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Explorations of Identity in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

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Présenté par :

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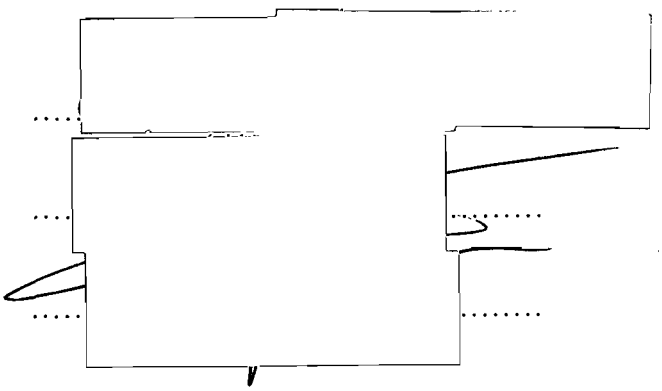

Résumé de Synthèse

L'objectif de ce mémoire est d'explorer ce qui nous catégorise en tant qu'êtres humains et nous sépare de nos réalisations scientifiques et technologiques. Dans son ouvrage *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, Philip K. Dick dresse le portrait d'un monde futuriste dans lequel la création de l'androïde, un automate aux traits et comportements humains, brouille la ligne séparant l' « humain » du « non-humain ». En établissant une confusion entre l'être authentique et l'artificiel, Dick expose la hiérarchie de fausses valeurs utilisées pour nous distinguer d'autres espèces.

Cette analyse commence par considérer l'œuvre de Dick comme une reproduction de *Paradise Lost* de John Milton et de *Frankenstein* de Mary Shelley. Les angoisses ontologiques exprimées par les prédécesseurs de Dick influencent grandement l'ouvrage de ce dernier, dont la représentation des femmes appelle au retour d'Ève, un personnage crucial dans les textes de Milton et Shelley, sous forme d'une femelle « cyborg ». La deuxième partie de ce mémoire tente de définir l'être humain en termes d'implications biologiques, sociales et humanistes. La troisième et dernière partie examine le concept d'individualisme en tant que prérequis humain, ainsi que la relation entre soi et autrui.

Sur le plan théorique, cette étude se base sur les œuvres de plusieurs théoriciens et critiques littéraires, y compris Harold Bloom, Lucy Newlyn, Marilyn Gwaltney, Sandra Gilbert et Susan Gubar, N. Katherine Hayles et

Sigmund Freud. Les œuvres de ces derniers sont cruciales afin de comprendre le roman de Dick en tant que rejet de l'idéologie humaniste traditionnelle, en faveur d'une nouvelle philosophie posthumaine, dans laquelle humains et non-humains peuvent coexister en harmonie.

Mot-clés: Anxiété d'influence, cyborg, Dick, féminisme, humanisme, identité, Milton, posthumanisme, Shelley.

Abstract

This thesis is aimed at exploring the question of what it is that classifies us as human beings and separates us from our scientific and technological constructs. Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* portrays a futuristic world where the creation of the android, an automaton that resembles and behaves like a human, leads to a blurring of the line between the human and the "non-human." By establishing a sense of confusion between the authentic and the artificial being, Dick exposes the hierarchy of false values used to distinguish us from other species.

This study begins by considering Dick's novel as a rewrite of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein.* The ontological anxieties expressed by his predecessors strongly influence Dick's work, whose representation of women calls for the return of Eve, a crucial figure in both Milton's and Shelley's texts, in the form of a female cyborg. The second part of this thesis attempts to define the human in terms of its biological, social, and humanistic implications. The third and final part examines the concept of individualism as a human prerequisite and the relationship between self and other.

Theoretically, this project builds upon the works of several theorists and literary critics, including Harold Bloom, Lucy Newlyn, Marilyn Gwaltney, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, N. Katherine Hayles and Sigmund Freud. Their works are crucial in understanding Dick's novel as a rejection of

traditional humanistic ideology in favour of a new posthuman philosophy, where both humans and non-humans can coexist harmoniously.

