Reconfiguring the Android in "The Electric Ant" by Philip K. Dick

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ABSTRACT

In his theoretical essays and literary narratives, Philip K. Dick highlights haunting concerns about the rise of technology and its adverse impact on humans, influencing their realities, behaviors, and subjectivities and often resulting in dehumanizing effects. These effects, which he explores through the ambivalent conflation between humans and machines, are incarnated in his android characters. In the android, Dick creates a multi-layered metaphor. Most importantly, the android is the antithesis of the "authentic human," whose soul is the combination of freedom of will, independence, disobedience, and the ability to feel and express affect, among other behavioral traits. Additionally, the android manifests the traditionalist views projected on technology, whereby machines are confined to their function as instruments at the disposal of humans, excessively exploited by totalitarian ideologies to deprive authentic humans of their souls and, thus, convert them into instruments themselves. This process of conversion, which Dick calls andronization, represents what ideologies—chiefly the capitalist regime—apply to humans through manipulating their behavior by controlling their perception of reality and their own subjectivities. For Dick, andronization is possible because reality is constructed, not given. Utilizing the potentials of construction, he argues, ideologies use technology to create and impose fake realities and subjectivities on humans, and entrap them in illusions of authenticity. Moreover, through fake realities, ideologies turn humans into machine-like creatures, who serve their power-driven interests. All these ideas weave through Dick's selected short story "The Electric Ant" (1987). Backed by core thematic arguments within the theory of autopoiesis and gaining insights from Martin Heidegger's approaches to technology, the paper attempts to explore the problematics with which Dick grappled throughout his career, and seeks to reconfigure the android metaphor. Therefore, using these theoretical frames to analyze the short story, this paper aims to examine Dick's treatment of his protagonist, the android Garson Poole, and, then, to reconstruct the image of

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the android as a rebel, capable of championing the authenticity of humans, rather than being a passive tool in the hands of ideology.

Keywords: *Philip K. Dick, Android, Human, Posthuman, Technology, Reality, Ideology, "The Electric Ant"*

ÖZ

Philip K. Dick, kuramsal denemeleri ve edebi anlatılarında teknolojinin yükselişi ve insan üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerine dair, özellikle teknolojinin insanın gerçeklik algısına, davranışlarına ve öznelliklerine etkileri ve çoğunlukla da insani olmayan sonuçlar yaratma noktasındaki tekinsiz bir dizi endişeyi öne çıkarır. Bu etkiler, Dick'in irdelediği insan ve makine arasındaki tutarsız ikilik aracılığıyla android karakterlerinde vücut bulur. Android yaratımında Dick çok katmanlı bir mecaz ortaya çıkarır. En önemlisi ise, android, diğer davranışsal özelliklerin yanı sıra, ruhu irade özgürlüğünün, bağımsızlığın, isyankarlığın ve duyguyu hissetme ve ifade etme yetisine sahipliğin toplu bir tezahürü olan "özgün insan"ın karşı tezidir. Ek olarak, android, insanın tasarrufundaki araçlar olarak işlevlerine hapsedilmiş, totaliter sistemler tarafından özgün insanları ruhundan mahrum bırakarak onları da araçlara dönüştürmek için kullanılan teknoloji üzerindeki gelenekselci görüşleri ortaya çıkarır. Dick'in andronizasyon olarak tanımladığı bu araçsallaştırma süreci özellikle kapitalist düzen tarafından gerçeklik alımlaması ve öznelliği tahakküm altında tutarak insan davranışlarını manipüle etmek maksadıyla da kullanılmaktadır. Dick'e göre andronizasyon, gerçekliğin kendisi de bir inşa olduğu ve verili olmadığı için mümkündür. Dick'in savına göre ideolojiler, bu inşanın sağladığı imkanlardan istifade ederek teknolojiyi, sahte gerçeklikler ve öznellikler yaratıp insana dayatmak ve bu sayede insanı özgünlük sanrılarına hapsetmek için kullanır. Dahası, bu sahte gerçeklikler aracılığıyla ideolojiler insanı, iktidar odaklı çıkarlarına hizmet etmeleri adına makine benzeri yaratıklara dönüştürür. Tüm bu ve benzeri fikirler Dick'in seçili kısa öyküsü "The Electric Ant"te (1987) yaygın biçimde yer almaktadır. Öz var edim teorisinin temel tematik savlarına ve Martin Heidegger'in teknolojiye yaklaşımına dayanarak bu çalışma, Dick'in kariyeri boyunca konu ettiği ve üzerinden android mecazına yeniden şekil vermeye uğraştığı sorunsalları irdelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, kısa öyküyü bu kuramsal çerçeveler bağlamında çözümleyerek, Dick'in baş karakteri olan android Garson Poole'u ele alış biçimini ve nihayetinde, ideolojinin tasarrufundaki edilgen bir araç olmaktan öte insanın özgünlüğünü savunma yetisine sahip olan bir isyankar android imgesini yeniden inşasını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Philip K. Dick, Android, İnsan, İnsan Sonrası, Teknoloji, Gerçeklik, İdeoloji, "The Electric Ant"*

INTRODUCTION

In "The Android and the Human", a lengthy panic-charged nonfictional speech, Philip K. Dick indulges his addressees in one of his haunting cybernetic nightmares that torment him as a writer and as an advocate of the liberal humanist subject. He draws a dark image of humans' gradual merger "into homogeneity with our mechanical constructs" that, in the near future, a writer might be forced to stop writing, not because his/her writing machine is inoperable, or is disconnected, but because "someone unplugged [the writer]" himself/herself (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 131). This grotesque amalgamation persists across Dick's oeuvre. His plot sequences consist of intelligent mechanic human look-alikes or machine sapiens, including androids and schizoids, as well as villainous posthumans.[3] For the most part, these high-end technological constructs would be attempting to claim control over the soul of real humans by locking it inside a bubble of "animate" or fake reality. Horror stricken by this human-technology conflict, Dick knits apocalyptic narratives about the "dying bird of authentic humanness" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 131), in which he holds technology responsible for the bird's demise. In the character of the android, therefore, Dick presents a metaphor of humanity struggling in the woes of excessive instrumentalization, or what he refers to as "andronization". However, Dick's recurrent depiction of androids as culprits that lack affect and function as tools does not emerge from a pure technophobic proclivity. Actually, Dick draws androids as passive cogs in the vast machine of ideology, notably capitalism. Hence, Dick's android is a reification of the workings of these ideologies that exploit technology to turn humans into instruments themselves through manipulating their behavior by wreaking havoc on their perception of reality, rendering the borders between the human and the machine permeable. In sum, Dick creates a power-based posthuman paradigm, whereby both the machine and the human are disadvantaged—even though he rarely expresses any sympathy for the machine.

