

PHILIP K. DICK AND THE SPECTRE OF THE SUBJECT

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the American author Philip K. Dick (1928 - 1982) from a philosophical framework informed by the work of the contemporary philosopher Alain Badiou. Drawing from three different phases of Dick's career, I aim to demonstrate that his *The Man in the High Castle* (1962), *Time Out of Joint* (1959) and the later short story "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale" can examine and comment upon the ethical call in Badiou's subtractive schema of the event.

However, this is not to suggest that the thesis is a ventriloquist application of philosophy to text. Rather, the work will also consider Badiou's Lacanian heritage and move to discuss the grand categories the two thinkers share in common: the Real, truth, subject and the ethical call through an analysis of Dick's fiction.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following texts have been abbreviated:

BE – Badiou, Alain. *Being and Event*. Trans. Oliver Feltham. USA: Continuum, 2007.

BOE – Badiou, Alain. *Briefings on Existence*. Trans, ed and intro by Norman Madarasz. Albany: State U of New York P, 2006.

C – Badiou, Alain. *Conditions*. Trans. Steven Cocoran. GB: Continuum, 2008.

D – Badiou, Alain. *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*. Trans. Louise Burchill. Theory out of Bounds, Vol. 16, U of Minnesota P, 2000.

E – Badiou, Alain. *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*. Trans. Peter Hallward. NP: Verso, 2001.

ES - Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: A Selection*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. London/New York: Routledge, 2001.

HI – Badiou, Alain. *Handbook of Inaesthetics*. Trans. Alberto Toscano. USA: Stanford UP, 2005.

IT – Badiou, Alain. *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*. Trans. Oliver Feltham and Justin Clemens. GB: Continuum, 2005.

LW – Badiou, Alain. *Logics of Worlds*. Trans. Alberto Toscano. GB: Continuum, 2009.

MHC - Dick, Philip K. *The Man in the High Castle*. USA: Penguin, 2001.

MP – Badiou, Alain. *Metapolitics*. Trans. Jason Barker. Mexico: Verso, 2006.

OB – Badiou, Alain. *On Beckett*. Trans, edited and introduction by Nina Power and Alberto Toscano. GB: Clinamen Press, 2003.

P – Badiou, Alain. *Polemics*. Trans. Steve Corcoran. Colombia: Verso, 2006.

PS - Lacan, Jacques. *The Psychoses*. Trans. Russell Grigg. GB: Routledge, 1993.

PF - Žižek, Slavoj. *The Plague of Fantasies*. GB: Verso, 1997

SP – Badiou, Alain. *Saint Paul and the Foundation of Universalism*. Trans. Ray Brassier. USA: Stanford UP, 2003.

T - Dick, Philip K. *Time Out of Joint*. GB: Gollancz, 2003.

WC - Dick, Philip K. “We Can Remember It For You Wholesale” in *We Can Remember It For You Wholesale, Volume Five- The Collected Short Stories of Philip K. Dick*. GB: Orion, 2000. 157-174.

PHILIP K. DICK AND THE SPECTRE OF THE SUBJECT

INTRODUCTION

Philip K. Dick – A “Fictionalising Philosopher”¹

The two basic topics that fascinate me are “What is reality?” and “What constitutes the authentic human being?” Over the twenty-seven years in which I have published novels and short stories I have investigated these two interrelated topics over and over again. I consider them important topics (260).

Philip K. Dick. “How to Build a Universe That Doesn’t Fall Apart Two Days Later”.

Lawrence Sutin’s authoritative introduction to *The Shifting Realities of Philip K. Dick* argues that ‘philosophical issues were always at the heart of Dick’s subject matter as a writer’ (xiii-xiv). Claiming that Dick wrote largely within the science fiction genre owing to the ‘conceptual and imaginative freedom’ (xi) that it afforded, Sutin contends that Dick’s ‘spiralling alternate universes’ (xi) are not concerned with the traditional “hard science predications” (xi) common to science fiction but rather seek to raise ‘metaphysical speculations’ (xi)². Douglas A. Mackey shares Sutin’s analysis and concludes his chronological survey of the corpus with the assertion that Dick wrote ‘metaphysical fiction in which the *starting point* was the...future world he developed with science fiction motifs’ (130-1). According to Mackey, Dick’s everyman protagonists of the novels and short stories are repeatedly thrown into a desperate struggle for truth and subjectivity as “reality breakdowns” (“preface”, n.p.) in the form

¹ This sub-title takes its name from Philip K. Dick’s affirmation in his *Exegesis* that ‘I am a fictionalising philosopher; not a novelist’ (reprinted in Lawrence Sutin’s *The Shifting Realities of Philip K. Dick*, page xvii).

² In addition to the 115 short stories and 40 plus novels written in the science fiction genre, Dick wrote a dozen realist novels during the 1950s (including the now celebrated *Confessions of a Crap Artist*, (1959)), all of which were rejected for publication. Due to this lack of response from publishers, Dick abandoned his realist hopes after this period and returned to his science fiction.

of counterfactual historical accounts, psychotic episodes, and the regression of time permeate their worlds, leading to the conclusion that ‘*this [fictional] world is not real*’ (131) ³.

Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr. proposes that Dick’s disintegrating worlds directly speak to a postmodern sensibility. Declaring ‘Dick’s themes, it turned out, were not just the wild “what ifs” of SF [science fiction]; they were the guiding ideas of postmodern culture’ (vi), Csicsery-Ronay Jr. advances that Dick’s fictions directly reflect and comment upon the changing political, social and economic climate of post-war America.

A veritable ‘forest’ (Csicsery-Ronay Jr. vi) of critical work has shot up and continues to flourish around Philip K. Dick that seeks to align the author as an ‘icon of postmodern culture’ (Csicsery-Ronay Jr vii). Jean Baudrillard claims that Dick’s fictional universes immerse the reader directly into a ‘hyperreal’ environment that is ‘without origin, past, or future—in a kind of flux of all coordinates (mental, spatio-temporal, semiotic)’; Fredric Jameson argues that Dick’s texts reflect the blockage of historical time (*Postmodernism* 284) and both Anthony Enns and Scott Bukatman argues that Dick’s protagonists suffer under the psychological upheavals of late capitalism (68, 48). Similarly, recent critical assessments of Philip K. Dick’s corpus by Christopher Palmer (2005) and Jason Vest (2009) seek to keep the postmodern classification current, claiming that the label is ‘apt’ (Vest xi) and ‘illumin[ating]’ (Palmer 5).

However, both Palmer and Vest argue that the terminology of the postmodern cannot fully account for Dick’s construction of the subject. According to Palmer, Dick’s work is a ‘dual project’ (32) in which the competing, contested discourses of postmodernism and humanism vie. Jason Vest confirms this analysis and classifies the author’s work as an example of “postmodern humanism”. He states,

Dick’s great contribution to American literature...is that he dares to rehearse the values of individual autonomy, personal liberty, and political freedom that seem impossible in the fractured pessimism of the postmodern era. These values may be utopian principles, but they more precisely represent the essential humanism of Dick’s fiction (xi).

³ “If There Were No Benny Cemoli” and *The Man in the High Castle* are two examples of counterfactual histories (1963 and 1962 respectively); psychic breakdowns feature in a number of Dick’s texts including *Time Out of Joint* (1959), *Martian Time-Slip* (1964) and *A Scanner Darkly* (1977). The regression of time features prominently in *UBIK* (1969).

These invocations of the humanist subject suggest that the popular postmodern proclamation that the subject is at an end is not only ‘premature but also erroneous’ (Caroline Williams 3). Caroline Williams has argued that ‘postmodern voices announce the subject’s dissolution and defeat with undue regard to the residues of subjectivity which still echo in their pronouncements’ (2-3). The subject continues to haunt contemporary debate in the wake of postmodernism and demands that its spectral presence be granted articulation within discourse.

All Meaning But No Truth: The Pitfalls of the Postmodern Philosophical School

The contemporary philosopher Alain Badiou agrees that the postmodern philosophical school is not fit for purpose. Designating the current philosophical climate ‘ill’ (IT 39), Badiou proposes that no definition of the subject can be advanced from within the reigning modes of the postmodern, hermeneutic or analytic tradition on two counts.⁴ Firstly, Badiou argues that a ‘metaphysics of truth has become impossible...Philosophy can no longer pretend to be what it had for a long time decided to be, that is, a search for truth’ (IT 34-35). The present orientations share in a belief that ‘we are at the end of metaphysics’ (IT 33) and accordingly engage not with philosophy’s *locus classicus*’ (Badiou, IT 33), truth, but privilege a plurality of meanings. Badiou argues that this movement effectively ‘puts the category of truth on trial’ (IT 34) and announces the ‘passage from a truth-orientated philosophy to a meaning-orientated philosophy’ (IT 34). Secondly, and connected to this first charge, Badiou perceives contemporary philosophy to be marked by a turn towards ‘the question of language’ (IT 34). Afforded a central, even ‘crucial’ (IT 35) role in recent debate, the present emphasis upon language makes explicit that ‘the question of meaning replaces the classical question of truth’ (IT 35). Badiou concludes that ‘these two axioms represent a real danger for thinking in general and for philosophy in particular’ (IT 35). Fearing that the continuation of philosophy in this vein would result in a submission to language as ‘the absolute horizon of philosophical thought’ (IT 35), Badiou forcefully proposes both a return to and a renewed engagement with philosophy’s core – the categories of truth and subject. He states,

⁴ I have grouped the postmodern, hermeneutic and analytic schools together under the banner of ‘contemporary thought’ as Badiou contends that all three are guilty of the same crimes.

At base, it is a question of philosophically reconstructing...the category of truth – not as it is passed down to us by metaphysics, but rather as we are able to reconstitute it, taking into consideration the world as it is...This will allow us to propose a new doctrine of the subject – and I think this is the essential objective (IT 38, 42).

Foundational and transformative in both tone and substance, Alain Badiou's subtractive philosophy of the event proposes that a re-engagement with philosophy's Platonic origins necessitates a return to the "mathematical line" (Norman Madarasz in BOE 1).

Reconstructing Philosophy - Alain Badiou's Foundational (Re)Turn

Badiou's magnum opus *Being and Event* sets out the terms of philosophy's renewed relationship with mathematics. Claiming Cantor's work in set theory as a 'decisive break' (BE 6) within the mathematical discipline, Badiou argues that 'mathematics = ontology' (BE 6). According to Badiou, mathematics is 'the thought of pure Being, of Being *qua* Being in its very act' (*Briefings on Existence* 43); the theorems and laws of set theory provide the conceptual framework with which to present any ontological situation owing to the logic of pure multiplicity⁵.

Today's 'true problem' (C 98), Badiou argues, lies with the romantic affinity with finitude and the One.⁶ According to Badiou, the entire history of metaphysics can be summarised as the 'enframing of being by the One' (BOE 34); that is to say that metaphysics relegates being to an operation of 'securing presence' (Badiou, BOE 33) against a finite, normative universe. Conceiving of his project as a 'Platonism of the multiple' (C 100), set theory's insistence upon pure multiplicity furnishes Badiou with the tools to finally eliminate finitude from the heart of ontology and rebuke the romantic turn of philosophy. For Badiou, the One of traditional metaphysics is nothing other than an 'operational result' (BE 24) that varies in efficacy according to the terms of the situation. 'Every [ontological] situation is structured' (BE 24) by the Count-for-One, and structured twice through the Count of the Count to ensure that presentation is consistent with representation Badiou insists, lest the void, that 'subset par excellence' (BE 101) be allowed to ruin the 'structural lie' (Steven Corcoran, P xii)⁷. Containing no elements, the void is unrepresentable yet the logic of set theory dictates that it is

⁵ Pure multiplicity is a multiplicity that is not bounded in any respect.

⁶ Badiou names as 'romantic' any form of thought that harbours an attachment to finitude.

⁷ Every situation, Badiou argues is necessarily doubled.

‘universally included’ [but does not belong] (BE 101); the void represents a sticking point for the counting operations and it follows that ‘God is dead at the heart of presentation... Ultimately at issue is the void, and not the One’ (Badiou, C 111).

The concept of the void is of central importance to Badiou’s model of truth. Badiou approaches truth as a singular, exceptional occurrence and proposes that ‘one must come to conceive of truth as making a hole in knowledge... Knowledge never encounters anything’ (“On a Finally Objectless Subject”). Badiou continues his analysis with the argument that truth touches being through the eruption of an “event” (BE 178). Existing as a ‘supernumerary’ (BE 178) element, Badiou’s event occurs from a multiple on the edge of the void and represents the intrusion of the new within a situation.⁸ The event ‘is a sudden change of the rules of appearing; a change of the degrees of existence of a lot of multiplicities which appear in a world’ (Badiou “The Three Negations”). The event as the intrusion of the new unravels and ruptures the existing social networks, revealing what the “state” foreclosed through the counting operations (BE 103). Summarising this complex operation, Slavoj Žižek states:

The event is the truth of the situation, that which renders visible/readable what the “official” state of the situation had to “repress”, but it is also always localised, that is, the truth is always the truth *of* a specific situation (“Psychoanalysis and Post-Marxism” 237).