Keywords: Anxiety of influence, cyborg, Dick, feminism, humanism, identity, Milton, posthumanism, Shelley

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Acknowledgments

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Anastasia Polyrakis
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Dedication

To my son, George Flouris; I love you more than words can express. When I first learned that I was going to have a baby, I had just begun writing this thesis. It was not always an easy task to do, with the morning sickness, fatigue, and distracting cravings, but you always managed to give me the kick in the gut I needed (literally) to keep writing. That is why I dedicate this to you, *agori mou*; because we created it together.

Introduction

For years, many scholars have regarded science fiction in simplistic terms, as an idealistic prediction of the future. Images of extraterrestrial and artificially-constructed beings visiting the Earth, or living among humans, dominate this literary genre; and, until recently, such figures have been viewed as unrealistic visions of things to come. At present, with the advancing fields of—among others—cybernetics, artificial intelligence and virtual reality, science fiction has gained value as an outlining of possible future realities. In fact, this genre can be considered as a form of philosophical literature, by contemplating important anxieties surrounding the present condition of the human race and attempting to transcend such issues by inducing an alternate form of reality through fictional narrative.

Consequently, science fiction is not limited to predictions of the future but includes a thought-provoking insight of the present world as well. Through "conceptual dislocation," the science fiction writer presents "a new idea, or a new variation on an old one" (Dick, "My Definition" 100), as a means of exposing one to new theories and thus, forcing one to re-evaluate ideas which they have, until that moment, taken for granted. In one of his definitions of science fiction, Philip K. Dick explores the displacement from the conventional as follows:

> If it is good SF the idea is new, it is stimulating, and probably most important of all, it sets off a chain reaction of ramification ideas in the mind of the reader; it so to speak unlocks the reader's mind so that that mind, like the author's begins to create. (100)

What Dick describes here is of particular importance because it represents the basis for my interest in exploring *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* The novel opens one's mind to something that he or she has never really paid much attention to until that moment; a central theme in much of Dick's writing: the question of what it is that makes us truly human. Through his portrayal of the android, Dick portrays a world where it is virtually impossible to distinguish between humans and machines. As a result, the line separating the authentic and artificial being is blurred, thus creating a context wherein humanism is challenged and calling for a revision of the false hierarchies involved in the classification of the human.

The main purpose of my thesis is to explore Dick's philosophical question of what makes us human and negotiate whether or not his android characters can be considered as such. Within the context of this study, I also wish to delve into the matter of ontological anxieties, human identity in terms of the notion of "self" and the effects of sexual difference. In doing so, I wish to establish Dick's interpretation of our notions of humanism, self and gender as outdated, prejudiced, and binding.

My work is divided into three chapters. The first studies Dick's representation of the female. By considering his novel as a rewrite of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Dick reveals how anxieties surrounding female sexuality are passed on from one generation to the next. Drawing upon the works of Harold Bloom and Donna Haraway, I will establish a link between Milton's Eve, Shelley's monster, and Dick's females, in order to

show how the anxieties of Dick's predecessors influence his portrayal of the feminine and the image of the cyborg in particular. The second chapter seeks to construct the "human" through the exploration of its historical delineation, as well as through concepts such as free will and empathy. Through a close analysis of Dick's key android characters, I will demonstrate how the construction of the human is in need of revision and incorporate N. Katherine Hayles' theory of a reconstruction of the "human" into a new type of species: that of the "posthuman." Finally, the third chapter deals with the question of whether or not Dick's androids can be considered as individuals, using the criteria established by Marilyn Gwaltney as a guiding point. In the same chapter, I posit a relationship between the self and the psychoanalytic theory of the double in order to explain Dick's use of the "uncanny" as a literary device in his novel.

