Androids, Drugs and Scramble Suits:
Technological Society in the Science Fiction of Philip K. Dick

Brett Cherry

12 September 2008

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an M.Sc. In Science Communication at Imperial College London

IN MEMORY OF PHILIP K. DICK

Novel Abbreviations

Do Androids Dream = Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

Simulacra = The Simulacra

Scanner Darkly = A Scanner Darkly

Three Stigmata = The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch

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Introduction

The novels of Philip K. Dick present complex social and philosophical questions about technological society. What is human? How does technology shape reality? Is what we perceive empirically merely an extension of an unseen world? Dick creates worlds within science fiction that address these profound questions. For the purpose of this dissertation, I will examine a selection of Philip K. Dick's novels in order to extract their relevance to the relationship between society and technology. I will also present recent cultural and literary analyses of Philip K. Dick's novels along with philosophical guides to provide an insightful understanding of society and technology, such as Jaques Ellul, Frederic Jameson and Jean Baudrillard. I will examine the core notions explicit within four novels of Philip K. Dick by addressing the following question: What do the novels of Philip K. Dick say about the social relationship between technology and society?

The writings of Philip K. Dick stretch the limitations of one's imagination and world view. Like most science fiction, Dick´s novels revolve around unique and interesting characters in situations within a series of subplots. As a writer, Dick possessed the unique ability to allow the reader to enter the world view and consciousness of each character in his novels. Even seemingly benevolent characters are exposed as having both flaws and attributes that always make them painfully human. Dick introduces new ideas in his novels frequently. Critics have called him a 'fictionalising philosopher' who transcends the boundaries of literature, let alone science fiction. Philip K. Dick´s ideas about society, technology, philosophy, science and the human experience makes him

more than worthy of study, not only within literature, but in history, philosophy, religion and in this case, science and technology studies. His novels are often ontological investigations that question the basis of the social and physical sciences, from psychology to physics and even ancient philosophy, giving rise to sometimes unprecedented insights not only in science fiction, but all of literature. It is for this reason that Dick has been compared to a wide range of 'literary' writers, such as Borges, Pynchon, Kafka, Dickens and many others.

Philip K. Dick is one of many writers within the genre of science fiction worthy of study. The 'ghettoisation' of science fiction unfortunately led him and other writers to be neglected by ´literature´ and its critics. However, Dick is not without his examiners. The task I will put forth here is to use some of the insightful interpretations made of his novels to aid in exploring how society interacts with technology. Similar to how the philosopher or sociologist of science uses historical case studies to uncover the social or epistemic foundations of science, I will use the science fiction of Philip K. Dick to explore the social relationship between technology and society. I will first look at a radical notion of how technology is understood and defined by Jacques Ellul.

Technological Society According to Jaques Ellul

Technology is often viewed as 'neutral,' solely in terms of applied science, as the product of engineering in the physical and biological sciences. However, as many authors in history, sociology and science and technology studies have found, this view is myopic in light of the social impacts of technology on society and vice versa. It is inadequate for addressing questions such as, why are certain technologies adopted by society and others are not? While one could beg the question that scientific progress eliminated less efficient or practical alternatives, one is still left with the question of 'efficient' for what and for whom? These questions concerning technology cannot be avoided and are directly addressed by Jacques Ellul.

Ellul's philosophy of technology is useful for understanding technological society in the novels of Philip K. Dick. Ellul avoids scientistic or social contstructivist views of technology to the degree of appearing technocentric. However, his large contribution to understanding technology as a unique social phenomenon fundamental to society is a useful guide for exploring technology in Dick's novels.

Ellul defines technology in terms of 'la technique' or 'technique[1].' Ellul defines technology as 'discourse on technique,' such as how it is referred to in the media or how it is studied[2]. According to Ellul, techniques are prior to science, existing long before the age of enlightenment and reason of scientific method(s). Ellul defines technique itself as "the totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency (for a given stage of development) in every field of human activity[3]." Technique is intricately part of

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1   In order to avoid ambiguity I will only use the term 'technique' when referring to Ellul.
2   Ellul, Jaques. *The Technological Bluff*. (Wm. B. Eerdmans 1990) p. xv
3Ellul, Jacques. *The Technological Society*. (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1964) author's note

the development of culture, especially the arts and later the sciences. The advancement of technique in society is essentially 'technical progress' leading civilisation down the paths it has carved into the social and natural environment:

Technical civilization means that our civilization is constructed by technique (makes a part of civilization only what belongs to technique), for technique (in that everything in this civilization must serve a technical end), and is exclusively technique (in that it excludes whatever is not technique or reduces it to technical form). (Ellul,1964, Pg. 128)

It appears that critiques of Ellul being radically technocentric in his social theories of society and technology are valid. However, this criticism ignores the much greater question: Do we live in a technocentric society? Ellul is not arguing that we must live forever within a society that is enslaved to technical progress, but he does argue that techniques will always be unpredictable and have negative consequences[4]. While technique has become sophisticated enough to create an 'independent reality,[5]' Ellul does not accept it unquestionably, but he does argue that technological society has reached this extreme by becoming 'technisized'[6] or sacrificing the social on behalf of the technical. I will show how individual characters and society in some novels of Philip K. Dick are technisized to the degree of being simulated.

Technique provides people with a range of different means that are 'obtained rationally' and are used to build and/or govern society. When one observes the world

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4   Ellul (1990) p. 39
5   Ellul (1964) p. 63
6   Ibid. p. 142

around them, unless they are outside of technical civilisation, the first things they will see are examples of technique such as cars, roads, trains, houses, power lines, agriculture, advertisements etc. These are all forms or products of technique, but where do they come from? How are they developed? Ellul refers to two basic definitions of technique in society: "The sum of all man's relations with his environment" and "the techniques which are the results of applied science[7]." The latter is of course what concerns people the most within contemporary society, but Ellul explains that science today is now enslaved to technical progress[8]. The first definition describes technique as a form of relationship between people and their environment that I will argue in regards to the works of Philip K. Dick, includes all aspects of society, especially the social lives of individuals. Indeed, Ellul argues that contemporary society has become so technisized that it intervenes with many social and even spiritual aspects of society[9].

Ellul describes technique as having its own 'morals' unique unto itself. This seems counterintuitive as morals are usually thought of as a uniquely human trait, what could they possibly have to do with technique? Ellul writes: "Technique never observes the distinction between moral and immoral use. It tends, on the contrary, to create a completely independent technical morality[10]." No matter how benevolent or evil techniques may seem, Ellul argues that these intentions do not solely influence how technique will impact society. Once techniques are loose upon society they have values that are unique to their applications, which provide them with degrees of autonomy. As we shall see in some of the novels of Philip K. Dick, many technologies such as androids

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7Ellul (1964) p. 62
8   Ibid. p.45
9   Ibid. p. 415
10 Ibid. p. 97

or other forms of simulacra possess values as well as social identity parallel to humans.