Within this schema, philosophy exists as a particular or localised operation that ‘disposes the ‘there is’ of truths and their epochal compossibility’ (C 11). Concerned solely with the ‘care of truths’ (BE 4), philosophy, cleaved from the domain of ontology and bearing no truths of its own, enters discourse only when ‘there are paradoxical relations, or because there are ruptures, or because there are decisions, distances and events’ (Badiou, P 10). Carving out a specific place for the philosophical task, Badiou ‘insists’ (P 10) that truth can only emerge from under the four conditions or “generic procedures” of art, science, love and politics (BE 17). Arguing that ‘what happens in art, in science, in true (rare) politics, and in love (if it exists), is the coming to light of an indiscernible of the time... it is the truth of the collective’s being’ (BE 17), Badiou announces that truth is immanent rather than transcendent. However, this is not to suggest that the eruption of the event represents a new Master discourse in which humanity must proceed. Rather, Badiou argues that truth essentially belongs to the

⁸ Badiou explains that the event must originate from the edge of the void as the void itself is empty; it does not contain any elements (BE 179). Further, the event is a ‘one-multiple made up of, on the one hand, all the elements that belong to its site [the historical designation], and on the other hand, the event itself’ (BE 179).

future anterior; for Badiou truth is ‘errant and incomplete’ (C128) as it is infinite in address – truth unfolds its own historicity in which the effects of the event are measured. Therefore, although it is necessary to say that ‘an event has taken place’ (C 128), the work of this event remains open, unnameable. To attempt to totalise the truth and name the unnameable represents ‘the very figure of Evil’ (C 126) according to Badiou.⁹

Badiou names as “subject” precisely that multiple which persists and supports the procedure of truth and thus takes on the “wager” (C 123), the chance, announced by the event. ‘Manifested locally’ (BE 17), Badiou’s subject is ‘both the *real* of the procedure (the enquiring of the enquiries) and the *hypothesis* that its unfinishable result will introduce some newness into presentation’ (BE 399). Existing solely in support of the truth yet in no way produced by the truth process (BE 399), Badiou’s subject is an ethical construct that demonstrates ‘*fidelity*’ (E) to an event, continuing the work announced by the rupture. As Peter Hallward suggests, there is interdependency between truth and subject in Badiou’s schema:

A truth is something we *make*. It is declared, composed and upheld by the subjects it convokes and sustains. Both truth and subject are occasional, exceptional. When they emerge, they emerge together, as qualitatively distinct from the opposing categories of knowledge and the object (*Subject to Truth* xxv).

Sharing more than a passing family resemblance to his ‘master’ (E 121) Jacques Lacan’s conception of an “ethic of the Real” (Alenka Zupančič, 235), Badiou’s faithful subject refutes the world of knowledge to be the ‘militant of truth’ (BE xiii); that is to say that the subject is none other than the political revolutionary (such as the French Revolution of 1792), the scientific advance (such as Cantor’s work in mathematics), the couple in love or the new artist configuration (such as Schönberg’s serial technique).¹⁰ Therefore, against Slavoj Žižek’s call to return to the Cartesian subject in his *The Ticklish Subject*, Badiou replies forcefully that ‘we are...the contemporaries of a second epoch of the doctrine of the subject...the contemporary subject is void, cleaved, a-substantial, and ir-reflexive’ (BE 3).

⁹ In his *Ethics*, Badiou designates that evil is an occurrence of the subject, not of the world of knowledge. Refuting traditional conceptions of morality, Badiou proposes that evil can only come from the good of truth and finds expression in three modalities: disaster (asserting the event as a new master discourse), terror (a pseudo-event) and betrayal (loss of fidelity).

¹⁰ A more detailed discussion of Badiou’s Lacanian heritage is provided in chapters two and three of the thesis.

Literature's "Subjective Destiny": A Path Out of the Postmodern 'Forest'

Badiou's designation of art as a condition of philosophy raises questions concerning the task of literary criticism. Both Mallarmé and Rimbaud adorn Badiou's work and provide frequent points of contact for his difficult conceptual model. However, it is arguably with the novels of Samuel Beckett that Badiou stages his most sustained engagement between a literary corpus and his subtractive philosophy of the event.

Badiou's "The Writing of the Generic" hails the author as an economist. According to Badiou, Beckett's novels compress 'the complexity of experience to a few principal functions...[characters] lose their inessential attributes in the course of the text: clothing, objects, possessions, body parts and fragments of language' (OB 3). However, Badiou maintains that this reduction does not infer a 'nihilistic' (OB 4) stance and 'is by no means the *expression* of a spontaneous metaphysics' (C 264). Rather, Beckett's texts examine 'that which happens' (C 267) from within an evental framework.

Due to the scope and confines of this thesis introduction, further discussion of Badiou and Beckett will be limited to the article "Figures of Subjective Destiny" in order to interrogate the link between Beckett's work and Badiou's claim that 'philosophy finds in literature some examples of completely new forms of the destiny of the human subject' ("Figures...")¹¹. Badiou regards Beckett's *How It Is* as an exemplary exploration of subjective positions, asserting that Beckett presents here 'the generic figures of everything that can happen to a member of human kind' ("Figures..."). Beckett's creation of the four distinct categories of the wanderer, the tormentor, the victim and the immobile are 'generic avatars of existence' ("Figures..."). According to Badiou:

these figures are egalitarian ...there is no particular hierarchy, nothing that would indicate that this or that one of the four figures is to be desired, preferred, or distributed differently than the others. The words "tormentor" and "victim" should not mislead us in this regard ("Figures...").

Beckett's constructions interrogate how and when a subject can emerge when seized by a truth and traces the development from waiting and naming an event (the figures of the wanderer and the victim) to persisting in the traces of and investigating the event (the figures of the tormentor and the immobile).

¹¹ I have chosen this article as it aligns literature with a discussion of subjectivisation.

Commentators such as Lawrence Sutin and Douglas Mackey frequently cite Philip K. Dick as a contemporary of Beckett in terms of a commitment to ontological extrapolation (xxvii/preface n.p.). The following thesis aims to build upon this identification and to propose that Dick shares with Beckett an “evental emphasis”. That is to say that, Dick’s texts are not solely ‘hyperreal’ (Baudrillard) worlds dominated by simulacra and the “death of the subject” (Scott Durham, 174), but are also worlds open to the chance of the event from within a universe of actual infinity that allows for an engagement with the subject in Badiou’s terms. Dick’s ‘love of chaos’ (“How To...” 262) expressed via his “reality breakdown” formula provides the subtractive requisite for such an approach.

Specific texts analysed will be Dick’s Hugo award winning *The Man in the High Castle*, his 1959 novel, *Time Out of Joint* and the short story from his later period “We Can Remember if For You Wholesale”. These texts have been chosen as they each correspond to a different chronological period of Dick’s work as identified by Douglas Mackey and share in a critical engagement with the question of history and its construction.¹² Although the waning of the historical and the question of historical validity is frequently cited as a postmodern concern, I aim to demonstrate that Dick’s texts ask how a distance from the state, from representation and the symbolic strictures can be achieved. Furthermore, I seek to establish that Dick’s fictions can comment on the ethical task and the struggles for subjectivisation from within Badiou’s schema.

¹² Douglas Mackey divides Dick’s corpus into broad chronological bands and groups the novels and short stories together according to their common concerns. Thus, using Mackey’s system, *The Man in the High Castle* belongs to “The Early Sixties”, *Time Out of Joint* is placed within “The Fifties” and “We Can Remember It For You Wholesale” is part of “The Late Sixties”. By using texts from different chronological periods of Dick’s oeuvre, I hope to show range within the corpus.

CHAPTER ONE

Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* and the Arduous Path of [Artistic] Truth

Most critical assessments of Philip K. Dick's corpus agree that the author's 1962 alternate history novel, *The Man in the High Castle*, is a 'masterpiece' (Darko Suvin 2) of narrative sophistication that successfully combines Dick's science fiction and realist talents as developed in his earlier works.¹³ Kim Stanley Robinson devotes the fourth chapter of his study, *The Novels of Philip K. Dick* (1984), to an analysis of the text, outlining several points of divergence between *The Man in the High Castle* and Dick's preceding science fiction works such as *The Solar Lottery* and *The Man Who Japed* in order to account for the 'tremendous leap' (39) in narrative quality. Firstly, Robinson observes that *The Man in the High Castle* 'is simply longer than any of Dick's previous science fiction novels, and at the same time, it has fewer characters in it than the earlier books do' (39). Consequently, Robinson argues that a greater depth of characterisation is achieved, and that the quality of the prose is comparable to that employed in Dick's realist novels of the 1950s (39). Secondly, Robinson states that the character system of *The Man in the High Castle* differs radically from the "big protagonist / little protagonist" formula favoured in the earlier science fiction works where all of Dick's characters were thrown into the central action of revolution against an oppressive force (40). Robinson argues that *The Man in the High Castle* marks the end of such 'circular' (40) plotting as there is no central action to unite the characters in revolution. Thirdly, there is no turn to a wish fulfilment conclusion; the dystopia of *The Man in the High Castle* remains 'thoroughly entrenched' (Robinson 40) at the close of the text as the

¹³ See Darko Suvin's article "The Artifice as Refuge and Worldview" and Patricia Warrick's second chapter in her *Mind in Motion: The Fiction of Philip K. Dick*.

four central characters remain trapped with their various socio-political constraints and ‘spread out into their environments’ (41). As Robinson succinctly summarises, with *The Man in the High Castle* ‘Dick is no longer content to express wishes; modern realism has invaded the realm of science fiction’ (41).

Robinson’s analysis intimates that Dick’s realist turn negates the possibility of revolt and thus the chance occurrence of the event. Although Robinson is correct to state that there is no wholesale revolution within the world of *The Man in the High Castle*, he fails to appreciate that points of rupture do occur within the text, notably in the domain of art. The following chapter will focus upon the role of art in Dick’s text and move to argue that *The Man in the High Castle* interrogates art as a condition of truth and a point of subjectivisation as the concepts of truth and subject are understood in Alain Badiou’s subtractive philosophical schema. The chapter aims to demonstrate that Dick’s use of a realist code does not negate the possibility of a revolutionary subject but rather allows for a detailed examination of the construction of the count and the struggles for incorporation within a truth process under a Statist economy¹⁴.

The Power of the Count: Inclusion over Belonging

‘Send that,’ he told her. ‘Sign it, et cetera. Work the sentences, if you wish, so that they will mean something...Or so that they will mean nothing. Whichever you prefer’ (MHC 100).

Karen Hellekson classifies *The Man in the High Castle* as a ‘true alternate history’ (7) since it ‘take[s] place years after a change in a nexus event’ (7) and presents the reader with a ‘radically changed world’ (7). In Dick’s case, great care is taken to delineate and create a viable alternate history based in extensive research that relies on not one but two changes to the historical narrative. Paying ‘homage’ (Robinson 42) to the conventions of the alternate history genre, Dick combines a ‘violent shift in political leadership’ (Robinson 42) with an altered result to a ‘crucial battle’ (Robinson 42) in order to create the ‘gloomy’ (MHC 193) America of *The Man in the High Castle* in which it is imagined that the Axis powers emerged victorious at the end of World War Two and proceeded to occupy the United States. According to Dick’s fictional world, a successful assassination attempt on President Roosevelt in 1933 caused America to remain in economic depression and abandon the nuclear program. As a direct result,

¹⁴ I have chosen to use the word ‘Statist’ here to describe the operator of the count as Badiou uses the term to play on the meaning of a political state as well as the state of the situation.

Dick proposes that Germany developed this capability and used the technology in World War Two. Furthermore, Dick imagines that Adolf Hitler followed Hermann Goering's advice and targeted radar stations during the Battle of Britain, contributing to the Axis victory.

As the reader enters the text, tensions rise between Germany and Japan owing to the provisional power share of land. Although the American nation is split geographically and ideologically between the war's victors into three distinct zones summarised as the PSA (the West coast under Japanese, Taoist rule), the Eastern bloc (controlled by Germany and Nazi politics) and a neutral "buffer zone" (Cassie Carter 333) along the Rocky Mountains (where a synthesis of Nazism and Taoism exists), the Nazi party covertly plan to eradicate their Japanese counterparts with a nuclear attack code-named "Operation Dandelion". The sudden death of the Nazi Chancellor Martin Bormann, does not alleviate this tension: there is little opportunity for a change in policy as Bormann's possible successors are ranked according to their views on and support for "Operation Dandelion". There appears to be no conceivable end to the Nazi party's desire for the foreclosure of any and all contrary elements in their pursuit of the same.

This is not to suggest however, that the Japanese-ruled territories permit the individual any more freedom. Rather, within each zone, a restrictive socio-political economy is created as the ruling elites employ economic, political and military oppression in order to ensure that their regime is perpetuated. In Badiou's terms, the political economy of *The Man in the High Castle* is explicitly Statist as both Germany and Japan seek to deny the inclusion of new elements within appearing and control the counting operations: there is an excess of inclusion over belonging.

The Eastern Bloc and the Delusion of Foreclosure

Do they [the Nazi leadership] ignore parts of reality? Yes. But it is more than that (MHC 45).

In many respects, Dick's evocation of the Nazi party and their politics exemplifies the function of the counting operations as the creation of coherence and the removal of elements that run contrary to State interests. Through the use of indirect reportage, Dick presents the reader with a complete history of fascist expansion, carefully delineating the physical, economic and cultural effects of the assertion of the particularity 'Aryan' above all contrary elements. It is revealed that the genocide of Jews, gypsies, Bible students and the entire continent of Africa has taken place within

the space of fifteen years under the leadership of Martin Bormann following the death of Adolf Hitler due to syphilis. Physically the natural environment has been radically altered as the Mediterranean Sea has been pillaged, ‘bottled up, drained, made into tillable farmland, through the use of atomic power’ (MHC 29); culturally, the artistic industry has been rendered stagnant - the New York printing industry has been all but obliterated with no new works emerging from the capital. Similarly, a stringent censorship policy explicitly prohibits any counter-hegemonic documents to exist within the Eastern Bloc. Access to art and education mirrors the aforementioned hierarchical assertion of race with the ‘Slavs, Poles, Puerto Ricans...the most limited as to what they could read, do, listen to’ (MHC 88).

In an interview included on disk four of the *Blade Runner* DVD, Philip K. Dick describes *The Man in the High Castle* and his evocation of the Nazi party as his first significant investigation into the “inauthentic human being”. Arguing that ‘android’ is merely a metaphorical term for those who lack the ability to engage with the new and find themselves reduced to a system, a passive reflex machine, Dick states that the German mentality becomes android as their fanatical drive for power leads to a corresponding eradication of the creative function. Consequently, German idealism becomes the subject of satire as the drive for land and power is described metaphorically in terms of regression within the text of *The Man in the High Castle*:

Bunch of automatons, building and toiling away. Building? Grinding down. Ogres out of a palaeontology exhibit, at their task of making a cup from enemy’s skull, the whole family industriously scooping out the contents – the raw brains – first, to eat. Then useful utensils of men’s leg bones. Thrifty...the first technicians! (17).