It is important to mention that although *Blade Runner*, the film version of Dick's novel, has received a great deal of attention since its release in the 1980s, I chose not to consider it for study in my thesis. The reason for this is that the film detracts from the novel by paying more attention to the futuristic setting[1] than dealing with the complex issues of humanism that are so central to

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[1] Ridley Scott paints such a spectacular picture of the future that even Dick himself is said to have been in awe. Despite some of the film's shortcomings with regard to plot and character development, its setting is considered a visual masterpiece. As William M. Kolb writes:

> Scott's nightmare depiction of a possible future city, one of the film's greatest achievements, is revealed in isolated fragments and exaggerated detail as though we had actually traveled in time to the year 2019. You can almost smell the steaming noodle bars, the dank clothes that no one seems to change, and wet trash that accumulates faster than it can be remove. You feel the cold, endless rain that saturates

Dick's work. Furthermore, the film omits key characters (i.e. Isidore and Iran), crucial scenes (when Deckard is taken to an alternate police department), and important ideologies (i.e. Mercerism) which are integral in Dick's critique of the human condition. Having contemplated whether the film would provide an interesting contribution to my thesis, I decided to focus solely on Dick's novel because I found Scott's adaptation to be less affected by the anxieties of humanism.

What I seek to accomplish through my work is a better understanding of how we have arrived at our present-day concept of the human and what forces are at play in the construction of such a theory. I am also interested in establishing the role of literature in the creation of humanism and the subsequent anxieties which have emerged as a result of the absolute ideals attached to such a concept. And I wish to show how, although Milton, Shelley and Dick replicate the same fears with respect to the human condition, the latter author actually calls for a change in our traditional beliefs. For, it is only in doing so that we will be able to live in harmony with other unique species with which we share the universe.

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this gloomy megapolis, the heat of sidewalk fires keeping indigents warm, and papers stirring in the breeze from a passing spinner. Scott's surrealistic, frame-packed backdrop evokes images and feelings so overwhelming that the story suffers unintentionally. Visions of this garish and frightening city come back strong and vivid longer after we've left the theatre, a striking reminder of what cinema does at its best. (Kolb 133-134).

Chapter One

Representations of the Female:

From First Mother, to Monstrous Other, to Female Cyborg

In order to fully appreciate *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* not just as a narrative but as an important philosophical work which raises critical issues about human nature, it is imperative that one consider the novel as a twentieth-century rewrite of John Milton's epic, *Paradise Lost*, and Mary Shelley's gothic tale, *Frankenstein*. In his novel, Philip K. Dick revisits some of the predominant themes found in both Milton's and Shelley's works, namely humankind's ontological anxieties and our quest to eliminate death from life's equation. *Where do we come from and where are we destined?* The answer to both of these questions lies in a single word: woman. Dick argues that the origin of man is "the mother, the woman, the Earth"; that "man came from her and returns to her" (Dick, "The Android" 203). Although the mother is replaced by mechanical reproduction in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, her presence is felt through her absence. Through his portrayal of a world reduced to a wasteland where the only thing being reproduced is kipple, Dick paints a morbid picture of the consequences of our scientific endeavours to create a motherless human life; yet even though there are no mothers in the novel, the ghost of the biblical figure of Eve, our first mother, appears through Dick's female characters, as it does in the works of his precursors, Milton and Shelley. Hence, the purpose of this chapter will be to explore the representation of Eve in each of the texts. By studying the works in chronological order, beginning with Milton, then Shelley, and subsequently ending with Dick, I will trace the shift of Eve from "first mother" to "monstrous other," to "female cyborg," which I will argue is the result of one author's misreading of the other.

I will also explore the ways in which Dick swerves from his predecessors by rewriting Eve as an androgynous entity and what this means in terms of gender. I will argue that gender categories are established based on sex difference; that even though Dick eliminates the female's reproductive power and emasculates her, the gender barrier remains because of her biological dissimilarity. This reflects the human insistence upon designating and classifying things according to their similarities and differences, as well as exposes the role of biology as a discourse which constructs gender as a means to justify the social inequality of women.

Since her appearance in *Paradise Lost* in the seventeenth-century, the figure of Eve remains the subject of a perpetual debate among literary critics and theorists which seeks to resolve whether or not Milton's portrayal of our first mother is misogynistic or pro-feministic. On the one side of this debate, Milton is viewed as portraying Eve as infantile, powerless, corrupt, and inferior; as possessing no identity of her own other than that of Adam's wife. On the other side, Eve is viewed in heroic terms, as a woman who rises against the patriarchal society which seeks to repress her and, as a result, gives birth to the knowledge, imagination, and free will of humankind. In this dual representation, it is possible that Milton purposely leaves it up to his audience to decide how to interpret his characterization of Eve; or, perhaps Milton engages in what Lucy Newlyn calls "a complex and ambivalent game: a game of half-releasing, and half-restraining" (190) the feminine subject.

