS Newsletter* and I have not read any other source I have listed it for 1995. "Man Machine and Android" therefore has three potential sources and *The Golden Man* introduction potentially has four. For these two I have listed the 1976 and 1983 versions respectively.

There is also a background bibliography of some of the short stories and novels by authors other than Dick cited in the text. The information given need not be about the first appearance or edition of the work. The same reservations about the accuracy of imprint details
apply to most of these. The possibility of textual variants in these works is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The secondary and cultural bibliographies also need some explanation. Magazines and journals can shift from volume and section number to series number or vice versa; I have attempted to be consistent. In the case of Science-Fiction Studies I have referenced the original magazine appearance by volume and section, without noting the month or the fact that some of these were reprinted in Gregg Press compilation and most appeared in Mullen et al. 1992. Conversely, I have not been able to track down the original appearance of most of the essays in Olander and Greenberg 1983. Anonymous articles, news items and notices are listed under the title of the magazine or newspaper in which they appeared. In the cultural bibliography I have listed theoretical, cultural and historical materials consulted in the course of this thesis.

Finally I must note the importance of the following bibliographies. The third edition of Stephensen-Payne and Benson's bibliography, in particular, has been a constant reference work, and it has now been superceded by a fourth edition.


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1991b. If you find this world bad, you should see some of the others. Introduction by Paul Williams. PKDS Newsletter # 27. [Reprinted in SR. pp. 233-58.].


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1995r. The Two Completed Chapters of a Proposed Sequel to *The Man in the High Castle* [1974]. In SR. pp. 119-34.
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Notes

Introduction

1 Dick's name is absent from the original essay, as is any discussion of sf. Although Jameson has been writing about sf for many years, it is curiously - and openly - absent in his discussion of postmodernism. But see the discussion of Jameson and cyberpunk in Chapter Two.

2 See Williams 1984.

3 Problematic because of Rickman's belief that Dick was sexually abused as a child. See Williams 1990a for one response.

Chapter One

1 Dick's mainstream novels were consistently rejected by publishers, for being gloomy, too graphic or too complex. Some of the correspondence between publishers, Dick and his agents has been reprinted in the PKDS Newsletter: Dimoff 1990a and 1990b, Fadiman Jr. 1988, Fields 1988, Meredith 1988a, 1988b, 1988c, 1990a and 1990b, and Wickenden 1988a and 1988b. Dick 1983a was written in response to Dimoff 1990b, and shows his 1960 feelings about the mainstream novels. Dick did rewrite some of these novels in response to some of the publishers' requirements, but this was not enough to sell them. Bowing to inevitable economic pressure, Dick gave up writing these books, and the SMLA stopped trying to sell them, in 1961. Only Confessions of a Crap Artist was published in Dick's lifetime; all bar one of the surviving novels have been published posthumously.

2 This sort of idea about time has been explored thoroughly by Bakhtin.

3 This is a simplified version of the conditional environment described in Christopher Priest, Inverted World.

4 In my use of "environment" I am following in the footsteps of critic Darko Suvin, who in his definition of sf refers to the "author's empirical environment" (Suvin 1979: 9). Due to the distinction between the common (koinos) and the individual (idios), empirical, with its connotation of individual experience, is not quite the right world.

5 In the 1990s this seems not to be the case in bookstalls, if indeed it ever was. (In "Notes on Realism" [1883], Robert Louis Stevenson describes then recent realism as "the works that now amaze us on a railway journey" [Stevenson 1925: 99]). For years such bookstalls have been dominated by horror, thrillers, epic fantasy, comic fantasy and Mills and Boon romances. The nearest to realism is the stylised realism of crime writing and Michael Crichton's technothrillers.

6 Tallis reserves particular scorn for sf: "So-called science fiction is more often given serious attention as a literary form and its
reputedly better practitioners, such as Moorcock and Le Guin, are considered appropriate for postgraduate research" (Tallis 1988: 2). In one sentence, he manages to insult both postgraduates and science fiction writers.

7 Sf writer Gwyneth Jones observed at a conference that she has yet to find a reader who visualises her conditional environments in exactly the same way that she does.

8 *Humpty Dumpty in Oakland* shows evidence of an authorial slip. In the first sentence Jim Fergusson inhales "early-morning summer air" (HDO 1: 7). Three pages later he is talking about Al Miller’s lease which has five months to run until April, putting the action in December. However since no mention is made of Christmas, this seems to be a mistake, either on Jim or Dick’s part.