Efficiency becomes a cannibalistic nightmare. Frank Fink, a Jew covertly living in the PSA under the surname ‘Frink’, can thus only consider the German expansion into space and proposed plans for space colonisation as a perpetuation of the suffering experienced on earth. Chanting a ‘satire to himself’ (MHC16) following a morning radio broadcast announcing that the space effort will continue, Frank states:

‘Gott, Herr Kreisleiter. Ist dies vielleicht der Ort wo man das Konzentrationslager bilden kann? Das Wetter ist so schön. Heiss, aber doch schön ...’ (MHC 16).

‘*The weather is schön, so schön. But there is nothing to breathe*’ (MHC16).

Frank conducts his retort in German, mocking the ambitions of the ruling elite with their own tongue, providing a form of subversion through his mimicry of the dominant codes.

Rudolf Wegener, a fractious German who hopes to bring news of Operation Dandelion to the Japanese, shares Frank's disdain, describing the fascist mind in terms of psychological disturbance. Shuddering at the thought that he is 'racially akin' (MHC 45) to those in power, Wegener considers that:

They [the Nazi party] want to be the agents, not the victims of history. They identify with God's power and believe they are godlike. That is their basic madness. They are overcome by some archetype; their egos have expanded psychotically so that they cannot tell where they begin and the godhead leaves off...it is an inflation of the ego to its ultimate - confusion between him who worships and that which is worshipped. Man has not eaten God; God has eaten man. (MHC 45-6).

Wegener's internal monologue implies that Nazism does not just ignore reality and the suffering of others at their hands but creates a completely new reality in which the Aryan race assumes the position of deity. In this age of 'reverse communion' (Douglas Mackey 48), Wegener can only conclude that 'the madmen are in power' (MHC 44). Similarly, the fascist mindset is deplored as unbalanced by the Taoist philosophy of the Japanese. Mr Tagomi, a respected Japanese business man in the PSA argues that Nazi totalitarian policies render evil palpable and concrete 'like cement' (MHC 97).

The Way of the Tao: Pacific Seaboard America (PSA)

'I am an outsider in my own country' (Robert Childan, MHC 105).

Dick's indirect, amplified account of fascist domination and the imbalance caused by the assertion of the 'Aryan' race, finds its counterpart in the direct reportage of quotidian existence under Japanese, Taoist rule within the PSA. Guided by a reverence for the wisdom of the *I Ching*, the PSA operates according to a principle of synchronicity in which emphasis is placed upon acting in accordance with the 'moment'. Christopher Palmer therefore views the inclusion of the *I Ching* as a 'refreshing presence' (126) that contrasts to the stagnant ordering of time within the world of the Eastern Bloc.

Although the *I Ching* may well be a 'refreshing presence', certain parallels can be drawn between the PSA and the fascist creation of coherence within the Eastern Bloc. The *I Ching* ultimately demands submission to the One; to invoke the language of Lacanian psychoanalysis, the *I Ching* performs the function of an "Other Supposed to

Know”. Viewed as such, the *I Ching* presents reality as full and consistent for those who choose to follow its path; there can be no eruption of chance or the event as the oracle does not aim at overcoming existing conditions but rather appropriates rupture as part of an onward journey towards balance; the book of divination renders the revolutionary subject of the event obsolete.¹⁵ As Dick himself suggests in his essay, “Schizophrenia and the Book of Changes”, ‘the possibility of free, effective action of any kind is abolished’ (181) with adherence to the book. Reliance upon the One of the *I Ching* affords fate a crucial role (‘fate will poleaxe us eventually anyhow’(MHC 55)) and stifles action; man is seen as ‘too small’ (55) and insignificant to alter its judgement.

Similarly, evidence exists within the text to suggest that the appropriation of the *I Ching* by a number of the novel’s American characters forms part of a wider enforced colonisation project taking place within the PSA as the Japanese occupation of America is shown to alter the country’s cultural and artistic economy. Echoing the restriction of art within the Eastern Bloc, the Japanese victors create a stagnant artistic economy that privileges relics of the past and suppresses the production of innovative new works. Comparable to ‘the order of coin or stamp collecting’ (MHC 31), the Japanese exhibit a feverish desire for American ‘ethnic’ art objects produced in the pre-war period. This appropriation of “antiquities” should not be seen as an altruistic attempt to explore and keep current a colonised race. Rather, the collection of artistic goods is performed in a manner in which American culture is sheared from its history and reduced to a commodity - the Imperial Major Humo fails to appreciate that the “Horrors of War” cards he seeks to collect were once imbued with use, employed as ‘flip cards’ (MHC 32) for children’s games.

Cassie Carter dedicates her article “The Metacolonisation of Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle*” to an exploration of what she terms the ‘ironic scenario’ (333) expressed in the Japanese PSA. Carter argues that the ‘Japanese colonizers are mirror images of Western ideals and values instilled by colonialism’. Thus, she proposes that ‘the PSA represents an America occupied and “oppressed” by a simulation of itself’ (333). It is fitting therefore, that an ‘authentic 1938 Mickey Mouse watch’ (MHC 48) is invoked by the text as ‘the most authentic [object] of dying old U.S. culture, a rare retained artefact carrying flavour of bygone halcyon day’ (MHC 47-8). Dick’s choice of art object rebounds through layers of simulation, sharply satirising contemporary

¹⁵ Furthermore, Frank’s rhetorical questioning (‘Can anyone alter it? He wondered. All of us combined...or one great figure...or someone strategically placed...chance. Accident’ (MHC 55)) takes on a particular relevance as his wording suggests that the event – the ‘chance’ rupture – could unravel the structure disclosed by the oracle.

culture's concession to the image and the reign of simulacra that he saw as ubiquitous within the America of Disneyland.¹⁶ Art in the PSA can thus be said to be a suspect medium that cannot offer a guarantee of truth.

Dick evokes art within the PSA as a purely relative product. In order to placate the Japanese demand for American ethnic objects, the factory owner Wyndam-Matson and his employees Ed McCarthy and Frank Fink, create replicas of antique artefacts to sell as "authentic" to store owners such as the aforementioned Robert Childan. Fraudulence therefore reigns at the centre of this economy as 'nothing is true or certain' (MHC 159); value is exclusively relative. As suggested by Wyndam-Matson, an external reference is required in order to guarantee an object's worth (MHC 66), the object itself has no worth other than what is given to it by the appearing of a world.

However, two art objects exist within the text that refuse their appropriation within the world of *The Man in the High Castle*. Ed McCarthy and Frank Fink depart from the colonial economy of the PSA and set out to produce a line of contemporary American jewellery made through the innovative process of adapting the industrial techniques they learnt under Wyndam-Matson. Referred to as an 'authentically...new thing on the face of the world' (171), the EdFrank jewellery, as it is called, shatters the appearing of the current world. Similarly, the author Hawthorne Abendsen creates an alternate history novel entitled *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*. Although this text bears no novelty of form, the novel creates a point of paradox that demands the intervention of philosophy in order to think its truth.

Suspending the Count: The "Affirmative Split" of Art¹⁷

'But that's the task of art...art has to go on - it can't stay still' (MHC 43).

Proposing that the link between art and philosophy '...has always been affected by a symptom - that of an oscillation or a pulse' (HI 1), Alain Badiou argues that art can allow for the possibility of truth and that art shares with philosophy a responsibility to expose truths. However, Badiou specifies that this conflation of art and philosophy does not represent a return to didactic, classic or romantic schemas (HI 11), owing to the

¹⁶ See Dick's paper "How To Build A Universe That Doesn't Fall Apart Two Days Later" (1978).

¹⁷ Badiou asserts that the rupture announced by art is always an 'affirmative spit' ("The Subject of Art") as the possibility of new creation asserts that something is still possible.

‘saturation’ of such schemas today. Badiou affirms that it is ‘necessary to propose a new schema, a fourth modality [that rethinks] the link between philosophy and art’ (HI 9).

Badiou’s fourth modality links art and philosophy under the category of truth (HI 9) as this concept is understood within his subtractive philosophy of the event. Claiming art as a condition of philosophy, Badiou signals that the discipline is open to the irruption of the new. Thus, art is not a decoration or ornamentation but an ‘affirmative split’ (Badiou, “The Subject of Art”) and a mode of thinking that is ‘responsible for the subjectivating capture of events and the production of multiple truths’ (OB xxvi). Within this schema, philosophy acts as the ‘go-between or procuress in our encounters with truth’ (OB xxvi). As Nina Power and Alberto Toscano suggest, philosophy bears no truth. Rather, it is ‘duty bound to make the truths of art apparent and consistent with the abstract discourse of ontology, but not to assimilate them to itself and claim them as its own property’ (OB xxvii). Therefore, it can be said that artistic truths exist and that these truths can only be found in art.

In his *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou provides an extended reading of artistic truth under the musical variant ‘Scholium’. Badiou contends that Arnold Schönberg’s serial technique represents an event for the world of German music at the end of the nineteenth century. According to Badiou, the “Schönberg event” ‘breaks the history of music in two by affirming the possibility of a sonic world no longer ruled by the tonal system’ (80); Schönberg’s serial technique rebukes classic harmony and the tonal hierarchy by treating the twelve tones of the chromatic scale equally, ‘according to a principle of succession’ (80). Badiou argues that the subject of this event is the artistic ‘configuration’ (77) or sequence of works that adhere to the policy of innovation. For Badiou, the artist cannot be the subject of an artistic truth as this would mean to assert a name and a particularity upon truth. As he states in his *Ethics*, ‘the subject points of art are works of art...the artist enters into the composition of these subjects (the works are ‘his’), without our being able in any sense to reduce them to ‘him’ (and besides, which ‘him’ would this be?)’ (44).

However, this is not to suggest that the ‘human animal’ is denied a place within the artistic truth process. Badiou proposes that the incorporation of the ‘human animal’ within an artistic truth is signalled by one of four affects that he names as terror (the desire to bring about the new truth immediately); anxiety (‘the desire for continuity’ within appearing (LW 86), a retreat from the event), courage (the acceptance of a plurality of points) and justice (an affirmation of ‘what is continuous and negotiated on the one hand, and of what is discontinuous and violent on the other’ LW 86). Existing

as ‘subjective modalities’ (LW 86), Badiou proposes that there is no hierarchy attached to the differing values. Rather, terror, anxiety, courage and justice form part of the unfolding path of truth.

Maximal Effect: EdFrank Jewellery

‘...this is really good, creative original handmade jewellery’ (MHC 133)

Echoing what Badiou names the ‘Schönberg event’ in classical music, EdFrank’s amorphous jewellery marks a new artistic arrangement that contradicts the official discourse. The artefacts’ position as counter-hegemonic is immediately signalled in the text as Ed McCarthy and Frank Fink reveal that they are driven by a desire to depart from the colonial economy that leaves them ‘defeated and hopeless’ (MHC 49) and ‘play around. Like a kid plays’ (MHC 52). Ed and Frank directly challenge the ‘Nazi idea that Jews can’t create’ (MHC 52) and threaten to undermine the duplicitous, fraudulent artistic economy that reigns in the PSA through the creation of original pieces. Indeed, McCarthy takes it upon himself to blackmail the factory owner Wyndam-Matson in order to obtain business start-up funds and Frank bluntly instructs shop owner Robert Childan that his antiques are but mass-produced forgeries of the originals, questioning him as to whether he ‘cannot distinguish the forgeries from the real?’ (MHC 59). A series of unscrupulous acts thus pave the way for the creation of the EdFrank pieces.

Following Frank’s revelation regarding the fraudulent antiquities industry, Robert Childan is first exposed to the EdFrank jewellery in chapter nine of *The Man in the High Castle* as Ed McCarthy attempts to sell his ‘handwrought’ (MHC 133) original pieces to him. Although initially rebuking Ed McCarthy’s sales proposition and designating the contemporary American artwork as ‘not in my line’ (MHC 140), Childan perceives a latent economic opportunity and pushes the seller to leave the pieces with him on consignment:

I'll change the tags. Mark them up a lot higher. Push the hand-made angle. And the uniqueness. Custom originals. Small sculptures. Wear a work of art. Exclusive creation on your lapel or wrist.

And there was another notion circulating and growing in the back of Robert Childan's mind. *With these, there's no problem of authenticity...* (MHC 145).

Childan's internal monologue clearly intimates that he is driven solely by economic gain and to 'have the edge over the competition' (MHC 146). His acceptance of the contemporary American artefacts should not, however, be confused with an altruistic attempt to revive American artwork within a stagnant economy. As both Christopher Palmer and Cassie Carter have stated, Childan has adapted his views to those of the ruling elites; he keeps up with the Japanese 'play of appearances' but also displays overt racism similar to that expressed within the Nazi ranks (338).

It is Childan's desire for social elevation and his excessive yearning to keep 'the proper expression' (MHC 113) that leads him to offer a piece of the EdFrank jewellery to the Japanese businessman, Paul Kasoura. Secretly aiming to seduce Paul's wife, Betty, through this gesture, Childan meets with Paul in his office to discuss Betty's response to the artefact. However, as Childan introduces the item into discussion, Paul reveals that 'I did not give the piece of jewellery to her...It has not left this office' (MHC 169) as he '*feel[s] a certain emotional fondness*' (MHC 170) towards the artefact:

'...But it somehow partakes of Tao. You see?' He motioned Childan over. 'It is balanced. The forces within this piece are stabilised. At rest. So to speak, this object has made its peace with the universe. It has separated from it and hence has managed to come to homeostasis'.

Childan nodded, studied the piece. But Paul had lost him.

'It does not have *wabi*,' Paul said, 'nor could it ever. But-' He touched the pin with his nail. 'Robert, this object has *wu*'. (170).

Childan significantly mistranslates 'wu' as 'wisdom...or comprehension. Anyhow, it was highly good' (171). Literally implying, 'void', 'wu' is apt to describe the jewellery since it is the void of the present appearing; in Badiou's terms it is that which is not counted by the world of America under occupation.

As Paul continues in his attempts to describe the EdFrank piece, he struggles to name this unnameable, non-sense item:

To have no historicity, and also no artistic, aesthetic worth, and yet to partake of some ethereal value - that is a marvel...It is a religious experience. Here an

artificer has put wu into the object...In other words, an entire new world is pointed to by this. The name for it is neither art, for it has no form, nor religion. What is it?... (171).

'...an entire new world is pointed to, by this... We evidently lack the word for an object like this. So you are right, Robert. It is authentically a new thing on the face of the world' (MHC 171).