In her groundbreaking essay, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Mary Wollstonecraft argues that Milton's Eve is the product of sexism and that her portrayal is degrading to the female gender:

> Thus Milton describes our first frail mother; though when he tells us that women are formed for softness and sweet attractive grace, I cannot comprehend his meaning, unless, in the true Mahometan strain, he meant to deprive us of souls, and insinuate that we were beings only designed by sweet attractive grace, and docile blind obedience, to gratify the senses of man when he can no longer soar on the wing of contemplation. How grossly do they insult us who thus advise us only to render ourselves gentle, domestic brutes! (Wollstonecraft 19-20).

Wollstonecraft accuses Milton of being a misogynist who only values women in terms of their beauty, submissiveness and the sexual gratification they offer men. The introduction of Eve in Book IV does support Wollstonecraft's claim, as it clearly identifies woman as man's inferior. When Satan encounters the first humans created by God, he categorizes the female as the weaker sex: "Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed; For contemplation he and valour formed, For softness she and sweet attractive grace, He for God only, she for God in him" (Milton iv. 296-299). Eve's "softness" and "sweet attractive grace" are viewed as insignificant next to the strong qualities of "contemplation" and "valour" used to describe Adam, whom she is to regard not just as a husband but as a god.

In the process of such blind idolatry, Eve is denied the opportunity to grow as an individual and develop a sense of independence. Instead, Eve is portrayed as Adam's willing servant, his plaything, an object created for the sole purpose of pleasing him: "My author and disposer, what thou bidst

Unargued I obey; so God ordains, God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more Is Woman's happiest knowledge and her praise" (Milton iv. 635-638). Eve's declaration of being happily ignorant of all things unrelated to her duty towards Adam serves as an example, according to Wollstonecraft, of the male attempt to "secure the good conduct of women" by reducing them to a perpetual "state of childhood" (Wollstonecraft 20). Wollstonecraft contends that Milton's representation of our first parents in terms of "simplicity and spotless innocence" (Book IV 318) represents a derogatory attack on the female sex by arguing that: "Children, I grant, should be innocent; but when the epithet is applied to men, or women, it is but a civil term for weakness" (20). By reducing Eve's status to that of a powerless child, Wollstonecraft's case against Milton's negative portrayal of women becomes a strong one which, as we will see later on in this chapter, subsequently influences other literary critics and theorists to treat the figure of Eve in the same injurious manner.

Although there is clear evidence in Milton's epic to support claims of misogynism, there are also textual implications of Eve as a sympathetic and even commendable character. Milton draws an important parallel between Satan and Eve, thus allowing for a pro-feminist reading of the latter as a fallen heroine rather than as the birth mother of sin and death. Lucy Newlyn argues that, even though Milton critics accuse him of supporting patriarchal oppression of woman in his portrayal of Eve, *Paradise Lost* may also be considered as an expression of compassion for the female sex and its state of subjugation. In the same way that *Paradise Lost* deals with the notion of free will, Newlyn argues

that Milton's audience is given a *choice* between the "supertext"[2] and the "subtext"[3] of the epic in deciding whether Eve is a guilty party or sympathetic figure (155).

Newlyn argues that the supertext of *Paradise Lost* exhibits signs of Eve's transgression before the Fall, which can be construed as Milton's judgment against woman, whom he denounces as a sinner (156). The authorial disapproval of Eve reveals itself in several scenes in Milton's epic. For example, his description of Eve's hair as "dishevelled," "wanton ringlets," (Milton iv. 306) and "loose tresses," (iv. 497) alludes to her seductiveness and the sin of lust, which manifests itself as a consequence of the Fall. Furthermore, Eve's association with the mythological figure of Narcissus, as she "pines with vain desire" (iv. 466) upon seeing her reflection in the lake, implies that Eve is also to blame for the emergence of a second sin: that of pride. Finally, in Book V, where Eve recounts her dream of flying above the earth with Satan, she is associated with sin, as the dream implies "her succumbing to temptation and portrays imagination as presumptuous and damned" (Newlyn 156). A supertextual reading of each of these scenes shows a persistent affiliation between Eve and sin which can be regarded as a harsh judgment against woman, whom Milton's patriarchal society blames for the Fall of man.