9 Both Moorcock and Ballard have resisted such pigeon-holing.

10 Dick wrote a letter to Disch praising the latter’s *Camp Concentration* as: "I think, not only the finest science fiction novel I’ve ever read but now that I’ve realized that, I find myself reflecting that it is the finest novel as such" (SL [1972-3].: 65). It seems significant in terms of Dick’s position as a so-called member of the New Wave that a novel first serialised in *New Worlds* in 1967 was being praised by Dick five years later; it suggests that Dick was more familiar with the book market than the magazine scene in the late 1960s and early 1970s. But this praise must also be contrasted with Dick’s denouncing of the same novel to the FBI for allegedly containing Nazi code words. Disch is reported to be flattered by such treatment. Disch’s "The Girl With Vita-Gel Hair" is discussed later in this chapter.

11 Disch’s erstwhile writing colleague, John Sladek, parodist and writer of humorous sf, wrote "Solar Shoe Salesman by Chipdip K. Kill", in homage to Dick. His other fiction has owed a debt to Dick, particular in his exploration of robots and human behaviour in America. As with Disch, the admiration was mutual: "That story ['The Poets of Millgrove, Iowa'], by John T. Sladek, can stand in the ranks of the all time great short stories in the English language. Not with s-f stories but with all. The masterpieces" (SL [1972-73].: 228). It seems fitting that when the revised version of *The Unteleported Man* was published, John Sladek was commissioned to write the short linking passages which replaced the missing manuscript pages. See Chapter Five for a discussion of this.

12 The model of postmodernism following modernism is not the only one, but there is the recurring idea of the emergence of a postmodern fiction in the 1960s. For a discussion of some aspects of postmodernism see Chapter Two.

13 Pfeil cites four writers which for him constitute the 1960s sf New Wave: Ursula Le Guin, Joanna Russ, Philip K. Dick and Thomas M. Disch. This American-centred movement presented by Pfeil
would not be recognized by sf critics. Another example is Christina Brook-Rose who mentions "the so-called 'New Wave' SF (Aldiss, Ballard, Disch, Delany, Heinlein and on)" (Brooke-Rose 1981: 99). It is wrong to see Heinlein as part of such a movement.


15 I am thinking particularly of Zoline's "The Heat Death of the Universe", an account of a day in the life of a bored housewife; her breakdown and the laws of thermodynamics are metaphors for each other.

16 It is tempting to cite biographical reasons for Dick's character types - for example the loss of his twin sister Jane, his relationship with his divorced mother and five broken marriages must have inevitably coloured his view of women. "The Dark-Haired Girl" is perhaps his most sustained account of his own ambiguous attraction to a particular sort of young woman. The Patriarch is often a portrait of his only boss, Herb Hollis, perhaps tinged by Dick's ambivalent feelings towards his father as monster and saint.

17 Cf.: "Service men keep things running in Dick's fiction", story note by Patricia Warrick cited in *PKDS Newsletter* # 4 p. 6.

18 Dick's only job, beyond his writing and some voluntary work in a hospital, was in a record store. For account of Dick's feelings about Hollis see Dick 1986a. Dick did say that he worked on a classical music radio show, but there seems to be no evidence for this.

19 By "image" she seems to mean how the female characters exist only in relation to the male characters, rather than in their own right.

20 A few exceptions have to be noted: particularly Marsha Hamilton in *Eye in the Sky*, the black-haired Julia, who is able to more than hold her own in *The Man in the High Castle* and Angel in *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* (see Chapter Eight).

21 The mainstream novels often centre on marital infidelity. Ray Nelson, friend of and collaborator with Dick, has suggested (1991) that the endings of the mainstream novels were revised to try and appease publishers; *Humpty Dumpty in Oakland* allegedly ended with [Al Miller's] wife leaving on the bus. But to cap this unhappy ending with the hero starting an interracial relationship hardly seems calculated to sell the novel. Whilst it seems that Dick did make some alterations, this does not seem to be one of them. (Williams postscripts Nelson's article by noting the manuscript of *Humpty Dumpty in Oakland* remained in New York, giving Dick no chance to revise it).
Chapter Two

1. For *VALIS*, see Chapter Seven.
2. For *Ubik*, see Chapter Five.
3. For examples of Derrida writing about Heidegger see "Ousia and Gramme: Note on a Note From Being and Time" (Derrida 1982: 29-67) and *Spurs* (Derrida 1979).
4. Rickman recalls a story Dick told him: "about how on the delivery truck one day one of the men pointed to a red light and asked him 'How would you prove that we both see the same color?'" (Rickman 1989b: 201).
5. The only other novels with first person narratives are *We Can Build You*, *VALIS* (see Chapter Seven) and *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* (see Chapter Eight). *Confessions of a Crap Artist* contains a mixture of Jack's first person narration, passages apparently in the third person, and another first person narration.
6. See Chapter Five for a discussion of *Lies, Inc.* and *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, where this is particularly true.
7. I discuss *A Scanner Darkly* in Chapter Seven.
8. I further discuss Derrida in relation to Levinas in Chapters Six and Eight of this thesis. His discussion of Plato's *pharmakon* briefly informs my discussion of the redeemer redeemed in *VALIS* in Chapter Seven. On presence v. absence see "Differance" (Derrida 1982: 1-27), on culture v. nature see "Language, Sign and Play in the Humanities" and on male v. female see *Spurs* (Derrida 1979). A useful - if now very out-dated - introduction to Derrida was written by Christopher Norris (Norris 1987).
the age of six - the millionaire's age would be likely to be closer to one-hundred-and-twenty-eight. This whole section in Jameson's book seems to be poorly edited, as the footnote giving Jameson's source wrongly refers the reader to his chapter eight for further discussion of Dick, and the index is wrong.