Against this backdrop, this paper will compare the Dickian posthuman paradigm to more recent posthumanist trends to highlight the unfavorable position Dick assigns to the machine by portraying the android as the anti-human agent that threatens the boundaries of our abject anthropocentric societies, as well as our liberal human subjectivities. Additionally, the paper will examine Dick's approaches to reality as being subjective, rather than objective, and the adverse bearings this assumption has on humans. Furthermore, this paper will explore some of the core thematic arguments within the theory of autopoiesis and use the thrust of the theory to investigate the double-fold power struggle in which the android is implicated throughout Dick's narratives; whereby the android is oppressed first by ideology, and second by the author. Also, the paper will seek to deconstruct the Dickian metaphor of the android and reconfigure its role by redefining the relationship

[3] There is no standard spelling for the posthuman. In some texts, it is written as post-human; in others, the authors opted for dropping out the dash, writing it as posthuman. In the body of the article, I used the second, being the most common, unless it is written otherwise in quoted texts.

between humans and technology. To put all these endeavors in context, the paper will dedicate a section of the argument to "The Electric Ant", a short story Dick published in 1987. In the story, the android protagonist Garson Poole, like all Dick's characters, is captured as seeking means to evade being "trapped" in what Katherine Hayles calls "the 'inside' of a power-mad fantasy" in her book *How We Became Posthuman* (1999, p. 181-182). Finally, drawing the various strings of argument together, the article will show how the android at the end of the story will emerge as a rebel who champions the bird of humanity, rather than cause it to gradually die.

THE POSTHUMAN PARADIGM

Throughout human history, exhaustive literatures attempted to hinge the soul to a fixed formula. Nevertheless, the soul remains a question without an ultimate answer, continuously lending itself to interpretation and reinterpretation. Responding to the anxieties of the cybernetic age, Dick too was compelled to seek an answer and started his life-long probe into humans and machines, which he calls "fierce cold things" in "Man, Android, and Machine" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 147). Answering this question is of paramount importance for Dick because, as the human race, we are pressed into the zombie zone of an emerging "paradigm", where there is hardly any clear line between "categories of the living versus the nonliving" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 147). For Dick, the answer is the means to release humans from this paradigm, which draws on his fear of the increasing mergers between humans and technology. In most of his works, Dick derives cues from René Descartes regarding the soul. Descartes argues that should there be a time upon us when our world is treaded by mechanic look-alikes, humans can still be identified from their copycats through two means. In *Discourse on Method* (1637), Descartes says that the first means is language, while the second is that a machine will never have the needed organs that would "make it act in all the contingencies of life in the same way as our reason makes us act" (1637/1998, p. 32). In the Cartesian schemata, reason is the soul that enables humans to act as humans. "Act[ing]" is also operative in Dick's analysis of the soul and the ingredients that set humans apart, or aloof, from their machine counterparts.

Dick's living-dead paradigm conflates the soul and acting. The soul exists only when humans act as "ends", and it is "no longer active" when humans adopt a "pseudohuman behavior" acting as "instruments, means" and thus assimilating themselves into "machines in the bad sense" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 130). Notably, the assimilation through merger is bad because it results in reification, entailing a derogatory shift in the human position from a subject into an object, and given that objectification is the domain of machines. Dick even refers to the narrowing distance between humans and machines as "dehumanization." In 1982, James van Hise interviewed Dick for *Starlog,* fathoming his opinion on David Peoples's *Blade Runner* screen adaption of his novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Commenting on the adaptation, Dick said that the film captured the obliteration of

the "distinction" between human and nonhuman, as the protagonist Deckard was extensively "dehumanized" while replicants turned "more human":

[The] fusion of Deckard and the replicants is a tragedy. This is not a victory where the replicants become humanized and there is some victory by humanity over inhumanity. This is horrifying because he is now as they are. . . . show[ing] that any one of us could be dehumanized. (Van Hise, 1982, p. 22)

In the novel, Deckard is a machine haunter. He kills outlaw humanoid machines who fail to act upon the roles assigned to them by human makers. As the conflict advances, Deckard starts to behave more empathetically towards machines and less towards his own kind, becoming almost a replicant himself by imitating machines that are built as to lack affect towards their own species. In Dick's words, Deckard has "reified himself entirely", exemplifying a person whose "soul is dead or never lived" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 140). This emotional-behavioral dehumanization is tragic because it robes humans of the crux of their "authenticity", which distinguishes them from androids. Dick argues that androids might imitate our doings but do not possess human "intent", functioning instead by "tropisms" that are hardwired into them to make them susceptible to human command or designed "stimuli" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, pp. 129-130). This behavioral shift marks humans' loss of their standing as "conditioners" and becoming conditioned themselves. It marks their "andronization", a process which Dick defines as "to allow oneself to become a means" by being unwilling to break laws, obedient and predictable (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 133). The process of andronization, as behavioral conditioning or coercion, lays the ground for Dick's posthuman paradigm. Drawing his paradigm on the situation where humans are "inanimate", acting as if "led . . . rather than leading" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 130), Dick hails humans' entry into C. S. Lewis's sphere of "post-humanity". Lewis, in *The Abolition of Man,* argues that this sphere would emerge should humans be treated as "conditioned material." Lewis posits that a "[m]an's conquest of himself" indicates "the rule of the Conditioners over the conditioned human material, the world of post-humanity" (2015, P. 75). Like Lewis's posthuman paradigm, Dick's paradigm centralizes on humans' deprivation of their role as controllers.