Despite the influence of technology on society Ellul argues that technical culture is impossible. For Ellul, what is viewed as technical culture is not a direct human product, but the result of the interface between a group and a machine.[11] The basis of his argument is that technique is not human centered and that techniques exist for themselves rather than for humans[12]. As we shall see in Dick's works, technoculture does exist; it is not culture so much in the humanist sense, but is simulation of culture. Through simulation, people are able to influence technology in unique ways. Technology may not be included within culture in the strict pre-modern humanist sense, but it is the dominant cultural medium in Dick's novels as it could be argued in contemporary society. One of the main ideas to take with us from Ellul is that we must not merely assess the 'intrinsic character' of technique, 'but the actual situation of technique in human society[13].' Also, for Ellul, 'technical knowledge does give us new insights into human reality and can serve toward its unification[14].'

Technological society in the novels of Philip K. Dick include something necessary to the lives of all characters in the worlds he creates: social interaction. Whether they are media technologies, drugs, androids or simulacra, all revolve around social interaction. In Dick's novels, people don't merely *use* technologies rather they *interact* with them and in the process are often used by them. In order for one to utilise technology, such as a vacuum cleaner, for example, they simply operate it with the intention of cleaning a space. Yet everything that takes place during this operation: turning it off and on,

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11 Ellul (1990) p. 135
12 Ibid. p. 151-152
13 Ellul (1964) p. 63-64
14 Ibid. p. 338

plugging it in, maintenance etc. is an interaction.

One is interacting with the environment through a machine, yet one often forgets that they are also interacting with the machine itself. When one utlises technology it is not merely a neutral force that is under complete control of the user; it is an interaction that has positive and negative consequences for all social actors involved. Whether or not the technology achieves the goal one intends, they are always interacting with it, this is inescapable. Although it is overlooked when examining today's constantly changing technological society, as the following investigation of Dick's novels will show -- the technical is always highly involved with the social.

Philip K. Dick : Postmodernist, Humanist or Existentialist?

Philip K. Dick has been read amongst a variety of academics spanning philosophy, literary and cultural theory. Most who comment on Dick's work are quick to label him 'postmodernist' because of his tendency to address the underlying conditions of society, through replication, reconstruction and destruction of modernity to no certain end. However, like with many genius writers, there is no one way to read Dick. His novels persistently question the past and the future while remaining within the unknown of the present. If technological society is indeed as uncertain as Ellul claims it to be, this would be the case of society in the novels by Dick. Without blindly rushing into labeling Dick as a postmodern writer, I will examine a number of recent postmodernist interpretations of his work in order to understand radical notions about technological society within his novels.

Literary and social theorists have attempted to give Philip K. Dick a place in contemporary literature. The difficulty in this task is that similar to and unlike many science-fiction writers, Dick's work is a myriad of philosophising, social criticism, humanism, theological discourse, alternative history and ontological probing. Dick does not merely break with convention within the science fiction genre, he is a literary black hole that many critics have kept their distance from. In *Archaeologies of the Future*, Fredric Jameson analyses the novels and short stories of Philip K. Dick using a structuralist methodology, namely a Greimas semantic rectangle. I will not go into great detail about this method Jameson uses to analyse Dick's work, but will instead focus on his interpretations of Dick's novels in reference to his research on utopia in science

fiction. Jameson finds that explicit ideas within Philip K. Dick's novels such as empathy in *Do Androids Dream* is merely one element of an overall structure[15]. Jameson wishes to challenge the ideas that are explicated through Dick's narrative in favor of segmenting his works in order to synthesise contradictions present in many of his novels.

Jameson observes that one of the reasons Dick's novels are often perplexing is due to his characters being submitted to 'very human and collective worlds[16].' The private experience of individual characters are rarely separate from the world around them, even when they believe they are completely isolated or in control. The characters of Dick's novels and short stories are often painfully social. These 'collective groups' as Jameson labels them within his semantic diagram are characterised by a 'pre-text,' namely catastrophe that leads to the need of an important figure within many of Dick's novels, who are usually ordinary people such as the repairman. Jameson writes:

The activity of repairing appliances, then, offers the synthesis between the valorization of small business on the one hand and the imperfect and exasperating attempts to keep the small communities in existence; and no doubt draws its Utopian force from the nostalgia for handicraft itself and as such. (Jameson, 2007 p.378)

This interpretation is useful for understanding a particular theme (or as Jameson prefers 'cluster') throughout Dick's novels and short stories. The technician, technocrat or common repairman plays a unique role in society. There is a distinct relationship between society and technology in the form of the technician, not because it resolves

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15 Jameson, Fredric. *Archeaologies of the Future*. (Verso Books. 2007) p. 365
16 Ibid. p. 377

conflict, but that it expands upon how technologies (especially machines) are incorporated into social experience. Society depends on technicians to maintain and relate people to technologies, they represent the backbone of advancement or degradation of technological society in Dick's novels.

Another interpretation using Jameson's method is what he calls 'nostalgia for the present'[17]. Rarely are characters in Dick's novels confined to the past or future, but instead remain within an alternative present. Jameson notes that bringing the future together with the past allows an appreciation for contemporary society that remains undeveloped within postmodernity[18]. This is what is meant by 'nostalgia for the present.' Similar to the role of technician in Dick's novels, this notion is important to understanding the relationship between people and technology within society. I will show that like many science fiction authors, Dick is not merely creating fantasy, he is writing about society. I will use Jameson's interpretations of Dick's work to show how he uses different story telling techniques that reveal the interactions between people and technology.

Another philosophical guide for the purpose of this inquiry into the social relationship between people and technology is Jean Baudrillard who addresses Dick's novels in *Simulations and Simulacra*. Baudrillard proposes that society has reduced itself to mere systems of symbols and signs that appear to signify 'reality,' but actually no longer have a referant. Simulations and simulacra instead take on a reality of their own,[19] making them 'hyperreal.'[20] Reality signified by various media has no essence in this sense. What is

17 Ibid. p. 380
18 Ibid. p. 381
19 Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. (University of Michigan. 1994) p. 6
20 Ibid. p. 1

viewed as a common reality, is revealed later to be a hollow artifice. In relation to

technology, I will show that understanding reality as fake, plural or hyperreal is found

throughout Dick's novels. Baudrillard gives attention to Dick's novel, *The Simulacra,[21]*

which is also part of this analysis. The basis of this novel is what Baudrillard refers to as

the 'third order of simulacra' known as 'simulacra of simulation' that is founded on

information or the model itself as in cybernetics[22].