11 See Chapter Seven for my discussion of VALIS. Horselover, if not clinically schizophrenic, is frequently presented as mad.

12 In "The Precession of Simulacra", Baudrillard argues the representation connects an image to reality, denying simulation as falsehood or misrepresentation, but in turn the simulation suggests that representation is itself false. He suggests four phases of the image:

- it is the reflection of a basic reality
- it masks and perverts a basic reality
- it masks the absence of a basic reality
- it bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum

(Baudrillard 1983: 11).

The first stage of an image is a good appearance, the second a bad. The third stage is playful. The fourth stage is no longer a representation but a simulation. Crudely speaking, stage one might be equated with Dick's realistic novels, stage two with the novels discussed in Chapter Three, stage three with those in Chapter Four and stage four with those in Chapter Five.

13 There is actually no evidence to suggest that this was ever given; however, it is clearly written as a speech.

14 This coincidence of discussions of Disneyland is noted and discussed briefly by someone signing themselves Ubik (Ubik 1986 /7: 6). It is perhaps worth noting that Dick sees this substitution as positive (Dick 1988k: 34).


16 The epigraph echoes the opening of The Gospel According to Saint John. For my discussion of this point see Chapter Five.

17 In an e-mail message, dated August 30 1995, Eric Rabkin confirmed that from his own meetings with Dick, his reading of Dick's non-fiction works and his conversations with those who knew Dick well, he felt Dick was mad. He also felt that, for him at least, postindustrial capitalism is rational in his life, whilst noting that it might not be for others. Indeed I would add that there are others who would say that the post-1974 Dick was one being healed.
A computer search found just over a hundred essays mentioning Gibson; this would not be exhaustive.

A whole scholarship has grown up around *Blade Runner*. For a postmodern approach see Bukatman 1993 and Bruno 1990. See also my "Reality versus Transience" (Butler 1991).

Actually, only the first twenty minutes of *Total Recall* resemble Dick’s "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale", before the film degenerates into the formulaic violence encountered in most other Arnold Schwarzenegger films. The most telling comment is that Dick's name is misspelled on the opening credits, as if some alternative Dick had in fact written it. A possibly apocryphal story explains this error: Dick was still alive when the rights for "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale" were negotiated, with Disney, and the contract which he signed spelt his name as "Phillip" in the section regarding his credit. The eventual producers of the film were thus contractually obligated to spell his name incorrectly. R. J. Ellis, in a paper given at the *Strange Attractors* Conference in December 1994, has been more charitable to this film than I have, suggesting that the closing shots of Schwarzenegger kissing his lover on Mars are meant to echo the opening shots, which are a dream sequence.

Bishop has written a number of reviews and essays on Dick, for example the introduction to the Gregg Press reprint of *Ubik* (Bishop 1983). When Bishop reviewed *A Scanner Darkly* favourably in *Delap's S-F Review* (Bishop 1977), Dick wrote to Richard Delap saying that: '[Bishop's] is the best-written review I have ever read of any of my writing by anyone . . . this review was written by a superb author, and it was written by a genuine human being" (SL [1977-9], 158).

This is one of Dick's lost novels, thought to date from1957-8 and to be a mixture of sf and mainstream.

Chapter Three

This is not to say that there were not subtle treatments. Theodore Sturgeon's "Mr Costello, Hero" features a McCarthy figure and Sturgeon's feeling during the period. Sturgeon discusses the story in a useful interview with Darrel Schweitzer (1979).

Nixon appears under his own name in *VALIS*. For a discussion of his later feelings about Nixon see "The Nixon Crowd" (Dick 1988b) and for a discussion of some of the correspondence Dick had with Nixon, see Chapter Seven. Dick sensed that the Watergate conspiracy was in fact a distraction (see Dick 1995f: 36). He also felt that Reagan was even worse (Rickman 1985: 50).
Dick has given several explanations for this, usually associated with his attitude to the mandatory ROTC training; he claimed that he dismantled his gun. Certainly the academic life did not mix well with his fear of crowds. The date of his attendance is not certain; Williams (1984: 4) suggests 1947 in his chronology, but 1948 in the book (51-6), Rickman (1989b: 424) writes of an attempt to attend in late 1948 and Sutin (1989a: 62-3) puts it in 1949. This would appear to be supported by the evidence cited by Rickman that Dick withdrew on the 11 November 1949 and was granted a dismissal on 3 January 1950 (194). It is of course possible that he had attempted to attend the university in autumn 1947 and 1948, but never registered.