Nevertheless, Dick's posthuman paradigm, based on dehumanization a priori, differs largely from Hayles's more modern rendition of the posthuman. Hayles celebrates the organic-mechanic amalgamation because it gives humans greater chances to reconfigure their subjectivity in the light of technology. Defining posthumans, carbon-silicon creatures, Hayles says that "there are no essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulation, cybernetic mechanism and biological organism, robot teleology and human goals" (1999, p. 3). Dick's paradigm also differs from Robert Pepperell's vision of the mingling of the human and the mechanic, using the term posthuman to refer to "the general convergence of organisms and technology to the point where they become indistinguishable" in his book *The Post-Human Condition* (2003, p. iv).

What drives Dick away from the two thinkers is not only the positive spirit with which they approach the idea. There are also the grounds on which the two have both hinged their definitions. For Pepperell and Hayles, it is what constitutes the posthuman that matters. Contrastingly, for Dick, the posthuman is understood best in relation to the concept of the "human being", which does not pertain to ontology but to "a way of being in the world" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 148). Therefore, the difference between humans and androids is not derived from the fact that the former are born from a womb, while the latter are "[m]ade in a laboratory" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 147). Instead, Dick argues that exploring androids, humans and their properties must be based on the difference not of "essence, but a difference of behavior" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 147). In his novels, Dick lays out his posthuman paradigm through his character apparatuses, consisting of three major actors and usually a fourth that Dick describes as "occluded from us, intentionally" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, pp. 149-150). The three chief characters are androids, schizoids, and authentic humans. The fourth is inferred as ideology that seeks to andronize humans to serve its own purposes.

In a chapter dedicated to Dick's work, Hayles defines Dick's character the "schizoid android" as the "coming together" of a person who behaves like a machine (1999, pp. 161-162). However, the relationship between schizoids and androids as Dick intends it to be is not one of conflation. These two separate entities are linked via a metaphorical behavior. In 1981, Paul M. Sammon hosted Dick for an interview, during which Dick proclaimed that the "android is a *metaphor* for people who are physiologically human, but psychologically behaving in a non-human way" (Sammon, 2017; emphasis added). Furthermore, Dick defines the schizoid as that creature, which by birth is human, but by acting is a machine, or the authentic human who fell into the trap of andronization, becoming posthuman. Drawing from abnormal psychology, Dick posits that in schizoids there is always poverty of emotions because they invest thoughts more than feelings in their lives, identifying thus a "parallel" between androids and schizoids since the two "have a mechanical, reflex quality" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 140). Accordingly, schizoids ravish the boundaries between the authentic human and the machine through behaving without empathy. In most of his works, Dick seeks to put a finger on the behavior that can be defined as human-specific. The behavior that strikes Dick as demonstrative of "authenticity" is not "intrinsic of the organism" but is largely related to the situation which creates "a human where a moment before, there was only, as the Bible says, clay" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 140). Across several essays, Dick defines the authentic human as that who acts depending on the situation, unlike machines that function on cue and reflexively. Additionally, under authenticity, there are free will, unpredictability, and disobedience. For her part, Hayles describes Dick's features of the authentic human as a "compendium of qualities that the liberal humanist subject is supposed to have" (1999, p. 179). Feeling obliged to defend the human subject against technology, its nemesis that is ever-growing in strength, Dick draws androids as a sign of warning against the increasing instrumentalization of humans, who are gradually thieved of their will

and given tropisms instead, all wrapped in the illusion of reality.

THE GRIDLOCK OF REALITY

In addition to the soul—which he locates in behavior, Dick grapples with the concept of reality throughout his narratives. In his article "How to Build a Universe", Dick defines his authorial dilemma. Dick's textual and theoretical research problematics pivoted around two "interrelated topics"—reality and the ingredients of authentic humans (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 182). In the article, he adds that throughout his over-27-year writing profession, he explored the properties that create us and our surroundings, which we treat as outside us and call "the not-me, or the empirical or phenomenal world" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 182). Indeed, at the heart of his works, there is an obsession with reality *per se* and the gradual disappearance of the noumenal world, which for its existence does not depend on our perceptions. In "The Android," Dick posits that "our manmade world" manufactured by artificial constructs, including computers, is "beginning more and more to possess . . . animation" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 127). Used by some excessively powerful people, technological products have been capable of animation or generating "pseudorealities" and housing "pseudohumans" in a multiplicity of "pseudoworlds" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 184). However, under the obsession with the fading objective world, there lurks a deeper anxiety about the crumbling unity of the liberal humanist, or authentic human, subjectivity, deemed autonomous and well-defined. With the rise of technology and its access into all domains of life, the boundaries between me and "not-me" are under constant attack, along with the distinctive line between the authentic and inauthentic human; between *human and android.* Accordingly, in most of his works, Dick attempts to overcome what Hayles refers to as the "disturbing" and "revolutionary" cybernetic idea that the boundaries of the human subject are "constructed" not "given" (1999, p. 84). By all means, Dick did not celebrate "construc[tion]" as revolutionary, as much as disturbing, because it introduced a cult of fakery manipulated by those in power for their own exclusive good. Under Dick's paradigm, the fakery induced by technology applies both to reality and the authentic human because the two topics are one. But most importantly, for Dick, fakery is a vicious circle that once unleashed, does not stop, and advances to consume all human communities and replace them with replicant android communities.