 The simulation is an extension of the 'real' world, but is also inclusive of it.

Baudrillard uses a number of examples within society that he defines as simulations or

simulacra, especially Disney Land or the 'Water Gate' political scandal in the U.S. He

describes historical political events as merely facades blinding any detailed view of the

advanced power structure that lies beneath it. However, simulacra to Baudrillard are

more real than 'real,' they are hyperreal meaning they have consequences and are not

merely theatre. If one is capable of simulating an event to the utmost detail, what

distinguishes it from the actual event? Baudrillard writes:

'Today, it is the real that has become the alibi of the model, in a world controlled by the principle

of simulation. And, paradoxically, it is the real that has become our true utopia – but a utopia

that is no longer in the realm of the possible, that can only be dreamt of as one would dream of a

lost object.'

(Baudrillard, 1994, p. 122)

 Similar to Jameson's interpretation of Dick as 'nostalgic for the present,' Baudrillard

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21 Unfortunatley, Baudrillard himself may not have been a Philip K. Dick 'reader' as he jumbles together
    plots from two different novels along with making other scholarly mistakes.
     Rosa, Jorge Martins. "A Misreading Gone Too Far? Baudrillard Meets Philip K. Dick." in *Science
    Fiction Studies* Vol. 35 2008 p. 60
22 Baudrillard (1994) p. 121

emphasises the present as a dream or longing for something inherent that has been lost. Since it is 'no longer possible to fabricate the unreal from the real,' the 'real' must be 'reinvented' as a fiction because it no longer exists[23]. However, the alternative present that Dick creates through manipulation of time in his narrative has significant appreciation for the 'real,' such as human qualities like empathy, that can be recovered, therefore it is unnecessary for them to be 'reinvented' as Baudrillard claims. There are clearly a number of philosophical differences between Dick and Baudrillard, but also important similarities. In an essay, 'How to Build a Universe that Doesn't Fall Apart Two Days later' when talking about Disneyland, Dick refers to how fake humans will generate fake realities and then sell them to other humans, turning them, eventually, into forgeries themselves[24].' This statement is strikingly similar to Baudrillard's third order of simulacra to utmost detail[25]. However, we will see that both Dick and Baudrillard strongly differ when coming to terms with technology, as Dick shows that reality can still be redeemed despite 'fake fakes' that exist in society and may even include technology itself aiding one in recovering what is real[26].

Despite the often isolating, phantasmographic worlds Dick's human characters endure, they persevere because they retain some form of humanity, regardless of whether they are benevolent, foolish or diabolical. In Dick's novels, human attributes often rise above the chaotic worlds he creates. It is for this reason that Dick has been labeled a humanist and has been viewed as an antidote to the negative conservatism of postmodernism, namely that the world experienced can never be 'real' and is merely a sham or is left over from a

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23 Ibid. p. 124
24 Rosa (2008) p. 65
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid. p. 66

post-capitalist displacement where nothing can be resolved. Christopher Palmer

recognizes this contradiction in Dick's works because postmodernists tend to devalue any

essential or liberal form of humanism[27]. The human experience is of great value to Dick

who emphasises human traits such as solidarity and empathy that allow them the capacity

to 'apprehend intense moral dilemmas, and to take responsibility[28].'

Humanist elements in Dick's writing makes him uniquely existential in his concerns

about what allows humans to exist along with questioning the human condition itself.

However, since humans interact with complex technologies such as androids frequently

in his novels, it leads to yet another postmodernist interpretation of Dick, 'post

humanism.' Posthumanism attempts to re-define what is human in light of

postmodernism, especially the impacts of technology on the human condition. The

posthuman view 'configures human being so that it can be seamlessly articulated with

intelligent machines,' where demarcation between humans and technology disappear.

The problem with recent studies on Dick's works is not whether he fits completely

within any of these ideal frameworks. It is how they bring to light aspects of his novels

that are useful for examining similar problems within contemporary society, in this case

the relationship between people and technology.

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27 Palmer, Christopher. Philip K. Dick: *Exhiliration and Terror of the Postmodern* (Liverpool University Press. 2003) p. 8
28 Ibid. p. 33

Simulations, Simulacra and the Search for the 'Authentic' Human

Since technology is inseparable from modern society, Dick's novels provoke imagined worlds that sometimes resemble historical events, but the underlying technologies are usually radically different. Dick emphasises the ambiguous relationship between people and machines through interactions between simulations, simulacra and humans. Dick asks the question: what is human? by showing how androids possess social abilities and human-like intelligence allowing them to live in society almost undetected. Robots, androids, cyborgs and super intelligent computers are often portrayed as similar to humans, at least intellectually, if not physically. What makes them most convincing are their abilities to take part in society as humans do and to experience the world as social beings, not merely as machines.

The Simulacra

Technology mimics the actual world creating environments that appear indistinguishable from the 'real'. In Dick's novel *Simulacra,* one is confronted with a number of seemingly real people and places that are later revealed as clever or diabolically orchestrated illusions. Knowledge of how society is governed is possessed by an elite social group, 'Geheimnistrager' or 'Ges,' while another group known as 'Befelhaltrager' or 'Bes' merely carry out instructions of the former[29]. People are tricked into believing parts of civilisation such as government exist in a particular way and are often distracted by media technologies such as advertising. The story takes place within

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29 Dick, Philip K. *The Simulacra*. (Gollancz, London 2004) p. 37

an alternative future in the 1990s. The United States has merged with European countries (such as Germany) to form the USEA. The executive branch of government is presided by First Lady Nicole Thibodeaux who has remained in power for decades.

Nicole is an irresistibly beautiful matriarch who is exploited by television, giving her seemingly infinite youth. Citizens vote for the president or der Alte who is elected every four years and serves as the president of USEA as well as husband to Nicole. However, the government itself appears matriarchal as Nicole remains political retainer despite representational democracy. The USEA government maintains control primarily through a time travel apparatus known as von Lessinger equipment and interactive television. Television simulates reality for characters in *Simulacra,* giving life to characters such as Nicole. It has the most direct social and political influence on society. Television is central to people living in the USEA who watch First Lady Nicole on television religiously. Two characters in the novel, Ian Duncan and Al Miller, discuss the 'unreal' beauty of the First Lady on television:

'You're that much involved emotionally with her? A woman you've never seen? That's schizophrenic.
Because the fact is you're involved with --' Al gestured. 'An illusion. Something synthetic, unreal.' 'What's unreal and what's real?
 To me she's more real than anything else; than you, even. Even than myself, my own life.'
'Holy smoke,' Al said. He was impressed. 'Well, at least you have something to live for.'
(*Simulacra*, 2004, p. 119)

Baudrillard's concept of hyperreal is certainly of interest here without attempting to force the concept to fit within Dick's narrative. The experience that Ian Duncan is describing is simulated yet more 'real,' more meaningful, than his mundane social environment. The boundary between fake and authentic experience blurs to such a degree that not only are they at first indistinguishable, but the simulation actually appears more genuine than the original.