"Berkeley was the only major institution to sustain a major faculty revolt against restrictive anti-Communist personnel policies in the form of the loyalty oath controversy of 1949-50" (Lipsett 1972: 137).

Dick's interest continued into the 1960s, with, for example, a black character in Dr Bloodmoney. In the 1960 presidential election he wrote in Dr Martin Luther King JR. on his ballot form rather than vote for Kennedy or Nixon (Rickman 1989b: 347).

Jakaitis also considers issues of race in Solar Lottery, Eye in the Sky, The Crack in Space and Counter-Clock World (Jakaitis 1995). He only considers blacks, and so does not include Dick's use of Native American characters, such as in Dr. Futurity and The Penultimate Truth.

See for example the outlines for OFFF8, Dick 1989a and for ZG, Dick 1988a.

In an interview, Dick seems to reverse the order of this work: "I wrote 'A Little Something For Us Tempunauts'. Then I typed up Flow My Tears, I revised it again and typed it up. And then I wrote A Scanner Darkly" (Williams 1984: 121). Williams does not give a date for the arrival of Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said at the SMLA, but "A Little Something For Us Tempunauts" was received on 13 February 1973 (CS [5]. 392). A Scanner Darkly was written over about a two month period (Williams 1984: 124-5) and received by 14 April 1973, although the idea for the novel is discussed in "Evolution of a Vital Love", written October or early November 1972 (Dick 1988g) so Dick had obviously been thinking about such a novel for some time. For an indication of what the revisions may have consisted of, see Klein 1992 and Williams 1992a. For one of the longer cut passages see Dick 1992a, some of which is quoted in this thesis.

The 1968 Democratic Convention was interrupted by a series of demonstrations against the continued presence of the US in Vietnam; this had the result of splitting the party, and a notorious trial of eight so-called conspirators.
10 American sf author and television writer, best known for his editing of the *Dangerous Visions* anthology. Two typical story titles are "I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream" and "Repent Harlequin! The Ticktock Man Said". For an account of a meeting between Dick and Ellison see Nicholls 1982, Ellison 1982 and 1983 and Platt 1983.

11 Samuel R. Delany announces himself as gay in his autobiography *The Motion of Light in Water* and has frequently explored sexuality in his works. More recently Geoff Ryman, Colin Greenland and Simon Ings have lesbian protagonists in their fictions.

12 See Chapter Four for discussion of this.

13 This novel is discussed in Chapter Five.

14 This could well be a reminder of the Nexus-6s of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*.

15 "Which I did not know when I wrote the novel", Dick in IHISAS.

Chapter Four

1 More recently the novel has been reprinted under the Roc imprint. Run by Penguin Books, this imprint specialises in sf and fantasy.

2 Unlike America, where there were only two major sf publishers in the fifties, Britain had Rich and Cowan, Penguin, Panther, Pan and Badger, to name but five. In the sixties, Penguin's sf line was chosen with the aid of Brian Aldiss and had surrealistic cover art, frequently by Ernst, as opposed to the more lurid covers of other publishers. Penguin first published *Time Out of Joint* in 1969. They were also the British paperback publishers of John Wyndham but this, at his request, was not distinctly labelled sf.

3 The person talking is Amriou, business manager of Chevignon, a French fashion company.

4 He also remarks "I do not know that Dick ever uses this particular word [i.e. 'fifties']" (Jameson 1991: 282). The passage by Black which I quote above (TOJ. 14: 176) demonstrates that Dick does.

5 I am slightly wary that Dick's grimy version of the 1950s may be a sort of gutter chic; his dissection of the American dream, which often takes up where *Death of a Salesman* leaves off, might serve the postmodern agenda's (frequent) need for a point in the late 1950s or early 1960s where everything went wrong.

6 Some recent American editions of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* have updated the action to 2021. See for example the 1992 Del Rey printing, p. 2.
Strictly speaking the fake world in *Time Out of Joint* is not "in a
different time" to a real one, but rather in western Wyoming, in
1998. The quote should read in the context of his 2-3-74 visions of
Rome, where the consensus environment appears to be occluding
a real one, c. 70 C.E..

See Chapters Seven and Eight for my discussion of the trilogy.

Compare this to June 1953, when he had half a dozen stories in
magazines at once.

Wollheim liked *Time Out of Joint*, but had to pass on it due to the
doubts of the head of Ace, A. A. Wyn.