Existing as an 'authentically new thing on the face of the world' (MHC 171), the artwork points to 'an entire new world' (MHC 171) located outside of language and knowledge. In Badiou's terms the EdFrank jewellery is a self-referring element (a eventual site) that marks creation ex nihilo as it is the "non-sense" of truth. Significantly, Paul intimates that it is Childan who will be subject to this truth as he instructs Childan to 'face [his] reality with more courage' (MHC 172):

'The task is yours. You are the sole agent responsible for this piece and others of its ilk... Withdraw for a period into isolation. Meditate, possibly consult the *Book of Changes*. Then study your window displays, your ads, your system of merchandising... You will see your way... How you must go about putting these objects over in a big fashion'.

Childan felt stunned. The man's telling me that I'm *obliged* to assume moral responsibility for the EdFrank jewellery! (172).

Paul's terms clearly connote adherence to a Taoist philosophy. Childan explicitly denies the terms presented to him, regarding such a Japanese conception of moral custom as 'dreadful... a catastrophe' (MHC 173); 'Obligation, he thought bitterly. It could stick with him the rest of his life, once incurred. Right to the grave itself' (MHC 173). Echoing Wegener's language used to describe the Nazi leadership, Childan decrees Japanese customs psychotic; he refuses the mingling of business and the spiritual, offering the piece back to Paul unaware of the correct procedure to follow when 'a high placed Japanese [is] lauding to the skies a gift grafted to him – and then returning it' (MHC 172).

Immediately following this exchange, Paul Kasoura reveals that he has shown the art objects to his business contacts and created interest in the pieces as possible mass-produced charms. Appealing to Childan's desire for social elevation, Paul reveals it is a buoyant market and 'big business' (MHC 174); a chance for Childan to become 'extremely wealthy' (MHC 175). Childan thus finds a choice forced upon him: should he appropriate the EdFrank jewellery within the larger appearing of *The Man in the High Castle* by agreeing to the business proposition offered or should he refuse and retain the singularity of the objects. Feeling seduced by Paul's reasoning that the 'vast

number of uneducated' (MHC 175) derive pleasure from 'models and replicas... cast by the tens of thousands' (MHC 175), Childan accepts the business proposition believing he has adhered to the correct procedure in such matters.

However, as Childan thanks Paul and turns to leave, he notes discontent in Paul. When questioned by Paul as to what the artists planned for their work, Childan "sees" for the first time - he believes that the entire affair has been an example of Japanese 'cunning' (MHC 177); 'Paul did not say - did not tell me - that our art was worthless; he got me to say it for him' (MHC 177). Gathering courage, Childan stammers, 'Paul, I...am...humiliated' (MHC 178). Declaring 'I - am proud of this work. There can be no consideration of trashy good-luck charms...I ask for apology' (MHC 178), Childan appears to have shed his previous views and become endowed with a new conception of the situation; he has been 'converted' (MHC 217). John L. Simons suggests that it is this rebuke and valorisation of the singularity of the creative artwork that allows Childan to reclaim his subjecthood. Simons states, 'by selling Frank Frink's pins, and in arguing for their artistic merit, Childan at once extols art's capacity to engender creation and his own desire to begin a new life' (268). Simons attaches a theological reading to Childan's awakening, arguing that Dick's naming of Paul Kasoura and the religious vocabulary of the text ('converted') invokes St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (270) in which an emphasis is placed upon seeing anew, seeing as a child:

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even also as I am known (1 Corinthians 13:9-13, p 218).

Although I agree that the religious connotations are present and that Childan's name immediately connotes the image of a child, as Simons continues his reading he enforces a theological reading of the artwork as a 'magic' (Simons 270) or divine piece and thus distances the object from the world. I believe that it would be more accurate to read the Pauline overtones of the text as evidence that Childan has experienced an event comparable to that of St. Paul's on the road to Damascus. For Badiou, St Paul is 'our contemporary' (SP 4) precisely because his work of fidelity to the Christ event illuminates the trajectory of truth in his philosophical schema - the event is only a brief illumination that dismisses the Count, truth necessitates a sustained engagement and a prolonged effort if we are to achieve justice. Thus, in a Pauline manner, Robert Childan

spreads forth the “good news” presented by the EdFrank jewellery to his customers as the text progresses.

Mr. Nobusuke Tagomi, a Japanese trade official, enters Childan’s American Handicrafts Inc following a spiritual crisis. Tagomi, a committed Buddhist, attempts to return a Colt .44 recently used to foil and kill two SS agents sent to terminate a Japanese minister. Claiming that the weapon is imbued with too much “subjective history” (MHC 215), Tagomi asks for an exchange. Childan refuses. Instead, he offers Tagomi one of the EdFrank pieces promising that they are ‘the future’ (MHC 216).

Having been previously unable to find spiritual sanctuary in the guidance of the *I Ching*, Tagomi consents to Childan’s proposal and immediately begins to contemplate the object, seeking illumination and spiritual calm. Tagomi’s behaviour appears comic as he seeks to desperately discern the object’s truth:

If I shake it violently, like old recalcitrant watch. He did so, up and down. Or like dice in critical game. Awaken the deity inside. Peradventure he sleepeth. Or he is on a journey. Titillating heavy irony by Prophet Elijah. Or he is pursuing. Mr. Tagomi violently shook the silver squiggle up and down in his clenched fist once. Call him louder. Again he scrutinised (219).

Tagomi concludes ‘you little thing, you are empty’ (219) yet nonetheless continues in his “scientific” investigation of the piece, invoking his senses – touch, smell, taste, and sight in the contemplation. Suddenly, the piece becomes illuminated by sunlight. Tagomi holds the object’s gaze and marvels at the light yet finds his contemplation disturbed by a passer-by:

‘Spoiled. My chance at nirvana. Gone. Interrupted by that white barbarian Neanderthal yank’ (222).

Tagomi’s short syntax and insults not separated by punctuation clearly display his frustration and his colonial, racist attitude. Believing that the piece is useless, he sets out to return to his office. However, as Tagomi leaves the park bench, his experience quickly turns into science fiction. He realises that the reality around him is not *his* world. There are no pedecabs and contrary to the customary reverence he experiences as a Japanese official and he finds himself addressed by the racial slur ‘tojo’ (MHC 223). Tagomi’s pursuit of nirvana has turned into a nightmare.

Returning to the park bench, Tagomi collects the abandoned EdFrank piece and scorns himself for his actions. Reasoning that his greed for the truth has unsettled his

sense of balance, Tagomi describes his reality slip in terms of psychological disturbance:

Now one appreciate Saint Paul's incisive word choice...seen through glass darkly not a metaphor, but 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 disturbances of middle ear (225).

Does this reference to St. Paul imply that Tagomi is on the path to truth like Robert Childan? No: Tagomi remains within the logic of appearing, treating his nightmare experience according to the laws of Taoism. His use of the terms 'distortion' and 'falter' suggest that he has lost his way, his balance with the world. Tagomi is not prepared to pursue these points of rupture but rather to deny their effect; he does not appreciate the novelty of the EdFrank pieces and desires no further engagement with them, returning quickly to his symbolic role as a trade official.

However, Tagomi's reference to St Paul does suggest that he is alert to the logics of appearing. That is to say that, Tagomi's experience has alerted him to the state's inherent duplicity. Realising that the organised meeting between himself, Wegener and the Japanese minister was nothing more than a 'cardboard front' (MHC 227) to bring news of "Operation Dandelion" to Japanese high officials, Tagomi argues that reality is purposely illusory and that the individual within this schema is a mere pawn, trapped within the play of appearances:

My self, my office; they made use of me here...I was their – what is it deemed? Their cover (MHC 227).

The result of this revelation of appearances is that Tagomi breaks with Japanese custom by refusing to co-operate with Hugo Reiss, the Reichs Consul in San Francisco, denying his request to deport Frank Fink to the Eastern Bloc. Tagomi's denial represents a break with the state and the initiation of a possible political truth procedure. However, it is significant that Tagomi experiences a heart attack immediately following this act. Receiving the hexagram "inner truth" from the *I Ching* as he struggles on the floor, Tagomi continues to entertain contradictory ideas of truth, suggesting that death itself is the inner truth prophesied. Dick does not allow Tagomi any solace or certainty in his final appearance; rather, Tagomi remains clutching at straws, scrambling for truth and subjectivity.

As the novel nears conclusion, the final image the reader is given of the EdFrank jewellery is that of Frank Fink returning to his workshop:

‘I have to find my way back to the workshop, down there in that basement. Pick up where I left off, making the jewellery, using my hands. Working and not thinking, not looking up or trying to understand’ (Frank, MHC 232).

The promise of further work indicates that the configuration of the EdFrank jewellery has only just begun. The reader cannot yet know what this configuration will be and what truth the pieces bring. As Badiou states in *St. Paul and the Foundation of Universalism*, ‘truth is a process and not an illumination’ (15). It remains to be seen whether Childan’s ready conversion to the pieces will achieve the status of courage and justice or whether he will fall prey to terror and anxiety.

Into Actual Infinity: The Grasshopper Lies Heavy

‘It is impossible that ours is the only world’ (MHC 234)

Both Lorenzo DiTommaso and Patricia Warrick posit that Hawthorne Abendsen’s alternate history novel *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* performs a role analogous to the EdFrank jewellery (112; 40) within the world of *The Man in the High Castle*. Offering its readers a ‘creative salvation’ (Warrick 42) and regarded as a utopian construction by most inhabitants of Dick’s ‘gloomy’ America, *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* contradicts the official historical narrative of *The Man in the High Castle* by suggesting that the Allied powers won World War Two.¹⁸ Although prohibited throughout the United States and in Europe, the novel appears and is discussed by several key characters within *The Man in the High Castle*, as once again, art is shown to harbour a specifically subversive stance, ‘stirring up a lot of talk’ (MHC 69) and proving to be a burden as the novel’s biblically inspired title suggests.¹⁹

Wyndam-Matson and his secretary, Rita, discuss *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* at length. Dismissing the novel as ‘another fad, another mass craze’ (68), Wyndam-Matson guffaws as Rita outlines Abendsen’s text, describing how an Allied victory could occur:

¹⁸ Abendsen’s text contains both a changed battle sequence (Berlin falls to Britain) and a change in political leadership (Adolf Hitler stands trial for his crimes rather than dying of syphilis as it is posited in *The Man in the High Castle*).

¹⁹ Dick’s text alludes to Ecclesiastes 12:5 ‘and the grasshopper shall be a burden’ (760). Ecclesiastes focuses upon extolling virtue before God.

Abendsen's theory is that Roosevelt would have been a terribly strong President. As strong as Lincoln...so he's [Roosevelt] President until 1940, until during the war. Don't you see? He's still President when Germany attacks England and France and Poland. And he sees all that. He makes America strong...[Abendsen's] theory is that instead of an isolationist like Bricker, in 1940 after Roosevelt, Rexford Tugwell would have been President...and he would have been very active in continuing the Roosevelt anti-Nazi policies. So Germany would have been afraid to come to Japan's help in 1941...Do you see? ...And so Germany and Japan would have lost the war! (MHC 68-9).

Rita's extended explanation immediately signals to the reader of *The Man in the High Castle* that the alternate history of *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* is not congruent with their own. It is apparent that Abendsen's text does not represent the reader's own reality; rather as Eric Rabkin suggests, the text is the mirror image of a mirror image (184), creating a distorted vision that does not allow a return to classical logic. Differentiated only via the slightest modifications, the competing historical narratives of the reader, Dick's text and Abendsen's novel, open up history to a multiplicity of presents, recalling Badiou's thesis that 'history does not exist' (LW 560). History is thus shown to be a mutable construction that is controlled by those in power, a matter for the Count, not for the subject to truth.

Wyndam-Matson denies the mutability of history presented to him and remains resistant to Rita's claims that an Allied victory was possible. Arguing that for the Japanese 'it was their destiny to assume dominance in the Pacific...[and that] no strategy on earth could have defeated Erwin Rommel' (MHC 69-70), Wyndam-Matson extols a static view of time. Wyndam-Matson can therefore be said to be completely indoctrinated within the fascist code of the Eastern Bloc as he refutes even the possibility of change, choosing the comfort of the logics of appearing. As suggested by both Cassie Carter and Jason Vest, Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* is a study in oppression, the novel traces the effects of colonisation upon the individual and demonstrates that 'fascism debilitates the colonised individual's ability to resist its restrictive ideology' (Vest 55). For Wyndam-Matson there can be no consideration of an alternative to his current situation as he enjoys a privileged position within the business world, even extolling the work ethic employed in the work camps of the East:

Rita said, 'I couldn't live in those work camps, those dorms back East. A girl friend of mine; she lived there. They censored her mail – she couldn't tell me about it until she moved back out here again'...

'You'd get used to it [Wyndam-Matson replied]. You'd have clean quarters, adequate food, recreation, medical care provided. What do you want? Egg in your beer?' (MHC 71).

Wyndam-Matson's satirical slur serves to highlight that he is not concerned with the plight of others and that he is content with the world as it is presented; he does not care for points of rupture and cannot think their truth.

By contrast, Freiherr Hugo Reiss, the Reichs Consul in San Francisco, feels compelled to read Abendsen's contraband text. Alone in his office, Reiss reads of Abendsen's imaginings of a British advance upon Berlin and is surprised by the palpable effect the fiction has had on him:

How that man can write, he thought. Completely carried me away. Real. Fall of Berlin to the British, as vivid as if it had actually taken place. Brr. He shivered... Sorry I started it. But too late; must finish, now (MHC 124).

As Reiss continues, he becomes increasingly upset. Abendsen's depiction of Hitler's trial stirs in him a recognition that the current Nazi leadership has departed from the world of German hegemony. Abendsen's fictional characters are 'somehow grander, more in the old spirit than the actual world' (MHC 127). Reiss asks 'how could that be?' (127) and becomes frustrated that his emotions and 'base lusts' (127) have been provoked by the novel. Reiss' palpable response to the text signals that this point of paradox has alerted him to reflect critically upon his own history. However, he is unable to pursue this engagement as he immediately denies that *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* can have any effect upon the 'intellect' (127). Reacting with anger and returning to the racist code, Reiss concludes that only a Jew could have written such 'trickery' (127):

Where was this published? Herr Reiss inspected the copy of the book. Omaha, Nebraska. Last outpost of the former plutocratic U.S. publishing industry, once located in downtown New York and supported by Jewish and Communist gold...