A simulacrum of particular interest that also intrigued Baudrillard is the Papoola. The Papoola is a simulacrum of an extinct bug-shaped creature from Mars. It is used by Al Miller to advertise for his employer 'Loony Luke's' who sells 'jalopies,' illegal one-way space craft to Mars. Miller attempts to use the simulacrum's mental impulses to captivate a family to buy one of Loony Luke's jalopies:

What a wonderful place Mars must be, the man and woman were no doubt thinking, as the papoola poured out its recollections, its attitude. Gosh, it's not cold and schizoid, like Earth society; nobody spies on anybody else, grades their endless relpol tests, reports on them to building Security Committees week in, week out.
(*Simulacra,* 2004, p. 52)

The father of the family is aware that the Papoola is a con, but he is hypnotised by the simulacrum. Ironically, the simulacrum of the Papoola is used to sell vehicles for traveling to the desolate red planet. In this situation the Papoola seems to be completely under Al's control, it is a technology simply programmed for advertising, nothing more. However, how it interacts with the family is of most interest. While Al is controlling the

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simulacrum remotely, it appears to transmit messages on its own about the disparities of living on Earth and the need to escape to Mars before the government shuts them down. If this happens then 'no more crack in the wall of the authoritarian society through which a few – a few luck people – can escape[30].' Society on Terra has become so dismal because it depends on simulacra like the Papoola. Technology simulates and sells reality through interactions with social entities, from government to corporate cartels to small business.

People like Ian and Al live in separatist communal apartment buildings that function similar to small colonies[31]. The USEA government under Nicole controls the entertainment industry. All forms of entertainment usually involve the First Lady who issues mandatory televised quizzes (relpol tests) that citizens must take within their apartment buildings[32]. The quizzes are not only expected of each citizen, but are a method of maintaining obedience or servitude to the government. If citizens fail the quizzes they could be deported to Mars. The social role of interactive television is central throughout the novel as it is in other works, such as *Do Androids Dream*. In both novels, television is used to delude the public or at least to urge them to conform to a particular world view, marginalising their own, if they have one.

Vince Strikerock, one of the residents of the same communal apartment building as Ian and Al, 'The Abraham Lincoln,' watches the current President Rudi Kalbfleisch on TV disapprovingly. He attempts to interact with the president through TV by pressing a number of buttons to end 'the dire droning of the speech,' but it doesn't work:

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30 Ibid. p. 53
31 Ibid. p. 15
32 Ibid. p. 21

In fact there were probably enough other people in this one apartment building alone to offset any pressures he might try to exert on the old man through his particular set. But anyhow that was democracy. Vince sighed. This was what they had wanted: a government receptive to what the people said.

(*Simulacra,* 2004, p. 25)

Television simulates democracy in this sense, it allows citizens to believe that they have direct influence over the president himself. However, since this media technology allows everyone to voice an opinion over the president's appearance, the individual is inevitably ruled out by default. Despite Strikerock's own admittance to the 'democracy' of television, one realises that it is an illusive one. Interactive television exploits the choice of a mass audience at the expense of a minority. In this case, technology is believed to democratise society, but in doing so it amplifies the noise of many voices speaking at once.

In *Simulacra*, the high-tech mass media is never neutral, whether through interactive televised politics, Nitz commercials (tiny bug-like devices used for advertising communal apartment buildings[33]) or news media. While media technology does not determine the world around it absolutely, its technical interface controls how social interactions and exchanges of information take place. In other words, technology influences the ontological, meaning it affects the perception of objects in the world along with the subjects that correspond with them. In the case of technology, the subject becomes the object or fetishised commodity as critical theorists and postmodernists have pointed out. In *Simulacra*, the medium may not be the message, but the medium does

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33 Ibid.

interact with society by establishing its own independent technical reality as Ellul asserts.

Technology's effects on society produce or enhance uncertainty in *Simulacra*, primarily because it is used to construct belief systems that do not represent 'reality,' but either condition it or cause it to multiply. In this sense, characters in *Simulacra* are never living in a truly objective world beyond their own individual experiences that revolve around technical constructs -- simulations and simulacra. The main example of simulation is the government itself. Nicole is not an actual person, but the fourth actress to play her on television and in person[34]. The der Alte or 'elected' presidents of the USEA are actually androids. This carefully guarded secret is revealed to the public by the latest company to manufacture the president, the german company Karp Werke after discovering that their government contract would be passed onto another firm[35].

Karp Werke maintained governmental influence through manufacturing simulacra essential to the fake democracy of the USEA. Since Nicole drops contract with Karp Werke, they tell the media (news machines) that the president is an android and that Nicole is an actress.[36] Once the truth is revealed, some of the main characters simply do not accept it. Since society itself is based upon a simulation, it takes precedence over reality. For Dick, the actual reality still remains, although it quickly becomes lost amongst the fakes.[37] For Baudrillard, any reality prior to simulacra makes no difference as it can never be recovered. This is the ontological split between Baudrillard and Dick. Dick is interested in the multiple realities of human experience, simulation is one example of how reality is plural.

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34 Ibid. p. 165
35 Ibid. p. 85
36 Ibid. p 164
37 Rosa (2008) p. 63

Dick shows that reality must have some kind of ontological or psychological basis,[38] meaning it lies within the world view of the individual along with their perception of what could exist. It is Dick's fascination with the ontological that reveal social realities of technology. It is technology that affects how one views the perception of objects and subjects in the world, whether they are living or merely appear to be alive as in the case of *Do Androids Dream,* where negative or positive implications of technology is determined by how characters interact with it.

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

The protagonist, Robert Deckard, is a bounty hunter who 'retires' (kills) androids for a living. A group of androids have escaped from Mars killing a number of humans in the process. The androids were built for colonists who are encouraged to emigrate to Mars by the U.N. The setting of the novel is in San Franciso within a post-nuclear war future that has driven most species of animals to extinction and has left the planet little more than scorched earth. The city itself is full of empty, mostly unpopulated buildings that are degrading further due to kipplisation or entropy.