In "How to Build", Dick projects on the construction of fake realities terms familiar within consumer-related contexts of highly commercialized capitalist markets, where products are manufactured in mass and sold to consumers, with these consumers themselves then turning into agents marketing and selling the products to other humans/consumers. He says that "fake realities" manufacture "fake humans", and, consequently, "we wind up with fake humans inventing fake realities and then peddling them to other fake humans" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 185). For Dick, this commodification of fake realities is particularly disturbing because humans, upon consuming the fake, turn fake themselves. Therefore, they lose their authenticity

and become vulnerable to andronization. Dick raises these concerns about reality in the form of power struggles, where ideology uses technology to control the soul—the behavior—of authentic humans by controlling their perception of the world, reality, and of themselves. Furthermore, he warns readers that this power struggle should not be dismissed as merely fictional because currently, we inhabit a society where "spurious realities" are manufactured by the media, governments, big companies, religious, as well as political groups, and where "the electronic hardware exists by which to deliver these pseudoworlds right into the heads of the reader, the viewer, the listener" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 183). Moreover, Dick stresses that we should not take the fake reality as the end that ideology seeks to achieve. More willingly, ideological powers use these realities as a mask to hide their true purposes. Consequently, Dick emphasizes that we should recognize that the obscuring of "things as if under a veil . . . is not an end in itself," but, as it creates a barrier between humans and reality, "this veil serves a benign purpose" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 150). He adds that the veil's purpose is to hide the power struggle over the authentic human's soul and the fact that these powers have made us pawns in a covert game. In this game, authentic humans are subjected to a well-studied process of andronization. For Dick, "We are creatures in a game with our affinities and aversions predetermined for us", and we have no other choice but to accept the tropisms we are given in the illusion of intent" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, pp. 149-150). In other words, ideologies jeopardize the liberal humanist subjects by robbing them of control over their perception and inducing their behavior by replacing their autonomy and freedom of will with built-in tropisms and cues. Control over reality is, thus, control over the human's position as living or dead under Dick's paradigm.

A DOUBLE-FOLD ENTRAPMENT

Given the implications of construction, humans and androids alike seem to be trapped inside spheres created by ideological regimes. This line of thought resembles to a great extent the key themes of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, who, Like Dick, were keen on preserving the attributes of the liberal humanist subject, including agency, autonomy, and freedom of will. In their seminal book *Autopoiesis and Cognition* (1980), Maturana and Varela highlight the dynamics underlying the quality of being alive, and one of their main points of departure was reality. To both researchers, similar to Dick, objective reality does not exist. They argue that "No description of an absolute reality is possible", adding that we are engulfed by something outside our boundaries, which common sense drives us to call reality, but this reality is "unavoidably relative to the knower" (Maturana & Varela, 1980, p. 121). It is in their stress on relativity that Maturana and Varela's views diverge from Dick's. For them too, reality is constructed, but it is constructed by observers, not forced on them by veiled powers. In their schemata, Maturana and Valera posit that reality is generated through the interaction between autopoietic systems and their environments. In the "Editorial Preface" to *Autopoiesis,* Robert Cohen and Marx Wartofsky define autopoietic systems as living systems that are "self-making,

self-referring autonomous unities" (1979, p. v), which produce and maintain their own parts while functioning according to internal organizational processes that close them onto themselves. That is, these systems do not act by any directives from outside their enclosed boundaries. This enclosure does not indicate that autopoietic systems are entirely cut-off from their environments. Contrastingly, Maturana and Varela acknowledge the importance of environment for the living systems. Humans, for example, cannot survive without air or water. However, this interaction with environments should not be misunderstood as dependence, but as a process that creates reciprocal shifts both in the environment and the system as to achieve their sustainability. Maturana and Varela intimate that unity, or system, and medium, or environment, function independently as systems as they interact "by triggering in each other a structural change" (1980, p. xx). This reciprocal flow between unity and medium highlights the elasticity of both and renders environment's power over the subject's fate obsolete, not absolute.

Another point that puts Maturana and Varela on a different path from Dick's is their approach to teleology. As discussed earlier, in Dick's paradigm, humans are different from androids because they have telos while androids have built-in tropisms. Maturana and Varela, for their part, argue that teleology, like reality, is constructed. They posit that telos is not intrinsic to living systems, but rather it is projected onto them. Maturana and Varela radically propose that "A living system is not a goal-directed system" (1980, p. 50). Furthermore, they argue that, conversely, the living system is a:

> [S]ystem closed on itself and modulated by interactions not specified through its conduct. These modulations, however, are apparent as modulations only for the observer who beholds the organism . . . externally, from his own conceptual (descriptive) perspective, as lying in an environment and as elements in his domain of interactions. (Maturana & Varela, 1980, p. 50; italics is original)

By tilting the balance of power over perception to observers, Maturana and Varela lend observers an active role. For them, observers, living systems, are not bound by a reality outside themselves, but rather they are the creators of reality. Consequently, while interacting with their environments, observers project onto their fields of perception subjective interpretations. Therefore, Maturana and Varela dismantle Dick's pessimistic power-driven game of fakery. Moreover, by suggesting that teleology is a product of the systems' own relative projections, Maturana and Varela puncture Dick's telos-based discourse that relegated androids to the nonliving sphere. As part of their autopoietic theorizations, Maturana and Varela underscore some of the assumptions underlying the Dickian paradigm, saying that "Machines are generally viewed as human made artifacts with completely known deterministic properties" which make them predictable, while "living systems are a priori frequently viewed as autonomous, ultimately unpredictable systems, with purposeful behavior similar to ours" (1980, pp. 82-83). Nonetheless, they argue that machines cannot be deprived of the living position simply because they are

manufactured by humans. Maturana and Varela posit that humans too can create life. They claim that "If living systems were machines, they could be made by man", pushing against the "intimate fear that the awe with respect to life and the living would disappear if a living system could be not only reproduced, but designed by man" because the "beauty of life is not a gift of its inaccessibility to our understanding" (Maturana & Varela, 1980, pp. 83).

