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Negotiating Reality in Philip K. Dick's Fiction: from Postmodernism to Posthumanism.

The aim of this dissertation is to locate in the novels of the American science-fiction author, Philip K. Dick, instances of posthuman subjectivity in relation to cybernetics and theory of autopoiesis, also taking into consideration later developments in the field of posthumanism and its ongoing discourse with postmodernism. I attempt to create a comprehensive insight into what characterizes subjectivities emergent within the unstable realities imagined in Dick's novels, using frameworks established by scholars of posthumanism such as Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, N. Katherine Hayles and others, but also in relation to some of the prominent representatives of the postmodernist and poststructuralist perspectives of Jean-François Lyotard, Jaques Derrida, Jean Baudrillard, Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.

Chapter 1 presents objects in *The Man in the High Castle* (1962) – artworks, artifacts and literary texts – as actively involved in the creation of political reality. I argue that Dick opens up a possibility for the emergence of non-anthropocentric agencies, in concurrence with the new materialist philosophical thought. To that end, I utilize the philosophical frameworks of Graham Harman, Jane Bennett and Francesca Ferrando.

Next, by analyzing *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (1964) using Derrida's theory of deconstruction and the concept of social autopoiesis, I showcase how Dick imagines virtual realities as textual spaces. Subsequently, I propose that the author represents the dangers of prioritizing individualistic drives towards immortality, commodity economy or control over others, that arise for the subject within those spaces.

In the third chapter, I argue that in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (1968) Dick criticizes the discursive practices positioning humanity at the top of the hierarchy of life, and thus leading to violent persecution of nonhuman Others. Dick seeks a resolution to this dialectical process by imagining possible acts of transformation for the human subject that would result in a shift towards a posthuman perspective as proposed by thinkers such as Haraway and Braidotti.

I discuss the novel *Ubik* (1969) in chapter 4 to argue that, for Dick, adopting a posthuman perspective may allow the subject to reclaim the awareness of their mortality and embodiment, both occluded by Baudrillardian simulation. I position the characters of Ella Runciter and Jory Miller as contrasting representations of the practices of affirming one's subjectivity against dissolution in this environment.

Finally, in chapter 5, I offer a reading of *A Scanner Darkly* (1977), and with the use of Deleuzoguattarian concept of Body without Organs, as well as Catherine Malabou's framework of brain plasticity, I conclude that the novel illustrates a possible outcome of an experimentation with one's construction of identity. The main character, having become an "emptied" BwO, is virtually devoid of self-identification, but thanks to the dynamic adaptability of his embodiment – the brain plasticity – he is able to reintegrate into the vital assemblage of his environment.

I conclude that for Dick the solution to the postmodern crises of truth and the dissolution of the subject may lie in a movement towards technologically and materially embedded, self-organizing assemblages of human, non-human and hybrid actants. By drawing on postmodernist analyses and expanding on the posthumanist perspectives on Dick, I have formulated a new insight into the author's understanding of the complex interactions between the subject and the dynamic systems that construct their reality.