Society primarily consists of those who choose to live on Earth despite nuclear fallout, but also includes people labeled as inferior or 'special' by the UN government who are not allowed to emigrate. One 'special,' Jack Isidore, an electric animal repairman, is not as intelligent compared to the androids he meets, but possesses a unique quality that other humans on Earth possess, empathy. Humanism rises to the occasion in this novel. Despite living in the rot of an entropic technological society, some people still exemplify

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38 Ibid. p. 64

kindness, compassion and empathy, although it seems rare.

Jack Isidore expresses empathy throughout the novel. Despite being a special he is highly apt to feel empathy towards both people and machines, including androids. Human uniqueness is exemplified by Dick through this character who shows that while intelligence is certainly a human trait, it is not what makes them definitively human. As shown earlier by Jameson -- repairing appliances synthesises the development of business and maintaining communities through craft or technical skill[39]. As a character in the novel, Isidore also synthesises the opposition of human and machine. Isidore imagines bounty hunters who hunt androids as cold killing machines: 'A thing without emotions, or even a face; a thing that if killed got replaced immediately by another resembling it. And so on, until everyone real and alive had been shot[40].' The dichotomy of bounty hunters (humans) and androids (machines) is synthesised to form a new understanding of being human, what has been referred to as posthuman. Yet one must also keep in mind that Dick is interested in ontology, what is essential to being human. Interactions with technologies such as androids and electric animals reveal these characteristics. In an essay: 'Man, Android and Machines' Dick describes this ontological relationship:

As soul is to man, man is to machine: it is the added dimension, in terms of functional hierarchy. As one of us *acts* godlike (gives his cloak to a stranger), a machine *acts* human when it pauses in its programmed cycle to defer to it by reason of a decision[41].

39 Jameson (2007) p. 378
40 Dick, Philip K. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (Gollancz, London 2007) p. 138
41 Dick, Philip K. "Man, Android and Machines." in *Science Fiction at Large* (Victor Gollancz Ltd, London. 1976) ed. Peter Nicholls p. 203

For Dick, technologies may not merely copy reality making it hyperreal as Baudrillard has claimed, but may actually participate in a more authentic reality[42]. If this is the case, then technologies could tell us more about being human than we would be able to do ourselves. Yet their role in society is unfortunately one of indentured servitude. The androids are used as a form of social persuasion by the UN to get colonists to move from an Earth annihilated by nuclear war to the barren red planet of Mars. Dick compares it to the popularity of the automobile in the U.S. during the 1960s[43]. The androids Deckard must retire are a unique variety known as Nexus-6. They are designed to look and act almost indistinguishably from humans, meaning they are intelligent and are as socially complex as humans. Androids and humans influence each other to such a large degree that some have considered the society in *Do Androids Dream* as an example of a 'posthuman collective'. Jill Galvan describes this particular role of technology and its influence on reality:

To deny technology's pervasive role in our existence means, then, to deny reality -- the reality of a world in which we are advancingly imbricated in a mechanical presence. Only by recognizing how it has encroached upon our understanding of "life" can we come to full terms with the technologies we have produced[44].

Despite this blurring that occurs between humans and machines, the bounty hunter attempts to maintain demarcation by giving subjects a psychological test, known as the

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42 Ibid. p. 220
43 *Do Androids Dream*. p. 13
44 Galvan, Jill. 'Entering the Posthuman Collective in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* in *Science Fiction Studies* Vol. 24 1997 p. 415

Voight-Kampff Empathy Test. This test is designed to provoke an emotional or empathic response from the subject by measuring elements of facial expression, such as dilation of pupils, after one is asked a series of questions using hypothetical experiences often involving harm to animals. If the subject fails to show any signs of an empathic response, they are an android.

There are many advanced technologies that lead to profound social and philosophical questions in the novel. The question: If a technology such as an android could be made indistinguishable from people in both appearance and intelligence, what then makes humans unique? Indeed, the Voight-Kampff test itself seems to provide that answer, empathy, but it is also a technology with its own limitations that provides no clear solution. After all, Rachel Rosen, the first android Deckard gives the Voight-Kampff test to, fails the test, revealing that she is an android.[45] However, Deckard shows an empathic response towards Rosen along with other female androids with one important difference, he has sex with her[46]. Before going to bed with Deckard, Rosen engages in her own ontological monologue about androids:

We're not born; we don't grow up; instead of dying from illness or old age we wear out like ants. Ants again; that's what we are. Not you; I mean me. Chitinous reflex-machines who aren't really alive.' She twisted her head to one side, said loudly, *'I'm not alive!* You're not going to bed with a woman. Don't be disappointed; okay?

(*Do Androids Dream,* 2007, p. 168)

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45 However, the reason she was given the test was to create a new design, the Nexus-7, that would be entirely indistinguishable from humans. Ibid. p. 165
46 Ibid. p. 169. Although illegal, sex with androids is common place on Mars where people have android mistresses. Ibid. p. 124

The fact that Rosen expresses that she is 'not alive' is of great value to understanding how 'human' some androids in the novel appear to be. One defining characteristic of being human is the ability to be conscious of one's self, 'I think therefore I am,' as Descartes is well known for saying. Since Rosen is conscious of who and what she is, she becomes more human-like. After all, could one not apply the above statement to parts of the human species itself? An android is making a claim about what perhaps most humans could not, admitting their technicized existence.

Rosen seems to come close to interacting with Deckard on a level that only humans normally interact on, emotion. Rosen is still a technical product, a commodity that supposedly cannot express empathy, but even if she is incapable of an empathic response that can be detected scientifically. Nonetheless Rosen opposes an earlier assumption that all androids are emotionally vacuous or schizoid[47]. Rosen is an android who develops through social interaction with humans.

In the novel, the boundary between humanity and technology has blurred to the point where social identity is no longer uniquely human, now androids, simulated human organisms, have human and social identity as well. Deckard must retire one of the fugitive androids from Mars known as Pris who is of the same type as Rosen, yet while both androids appear as copies of one another, they possess unique identities. While Baudrillard may differ with Dick in his view of technology, the fact that Rosen is merely a copy of a copy makes her an example of Baudrillard's third order of simulacra[48]. Yet Baudrillard's model of simulacra does not address the problem of Rosen possessing a

47 Hayles, (1999) p. 161-162
48 Baudrillard. (1994) p. 121

unique social identity compared to Pris, they are two different 'people' and not merely cybernetic entities. Deckard himself is even investigated for being an android, by a group of androids no less, who pose as the San Francisco Police Department. Even the authenticity of characters we *know* to be human are questioned.