The Hugo Awards are given at the annual World Convention for
fiction of various lengths, for other media such as film and for
editing. The Hugo is named after the editor Hugo Gernsback.
Given by the more fannish element of the sf readership, it is not to
be confused with the Nebula Awards, which represents the choice
of the members of the Science Fiction Writers of America,
effectively a professional body. Although Dick was nominated for
several Nebula, he never received one. However *Flow My Tears,
the Policeman Said* won the John W. Campbell Award.

See the "Hitler Wins" entry in Clute and Nichols 1992 for a
lengthy list. Rickman lists several possible ancestors, including
C. M. Kornbluth's "Two Dooms" (1958) and Fritz Leiber's *The Big
Time* (1958, Hugo winner)

Williams provides a number of Dick's opinions about the novel in
*Williams1990b*.

This a reference to Cary F. Baynes, who translated Richard
Wilhelm's German translation of the *I Ching*.

Huntingdon interestingly invokes Walter Benjamin's "The Work
of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (in Benjamin 1992)
to discuss this point (Huntingdon 1988).

Dick, in 1974 at least, thought of the *I Ching* as only half of the
oracle - the rest being the questioner's own interpretation. The
novels which eventually became *Radio Free Albemuth* and *VALIS*
grew out of "A Man for All Countries", a planned sequel to *The
Man in the High Castle* in which Abendsen is captured by the
Nazis. The information provided by the VALIS entity was
thought of as a new version of the *I Ching* text. See *PKDS

It is ironic to note that whilst the Japanese are absorbers of
culture - ancient Chinese or modern American - Dick's interest
grew from absorbing German thought. See Paul Williams, "Dick's
love affair with Germany", circulating in samizdat form.

Classical or Newtonian physics appears to break down when it is
applied to the sub-atomic particles. Quantum Mechanics is an
attempt to described the behaviour of those particles. The classic
double slit experiment was designed to discover whether light
consist of waves or particles by shining a light through two razor
thin slits onto a photosensitive background. With both slits open,
the pattern produced is a wave one, with some areas dark. But if one is shut, it produces a scattered pattern. The question is, how does a particle of light "know" which slits are open? Two excellent volumes which relate Eastern philosophy and Quantum Mechanics are Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics* and Gary Zukav, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*.

19 Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle is based on the idea that the momentum and position of a particle cannot be simultaneously known.

20 The final clause might be taken to anticipate the Butterfly Effect of Chaos Theory, where the flapping of one butterfly's wings can lead to a storm elsewhere in the world. This means there is a limit on calculating turbulent systems. However it may yet prove misleading or incorrect to link quantum mechanics - which applies to the sub-atomic environment - to chaos theory - which is macroscopic.

21 The use of comic opera to provide a source of knowledge can be seen as a postmodernist blurring of the high / low art division. A privileging of so-called low art is of course appealing to sf writers and readers. Throughout the novel American popular culture is perceived as high art by the Japanese. In another shift in artistic categories, Wegener / Baynes says "'Afraid I do not care for modern art, ... I like the old pre-war cubists and abstractionists. I like a picture to mean something, not merely to represent the ideal.' " (MHC. 3: 37) This makes a distinction between modern - a relative term - and modernist - an absolute movement.

22 This line is a favourite of Dick's. It shows up in the titles of "A Glass of Darkness" and *A Scanner Darkly*, and in "Man, Android and Machine": "[St. Paul] speaks about our seeing 'as if by the reflection on the bottom of a polished metal pan'. He is referring to the familiar notion of Plato's, that we see only images of reality, and probably these images are inaccurate and imperfect and not to be relied upon." (Dick 1976: 206).

23 At this point it is important to point out the sort of fallacies which have been committed in the name of these ideas. The fact that Welsh is a language which has the same word for green as blue might be taken to mean that Welsh speakers cannot distinguish blue from green; they would therefore be unable to play snooker. When presented with cards in various colours, natives from all over the world are able to divide the spectrum up in similar ways. There must be some extralinguistic element to the way the world gets perceived.

**Chapter Five**

1 This paragraph is based on news items written by Paul Williams in the *PKDS Newsletter*. 
2 This information is again based on a news item. It must be noted that 1979 is a probable rather than a certain date for these revisions. Due to the nature of the opening chapter it seems that they post-date the 2-3-74 experiences. In an interview dated April 22 1981, Dick states "The two parts don't fit together at all. The second part is much better than the part that's been published . . . I haven't looked at it [the second part] for years" (Rickman 1988: 156). This may be creative embellishment by Dick, for it suggests that the new revisions were made in the second half of 1981. In a chronology of his involvement with Dick, Dick's subagent notes "1979 Acquired THE UNTELEPORTED MAN (complete version), THE COSMIC PUPPETS and DR FUTURITY for reprint for Berkley. Planned . . . a restructured THE UNTELEPORTED MAN" (Hurst 1986: 7; my italics and ellipsis) which suggested that Dick was still thinking about them. But Williams writes of "1979 revisions" (PKDS 1983b: 4) and is echoed by "further 1979 revisions" (Sutin 1989a: 305).