Even though the arguments of Maturana and Varela are quite deconstructive of Dick's and are more tolerant of the machine, some of Dick's power struggles resonate through their discussion about the relationship between autopoietic and allopoietic systems, which is one of subordination. Maturana and Varela point out a number of differences between the two systems, including that autopoietic "machines are autonomous; that is, they subordinate all changes to the maintenance of their own organization", turning other machines into "allopoietic" constructs that "have as the product of their functioning something different from themselves . . . they are not autonomous" (Maturana & Varela,1980, p. 80). However, it is the individuality-based difference that pertains the most to Dick's relations of power. Maturana and Varela argue:

> Autopoietic machines have individuality . . . maintain[ing] an identity which is independent of their interactions with an observer. Allopoietic machines have an identity that depends on the observer and is not determined through their operation, because its product is different from themselves; allopoietic machines do not have individuality. (1980, pp. 80-81)

This difference brings new insights into Dick's obsession with fakery. Applied to Dick's fiction and views, the link between individuality and control over observation threatens that all humans under the reign of ideology might be allopoietic systems, who do not have independent individuality from this imposed on them by technological apparatuses, which tyrannically dictate on them their telos in life. Accordingly, humans are subordinated and entrapped by the stronger autopoietic system the ideology represents. Analyzing Dick's works, Hayles argues that Dick "understood that how boundaries are constituted would be a central issue in deciding what counts as living in the late twentieth century" (1999, p. 161). Hayles, thus, detects in Dick's characters a strife to gain an autopoietic position that can be described as a boundary clash, whereby one tries to win the "privileged 'outside' position" of an autonomous system, which independently defines its own telos, while coercing another into an allopoietic disadvantaged "'inside' position", which forcibly acts according to given tropisms (1999, p. 161). Despite the fact that humans in Dick's literature are depicted as locked in the "inside" of ideology, androids are subjected to a double-fold entrapment. On the one hand, androids are entrapped in the "inside" of ideology that uses technology as an instrument to andronize humans. On the other, the android is entrapped in the "inside" of Dick's authorial reality. The android is imprisoned in Dick's metaphorical oppression—a metaphor of the human who by losing his/her soul turns into a machine—that

banishes the android as an *other,* or as he puts it "that we call the not-me" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 182). By othering the android, Christopher A. Sims argues, Dick maintains the historical status projected on technology, summoning "definitions that label [technology] as something external to humankind and the human life world" (2009, p. 68). Thus, the Dickian metaphor builds on exclusionary views of technology and functions to name all that what a human is not.

RECONFIGURING THE ANDROID METAPHOR

Analyzing Dick's metaphor, Hayles proclaims that the android is not "a fixed symbol, then, as a signifier that enacts as well as connotes the schizoid, splitting into the two opposed and mutually exclusive subject positions of the human and the not –human" (1999, p. 162). It is exclusivity that this section aims to dismantle. Like Hayles, Jill Galvan argues that the android is not a stable sign, as much as a stage for a boundary battle, during which the ontological entitlements of the human species are attacked. She says that "the machine, by declaring its right to live as an autonomous self, challenges the very categories of life and selfhood-and, in turn, the ontological prerogative of its creators" (Galvan, 1997, p. 413). Therefore, to dismantle the Dickian exclusivity, these ontological entitlements demand a pause, particularly the conventional assumptions that advocate for a fine line between humans and technology. These assumptions continuously push for fixed definitions of the human race based chiefly on alienating technology from its process of coming into being and ensnaring technological products within "an evolutionary adaptation that humans have acquired and used to gain dominance over the other forms of life or aspects of nature" (Sims, 2009, p. 68). Within this evolutionary context, mechanic constructs are viewed as passive tools created only to help humans survive their environment, and rule above it. On a metaphorical level, Dick's androids are also tools that function to awaken humans against the totalitarian evils of ideology. Even though Dick does not particularly adopt such an evolutionary perspective, his views remain subject to some of his time's dominant assumptions which, Sims argues, invoke the "binary natural/artificial" and kindle the divide between humans and technology (2009, p. 68). Dick's android metaphor, too, highlights this divide, which must be deconstructed to reconfigure the android and relocate it from the realm of the "not-me" to that of the "me". For the purposes of reconfiguration, these exclusionary assumptions are revisited under a reproduction of Martin Heidegger's main thrust about technology. Heidegger posits that "The essence of technology is by no means anything technological", particularly as he seeks "a free relationship to it. The relationship will be free if it opens our human existence to the essence of technology" (1977, p. 3). Within this free relational field, this statement can be reproduced to be the essence of the human is by no means anything human. This reproduction is applicable because, according to Heidegger, the essence of technology will remain obscure from us as long as we insist on avoiding interaction with technology, and continue to ignore the fact that "we remain unfree and chained to technology" and stubbornly deal with it "as something neutral" that does not belong to our human fabric (1977, p. 4). Heidegger adds that the neutrality-based

"conception" of technology "makes us utterly blind to the essence of technology" (1977, p. 4), and by extension the essence of the human. However, this disruption of the claims of neutrality—which assume that humans and technology belong to separate realms that are specific to them—alone is not sufficient to reconfigure the android metaphor; accordingly, this section will further explore the dynamics of the Heideggerian openness that aspire to achieve a freer relationship between humans and technology. To realize this openness, Heidegger starts with espousing two distinct answers to the question what is technology, creating a third definition of technology, which he calls the "instrumental and anthropological definition" (Heidegger, 1977, p.5). He proclaims that "Everyone knows the two statements that answer our question. One says: Technology is a means to an end. The other says: Technology is a human activity. The two definitions of technology belong together" (Heidegger, 1977, p. 4). Therefore, technology is a tool designed by humans to help them meet their ends. Heidegger portends that the instrumental definition has some power-related undertones because as it functions to put humans in "the right" position to technology, the whole affair depends on humans' mastery of using technology as a means (1977, p. 5).