The fact that humans are social creatures distinguishes them from any machine. However, in *Do Androids Dream* technology has given birth to new forms of social interaction, one that does not need to involve humans at all. Androids are able to associate with one another without the need of their human masters. If techniques have an independent technical reality as Ellul claims, then in the case of androids in Dick's novels, this reality is not constructed solely by humans. It can also be experienced by androids independently of human intervention, although the realities they experience may severely contrast with humans. The relationship between people and technology in Dick's novels is primarily social, it is not merely utilitarian. Believing that technology solely exists on behalf of human utility does not take into account how complex technologies, such as androids, interact with and influence society.

Technology in this case is about replicating the social. The goal of the Rosen Corporation is to make an android that can pass the Voight-Kampff test and be identified as human. It is not so much that androids need to be perfected in terms of identifying as human, this is already assumed by the technology, it is rather for their acceptance into society. However, humans also have problems being 'human' themselves and depend upon various technologies that simulate their lives.

One of the technical devices used by characters in the novel, especially Deckard's wife Iran, is the Penfield mood organ. The mood organ generates frequencies that induce

particular emotional states of being or moods. One sets the mood organ to a certain number that induces happiness, wakefulness, depression etc. The role that such a device plays in society, as with many technologies in Dick's novels, is that it is fundamental to how society functions by making people efficient in their activities. The mood organ itself does not necessarily make people happier. At one point, Iran actually sets it for depression, unable to feel sad on her own. The mood organ merely makes states of emotion more efficient and mechanised similar to their android counterparts.

The world that Dick portrays in this novel is so cold and lifeless that people must rely on a technology in order to retain what makes them human, the 'empathy box,' a small black box with two handles and a telescreen that allows the user to fuse with a semi-virtual being known as Mercer. Like characters in *The Simulacra*, Mercer is not what he appears to be. Labeled a special by the government, he supposedly lives in another realm or dimension known as the 'Tomb World,' a platonic world that is the final resting place for things that die or degrade[49]. Once the user grips onto the handles of the empathy box they peer into the telescreen and 'fuse' with Mercer. The experience of Mercer and the user become one. Everyone has an empathy box whether on Earth or Mars allowing them to fuse with Mercer simultaneously. Since androids cannot experience empathy, they are unable to fuse with Mercer.

The empathy box replaces or makes social activity technicised. Instead of more traditional forms of social activity such as meeting a friend for a cup of tea, one fuses with them through Mercerism. The experience of fusing with Mercer seems virtual, but users actually get injured and experience pain. However, it could be argued that Mercer

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49 *Do Androids Dream* p. 20

is merely a tool of the state because he keeps people living on Earth and Mars quiescent, unable to interact with society outside of their living rooms[50]. Yet as Jameson has demonstrated about the structure of Dick's novels, these polar opposites are eventually synthesised.

Similar to Nicole in *Simulacra*, Mercer is exposed on TV as a fraud by presenter 'Buster Friendly[51].' The exposè is on television in Jack Isidore's apartment who is helping the fugitive androids hide from Decker. Unknown to humans, Friendly is actually an android himself.[52] The androids believe that empathy is merely a fraud used by humans to distinguish themselves from androids[53]. This is taking place while Pris, the fugitive android Decker must retire, that is the same model as Rosen, is clipping off the legs of a spider that Isidore had found. Isidore reacts emotionally begging them to stop, giving an empathic response the androids can't understand. They continue to mutilate the spider until Isidore drowns it in a sink, unable to bear the suffering of the creature any longer. It is here that androids are revealed to be cold, schizoid, incapable of empathy as humans had feared.

Exposing Mercer as a fraud, the technical symbol of empathy, could ensure the future of androids on Earth as equals, but this is simply not the case. The technical reality of androids is not the moral or empathic reality that some humans share. Therefore it is unique human qualities, such as empathy, that must resolve the incapacity of technology to respect living things. Androids independent of humans are unable to do so, it is through social interaction, such as with Deckard and Pris that they come close to sharing

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50 Gavin. (1997) p. 417
51 *Do Androids Dream* p. 182
52 Ibid. p. 184
53 Ibid. p. 183

realities with humans. In the next chapter, I will show how one technology provokes interesting interactions with characters in Dick's novels that are central to them exploring what is real about their lives and the world they live in: drugs.

Pleasures and Perils of Technological Society:
Drugs and Totalitarian Control

Since many of the drugs in Dick's novels tend to be mind altering substances, they have a powerful influence on how society functions, especially how it is governed. This idea of technology being used to maintain power through social control is illustrated in most if not all of Dick's novels. How technologies of surveillance and psychoactive drugs, for example, interact with society is illustrated by Dick to great depths.

In both of Dick's novels and actual society, drugs are so embedded within culture that it hardly seems a technology at all. In this chapter, I will show that drugs are a highly sophisticated technology that radically affects society in some of Dick's novels. Drugs provide gateways into other worlds constructed not only by individuals who consume them, but the monolithic cartels that produce them. The influence of legal pharmaceutical and illegal psychoactive drugs are prevalent. Their legal status has to do primarily with the political influences of government bureaucracy and pharmaceutical cartels. Whether drugs are legal or illegal, they are of great importance to society, in some cases necessary to its existence.

Dick usually focuses on the chemical or psychological effects of drugs, breaking the boundaries between materialism, metaphysics, realism and mysticism. In Dick's novels,

hallucinatory experience is often indistinguishable from 'authentic' experience. It may appear 'hyperreal', as was discussed in the previous chapter, or it may be a new reality entirely. Once these realities emerge, whether or not they are caused by drugs, they are heavily influenced by totalitarianism. Technologies of surveillance and other forms of technical control provoke questions of individual freedom along with the motivations of social authorities in society. If reality is simulated, as in the case of the last chapter, or manipulated by drugs, are these technologies more likely to lead to totalitarian forms of control?

In this chapter I will examine how drugs and technocratic governance function in society. I will explore *Scanner Darkly* and *Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* where drugs and government share a unique social relationship. Characters in these novels are assimilated by the realities these drugs produce, while being either in constant fear of policing or are manipulated by corporate cartels and politicians alike. While drug culture is often viewed as taboo in society, Dick avoids making moral judgments and in instead examines the causes and effects of drug use[54]. The drugs in Dick's novels tend to be both illegal and highly addictive. Yet their importance to society often disillusions the moral basis for how authoritarian society manages drugs.