3 To summarize these different versions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>novella</td>
<td>Written by August 26 1964. Published in December 1964 as &quot;The Unteleported Man&quot; in Fantastic. Reprinted as The Unteleported Man by Ace (1966) and Methuen (1976) in bookform; in Sidgwick and Jackson omnibus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complete</td>
<td>Written by May 5 1965. Cuts final three paragraphs from novella and adds 30,000 words. Unpublished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkley</td>
<td>As complete but with four ms pages missing (Gaps pp. 165, 192 and 199). Published as The Unteleported Man by Berkley (1983)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restructured</td>
<td>Thought to date from 1979. New opening chapter, cutting the first eighteen paragraphs of the novella, rest of chapter one is chapter two; other chapters are then shifted along. A few paragraphs are added. The additional material of the complete version is situated after chapter six of novella version, with two gaps, but cuts last six pages of Berkley version (with third gap). Returns to chapter seven, paragraph twenty-four of novella from the third section of chapter fifteen. Unpublished.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 But as a result of the LSD rather than teleport-induced disorientation.
Of course, Lupov is presumed dead by this point of the novel.

According to the SMLA records it was received on 18 March 1964; the second half of The Unteleported Man was received on 5 May 1965.

Dick's parents were separated when he was quite young.

Note also the mention of "Eric Lederman's great text on colonial living, Pilgrim Without Progress" (3SPE. 7:10), a book within the novel which extols the virtues of taking Can-D. The users can be seen as pilgrims, but they do not make any spatial progress.

This sacrifice will be returned to in Chapter Six of this thesis.

The half-life idea was originally used by Dick in his short story, "What the Dead Men Say", which was excluded from the first British hardback and paperback editions of The Preserving Machine. "What the Dead Men Say" first appeared in Worlds of Tomorrow June 1964, and is collected in CS (4).

For a discussion of some Taoist ideas, with relation to The Man in the High Castle, see Chapter Four above.

The Tetragrammaton was used in Eye in the Sky to avoid blasphemy. Yah is used as the God in The Divine Invasion.

See Chapters Seven and Eight below.

My concentration on ontology up to this point might be contrasted with Suvin's writings about Dick, which treat him as a political writer.

Chapter Six

During this period Dick wrote Our Friends From Frolix 8, in some ways a retread of Solar Lottery and much disliked, several drafts of Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said, most of the material in The Dark-Haired Girl and an early version of A Scanner Darkly.

Biographically it marks a low point between the breaking up of his fourth marriage and the events of 2-3 74.

Ted White published it in Amazing, with an extra chapter to improve the ending. Dick accepted this at the time, although it was subsequently dropped from the book version (See White 1985: 8).

Since the Olander and Greenberg collection, We Can Build You has witnessed somewhat of a renaissance. I have already noted how Baudrillard has obviously read this book. The Umland collection has a number of essays on the novel: for example Rickman 1995 on schizophrenia and R. A. Umland 1995 on courtly love.

The exchange itself is a Turing Test, due to the non-specific gender of the three characters involved. The test was developed from the idea of distinguishing between male and female via the same interrogation technique, with A as female and B pretending to be female.
One possible demonstration of the table for *We Can Build You* is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ORGANIC</th>
<th>MECHANICAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WITH EMPATHY</td>
<td>Louis Rosen</td>
<td>Abraham Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LACKING EMPATHY</td>
<td>Pris</td>
<td>Mood Organ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compare also: "For the past year I've had many dreams which seemed - I stress the word 'seemed' - to indicate that a telepathic communication was in progress somewhere within my head, but after talking with Henry Korman, an associate of [Robert] Ornstein's, I would imagine that it is merely my right and left hemispheres conferring in a Martin Buber I-and-Thou dialogue" (Dick 1976: 217). This quotation will be returned to in Chapter Seven.

The Kaufmann translation of *Ich und Du* translates Thou as You throughout, and gives compelling reasons (pp. 14-6) for this. However as Thou is more widely known, I have silently altered his "You" to "Thou".

This is seen in *A Scanner Darkly* where Bob Arctor is assigned to spy on himself, and in *Radio Free Albemuth* where Phil Dick is asked to inform on his best friend Nicholas Brady.