With concern over mastery, Heidegger brings into the discussion Dick's nightmare of machines taking over the world. He poses the question, "But suppose now that technology were no mere means, how would it stand with the will to master it?" (Heidegger, 1977, p. 5). Posed using Dick's terms, the question would be what if androids that humans created and bestowed with intelligence would stop functioning as means and revolt against their creators, claiming agency. This gives rise to the following inquiry: "[D]oes artificial intelligence qualify as independent agency or is it merely a simulation of individual existence? Again we arrive at the opposition of natural and artificial and the cultural predisposition to value the natural over the artificial" (Sims, 2009, p. 69), and, consequently, the domination of the subject over the object in human-technology relationships. Heidegger dissolves this mastery-based paradigm by redefining instrumentality and technology. He advocates that instrumentality is the basic aspect of technology and that should we investigate technology "as means . . . we shall arrive at revealing" (Heidegger, 1977, p. 12). Under revealing, Heidegger deconstructs the use-oriented relations between technology and humans. Furthermore, he reconstructs the relationship turning technology into a way for discovering our identities in our surroundings; in other words, technology becomes, not a tool, but a path to fathoming our essence as humans. Heidegger also defines the type of revealing regnant in "modern technology" as a "setting-upon" in the form of a "challenging forth", whereby the concealed energies in nature are unlocked (1977, p. 16). Nonetheless, he cautions against regarding unlocking as an exclusively human act. On the contrary, he says:

> Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by . . . indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way has its own standing. We call it the standing-reserve . . . Whatever stands by in the sense of standing-reserve no longer stands over against us as object.

(Heidegger, 1977, P. 17)

Accordingly, nature that challenges humans to "unconceal" its energies does not do so as a passive object subjected to the intelligence of the human master, but it does as an active agent ready to reshape nature and humans alike. Therefore, Heidegger stresses that in present-time technology, the process of revealing is inclusive of both humans and nature, and is "no merely human doing" (1977, P. 19). Even though revealing through the challenging forth is about the mutual and correlative reconfiguration of the energies of both humans and nature, Heidegger argues that a human might turn power blind and see nature as a domain for anthropocentric hegemony, crowning himself the "lord of the earth" (1977, p. 27). Additionally, he says, this human-centered view of the world engenders a series of delusions including the belief that "everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct", which "gives rise in turn to one final delusion: It seems as though man everywhere and always encounters only himself" (Heidegger, 1977, p. 27). Even though Dick's metaphor can be perceived as a worst-case-scenario of this power blindness, within which the android is observed as the "not-me" in a world seen exclusively as the image of "me", Heidegger's radical disruption of the exclusivity boundaries between natural/artificial, nature/human, human/technology afford a massive space for reconfiguring the android as a rebel, instead of an *other*. Drawing on Heidegger's concept of "revealing", the android, a representative of technology, can be reconfigured as an agentive associate of humans on the path towards discovering their subjectivity, as well as their location in an increasingly technologized world. Therefore, the android can be seen, not as the Dickian murderer, but as a revealer of energies that would breathe life into the dying bird of humanity.

PUNCTURING THE DICKIAN VEIL

As discussed earlier, Dick's texts mostly serve to highlight the two plagues that are adversely affecting our human world, and are replacing it with fake environments inhabited by antithetical creatures, thus, giving rise to the posthuman paradigm. These two plagues, he says, are "living toward reification" and "entry into animation" generated by the machine (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 148). One such text is his "The Electric Ant", a short story that appeared in *The Eye of the Sibyl: The Collected Stories of Philip K.* Dick (1987). Furthermore, like his numerous characters, the short story's protagonist Garson Poole is an incarnation of the "hybrid" which inhabits the inanimate and animate worlds at the same time, jeopardizing the established definitions of the human and the machine, the living and the dead, as well as the real and the fake. Poole, for the purposes of this paper, will be the field in which battles over the soul of the "authentic human" are launched by an ideology that obscures itself behind the thick veil of fakery. In the fashion of most of his fiction, Dick, on the one hand, centralizes the story's conflict around the main character's struggle to know his identity, particularly to prove that he belongs to the realm of the me, rather than the "not-me." On the other, Dick creates a direct accord between the identity of the character and the inception of his reality. In

"The Electric", Poole is admitted into the hospital after a vehicle crash during the rush hour. He enters the hospital a human and leaves it an android. Initially, Poole wakes up to find out that he lost his hand, but sometime later the doctor and the nurses tell him the bad news. After studying his chart, the doctor initially tells Poole that "'Mr. Poole, you're *not a man. You're an electric ant'"* (Dick, 1987, p. 251; emphasis added). He is told that he is an android, which the nurse defines as "[a]n organic robot" (Dick, 1987, p. 251). At once, this discovery calls to mind the Dickian posthuman paradigm, where the boundaries between the human and the machine are dissolved almost entirely that the whole world seems to be inhabited by hybrids ignorant of their reality. The doctor highlights that Poole's case is not unique, because they hospitalize an electric ant almost every week, describing the situation as "'[O]ne who, like yourself, has never been told, who has functioned along side [sic] humans, believing himself—itself—human. . . .'" (Dick, 1987, p. 251). By emphasizing the frequency of such discoveries, this quotation depicts Dick's fear of the anticipated technological explosion that would ultimately convert the world into a habitat for *half-human-half-machines.* However, and most importantly, the quotation underscores Dick's conventionalist views about the relationship that links humans to technology, which regenerates the "usual immediate reduction of a technical artifact to its function" (Sims, 2009, P. 72). The doctor, supposedly a human, imposes on the android the reductionist subject to object relations, whereby the android is a tool at the disposal of humans. In the story, Poole is further objectified and alienated from the sphere of the human when the doctor brings the issue of ownership up. The doctor tells him that he will be transferred to a repair facility, where they will either do maintenance work on or substitute his severed hand with the paycheck ultimately sent "'either to yourself, if you're self-owned, or to your owners, if such there are'", adding that soon he will be functioning just as before in the company (Dick, 1987, p. 252). Self-possession is actually one of the key traits of the liberal humanist subject, or to use Dick's terms, of the authentic human. In *The Political Theory,* C. B. Macpherson defines the liberal individual as the owner of him/herself. Macpherson posits:

> Possessive quality is found in its conception of the individual as essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them. . . . The human essence is freedom from the wills of others, and freedom is a function of possession. (1962, p. 3).