A Scanner Darkly

The main character Bob Arctor is an addicted user of a popular, but highly dangerous drug known as 'Substance D.' Arctor is also 'Fred' a federal narcotics agent who's actual identity is hidden beneath a 'scramble suit' allowing him to spy on his peers. Characters

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54 Dick, Philip K. *A Scanner Darkly*, (Millennium, London. 1999) Author's Note

in the novel are actually based on actual persons known by Dick who suffered the ultimate price for their drug use, including Dick himself[55]. As with many of Dick's novels, it is semi-autobiographical and a reflection of an enlightening and dark time in U.S. history, the 1960s. SD along with other drugs, are one of three forms of technology that are central to the novel. Other technologies are used for surveillance by narcotics agents to spy on drug users, such as scramble suits that disguise the agent's physical appearance by generating images of people around them and 'holoscanners,' holographic video surveillance systems. Both are used to investigate drug users like Arctor.

Like many drugs, SD has a number of aliases, including 'slow death'. SD addicts eventually extinguish their identity as the chemical causes the right and left hemispheres of the brain to separate. Once both halves of the brain fail to communicate with one another, one hemisphere takes precedence over the other. The identity of the user becomes fragmented as they give into vivid delusions accompanied by paranoia. Also, like many drugs used for recreational purposes, using SD is often a communal experience that involves the accompaniment of others. However, when Bob Arctor does SD with other characters in the novel, they are not necessarily friends, but people willingly bound by SD.

Use of SD has an individual as well as social context. SD breaks down the user's social identity while fusing relationships with others through mental states induced by the drug. Addiction to SD, as with other drugs, is not merely physical or individual, but socially interactive. Since Bob Arctor is also an undercover narcotics agent as well as an SD user, the scramble suit he wears to hide his actual identity along with the holoscanners

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55 Ibid.

he uses to view himself in his home exacerbates this situation. It is through interactions with all three of these technologies that Bob Arctor's (Fred's) identity begins to break down,[56]yet the nature of his job in surveying the lives of drug users also neutralises empathy and emotion[57].

It's not that technology itself led to Bob Arctor's social and physical destruction, but rather that it amplifies his tragic experience of addiction to SD. Arctor is manipulated by totalitarian forces within society, namely Orange County Sherrif's Department and New-Path, a rehabilitation centre that actually manufactures SD, the very drug that patients at the centre are addicted to[58]. Arctor's colleagues intended for his life to be ruined by his SD addiction so they could check him into New-Path to discover whether they are indeed growing SD[59]. Through his interactions with the scramble suit, holoscanners and SD, Arctor is easily manipulated without his knowledge, even by himself as the narcotics officer Fred. Arctor's SD dealer Donna is also an undercover narcotics officer[60] and essential to getting Arctor addicted to SD to fulfill the plans of the government. The paradox of course is that the agency designated to stop the distribution of SD allows one of their own agents to form a dependence on it, placing him in New-Path where he now harvests it.

The negative effects of the drug are exploited by all parties involved: the user (victim), agency (drug pusher) and rehabilitation centre (manufacturer). The social interactions that surround SD contradict the appearance of the social actors and institutions involved.

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56 Ibid. p. 75
57 Ibid. p. 43
58 Ibid. p. 216
59 Ibid. p. 202-203
60 Ibid. p. 186

Those who interact with SD or surveillance technologies that are meant to keep it under control, reveal the most degenerative aspects of society -- government bureaucracies that do not seek to resolve problems caused by technology, but rather to exploit them for their own means. In this sense, the narcotics agents depend on SD as much as the 'head' does, they need SD in order to retain control over society.

The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch

In *Three Stigmata* many people live on Mars with encouragement from the U.N. due to over population on Terra (Earth). While the U.N. governs Mars, 'P.P. Layouts' the largest manufacturer of 'layouts' used with the illegal drug 'Can-D,' has the greatest influence on communities of colonists on Mars. A layout is a model that the Can-D user focuses on in order to project themselves into an artificial world or virtual reality. Can-D is used by colonists on Mars who wish to escape the depressing and barren wasteland of the red planet. Through Can-D, colonists are able to enter the pseudo-social world of 'Perky Pat,' a Barbie doll-like character who lives in an artificial sunny California untouched by nuclear war[61]. The Perky Pat experience is communal involving multiple users simultaneously who chew Can-D together in front of the layout. After each person consumes Can-D their consciousness is transported to the world of Perky Pat, but the experience remains communal as it includes other users present before the layout. Dick narrates the experience of Sam Regan, a colonist on Mars who consumes Can-D:

He himself was a believer; he affirmed the miracle of translation – the near sacred moment in

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61 Dick, Philip K. *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*. (Gollancz, London. 2003) p. 37

which the miniature artifacts of the layout no longer merely represented Earth but *became* Earth. And he and the others, joined together in the fusion of doll-inhabitation by means of the Can-D, were transported outside of time and local space. (*The Three Stigmata*, 2003, p. 37)

Jameson's interpretations of Dick's novels are once again of use to understanding the experience of Can-D users. Jameson notes that Dick's multifocal narrative 'constitutes a whole new way of thinking about time and history and a kind of method or organon for approaching these phenomena[62].' Can-D allows characters to transcend time, but only temporarily. In the end they must return to their dismal reality of Mars. However, Can-D allows the user to experience the 'present as history[63].' While Jameson is referring to Dick's literary techniques, they are used by Dick to illustrate how Can-D constructs an experience that is not merely hallucinatory, but also 'real.' The world that Sam transports to is sunny San Franciso where everyday is Saturday and there is no war or over population.

The Can-D user must identify with Perky Pat and her friends in order to facilitate the experience. During the Can-D experience individuality has no place. It is under control by P.P. Layouts, not the user. In the case of Can-D, the technology of drugs makes the artificial or simulated world superior to the actual or authentic reality of the user to the extent of addiction. However, Can-D users are aware that it is based on a fictional character within a fictional environment, but this communal experience succeeds in forming the basis of an interplanetary social structure. Through Can-D and the P.P. Layouts, Sam's reality along with five other colonists literally fuse together within two

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62 Jameson. (2007) p. 380
63 Ibid. p. 381

virtual people, Perky Pat and Walt.[64]

Can-D creates a new independent technical reality as reffered to by Ellul, but in this case the technical reality and reality of the subject fuse. Drug culture on Mars is a form of technoculture, one where technology and culture become inseparable. Ellul has observed that technique does substitute for the spiritual and/or religious aspects of life[65]. On Mars, Can-D is similar to transubstantiation in Christianity where one takes sacraments, such as bread and wine. Can-D actually made organised religion common place within colonies on Mars[66]. This religious aspect of the drug experience is even further developed when a new drug is used by Martian colonists, Chew-Z.