Dick had by the time of this interview adapted the anecdote for *A Scanner Darkly* (1: 20-2), where his role is taken by Charles Freck and the junkie being Jerry Fabin. Dick records "The person on whom the character Jerry Fabin is based killed himself." (SD Author's Note: 253)

A pun is possibly lost here in translation from the French. The glance can be read as regarding, as seeing, as well as a regard for, a caring for.

Ursula Le Guin has seen Mr Tagomi as one of sf's great human characters. See Le Guin 1989: 92-3, 153.

Molinari was inspired by Dick's (qualified) admiration for Mussolini. His nickname, the Mole, recalls the Mule in Isaac Asimov's *Foundation and Empire*.


The climate seems to reflect the desert origin of the underlying Judaeo-Christian theology. In *The Divine Invasion* there is a realm which is even preferable to the Garden (see Chapter Eight) The first quote is based on a vision Dick claims to have had.


This link is discussed briefly in Chapter Eight. I should also note Easterbrook's mentions of Levinas in a recent essay (1995).

I will return to this subject in Chapter Seven as part of my discussion of *Radio Free Albemuth* and VALIS.
Chapter Seven

1. The spelling of the title of VALIS, and that to which the title refers, is not consistent among critics, nor indeed on the book itself. I preserve the individual uses of others, but my practice is to spell the title VALIS. I will return to this point in my discussion of the titular epistext.

2. For more on the Gift see Chapter Eight.

3. This will be discussed in the next chapter, where I will also question the exact name and contents of the trilogy.


5. See Chapter Six for my discussion of the latter title.

6. The style of the film, together with the fact that it includes a rock star in the cast, suggests that this element was inspired by Nicholas Roeg's The Man Who Fell to Earth.

7. It perhaps should be noted that my emboldening of VALIS is not derived from the novel VALIS, but is my attempt to maintain the distinctions between Russian entity VALIS, the film Valis, the satellite "VALIS", the American entity VALIS and the novel VALIS.

8. There is a paradox in Radio Free Albemuth of how or when the novel gets written. Nicholas is shot and Phil is in a prison, waiting to be killed, having been told that his novels will be written by someone else. Are the authorities so secure in their position that they can allow the novel to be published within the conditional environment, or is it simply a sanitised version of an even worse reality? Within the conditional environment, the boundary between novel and life is erased.

9. These three writers were friends of Dick during the last ten years of his life and have been grouped together as the steampunks - as opposed to cyberpunk - as a result of their writing novels set in the nineteenth century. K.W.Jeter has recently written a sequel to Blade Runner, one in a line of tributes.

10. I have drawn on Dick's letters (SL [1972-73], SL [1974], SL [1975-76] and SL [1977-79]), his essays "Man, Android and Machine" (Dick 1976) and "How to Build a Universe that Doesn't Fall Apart Two Days Later" (Dick 1988k), his interviews with Charles Platt (Platt 1987) and Rickman (Rickman 1985 and 1988) and published portions of the Exegesis, Dick's labelling of the almost nightly written speculations about 2-3-74. This has been supplemented by the interviews with Tessa Dick (Rickman 1985: 62-72 and Reynolds 1987), K. W. Jeter (Watson 1984) and Blaylock and Powers (Reynolds and Watson 1985) as well as further statements by Tess (T. Dick 1984 and 1985) and Powers (Powers 1984). There is a similar summary in Sutin 1989a, but I have tried to arrive at my account independently.
Pike, Bishop of California during 1958-67, was interested in using the Dead Sea Scrolls to discover an authentic core to Christianity. His son Jim committed suicide and Pike began to experience manifestations from the astral plane of his son, as detailed in The Other Side (Pike 1975). Pike's life is the basis for Dick's last novel The Transmigration of Timothy Archer; more discussion of Pike can be found in Chapter Eight.

There has been some discussion as to whether this was in fact an accurate diagnosis after all, and if the condition was life threatening.

The tape recording of PKDS Newsletter 9 / 10 includes some of Dick's notes for this project, and some scenes such as Hawthorne's interrogation by Nazis. Dick got as far as writing two chapters of this sequel (Dick 1995r) and wrote some biographical material about Abendsen (Dick 1995q).

This was at Metz and was the infamous "If you find this world bad, you should see some of the others" speech (Dick 1991b), which perhaps has led to accusations of Dick's being mad.


This informing behaviour is reminiscent of the android behaviour in Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

Journal entries 36 and 37 in the Appendix to VALIS are reversed in the text (ie. V. 2: 23), possibly indicating a certain unreliability on the part of Phil-as-narrator, or Phil-as-author.

Whilst it should be remembered that the characters of David and Kevin are respectively based on the characters of sf authors Tim Powers and K.W.Jeter, Dick presumably had a reason for changing Powers's initial to D.

This insight arose in response to a probing and incisive piece of e-mail sent to me by Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr. Istvan spotted what he felt were a number of flaws in my Human / Android dialect; I believe my responses to them in fact strengthened the argument.