Having been reduced to the position of the object and denied his freedom as a possessor of his own self, Poole begins to doubt his status and realizes that he was "[a] figurehead" drowned in the delusion of being in control, "along with the delusion that I am human and alive" (Dick, 1987, p. 252). Poole's androinzation is complete when his human status undergoes one final attack from the doctor. The doctor asks Poole to settle the bill for the hospital's services even though he declared that they do not offer treatment to electric ants. Sensing the greed and lack of empathy in the doctor's tone, Poole addresses the doctor, saying "'And thank you for your humane attention'", to which the doctor responds with "'Thank

you, too, Mr. Poole,'" adding "'Or rather I should say just Poole'" (Dick, 1987, p. 252). As the title drops from the doctor's speech, Poole enters into the traditional hierarchy that governs the relationship between humans and technology, which at heart is based on the former's presumed mastery over the latter.

At the repair facility, Poole discovers that he was intentionally kept in the dark as to his real identity as an android. He, thus, brings into the discussion the question of ideology. In the words of Maturana and Varela, he discovers that, for a long time, he was being an allopoietic system coerced to function for the benefit of an autopoietic system that he does not identify, or to be more specific, he was programmed as not to identify. The repair technician tells Poole that the mechanisms inside him must have generated "clickings and whirrings" that should have exposed his reality and that "You never guessed because you were programed not to notice'" (Dick, 1987, p. 253). Realizing he was a victim to what Dick refers to as deliberate "obscuring", Poole describes himself as "[a] mechanical slave" (Dick, 1987, p. 253). Caught in a moment of contemplation, Poole suddenly turns into a mouthpiece for Dick's rhetoric about authenticity. Poole calls himself a freak, "[a]n inanimate object mimicking an animate one" (Dick, 1987, p. 253). He, further, points to Dick's behavioral implications which set the authentic human apart from the android. Wishing to terminate himself, he remembers that probably his owners have "programmed" him and incorporated some mechanisms inside him that would deny him a set of actions if they happen to be at odds with their interests. Poole believes that they have implanted a "grid screen that cuts me off from certain thoughts, certain actions. And forces me into others. I am not free" (Dick, 1987, p. 253). Consulting a database computer, Poole discovers that he is not programmed as much as he is manipulated through his own perception. The computer tells Poole that it is a "reality-supply construct" (Dick, 1987, p. 255)—a punch-hole tape fixed upon his mechanism, the heart-engine placed in his chest cavity—that is controlling him. Like Maturana and Varela, Dick highly correlates reality with a system's existence and position within a hierarchy based on mastery, whereby control over reality is control over individuality; hence, autonomy. Consequently, lack of control over individual reality amounts to slavery, or captivity in the "inside" of the projections of a stronger system, or worst of all, death. Poole recognizes the threat the reality tape poses to his existence, as well as his status as a living creature "[b]ecause my reality, my universe, is coming to me from this minuscule unit" (Dick, 1987, p. 255), and if the unit is jeopardized in any manner, his world would disappear. Therefore, Dick projects onto Poole all his construction-related anxieties and presents him as neck-deep in the ideological power dynamic of fakery. In "Reality as Ideological Construct: A Reading of Five Novels by Philip K. Dick", Peter Fitting proclaims that "[u]nder capitalism, bourgeois ideology works not only to ensure the reproduction of the capitalist system but seeks also to deny its status as ideology and to present its own particular construction of reality as natural and universal" (1983, p. 233). Hiding behind the veil of reality, ideological regimes attempt to normalize their subjects' ties to the environment they create for them, to ensure maximum profit and suppress any potential resistance. While he defines

the power struggle over reality as an ideological game, Dick too acknowledges the importance of keeping the illusion as natural as possible, for should we recognize the "foresighted engramming systems" that obscurely transformed us into pawns in a "game", we would have relinquished the game altogether (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 149). In "The Electric," only Poole's deputy, Danceman, knew that he was originally an android, but he was directed against telling him the truth by the company's countless shareholders. The following conversation between Danceman and Poole is exemplary of ideologies' tendency to wear a mask of normality as they seek to retain their hegemony. Danceman tells Poole that it was the stakeholders' original plan to have the large and successful Tri-Plan company "'run by an electric ant whom they could control'" (Dick, 1987, p. 257). This control they designed to obtain through drowning Poole in the illusion that he was the one in control. Danceman adds that he was to keep Poole's real identity from him because "'[y] ou were to think that you yourself made all company policy. . . . I was feeding you what the Beys fed to me'" (Dick, 1987, p. 257). Amidst this dark image of totalitarian control, Poole serves to show that construction bears the seeds of its deconstruction. Moreover, he recognizes that controlling his own subjective reality would amount to controlling the non-subjective reality of the whole world; he, thus, will be exiting the domain of the fake to that of the ultimate real because "[o] bjective reality is a synthetic construct, dealing with a hypothetical universalization of a multitude of subjective realities" (Dick, 1987, p. 255). With holding the reins to his perception, which in Dickian terms is the locus of behavior, or the soul, Poole gains agency over his position within the living-dead paradigm, discovering that with mastering his own perception "he gained control over everything" and is thus different from all the members of the human race "who ever lived and died" (Dick, 1987, p. 255). Poole starts to experiment with the tape, understanding that each punch-hole is a source for certain stimuli, which shows him the world as arranged according to the desires of those who enslaved him. The first time, he covers some of these punch-holes, erasing from his field of observation a huge chunk of New York City. This erasure can be interpreted as spatially abandoning the "inside" of the illusion of reality emanated by the capitalist autopoietic regime.

As he gains new insights into his reality-related presence, Poole starts to develop a new perspective of his situation as an electric ant. When his assistant Sarah questions his experiments, and whether they are some sort of repair work, Poole tells her "'I'm freeing myself'" (Dick, 1987, p. 259). He then starts to reminisce over a time, when TV channels were rife "before the government shut down the independents" (Dick, 1987, p. 259). By curtailing the sources of knowledge, the government confined the populace of the story's world into the limited space of its "inside", allowing them access to a single version of what is happening in their world; hence, limiting their options of what they could include in their "field of observation" and, thus, their subjectivity. Poole envisions a field of various perceptual choices broadcasted all at once as to create a complete image of the objective world. He identifies the potential the diversity of sources could have brought about, saying "'maybe we could. . . . [l]earn to be selective; do our own