Chew-Z is manufactured by Palmer Eldritch, a strange android-like creature who was possessed by an alien intelligence. Unlike Can-D, Chew-Z does not require a layout because it constructs a reality that is entirely based on the user's imagination, including their memories, with one important catch, anyone who uses Chew-Z merges with the virtual, surreal world of Eldritch.

'It's an illusory world in which Eldritch holds the key positions as god; he gives you a chance to do what you can't really ever do – reconstruct the past as it ought to have been. But even for him it's hard. Takes time.' (*Three Stigmata*, 2003, p. 176)

When one consumes Chew-Z, it continues to affect their reality even after the

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64 *Three Stigmata* p. 48
65 Ellul. (1964) p. 62
66 *Three Stigmata*. p.126 and p. 68

experience wares off, they themselves, along with people around them, take on the hallucinatory appearance of the three stigmata of Palmer Eldritch, his steel teeth, artificial arm and hollow face[67]. The distribution of drugs as means of totalitarian control is prominent throughout this novel as it is with *Scanner Darkly,* yet it also makes technology appear as if it were neutral. Yet one of the very reasons why technology veers society in the direction of totalitarian government is that these technologies demand it[68].

Both Can-D and Chew-Z make the individual succumb to an artificial reality transfixed upon their own to the degree that it becomes absolute. Similarly, in *Scanner Darkly*, Substance-D purges the individual subject in favor of complete interdependence and control of their life. If any authority, government or otherwise, wished to control society they could very easily do so with these forms of technology.

It is not solely the fascistic or diabolical will of authoritarians that cause such technologies to have an intrinsically negative impact upon the societies that use them, rather it is the fact that these technologies are already totalitarian in form. As Ellul notes, technique has morals of its own. A nuclear warhead is still for annihilating life, regardless of how one wishes to use it for 'peace keeping'. CCTV cameras still further an authoritarian society, regardless of the claim that they exist to protect citizens. Moral projections of this sort lead to social confusion about technology. What humans value is not necessarily what technology values.

Instead of transforming life on Mars, drugs such as Can-D and Chew-Z create a world that is more favorable because they both feed off from the human imagination.[69] If this

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67 Ibid p. 176
68 Ellul. (1964) p. 284
69 *Three Stigmata*. p. 23

technology of experience occupies the imaginative faculties it prevents criticism of

technological society itself and in this case merely paves the way for more technologies.

Those who work for P.P. Layouts, who gain massive amounts of wealth selling Can-D

and layouts to colonists on Mars have the opportunity to accelerate their intelligence

using 'chemical therapy.'

One of the main characters of the novel, Leo Bulero, chairman of P.P. Layouts, is

known as a 'bubble head.' A bubble head is someone who increases the size of the frontal

lobe of their brain using chemicals to accelerate brain growth at 'E Therapy clinics[70]'

After receiving E Therapy the top of the person's head forms into a large dome. The

therapy is available to only an elite few individuals who possess the wealth to travel to

Germany in order to have the treatment. Drug or chemical therapies to enhance human

intelligence, are technological fixes, even utopian fantasies that would lead one to believe

rationally that they would lead to a better world or at the very least solve a great deal of

the world's social problems. Ellul argues that this is simply not the case, that all

techniques have negative consequences and are never neutral on behalf of human utility.

Instead of raising the intelligence of society, this form of drug therapy is used to further

the power of those who are already in control, but it is indeed not without unintended side

effects as it also causes regression.

The societies portrayed by Dick in both *Scanner Darkly* and *Three Stigmata* are driven

by highly interactive and complex technical systems that share a social foundation, but

Dick is uninhibited in illustrating how these technologies are often used by or lead to

totalitarianism. In the first novel, one witnesses the destruction of the protaginast who's

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70 Ibid. p. 34

realities as narcotics officer and drug addict eventually lead to further social

fragmentation, as his life becomes entirely consumed by the technical system he is

interacting with. In *Three Stigmata* drugs seem simultaneously affiliated with the

objectives of authoritarian corporate cartels that, in the case of Palmer Eldritch, wish to

control every reality people experience. Yet the highly individual technicised experience

of drugs like Chew-Z allow one to explore new realities, dissolving the boundaries

between empirical perception and imagination.

Conclusion

The relationship between technology and society in the four novels analysed is neither intrinsically positive or negative in terms of its social impact, but nor is it neutral. While in some of Dick's novels, technology may appear to be solely under control of totalitarian government or corporate cartels, as in the case of drugs and some technologies of simulation, technical realities also tend to contradict the intentions of their supposed masters. The social influences of technology are exemplified by a variety of situations within Dick's novels where the social and technological exchange to such a degree that they become simulacra of each other.

The contradictions present within Dick's novels reveal that there are no easy answers to how people relate to technology. Humans interact with technology on a number of different levels, but all interactions fundamentally affect the realities of social actors involved. The relationship between society and technology can no longer be thought of solely in terms of utility. It is often in Dick's works that technology is always a factor in determining the social structure of society, whether it involves complex social interactions with synthetic humans or exists within a police state.

In reading Dick, one must keep in mind that ontology is inseparable from the social lives of his characters. While some are delusional, many persistently question their realities as social actors. 'We are the souls of machines' as Dick claims. Yet what humans demand of technology is often the opposite of what technology actually performs. In order to resolve this paradox, people interact with technology in multiple ways and in turn create multiple realities that radically affect society, as people retain human qualities

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such as empathy or become technicised according to Ellul, or schizoid androids in Dick's terms.

What is essential to being human is revealed through the technologies people interact with, despite their often negative consequences. Yet this is perpetually brought into question as some technologies replicate and create their own social experiences with humans. In the novels analysed, the relationship between society and technology is one of cyclical degradation and prosperity. Similar to fusion with Mercer in *Do Androids Dream*, one is living within a simulation, yet still experiences pain. Other characters live in supposedly ideal simulated worlds, but their social interactions with one another are still entropic.

Simply because people are able to fuse with technical realities, does not mean they are ideal or even preferable ones, as in the case of drugs in *Scanner Darkly* and *Three Stigmata*. Technical efficiency at its worst extreme exploits the fragility of the human condition. This makes the question 'what is human?' of importance to understanding how society relates to technology because people often interact with technology in order to define themselves.

The relationship between society and technology in Dick's novels, regardless of how delusional, schizophrenic or humorous it might be, has to do specifically with subjects perceiving and interacting with technology directly. In the science fiction novels of Philip K. Dick, technology is not solely a tool for society, nor is it a death sentence, rather it is an ontological vehicle people relate to and influences how they explore their social environment, simultaneously manifesting the most tragic hardships and illuminating discoveries of the human species.

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