Maybe this Abendsen is a Jew.

They're still at it, trying to poison us... He slammed the covers of the *Grasshopper* violently together. Actual name probably Abendstein (MHC 127).

Reiss ultimately denies the effect that the novel has had on him and proceeds immediately to blame the Japanese authorities' lax enforcement of the prohibition for his own emotional response rather than engage the void. Reiss utters that the author should be terminated yet also concedes that the situation is 'too late' (128), the book is already in print and the Japanese would raise a 'terrific fuss' (128).

Unbeknownst to Reiss, a plot to terminate the novel's author already exists. Joe Cinderella, the official tasked with executing Abendsen, deliberately seduces Juliana

Frink (Frank Fink's ex-wife living in the Rocky Mountains) in order to gain access to Abendsen's home. Learning that Abendsen is particular to 'a certain type of dark, libidinous girl' (202), Joe introduces Juliana to *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* and proposes that they visit the author at his home, the eponymous high castle. Juliana immediately agrees, ignorant of Joe's deception.

It is only when the couple stop over in Denver that Juliana suspects Joe is not the Italian truck driver he professes to be. After spending the day shopping, Juliana meets with Joe and discovers that his hair is now blond and not the deep, thick black hair she had admired earlier. Juliana becomes increasingly suspicious as Joe changes his manner and erupts into angry outbursts insisting that she 'put on the dress or I'll kill you' (200). The tension reaches a climax in the Denver hotel room as Juliana confronts Joe and airs her suspicions:

'How did you know the hotel had valet service? I didn't know it. Did you really have your hair cut and dyed? I think your hair was always blond, and you were wearing a hairpiece. Isn't that so?' (201)

Juliana concludes:

'You must be an SD man,' she said. 'Posing as a wop truck driver. You never fought in North Africa, did you? You're supposed to come here to kill Abendsen; isn't that so? I know it is' (201).

The weight of realisation forces Juliana to 'wither' (201) and feel physically sick (echoing Tagomi's disdain of the Nazi imbalance that he describes as 'evil...like cement' (97)). Retreating to the bathroom, Juliana decides that she must act and kill Joe. Extracting a blade from the hotel's courtesy pack of razors, Juliana slashes Joe's carotid artery.

Juliana's distress is not alleviated by her act of murder. Like Mr. Tagomi following his execution of the Nazi officers, Juliana turns to the *I Ching*. However, unlike Tagomi, Juliana is able to gather solace from the oracle's words and interprets the lines as a 'blueprint, schematic' (209); 'it depicted the situation exactly' (209). Juliana believes fully in the role of the oracle. After receiving the final judgement below, Juliana determines that she 'must bring [Abendsen] the truth' (210) regarding the plot on his life:

One must resolutely make the matter known
At the court of the king.
It must be announced truthfully. Danger.

It is necessary to notify one's own city.
It does not further to resort to arms.
It furthers one to take something.

Confronting Abendsen at his home during a dinner party, Juliana tells of her exploits in an attempt to persuade the author to arm himself against further assassination attempts. Juliana quickly becomes frustrated as the author merely replies 'thanks' (244) and exhibits no concern for his life; Abendsen is 'fatalistic...resigned to [his] own destruction' (245). Juliana interprets Abendsen's lax attitude as evidence that Abendsen receives his guidance from the *I Ching* also and that he has turned his fate over to this device. Arguing that 'the oracle wrote your book. Didn't it?' (245), Juliana asks that Abendsen reveals how he composed the novel. Abendsen's wife interjects at this point, stating:

'I'll tell you then, Mrs. Frink. One by one Hawth made the choices. Thousands of them. By means of lines. Historic period. Subject. Characters. Plot. It took years. Hawth even asked the oracle what sort of success it would be. It told him that it would be a very great success, the first real one of his career' (MHC 245).

Following this revelation that *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* was authored in conjunction with the *I Ching*, Juliana launches a barrage of questions, posing them directly to the oracle and throwing the yarrow sticks in order to read the responses:

Juliana said, 'Oracle, why did you write *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*? What are we supposed to learn?'

'It's Chung Fu', Juliana said. 'Inner Truth. I know without using the chart, too. And I know what it means'.

"It means, does it, that my book is true?"
"Yes". (MHC 246-247)

Significantly, Hawthorne Abendsen is unable to share in Juliana's assertion regarding the truth of his text. Initially mute, Abendsen merely shakes his head as he is asked to 'believe' (MHC 247). Abendsen effectively ends their exchange with his suggestion of a return to formalities, asking Juliana if she would like an autographed copy of *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* (MHC 247).

The Man in the High Castle thus ends with Juliana alone conceiving of *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* as "inner truth". Laura Campbell argues that this climax to the text is fitting. Comparing Tagomi and Juliana, Campbell argues that Dick both comments upon and exploits perceptions of time through the juxtaposition of these two

characters. She states, ‘logic (Tagomi) must adhere to the recognised perception of time; Intuition (Juliana) exists out of this framework’ (196). Freed from the confines of linear time, Juliana ‘roams tirelessly over the face of the earth...She’s doing what’s instinctive to her, simply expressing her being’ (MHC 247). Campbell therefore suggests that *The Man in the High Castle* must end with the climax at Abendsen’s house as Juliana effectively “runs out” of time - she cannot return to the linear plotting and therefore the novel must end (197).

However, Campbell fails to perceive that Juliana’s journey is very much like Tagomi’s progression throughout the novel. Both characters seek truth and moral guidance following distress and receive the same hexagram “inner truth”. It would appear that Juliana chooses to conflate truth with its own (textual) appearing, believing that the novel is the incarnation of a divine truth and conceding fully to the will of the *I Ching*. Juliana’s affirmation that the novel speaks an “inner truth” and her fidelity to this stance thus necessitates a psychotic disavowal of the world of *The Man in the High Castle*, marking a return to the ‘conclusion-within-psychosis’ (Laurence Rickels 54) formula of Dick’s earlier novels. Although Juliana states that truth is ‘destructive’ (MHC 248) and aims to rupture the existing social codes, she chooses negation over the work of subtraction and purification as demanded in Badiou’s schema; Juliana assumes Badiou’s position of ‘disaster’ as she aims to assert a new, consistent mode of appearing at whatever cost.

Similarly, John Rieder suggests that Juliana misperceives the “inner truth” to be found at the close of the text. He argues that Juliana’s affirmation that truth is textual, or rather ‘text to text’ (215) denies the ‘*mise en abime* or liar’s paradox’ (216) created by the juxtaposition of *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* and Dick’s textual world of *The Man in the High Castle*. For Rieder, Juliana’s truth privileges a dualistic conception of reality and presupposes that the real exists; she denies the actual infinity of reality, returning instead to classical logic.

‘Nothing is True or Certain’ (MHC 159): The Vulnerability of Truth and Subject

The political, economic and military situations at the close of *The Man in the High Castle* remain fundamentally unchanged. Following the news that pro-Operation Dandelion candidate Goebbels has ascended to the position of Führer, Wegener starkly claims that ‘it goes on...The internecine hate. Perhaps the seeds are there, in that. They will eat one another at last, and leave the rest of us here and there in the world, still

alive' (MHC 237). Wegener can only hope for the cannibalistic dissolution of the Nazi party. As Kim Stanley Robinson warned, there is no relief for the novel's four protagonists in this world where 'nothing is true or certain' (MHC 159).

However, I will argue that there are grounds for optimism in the novel. It is clear that for Dick, the "authentic human being", the subject, cannot exist within the world of appearing as the state seeks to install its own "pseudorealities" (to use the author's term), rendering reality itself untrustworthy. Dick's authentic human being therefore exists outside of the law. Throughout *The Man in the High Castle* Dick affirms art as a point of rupture with the state, highlighting art's capacity as a form of 'political emancipation' (Badiou "Fifteen Theses") via the use of the EdFrank jewellery and Abendsen's counter-hegemonic text. Art for Dick is thus a point of possibility and a possibility for the subject as in Badiou's schema. However, it is clear that Dick, like Badiou, is not content to concede that any revolutionary act entails subjectivity. Although Dick repeatedly calls upon his protagonists and readers alike to challenge the Statist representations, he demonstrates that pressures exist everywhere to deny the subject and the revolt of the event. His *The Man in the High Castle* outlines that truth is always vulnerable and prey to what Badiou terms the evil of 'disaster' (E 71) (asserting a new consistent truth at all costs) as Juliana's engagement with *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* necessitates psychosis and Tagomi's exploits with the EdFrank pin provokes a similar response. Interestingly, Badiou holds German national socialism as the pseudo-event par excellence, arguing that despite this political procedure's radical appeal, Nazism does not represent the irruption of the void but rather ensures the continuation of existing multiplicities (E 65). For Badiou, Nazism is the paradigm of the evil of 'terror' as it betrays the political event that it promises, calling upon only the particularly 'German' to share in its truth. Dick's text from the outset can thus be said to be caught in the modality of evil; as Tagomi warns, 'evil is actual like cement' (97). *The Man in the High Castle* emphasises that caution is required with any truth event and displays the vulnerability of truth and subject within Badiou's schema.

CHAPTER TWO

Engaging the Void: Dick's *Time Out of Joint* and the Real Event

In their separate studies, Lou Stathis and Lorenzo Di Tommaso agree that clear parallels exist between Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* and his earlier work from 1959, *Time Out of Joint* (215; 114). Stathis argues that *Time Out of Joint* represents the author's first attempt to combine the previously opposing genres of science fiction and realism and that the novel can be neatly divided into its component parts (215). The first third of the text carefully recreates the atmosphere of a small American town in the 1950s: President Eisenhower's health occupies the newspaper pages; the shadow of World War Two looms in the background and references are made to Cold War policies and equally to Alfred Kinsey's work in human sexuality. Similarly, the 'idiot box' (T 12) [television set] is a feature in every household and the protagonists' family is nuclear to the point of implosion. Gender roles are also strictly patrolled within this environment and an emphasis is placed upon the adoption of a "lifestyle" – P.T.A. meetings, book clubs and poker games with neighbours are commonplace within the narrative. Reminders also exist that this is the age of boom following the bust of previous wars; Dick disperses brand names into the narrative – Sammy Neilson, the child of the family, is 'McBoy' (T 67) and he wears a Mickey Mouse wristwatch (this *same* wristwatch appears in *The Man in the High Castle* as the artefact of American culture).

The rest of the novel proceeds along the science fiction premise that this world of America in the 1950s is "out of joint": Dick's fictional characters gradually question their reality as counterfactual documents and inexplicable events intrude into their daily

lives. However, unlike Dick's later *The Man in the High Castle*, *Time Out of Joint* is not an alternate history text – the novel does not concern itself with a change in political leadership or an altered battle result and the consequences of this deviation from the historical narrative. Rather, *Time Out of Joint* encapsulates an alternate present. The 1950s American town so carefully delineated in the novel's opening is the psychotic delusion of one man - Ragle Gumm. Employed as a missile interceptor by the One Happy World Government on Earth during a bitter civil war with Earth and its satellite, Gumm collapses under the pressures of his role, reverting to the childhood world of his father where he unknowingly continues his work under the ruse of a daily newspaper contest entitled "Where Will The Little Green Man Be Next?". Pleased with Gumm's performance in this 'fantasy of tranquillity' (T 200), the One Happy World Government 'reconstruct' (T 199) the memories of some sixteen hundred volunteers in concentration camps offering 'education along new lines' (T 209) and assign them a family placement according to their 'personality type' (T 200) so that they can participate in the delusional system. Similarly, a censorship on the arts and a strict prohibition upon radio sets ensure that the illusion is sustained as the One Happy World Government chooses which events are written into the historical narrative.²⁰ As Peter Fitting suggests, 'the novel literalises ideology as the construction of an illusory world whose purpose it is to secure the reproduction of the existing relations of production' (225); the government's collusion in Ragle's psychosis is not an altruistic response to alleviate job pressure but a self-serving attempt to retain military-political supremacy through any means necessary. Arguably, it is here that Dick's anachronistic reference to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as the contemporary "book of the month" gains its full significance – the entrapment of an entire community within a delusional system that denies individual liberty and the capacity of free choice is a form of slavery.

Di Tommaso regards *Time Out of Joint* as 'a comparatively lesser effort from Dick' (114). Although it is true that the text lacks the narrative sophistication of *The Man in the High Castle*, *Time Out of Joint* is nevertheless able to pass critical comment upon the event.²¹ Dick's use of psychosis as a structuring principle for reality invites a psychoanalytic reading of the text and allows for a comparison between Badiou's notion of the event as the 'pure multiple of the universe' (C 117) and his 'master' (E 121) Jacques Lacan's conception of the Real as a 'hard core resisting symbolisation' (Žižek,

²⁰ Interestingly, the government's name – One Happy World Government – signals immediately that submission to the One of the count is demanded.

²¹ Although by *Time Out of Joint* Dick had not yet mastered the multi-focal method present in *The Man in the High Castle*, it is important to note that the text attempts a move towards this method - the novel traces the movements of Ragle Gumm and certain of the Nielson family members.

Sublime Object 162)²². Badiou owes a debt to the “anti-philosopher” Lacan, as Robert Hughes points out, Badiou’s philosophical schema ‘stands as the most serious effort by a dedicated philosopher to develop a philosophy consistent with the fundamental insights of Lacanian psychoanalysis’ (http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v017/17.3hughes.html#foot13). The following chapter aims to trace out the contours of Badiou’s Lacanian heritage through a focus upon the placement of the event within the respective schemas, using Dick’s text as a reference point for the analysis and suggesting what Dick’s text proposes for each schema in terms of the ‘grand categories’ (Badiou “Philosophy and Psychoanalysis” 65) Badiou and Lacan share in common and in conflict: truth, subject and the ethical call.