Substitution is discussed in Chapter Six.

Some of Heidegger's ideas and Levinas's responses to them are discussed in Chapter Two.

This point echoes the discussion of God in The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch in Chapter Five.

Compare this discussion of Genesis to Davidson (1979: 62-6).

Philip was the older of the two and the stronger. Jane died in January 1929, a fact that Dick perhaps felt guilty about.

This section of the novel is discussed at length in Chapter Three.

See Chapter Three.

This word would appear to be equivalent to consciousness, and designates the total sensations felt by a body: literally koinos aisthesis, common sensation. See OED III 433c.


This poison / cure duality is at the heart of Derrida's discussion of the translation of pharmakon in "Plato's Pharmacy".
Levinas makes some interesting comments about Revelation and textuality in his "Revelation in the Jewish tradition" (Levinas 1989: 191-210). I discuss some of the implications of this in Chapter Eight.

Hirsch does include the unconscious mind in his model of authorial intention.

I have in mind the examples of the theories surrounding the death of John F. Kennedy and the (possible) existence of UFOs. Rather than a single goal of pleasure being reached, conspiracy theories prolong this pleasure indefinitely as theories beget theories. (For example, the possibility that UFOs witnesses are actually secret agents attempting to discredit accounts of genuine encounters). The pleasure is more in the production of theories rather than arriving at a final answer, something Dick seems to share in his production of the Exegesis.

Chapter Eight

1 Paul Williams apparently provided the alternative title. It was actually rare for Dick's novels to be published under his working title for them.

2 The use of "Divine" is also an echo of Dante's The Divine Comedy, to which Dick was alluding during this period. For one example see the following paragraph.

3 For The Owl in Daylight see also Dick 1991c, Rickman 1988: 225-6, 240-2.

4 My discussion of Gnosticism draws on Filoramo 1992, Jonas 1963 and 1967, Robinson 1977 and Rudolph 1983. It should, however, be made clear, that Gnosticism is not as unified as I have perhaps made out. The maze of codices and traditions is beyond the scope of this study to navigate.

5 In an ironical, PhilDickian twist, I originally read the short story months after the novel. My feeling of déjà vu was thus for something which in some ways had not yet happened.

6 Paul Rydeen has suggested that Kabbalistic elements are present in VALIS as well: for example Sophia reads the Sepher Yetzirah and the obsession with codes and cyphers such as King Felix (Rydeen 1995).

7 The Shekina and other Judaic mythological figures are discussed in Schmid 1987.

8 Levinas tends to be citing literary examples, such as the various ghosts and witches in Shakespeare's plays.

9 These are the thoughts of Cardinal Fulton Statler Harms, Chief Prelate of the Christian Islamic Church, as he attempts to prevent Emmanuel's arrival on Earth, and thus may have to be read with a tinge of irony. However, Timothy Archer expresses the same thought.

10 The chronology has at least a hint of ambiguity about it, being pegged by references to record releases. It seems to be set after Janis
Joplin's death in 1970 (TTA. 4:55). But Angel traces the break up of her marriage to the release of Rubber Soul in 1966 (TTA. 1:8), although the separation is not until a year after the release of Paul McCartney's first solo album in (TTA. 1:8, 5:66). Dick mentions his problems with dating the novel in an interview (Rickman 1988: 201-2). At the very least this suggests a certain unreliability about Angel's memory.

11 This could be because an American edition may not have been available by the time of Tim's death. Whilst in VALIS a character mentions that he knows someone who was working on the then-unpublished *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (V. 5:61), no manuscript source is given here. A similar avoidance of anachronism should be noted regarding quotations from the Bible. In *The Divine Invasion* Dick has his characters quote from the *New English Bible*, published in full in 1970, in *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* he is careful to emphasize that the characters consult an earlier edition: "[Tim opened] a very large leatherbound Bible... this Bible, I saw, was the Jerusalem Bible. I had never seen it before" (TTA. 3: 46, 50). Being published in 1966, this edition is not anachronistic for the late 1960s or early 1970s, but it is new enough to reflect Tim's radical position.

12 Compare Louis Rosen in *We Can Build You* and Phil Dick in VALIS.

13 This radiator seems to be a recurrent obsession in discussions of Pike / Archer. Compare this conversation about Pike in VALIS:

"What I could never figure out," Fat said, "is why they never drank the water in the car radiator. That is what you do when your car breaks down in the desert and you're stranded."

... "Maybe they had anti-freeze in their radiator," Sherri said.

"In the Dead Sea Desert?"

(V. 5:76).

This is another indication of Pike / Archer's ignorance of practical matters.

14 I should again note Levinas's feeling that knowledge, as an extension of the ego, is a matter of grasping and assimilation, possibly of the other.