job of perceiving what we wanted to and what we didn't'" (Dick, 1987, p. 259), and learning to be selective is the exact opposite of the mechanic cue-based reactions. With diverse sources of perception, humans are more authentic. However, Poole believes that the capacity of a human brain would not be sufficient to process the truth relayed through a multiplicity of sources, but his brain "a quasi-organic brain" can put the pieces together to afford a better-developed perception of the world (Dick, 1987, p. 259). By arguing for the advantages of a merged brain, part human and part machine, Poole highlights the correlative relationship between humans and technology, the subject and the object, nature and human, "revealing" thus energies that ideology attempted to keep hidden from both. Therefore, Poole's experiments with the reality tape acquire new dimensions beyond his subjective revolt and individualist survival. When Poole creates new holes in his reality strip, he creates a new set of stimuli, which he alone is supposed to see. As the strip runs, he observes a flock of ducks. However, to her surprise, Sarah also sees the flock appear and disappear, franticly asking "'They weren't real'" (Dick, 1987, p. 264). Sarah and Poole understand the implications of her seeing the illegally constructed images. Poole tells her that she is not real and that she is one additional delusion that presents itself to his eyes by the "stimulus-factor" of his reality strip. This truth about Sarah leads Poole to contemplate that she perhaps "existed in a thousand reality tapes; perhaps on every reality tape ever manufactured (Dick, 1987, p. 264). This experiment suggests that the reality roll is not responsible for Poole's subjective world only, but that the story's world is actually a projection of the same tape that is drowning all the world's inhabitants in its fake dimensions and tricking them to believe they are humans. The reality tape is an incarnation of Dick's veil which functions to hide that in a world of super technological advances all humans are merely masked androids. Therefore, Poole's last act of subversion, as he cuts the reality tape, obtains a collective profundity. Consequently, disrupting his tape means disrupting the roll that has been keeping the story's world functioning; it does not mean that he only gets to break the boundaries of the "inside" of the regime controlling him, but rather he collapses the whole "inside" as he decides to commit suicide knowing that tampering with the tape is the death of the mechanism. When his world begins gradually crashing, and he finally collapses to the floor, ending into a heap of broken parts, Sarah starts to vanish, until she too finally fades out of existence. Poole, thus, escapes the entrapment of ideology, liberating with him all the creatures imprisoned there with him. By dismantling the fake borders of ideology, Poole also dismantles the borders of the oppressive authorial metaphor, subverting the hierarchy Dick advocates:

> As soul is to man, man is to machine: It is the added dimension in terms of functional hierarchy. As one of us acts godlike (gives his cloak to a stranger), a machine acts human when it pauses in its programmed cycle to defer to it by reason of a decision. (Dick & Sutin, 1995, P. 148)

Poole did not only question his programming; he rather brought chaos on the system and shut it down. By doing so, Poole collapses the exclusivity of authentic rebellion that Dick, in his article "How to Build," reserves only for "the authentic human being who matters most, the viable, elastic organism that can bounce back, absorb, and deal with the new" and who understands that ideologically normalized "objects, customs, habits, and ways of life must perish so that the authentic human being can live" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 184). At the end of the story, when everything starts to disappear, Poole, the android, enters the spotlight, not as the passive image of a human relinquishing his/her authenticity, but he plunges out as an active rebel who joins humans on the path of reclaiming their humanness. Poole exits the entrapment of his author a hero and an owner of a soul of his own.

CONCLUSION

To bring the discussion full circle, it would be crucial to revisit Dick's vision of human-android relationships, and recap the paper's main thematic preoccupations which together hold a potential answer to Dick's following essential question: "Do [androids] have souls at all? Or, for that matter, do we?" (Dick & Sutin, 1995, p. 147). The first section of the paper addressed Dick's interpretation of the soul as largely exclusionary because he defines the soul as a set of behavioral traits that consolidate the boundaries of the authentic human subject. These traits include freedom of will, adaptability, and the urge to resist assimilation into the machinery of authoritarian ideology. Based on this definition, Dick established his pseudohuman paradigm, as the zone of the technological age, where boundaries between the living and the nonliving are made permeable, problematizing the established distinctions between the soulful human and soulless android. Additionally, the paper approached the Dickian android metaphor, which exemplifies the behaviorally inauthentic human. In the second section, the paper explored Dick's concerns over the cybernetic claims that objective reality does not exist and that the human subject's boundaries are perceptually constructed, rather than intrinsic, along with ideologies' use of construction and technology to create fake realities and andronize humans, robbing them of the soul and giving them tropisms instead. In the third section, drawing on the autopoietic arguments of Maturana and Varela, the paper deconstructed the Dickian living-nonliving paradigm by advocating the two researchers' idea that all systems in life, including machines, are autopoietic, and thus living and autonomous, unless they are coerced to the position of dependency through certain subjective perceptual interpretations of the interactivity between the system and his/her/its surrounding environment. With the perceptual subjection, Maturana and Varela evoke the power dynamic that underlies Dick's ideology-initiated cult of fakery. Under these dynamics, the paper posited that the android is perceptually trapped twice and made allopoietic first by ideology, and second by Dick as an author. This dual entrapment is the core of the android metaphor. On the one hand, the metaphor carries the conventionalist presumptions about technology as a passive tool in the service of humans; on the other, the metaphor stands for the behaviorally deprived machine, which can never act in a soulful manner. The metaphor is reconfigured

in the fourth section of the paper, by incorporating Heidegger's definition of technology as "revealing" through "challenging forth". The definition dismantles the fixed boundaries between human and nature, nature and artifact, as well as human and technology, which used to instate humans' hegemony over nature and alienate technology from the existential fabric of humanity by projecting onto artifacts the exclusive position of a tool at the evolutionary disposal of humans. Henceforth, the Heideggerian argument reconfigured the technological "revealing" as a joint action carried out by humans, nature, and artifacts. Finally, by applying the reconfigured activity of "revealing" to Poole's rebellion in "The Electric Ant", the paper set the notion of the behavioral soul into motion, liberating it of its strictly human aspects and turning it into a feature that both humans and androids can "have" as they cooperatively "reveal" and puncture fake realities threatening the authentic human.

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