Returns in the Real: Delusional Belonging

‘We have a hodge podge of leaks in our reality’ (T 87)

In Emmanuel Carrère’s biography, *I am Alive and You are Dead: A Journey into the Mind of Philip K. Dick*, Carrère reports that Dick read Sigmund Freud’s clinical case concerning the psychotic patient, Judge Schreber. According to Carrère, Dick drew inspiration for *Time Out of Joint* from this encounter, believing that the case ‘would make great science fiction’ (39). If, as Laurence Rickels suggests, we can take Freud’s study as Dick’s point of departure, it is therefore reasonable to assume that the delusions suffered by Ragle Gumm could be read as evidence of his psychotic onset (33). Indeed, Ragle’s delusional episode in the park reads as an incredibly succinct definition of psychosis as a language disorder in which ‘something that has been rejected from within reappears without’ (Lacan, PS 81):

Not again, he thought.

Not again!

It’s happening to me again.

The soft drink stand fell into bits. Molecules. He saw the molecules, colourless, without qualities, that made it up. Then he saw through, into the space beyond it, he saw the hill behind, the trees and the sky. He saw the soft-drink stand go out of existence, along with the counter man, the cash register, the big dispenser of orange drink... In its place was a slip of paper. (40).

.....

²² Capitalisation will be used to designate the Lacanian Real.

Turning away, he unsteadily walked back, past children playing, past the benches and the old people. As he walked he put his hand into his coat pocket and found the metal box he kept there.

He halted, opened the box, looked down at the slips of paper already in it. Then he added the new one.

Six in all. Six times ...

SOFT DRINK STAND
DOOR
FACTORY BUILDING
HIGHWAY
DRINKING FOUNTAIN
BOWL OF FLOWERS (T 41; 46).

According to Lacan, the oedipal dilemma integrates the individual within the symbolic network and creates the deadlock of desire as the subject ‘seeks the object of his desire, but nothing leads him to it’ (PS 84) owing to the parental prohibition. Lacan argues that ‘all human apprehension of reality is subject to this primordial condition ... Reality, inasmuch as it is supported by desire, is initially hallucinated’ (PS 84). However, for the psychotic, the oedipal dilemma has not been lived through; the psychotic subject has not accepted the castration implied by the paternal signifier and thus remains isolated from the symbolic structure with no support in which to expel *jouissance* and no signifier with which to represent the self to the Other (PS 156). Psychosis can therefore be said to be marked by a ‘perplexity concerning the signifier’ (Lacan, PS 194) that causes a corresponding questioning of reality as the foreclosed element returns in the Real. It is precisely this repressed world of signification that haunts Ragle in the park in a most material form despite its impossibility; the symbolic qualities he lacks return as an encounter with the Real as objects become mere words divorced from context. Dick’s *Time Out of Joint*, like Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, is a ‘tragedy of desire’ (Lacan, “Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet” 39) – Ragle has never consented to the phallic function and experienced the lack that is crucial to desire. His breakdowns in reality reveal the arbitrary nature of knowledge production and the fragility of our basic relations:

What is a word? Arbitrary sign. But we live in words. Our reality, among words not things... Word is more real than the object it represents.

Word doesn’t represent reality. Word *is* reality. For us, anyhow. Maybe God gets to objects. Not us, though (T 45).

To echo Lacan, ‘man speaks then, but it is because the symbol has made him man’ (ES 72).

Slavoj Žižek argues that contact with the Real has a traumatic quality; although the Real ‘in itself does not exist’ (*Sublime Object* 162), it is able to be grasped through its effects, assuming a retroactive dimension that denies the social its totalising mastery (*Sublime Object* 162). Žižek’s definition is particularly useful as his language immediately suggests parallels between the Lacanian Real and Badiou’s event. Both the event and the Real exist as a remainder that is not counted by the symbolic structure; contact with this excessive part threatens to undermine the social edifice. Does this therefore imply that Ragle’s encounter with the Real is comparable to the order of the event? No: Lacan’s Real is resolutely fixed as the limit point of the symbolic whereas Badiou’s event is situation-specific and must fall within the four conditions of love, art, science and politics. Thus, although the Real and the event share a similar structure, Badiou modifies his ‘master’s’ (E 121) concept and imbues it with a philosophical rigour. Ragle’s experience in the park is one of profound suffering as he faces the world primarily through the imaginary order with no suggestion that he can usurp this structure and force through this relation with the Real.

However, how then are we to view Sammy Nielson’s revelation that he too possesses five slips of paper with words such as ‘GAS STATION/ COW/ BRIDGE’ (T 48) displayed on them? Revealing that he obtained the ‘stringy’ (T 48) documents at the ruins located on the outskirts of town, Sammy causes Ragle to feel ‘worse than before’ (T 49); Ragle interprets Sammy’s disclosure as evidence that ‘something is wrong...[not] with me or with any one person...[but] in general’ (T 47). Laurence Rickels argues that breakdowns in the constructed world of America in the 1950s represent ‘fraying edges and margins through which one can glimpse behind the scenes figures of control, manipulation, or even persecution...’(49). Using Rickels’ suggestion and Ragle’s fears that ‘nothing works right’ (T 90) it could thus be posited that Ragle’s delusion where objects become signifiers is not a psychotic break but in fact, evidence of sanity; in this intentionally delusional world, it is the psychotic who is able to see clearly.

Returns in the Real 2: ‘Simple Contradictions’ (T 56)

‘I saw through the illusion’ (T 156).

As *Time Out of Joint* progresses, the political allusion implied by Dick’s reference to Shakespeare’s play take centre stage. The novel records the gradual influx

of real objects from the 1990s as lunar colonists ‘salt the ground’ with written documents from the 1998 reality, producing points of paradox. Like the modification announced by *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* in *The Man in the High Castle*, the counterfactual documents rupture the appearing of America in the 1950s and invoke art as the antithesis of the state and suggest an inherent overlap between art and political subversion. Could these returns in the real qualify as an event in Badiou’s terms and allow for subjectivity in fidelity to truth?

Following Sammy’s declaration that the slips of paper came from the ruins, Ragle commits to investigating this ‘point of reference’ (T 56) and discovers a host of texts that qualify as objects in the real. Ragle shares the counterfactual documents with his sister Margo and brother-in-law Victor, hoping that they can communally make sense of the situation before them:

Under the picture was the caption, *Marilyn Monroe during her visit to England, in connection with the filming of her picture with Sir Laurence Olivier.*
Have you heard of her? Margo said.
‘No’, Ragle said.
‘She must be an English starlet,’ Vic said.
‘No’, Margo said, ‘it says she’s on a visit to England. It sounds like an American name.’ They turned to the article itself.
The three of them read what remained of the article.
‘It talks about her as if she’s very famous,’ Margo said. ‘All the crowds. People lining the streets.’ (54)

As in *The Man in the High Castle*, Dick’s counterfactual art does not represent the world of the reader. Rather, he delights in creating and juxtaposing multiple worlds that invite the reader to engage critically with their own world. As Slavoj Žižek argues ‘the underlying experience of *Time Out of Joint* ... is that the late capitalist consumerist paradise is, in its very hyperreality, in a way unreal, deprived of material inertia’ (*Welcome* 13); the text asks the reader to confront the fictions that govern their own reality.

By contrast, Margo’s response to the magazine article is one of rationalisation; she concludes that the text must be a form of propaganda, an attempt to ‘dupe’ (T 55) readers into believing that a celebrity is more famous than they really are. Thus, she does not pursue her engagement with the void any further and seek to challenge the symbolic structures.

However, both Ragle and Victor chose to further their engagement and seek to map other inconsistencies within their reality, culminating in a drastic attempt to leave their

constructed realm. Hi-jacking a delivery truck, the two brothers proceed out of town and are soon confronted with ‘the world of the future’ (T 134) as they pass a check point guarded by soldiers:

CERTIFICATE OF ZONE BORDER
CLEARANCE 31. 4/3/98.

‘There’s your date,’ Ragle said. April third, 1998. The balance of the form consisted of IBM-style punches’ (T 170).

Documentary evidence is invoked again as a guarantee of truth and Ragle and Victor continue in their exploration of the new reality opened up to them. As the pair meet with inhabitants of the 1998 world, they discover that rationing tokens have replaced paper money, petrol is no longer available and that military tanks line the streets; the world of the future is quickly becoming their present.

We’ve been out and we’ve seen that it is 1998, not 1959, and a war is in progress, and the kids now talk like and dress like West African natives...they [the government] set up the old town, the old cars and streets, kidded us for years... (T 180).

However, Ragle remains troubled that ‘we didn’t learn what it’s all about. Why they set up the old town...’ (T 181). Similarly, the brothers are confounded by the inhabitants’ language use and the questioning as to whether the pair are ‘lunatic’.

Searching through documents from 1998 in order to determine ‘what’s been happening’ (T 183) Ragle alights upon a popular song:

*You’re a goon, Mister Loon,
One World you’ll never sunder.
A buffoon, Mister Loon,
Oh what a dreadful blunder.
The sky you found so cozy;
The future tinted rosy;
But Uncle’s gonna spank – you wait!
So hands ina sky, hands ina sky,
Before it’s too late! (184).*

It is here through the use of song that Ragle is able to adopt the signifier ‘lunatic’ within his vocabulary; ‘the war was being fought between Earth and the moon...then lunatics had to be human beings. Not creatures. They were colonists, perhaps. A civil war’ (T

184). This re-appropriation within language allows Ragle to recall his history and he shares his new knowledge with Victor:

I know what I do, now. I know what the contest is, and what I am. I'm the saviour of this planet. When I solve a puzzle I solve the time and place the next missile will strike. I file one entry after another (T 184).

Ragle's banal task is imbued with purpose, a specifically politico-military purpose. In this schema, Ragle as the analogy for the artist, although creative and esoteric in his work, is reduced to a puppet at the hands of the state. The counterfactual documents supplied by the 'Lunatics' allow Ragle knowledge of his imprisonment and suggest another possibility other than that prescribed by the One Happy World Government. Truth here is thus shown to be related to the function of anamnesis; Dick's text places a premium upon the role of the unconscious as the seat of truth and suggests that the unconscious cannot lie. The movement of the text resembles the use of free association in Freudian circles, as Margo suggests earlier in the text, there is 'no random' (T 66), the deployment of signifiers within the constructed 1950s realm served the express purpose of delivering and divulging to Ragle his subjective truth.

Surpassing or Suppressing: Badiou vs. Lacan and the Subject After the Event

'Typical difficulty in maintaining daydreams...they failed to be consistent'
(T 208)

In the novel's final chapter, Ragle and Victor part company regarding the oedipal dilemma posed by the civil war. Victor disagrees with Ragle's decision to defect to the Lunar side, choosing to remain within the symbolic sham reality of America in the 1950s along with Margo.²³ Victor, therefore, does not pursue his engagement with the void and attempt to bring forth a new truth as demanded by Badiou's schema. Rather, Victor exemplifies what Badiou deems to be the stumbling block of truth within psychoanalysis. According to Badiou, psychoanalysis still operates within knowledge. In his paper "Philosophy and Psychoanalysis", Badiou interrogates the relationship between philosophy and psychoanalysis, daring a direct comparison that

²³ I have mentioned Margo here because Bill Black reveals the government's scheme to her as the novel reaches conclusion. This revelation of structure leaves Margo dumbfounded; echoing her response to the counterfactual magazine discussing Marilyn Monroe, Margo does not pursue her engagement with the void but rather trusts in forms of knowledge.

centres on the question of truth and specifically, ‘how does a truth touch the real?’ (64). According to Badiou, psychoanalysis shares with his subtractive approach a belief that ‘truth is [not] correspondence or adequation between thought and the thing’ (65); both Badiou and Lacan agree that truth is primarily the effect of a loss, a voiding, between thought and the real. Thus:

Philosophy and psychoanalysis elaborate the same question: What is the thinkable relationship between truth and void?...Philosophy and psychoanalysis agree that truth is separation; that the real is irreducible or, as Lacan says, unsymbolisable; that truth is different to knowledge, and that truth thus only occurs under condition of the void (IT 65).

Badiou locates this void as ‘the mathematical mark of being qua being, the void-set’ (IT 65) and argues that ‘the void is the destiny of any event, since the being of an event is a disappearing’ (IT 66). However, Lacan localises the void ‘in the subject, for the subject is what disappears between the two signifiers’ (Badiou, IT 65-6).

The consequences of this ‘conflict’ (Badiou, IT 65) regarding the localisation of the void deserve full articulation. In his incredibly succinct critique of Lacan situated in the closing pages of *Being and Event*, Badiou argues that the localisation of the void in the subject relegates the subject to a ‘structural recurrence’ (432); Lacan returns both truth and subject to language and conflates being with the presence of speech. Contending that Lacan owes a debt to Descartes, Badiou insists that psychoanalysis is significantly unable to expand the process of truth as understood in his schema. As Peter Hallward summarises in his *Badiou: A Subject to Truth*, ‘Lacan thus persists in thinking of the subject as a structure (as an empty set), as opposed to the consequence of an event’ (144); the Lacanian subject simply disappears as soon as truth is brought forth in enunciation; under psychoanalysis the encounter with the real can only be a brief, traumatic moment as the symbolic fiction is always returned to and there is no new signifier brought to bear (BE 434). The Lacanian subject therefore becomes primarily a negative subject and truth becomes null if the symbolic is always to return; there is no new positive order to be taken from the real, no filling of the void. Put simply, the difference is between surpassing the void (as in Badiou’s schema and the adoption of a ‘new signifier’ (Claire Joubert, 4)) or suppressing the void (for Lacan, the traumatic experience with the real is the limit point).

However, is Badiou not a little impatient to dismiss the Lacanian subject after the event? Is it not the aim of the discourse to propose and provide the co-ordinates for a re-throw of the subjective position in which we break free from previous master

signifiers?²⁴ If so, Ragle's progression throughout *Time Out of Joint* could be read as a move towards an act in the Lacanian sense of the term. Ragle exhibits a resistance to and transformation of the symbolic fiction imposed by the One Happy World government. *Time Out of Joint* concludes with Ragle alone conceiving of the Lunar cause as just and returning to his 1998 reality as a "Lunatic". Declaring '*I'm doing it because I know it is right*' (T 211), Ragle justifies his action by means of an ethical choice. Ragle's decision resembles a Lacanian ethical act in that it says "no" to the symbolic fiction of America in the 1950s and denies the Other its signifying mastery; Ragle cares not for symbolic recognition or personal well-being, his stance is driven solely by his interaction with the Real. Here, we can witness that Badiou's ethics as the ethics of fidelity to the event have a clear Lacanian heritage. Delineating the points of comparison between the two discourses, Peter Hallward in the introduction to Badiou's *Ethics*, claims that:

Lacan's search for *an* ethics of psychoanalysis provides Badiou with the model for a procedure specific approach, and Lacan's famous imperative 'do not give up on your desire', furnishes him with an abstract principle valid for every such procedure. For to be thus faithful to the peculiarity of your desire first requires...the repudiation of all merely *consensual* social norms in favour of an exceptional affirmation whose 'value' cannot necessarily be proved or communicated (E xvi).

Hallward provides a host of examples in order to illuminate the status of the Lacanian ethical subject that include 'Antigone in her cave...Socrates condemned to the hemlock [and] Geronimo in his refusal to yield to an inevitable defeat' (xvi). Free from symbolic and subjective regulation, the ethical question according to Lacan, 'is to be articulated from the point of view of the location of man in relation to the Real' (EP 14).

Alenka Zupančič therefore argues that the ethical call for both Lacan and Badiou 'concern[s] something which appears only in the guise of an encounter, as something that 'happens to us', surprises us, throws us out of joint, because it always inscribes itself in a given continuity as a rupture' (235). Zupančič's language immediately recalls the title of Dick's text, suggesting that the novel can directly comment upon the ethical task and the struggles to remain true to the rupture. Dick's use of language at the close of the text subtly undercuts Ragle's progression and his capacity to act in the Lacanian sense. Now a 'lunatic' by name, Ragle's flight from a "leaky reality" (Douglas Mackey

²⁴ Jacques Lacan argues that truth is 'mysterious' (PS 214) but nonetheless states that truth is at the heart of analysis. Regarded as 'the science of language inhabited by the subject' (Lacan, PS 214), psychoanalysis aims to provide the movement by which previous signifiers can be integrated into a new sequence. As Dylan Evans states, truth is thus always the client's subjective truth about their desire (217).

28) into the world of 1998 is problematic as this structure suggests that there is an Other of the Other. That is to say that Ragle's assumption of a reality "fix" suggests that there is something to guarantee consistency within the Other. In Lacanian terms, Ragle has moved into the paranoid position as he is able to account for everything within his reality, creating a rich narrative in which the Real is integrated within the symbolic network (PS 144)²⁵. Thus, far from articulating 'the point of view of the location of man in relation to the Real' (Lacan, EP 14), Ragle's conclusion in *Time Out of Joint* affords the Other a position of totalising mastery that denies the Real.

Similarly, Ragle cannot be said to be the faithful subject of Badiou's subtractive schema. For Badiou, the ethical call demands that a 'new signifier' (Claire Joubert) be brought to bear; it is the work after the event that is of paramount importance for the philosopher. Fredric Jameson notes that the temporality of *Time Out of Joint* is that of the future anterior (285); the present of America in the 1950s is the past of a future to come. The protagonists in the novel essentially mount various attempts to get back to their "own" time yet the novel suggests that superimposition of past, present and future denies the possibility for creation and the event. At the close of the text, the counterfactual artefacts are denied their position as rupture as they can be appropriated within the "correct time" of 1998. Read in this manner, the artefacts are no longer points of the Real but attempts to reinstall Ragle within the symbolic structure. The novel thus seems to reverse the situation at the close of *The Man in the High Castle*: there is no optimism and no possibility that the new can be introduced into representation, only a return to symbolic networks with the individual trapped within the closed, sterile loop of past, present and future. The ethical call here is shown to be fidelity to the existing conditions rather than a faithful adherence to the new within being.

Dick's *Time Out of Joint* can therefore be said to express the difficulty of the ethical call and the subject after the event in Badiou and Lacan's respective schemas. However, I believe that Dick's text also raises another unsettling possibility for the ethical task and the subject as a whole - *Time Out of Joint* suggests that we are psychically constituted as inadequate to the freedom that Badiou's schema promotes. The symbolic economy of Ragle's delusion in which an entire community voluntarily surrender themselves to the will of the government perfectly displays what Žižek terms the 'paradox of late capitalism' (Žižek!). Žižek argues that the proclaimed death of God has altered the symbolic fictions that govern our lives. He states that the demise of

²⁵ The paranoid position as a defence against the Real matches the role of the *I Ching* in *The Man in the High Castle* as a form of divination that denies the event and incorporates change as a move towards an eternal form.

grand narratives has not led to ‘everything is permitted’ (*Žižek!*) ; rather the obverse is true: ‘nothing is permitted’ (*Žižek!*). In this age of ‘universal prohibition’ (*Žižek in Žižek!*), we display a passionate attachment to authority as the spectre of symbolic ghosts return to haunt us, like Hamlet’s father. Psychically constituted as such, it can be argued that freedom (as Badiou understands the concept) is the foreclosed function for the individual today; we simply do not desire or care to traverse the symbolic.

CHAPTER THREE

Desiring Systems: Re-engaging the Void with Philip K. Dick's "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale"

As evidenced by *Time Out of Joint*, Philip K. Dick's protagonists are frequently the "suffering subject[s]" (Badiou, IT 63) of psychoanalysis; that is to say that Dick's 'extra-ordinary ordinary' (Ursula Le Guin 33) leading men are plagued by the real of their symptoms. Christopher Palmer therefore classifies Dick as a 'diagnostic writer' (38), arguing that his fiction attempts to 'speculate on or invent explanations' (38) for conditions such as psychosis, paranoia and schizophrenia. According to Palmer, Dick's fictions practice a 'politicized psychology' (39); the novels and short stories constantly return to the notion that such illnesses are not solely within the remit of the individual, rather, it is the state that induces (e.g. Ragle Gumm in *Time Out of Joint*) or prolongs (Manfred in *Martian Time-Slip*) symptoms typically for their own gain. Palmer thus concludes that with Dick, 'it is usually society as a whole that is pathological' (39).

Dick's 1966 short story "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale" adheres to this pattern, featuring a protagonist who suffers at the hands of the state. Originally employed as a government assassin on Mars tasked with dispatching political rivals, Douglas Quail has been relocated to Earth and the memories of his former actions have been erased by his employer. Symptoms occur as the repressed element, Mars, returns and persists in unconscious formations such as dreams, causing Quail's wife to deem him 'fanatical' (WC 158) regarding the planet. Eager to visit the 'wonderful craters' (WC 158) that belong to 'the god of war' (WC 158), the 'miserable little salaried employee' (WC 157) Quail turns to Rekal Incorporated, an ersatz memory implantation firm, to fulfil his 'life long dream' (WC 160) only for his former memories from that 'censored chapter' (Jacques Lacan, ES 55), the unconscious, to surface whilst under sedation for the surgery. The text follows Quail's attempts to construct a narrative chain that reintegrates the signifier 'Mars' within its proper sequence, recalling the role of treatment within psychoanalysis. However, Quail is not permitted to access the truth of his desire from within this technocratic world; rather, Dick's Rekal apparatus forces him

into schizophrenia, paranoia and annihilation. As Hazel Pierce suggests, the text demonstrates that ‘wish fulfilment is not so simple’ (44).

I propose that Dick’s text raises several issues concerning desire and the objet petit a as the cause of the subject. If *Time Out of Joint* can be read as a tragedy of desire, then “We Can Remember It For You Wholesale” traces the psychotic breakdowns that result from directly realising desire under the capitalist promise.

The Capitalist “Fix”

Slavoj Žižek argues that Lacan’s axiom “truth has the structure of a fiction” is increasingly important today due to the rise of virtual technologies (such as videogames). Claiming that ‘we need the excuse of a fiction to stage what we truly are’ (*Pervert’s Guide*), Žižek proposes that virtual technologies permit the individual to ‘enact there an identity which is much closer to her true self’ (*Pervert’s Guide*) free from social constraints. Thus, it is not that in real life we are meek, weak individuals who can only dream of enacting the role of a sadist; rather in truth, we are a sadist who masquerades as respectable owing to symbolic restraints (Žižek, *Pervert’s Guide*).

Rekal’s technology seeks to directly collapse the boundaries between fiction and reality, and to realise for its subjects, their desires. Existing as a form of ‘id machine’ (Žižek *Pervert’s Guide*), Rekal’s ersatz experiences promising “a full two weeks of recall, every last piddling detail...[or] a full refund” (WC 159) suggests that desire can be directly realised and further, that the subject can be easily programmed and manipulated. Indeed, Rekal’s resident consultant, McClane presents a convincing proposal in which he suggests that the technological manipulation of memory offered acts as not only a mediator, but a guarantor of subjectivity; arguing that ‘the actual memory, with all its vagueness, omissions and ellipses, not to say distortions - that’s second-best’ (160). McClane’s optimism is shared by his secretary as she explains the correct pronunciation of the company’s name: “Not ‘rekal’ but *recall*” (WC 159). Professing authenticity and promising ‘such deep implantation of recall that nothing is forgotten’ (WC 160), Rekal’s services extend to the planting of ‘tangible proof of your trip’ (WC 159):

He [McClane] dug within a drawer of his impressive desk. “Ticket stub.” Reaching into a manila folder, he produced a small square of embossed cardboard. “It proves you went - and returned. Postcards.” He laid out four franked picture 3-D full-colour postcards in a neatly-arranged row on the desk

for Quail to see. “Film. Shots you took of local sights on Mars with a rented camera...Plus the names of people you met, two hundred poscreds worth of souvenirs, ...will arrive – from Mars - within the following month. And passport, certificates listing the shots you received. And more.” (WC 159).

Able to support every stage of the trip with “proofs”, Rekal’s exhaustive list of evidence with the promise of ‘more’ creates a complete synthetic reality. Echoing the use of documents in *The Man in the High Castle*, history here is an external, textual matter, confirmed by the letter. Relegating the individual to a passive receptacle of information, McClane deplores Quail’s choice of memory implantation as pedestrian, ‘programming an artificial memory of a trip to another planet – with or without the added fillip of being a secret agent – showed up on the firm’s work-schedule with monotonous regularity...*ersatz interplanetary travel has become our bread and butter*’ (WC 160-1).

However, this is not to suggest “We Can Remember it for You Wholesale” should be read as an endorsement of capitalism and technological advancement. Rather, the protagonist, Douglas Quail’s experiences with Rekal suggest that capitalism and technology are both deeply and fundamentally flawed. As Christopher Palmer states of Dick’s fictions, ‘the novels and stories take place in a technosphere rather than a biosphere, but with a twist, because technology is seldom glossy or efficient’ (18); the system presented is ‘unstable and malfunctioning’ (Palmer 21).

‘The Censored Chapter’ Or, ‘The Truth is Out There [?]’²⁶

‘He wants a false memory implanted that corresponds to a trip he actually took. And a false reason which is the real reason. He’s telling the truth’ (WC 162).

Quail’s exploits with Rekal Incorporated jeopardise his subjective well-being and prove detrimental to his acquisition of truth. Once home from Rekal’s aborted surgery but still dimly aware of his awakened memories, Quail finds

...a small, familiar box...Opening the box he saw, to his disbelief, six dead maw-worms and several varieties of the unicellular life on which the Martian worms fed. The protozoa were dried-up, dusty, but he recognised them; it had taken him an entire day picking among the vast dark alien boulders to find them (WC 166).

Quail’s recollection of his ‘wonderful, illuminated journey of discovery’ (WC 166) is cut short as he immediately protests that he did not go to Mars. Rekal’s “truth drug” has left him unable to locate himself within time as he simultaneously believes that he did

²⁶ This sub-title is a quotation from Slavoj Žižek’s *The Plague of Fantasies* page 3.

and did not go to the red planet as a secret agent. Quail's subjective position is thus schizophrenic as he is unable to produce a coherent temporal narrative. Fredric Jameson uses Lacan's work on schizophrenia to define the condition as an experience of the "perpetual present" ("Postmodernism and Consumer Society" 119); existing outside of the symbolic order owing to '[the] failure of the infant to accede fully into the realm of speech and language' (118), the schizophrenic subject becomes trapped in the 'perpetual present' (Jameson 119) as 'isolated, disconnected, discontinuous material signifiers... fail to link up into a coherent sequence' (Jameson 119). Although the 'perpetual present' offers a more 'intense experience' (119) of the world, it serves to sever the subject from itself. Jameson consolidates this point as he states, 'the schizophrenic thus does not know personal identity in our sense, since our feeling of identity depends on our sense of the persistence of the "I" and the "me" over time' (119).

Quail turns to his wife to obtain a temporal narrative only to immediately deny any symbolic support that she could offer him:

"Did I go to Mars?" he [Quail] asked her. "You would know".
"No, of course you didn't go to Mars; you would know that, I would think" (WC 166).

"Just tell me and make it absolute; I did go or I didn't – tell me which one." *But they may have altered your memory track also*, he realised (WC 167).

Although humorous, Quail's search for a narrative sequence is shown to bring about a psychic breakdown that shows no signs of relief as the text progresses. Indeed, as Quail recollects his actions as a political assassin hired by the state, armed Interplan police officers confront him at his home and place Quail within a paranoid position similar to Ragle's stance at the close of *Time Out of Joint*:

"You remember," the policeman said, "your trip to Mars. We know all your actions today and all your thoughts... He explained, "We have a tele-transmitter wired within your skull, it keeps us constantly informed." "So I warn you: anything you think may be held against you." (WC 167).

'A telepathic transmitter; use of a living plasma that had been discovered on Luna. He shuddered with self-aversion. The thing lived inside him, within his own brain, feeding, listening, feeding. But the Interplan police used them; that had come out even in the homeopapes' (WC 167).

The telepathic transmitter provides the rationale for Quaid's persecution and suggests an utterly intimate relationship with the state. For Dick, this symbiotic relationship with the state constitutes the individual as divided and invaded as the inner sanctuary is conquered, and the individual turned against himself ("So I warn you: anything you think may be held against you." (WC 167)). Quail's problem is that he simply knows too much and that he doesn't know what he knows (c.f. Lacan's definition of unconscious).

For the Love of *objet petit a*

Fantasy is precisely that which gives consistency to desire; that is to say that fantasy both structures and instructs the subject how to desire owing to the axiom that "there is no sexual relationship" (Lacan, *Le Seminaire* 17). As the subject fills in the disjunction between the sexes with a fantasmic supplement, desire emerges. Thus, as Žižek states, 'in this precise sense, fantasy is the very screen that separates desire from drive; it tells the story which allows the subject to (mis)perceive the void around which drive circulates as the primordial loss constitutive of desire' (PF 32). Put simply, fantasy provides the rationale for the deadlock of desire.

As Dick's text nears conclusion, Interplan concede that Quail may bargain for his life ('we do owe you something; you acted as a capable instrument for us' (WC 171)) and they agree that he may try memory implantation once again. Returning to Rekal with a government psychiatrist, the team discover Quail's ultimate wish-fulfilment:

"Your fantasy is this: you are nine years old, walking alone down a rustic lane. An unfamiliar variety of space vessel from another system lands directly in front of you. No one on Earth but you, Mr. Quail, sees it. The creatures within are very small and helpless, somewhat on the order of field mice, although they are attempting to invade Earth; tens of thousands of other ships will soon be on their way, when this advance party gives the go-ahead signal."

"And I suppose I stop them," Quail said... "single-handed I wipe them out. Probably by stepping on them with my foot."

"No," the psychiatrist said patiently, 'You halt the invasion, but not by destroying them. Instead, you show them kindness and mercy.... They wont invade Earth as long as I'm alive' (171).

"We Can Remember it for You Wholesale" ends with the indication that Quail's halting of alien invasion really did occur. Humour reigns at the close of the text as McClane returns "proofs" he had chosen for the presumably ersatz experience: 'the real

one probably would not be long in coming' (WC 174). Dick's circular plotting provides an exemplary reading of desire as a mechanical, cyclical process and suggests that desire cannot be realised from within the confines of a capitalist system. Dick's text thus deliberately devalues that capitalist ideal that everything can be reduced to an exchange value.

The Necessity of Revolt

Although Dick's text agrees with Lacan that desire is metonymic and traces the psychic downfall that results from seeking to directly realise desire, I will argue that Dick parts company with Lacan here. For Dick, psychoanalysis and the structure of castration merely traps the subject within the cyclical pattern of desire, reducing them to a repetition that centres around the absent object. Read in this manner, psychoanalysis thus becomes another structuring system that rebukes rupture and the possibility of engaged action, echoing Badiou's critique of the discourse discussed in the previous chapter. Dick's use of the telepathic transmitter device resembles the work of the analyst in treatment as they seek to uncover messages from the client and where every act provides a form of communication regarding the symptom. For Dick, the idea that communication is always occurring, that the individual is always already giving themselves away unawares is utterly intrusive and detestable.

Does this imply then that Dick sides with Badiou and seeks to eliminate castration and desire from the truth process? I propose that Dick's "authentic human being" shares with Badiou's faithful subject a commitment to freedom from any totalising structure. For Dick, as for Badiou, the subject is that which escapes the state and works to bring about representation's downfall. As Aaron Barlow suggests, control, and the use and misuse of power occupy his oeuvre (34); Dick's subject exists in action against an inconsistent and unjust state. The texts praise a heroism of the rupture, they demand that the subject searches for points of conflict within the state. As evidenced by Dick's later *A Scanner Darkly*, concession to representation is the 'death of the spirit' (SD 202) and the triumph of what Dick termed the "android personality". Narcotics agent Fred is reduced to a passive reflex machine at the hands of the state, denied the capacity to revolt and trapped in the futile hope that liberation will come from elsewhere:

‘What does a scanner see? He asked himself. I mean, really see? Into the head? Down into the heart?...into me- into us- clearly or darkly?...I see only murk...I hope for everyone’s sake, the scanners do better’ (SD 146).

‘React, not act. We can just hope. Remember what Paul says in the Bible: faith, hope and giving away your money’ (SD 202).

Dick’s references to Saint Paul stress that we do not perceive our world and its relations accurately; we see only ‘murk’ as prescribed by the power élites. It is thus tempting to suggest that Dick’s constant allusions to Saint Paul raise an intriguing point of comparison between the author and Badiou. According to Badiou, Paul is “our contemporary” as he demonstrates the universal reach of truth (in this particular case, the truth of Christ’s resurrection) and the necessity of love in any truth procedure (SP 87). Quoting directly from 1 Corinthians (“These three abide, faith, hope, love”), Badiou argues that Paul highlights that ‘without love, without fidelity, the [truth] declaration is useless’ (SP 91); it is the fidelity to the event and the continued work ethic that matters in Badiou’s schema, and for Saint Paul. Mike Westaway’s substitution of ‘giving your money away’ for Saint Paul’s reference to charity in *A Scanner Darkly* suggests that Dick’s characters struggle with the postevental work of truth (in SP, Badiou notes that Saint Paul’s ‘love’ is often translated as ‘charity’). Although Dick’s fictions repeatedly display instances of breakdown from the reigning social mechanisms and search for points of freedom, they practice a “tough love”. That is to say, that the texts display the difficulties of remaining true to the rupture of the event and demonstrate that truth is prey to Badiou’s categories of evil.

CONCLUSION

And Now Face to Face

Philip K. Dick's allusions to Saint Paul have not gone unnoticed by critical commentators. Lorenzo Di Tommaso argues for the centrality of Dick's religious imagery and claims that *Time Out of Joint*, *The Man in the High Castle*, *A Scanner Darkly* and the later *VALIS* novels demonstrate an increasingly Gnostic theological engagement (114). Both Peter Christiansen and Aaron Barlow agree that Dick's use of theology impacts upon his discussion of the "authentic human being". In their separate studies, Christiansen and Barlow claim that Dick celebrates those who suffer but strive to act morally, 'at the heart of Dick's works can be found the individual's struggle to do the right thing, despite opposing circumstances' (Christiansen 72). Dick's text can thus be said to worship virtues and morals; his choice of title for *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* directly quotes from Ecclesiastes and seems to support that we must celebrate those who act in the right manner, according to the principles of 'justice and kindness' (Christiansen 77). In his own non-fiction writings, Dick repeatedly privileged a definition of the authentic human being as a moral construct, arguing that to act with compassion and kindness is what makes the subject. Patricia Warrick, like Jason Vest, thus argues that a strong humanist ethic shines through in Dick's oeuvre and defines this facet as "moral humanism":

...Dick seems to be a contemporary writer who in many ways espouses an old-fashioned moral view that places him in the long tradition of humanistic writers. From the beginning, his writing insists that each individual has a responsibility to act in a moral way...(198).

Indeed, the conclusion of "We Can Remember it for You Wholesale" certainly suggests that morality is a saving grace as Quail halts the alien invasion through a show of kindness and not physical might.

However, I will argue that such a reading appears incongruous with the amoral nature of Dick's fictional worlds. Repeatedly, Dick demonstrates that there can be no

moral outcome from within the world of knowledge: Tagomi may save Frank with an act of dissent yet the actual situation remains unchanged at the close of *The Man in the High Castle*. Dick's worlds return again and again to show that moral choices cannot be supported by the existing world; morals are themselves already in conflict. Thus, *A Scanner Darkly* is not an examination of 'the theological value of love' (Christiansen 80), Donna does not save narcotics agent Fred by bringing him into the NewPath programme but rather, confirms that he is a valuable commodity against an inconsistent state. A discussion of Dick's subject as a moral constructs thus relegates the subject to an evocation of an essential human nature and denies an engagement with Dick's radically amoral worlds.

The preceding thesis has sought to locate Dick's subject in terms of an ethics of the event rather than as an appeal to pre-existing morals. The three chapters have demonstrated that his works can comment upon the ethical duty belonging to the subject of truth. Both *The Man in the High Castle* and *Time Out Joint* make explicit the difficulty of the ethical call in Badiou's schema owing to the vulnerable, retroactive nature of truth and the precise dimensions afforded to truth as demanded of Badiou's philosophical schema. Similarly, "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale" passes commentary on the ethical call, suggesting that late capitalism endangers the possibility of any ethical action; the reduction of the individual to a repetition of desire inscribes castration at the heart of the individual and represents, as Badiou suggest, a return to finitude (C 190). Thus, against Warrick's argument that Dick's texts 'place him in the long tradition of humanistic writers' (198), I propose that Dick's works speak to a thoroughly modern universe of actual infinity where the subject is a seizure, a gap with the state and not a spectre of subjectivity.

Afterlife: Into the Reel

In their separate studies, both Brian Robb and Jason Vest (*Future Imperfect*) argue convincingly that a critical discussion of Dick's work must also acknowledge the author's prevalence within and immersion into the entertainment industry²⁷. Jason Vest contends that the film adaptations have helped to preserve and promote Dick's texts, actively rescuing the author from the literary anonymity he suffered during his lifetime (*Future Imperfect* 179). Vest states, 'since *Blade Runner*'s 1982 release, all of Dick's

²⁷ To date ten cinematic adaptations of Dick's fictions exist: *Blade Runner* (1982); *Total Recall* (1990), *Confessions d'un Barjo* (1992), *Screamers* (1995), *Impostor* (2002), *Minority Report* (2002), *Paycheck* (2003), *A Scanner Darkly* (2006), *Next* (2008) and *The Adjustment Bureau* (2011).

125 short stories, all of his 46 novels, and several collections of his voluminous letters have come back into print' (*Future Imperfect* 179). This renewed interest in the source material suggests a continued relevance for Dick's fictions today both within Hollywood and without.

Badiou's philosophy designates that cinema is an 'ontological art' ("Democratic Emblem") and suggests possibilities for reading Dick's cinematic adaptations. Claiming cinema as a "mass art", Badiou asserts that the medium is the site of paradoxical, impossible meetings - the very conditions required for philosophy to occur. He argues:

In "mass art" we have the paradoxical relation between a pure democratic element (on the side of irruption and eventual energy) and an aristocratic element (on the side of individual education, of differential locations of taste) ... cinema imposes impracticable relations between aristocracy [art] and democracy [mass]...it is for this reason that philosophy takes an interest in cinema. Because it imposes a vast and obscure set of paradoxical relations.

Cinema, as the bridging of the aristocratic and democratic, opens itself to paradox and thus, the space of philosophy, the space from which truths can emerge. Badiou proposes that to engage with cinema, "to think cinema", involves a forcing of cinema's status as a "mass art". He argues that '...there have been five major attempts at such a displacement. Or rather, five different ways of entering into the problem; "to think cinema as a mass art"'. Badiou lists these five attempts as follows: the paradox of the image; time, the series of the arts, impurity and the use of ethical figures in cinema. Of particular interest to this study are Badiou's comments concerning cinema's relation to the other arts. Designating cinema as the "seventh art", Badiou asserts that cinema '...operates on the other arts, using them as its starting point, in a movement that subtracts them from themselves' (*Inaesthetics* 79). This "false movement" of cinema confines the medium to the "plus-one" of the arts (*Inaesthetics* 86) and highlights cinema's inherent impurity and its physical status as the result of cuts and editing. Existing as the '*popularisation*' ("Democratic Emblem") of the other art forms, 'cinema opens all the arts, it weakens their aristocratic, complex and composite quality' ("Democratic Emblem") and thus allows for a 'democratisation' of the arts. Badiou's extended thoughts upon cinema's relation to the novel clearly outline the democratic potential harboured by cinema:

What does cinema retain from the novel? Not the complexities of subjective formation, nor the infinite resources of literary montage, nor the slow and original restitution of the *taste* of an era. No, that of which cinema has an obsessive and insatiable need, and in the name of which it ceaselessly plunders

universal literature, is the fable, the narrative which it renames the “screenplay”. The imperative of cinema - artistic *and* commercial, indivisibly...is that of telling great stories, stories which can be understood by the whole of humanity (“Democratic Emblem”).

However, it is doubtful that all film adaptations of Dick’s novels will be able to enjoy consideration within Badiou’s schema; Dick’s translation into film does not engage with the story aspect of his works but rather favours an action imperative and trades on the special effects pull of the science fiction genre. Significantly, Philip K. Dick recognised cinema’s visual appeal and expressed concerns that cinematic adaptations of his texts may favour an action imperative rather than an ideas-driven narrative. Commenting upon early footage from Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner*, Dick expressed his concerns as follows, ‘as a writer I’d like to see some of my ideas, not just the special effects of my ideas, used’ (Philip K. Dick quoted in *Counterfeit Worlds* 301).

Jason Vest similarly views the cinematic medium as a potentially limiting and restrictive form for the exploration of the philosophical issues raised by Dick’s fictions. Writing in his *Future Imperfect: Philip K. Dick at the Movies*, Vest states:

The term “development hell” is perfectly tailored for movies based on Dick’s writing because his fiction is so ambiguous and evocative that translating it into coherent cinematic narrative is an unenviable challenge for film professionals. Dick’s visions of a heavily industrialised (and often postapocalyptic) future require tremendous skill to visualise, while assembling the talent necessary to mounting complex movies like *Blade Runner*, *Total Recall*, and *Minority Report* in an industry as mercurial as film-making can take far more time than actual production (xii).

Spanning over fifteen years in development, witness to six directors and with scrip re-writes totalling some five thousand pages²⁸, *Total Recall* can be held as exemplary of both the ‘mercurial’ nature of the film industry and as evidence of the difficulties involved in translating Dick’s fictions into “cinematic language”. That Verhoeven’s eventual production favoured an action imperative is particularly revealing as it emphasises the commercial nature of the business and the film industry’s overt concern with generating profits rather than engaging with the viewer and introducing them to Dick’s ideas. The low rate of text to film adaptations serves to further highlight that Dick’s texts are particularly challenging and complex works that resist easy appropriation into other mediums. An adaptation of Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle* appears simply inconceivable given the industry’s need for action and the complex,

²⁸ All figures quoted here are taken from Brain Robb’s *Counterfeit Worlds: Philip K. Dick on Film*, page 168.

intertwining ideas raised by the plot. As Brian Robb notes, the action genre is a limiting format:

The mechanics, repairmen and salesmen of his [Dick's] short stories and novels engage with the counterfeit worlds they face. In the movies, these meek figures who rise to a challenge become Arnold Schwarzenegger and Tom Cruise: buffed up Hollywood heroes who cinema audiences don't doubt will succeed (296).

It appears that the legacy of Dick's translation into film is to reassert the spectre of the self-founding, autonomous subject.

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