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[2] The term "supertext" outlined by Newlyn involves the reading of *Paradise Lost* in the context of the patriarchal system which ruled in the seventeenth century.

[3] The "subtext" refers to the consideration of *Paradise Lost* as a multi-faceted text with implicit content beneath its verbal dialogue.

In spite of this, Milton's statement that the purpose of his epic is to "justify the ways of God to men" (i. 26) may in fact reflect the author's attempt to show that Eve's disobedience is God's will and a necessary act in order that humankind may acquire the virtues of knowledge and free will. Although Eve's behaviour entails the loss of paradise, it also brings forth—through God's mercy—the possibility of redemption and the prospect of regaining paradise in the afterlife. A deeper reading of Milton's epic reveals the author's attempt to justify the ways of Eve, which are also the ways of God since He is omniscient and therefore knows about Eve's transgression even before it occurs and allows for it to happen. As a consequence, the subtext of *Paradise Lost* transforms the epic from "a model of patriarchal repression," to a statement of sympathy towards Eve, as well as a representation of sex as growth (Newlyn 7).

In contrast to one's interpretation of Milton's supertext, a reading of the subtext allows for the implicit expression of compassion for woman, as well as the celebration of female strength and growth. Newlyn argues that a parallel is drawn between Satan and Eve in order to underline their "subjection to an arbitrary hierarchical code" (Newlyn 189). The result of this shared inequality draws an "alliance" (189) between the two characters. Newlyn declares that this bond is established by Milton, in order to derive the same sense of sympathy for Eve that has already been incited for Satan:

> It is [. . .] precisely in the merging of Satan and Eve that the feminist possibilities of *Paradise Lost* reside. Eve is given the same legitimate cause for grievance as Satan, and the same ambitious potential. She can be understood and played on by

> Satan, because she has within her the yearning for equality that makes him a sympathetic figure. (155)

When Eve comes to recognize her inferiority as a woman, she, like Satan, imagines "a world that is less imprisoned" (hence, her dream of flying with Satan) and "temptation comes to [her], not just as an external possibility, but in response to a hidden impulse in [herself]" (189). Consequently, it is this hidden impulse which draws Eve to Satan and provokes her act of defiance as a "response to prohibition" (189) and as a desire to shift from innocence to maturity.

Unlike the epic's supertext, the subtext of *Paradise Lost* incites a sense of compassionate understanding of Eve's oppression and strips the archetypal figure of her libellous designation as a villain, declaring her as a heroine instead. Newlyn argues that, if read in terms of its subtext, the signs of fallenness portrayed in Milton's work represent "the register of her dissatisfaction with the unfallen state, and her striving for liberation" (156). Evidence of this is found in Book IV, where Eve sees Adam for the first time, right after she has caught a glimpse of her own reflection in the lake: "Till I espied thee, fair indeed and tall, Under a platan, yet methought less fair, Less winning soft, less amiably mild, Than that smooth watery image; back I turned" (Milton iv. 477-480). Here, Eve's narcissistic behaviour may serve not as an indication of vanity but rather as a manifestation of self-assertion and independence from her patriarch. Her turning away from Adam portrays her disappointment with her predestined state, as well as her plot to escape her fate. Her plan, however, is foiled by

Adam, who calls out to her, "claims" her as his wife, and "seizes" (Milton iv. 487) her hand until she finally "yields" (iv. 489). Consequently, Eve's attempted "flight" from Adam and subsequent dream of "flying" with Satan represent her "refusal to remain content with the place assigned to her by God" (Newlyn 156) and her ambition to attain a better life. On the other hand, Adam's intervention reflects the patriarchal society's firm hold on women, which seeks to keep the latter in a state of repression.

Although Wollstonecraft argues that Eve's innocence essentially represents her frailty, if one engages with Milton's subtext, one finds that Eve is depicted as anything but weak. The fact that Milton "chooses to make [Eve's] fall more detailed and compelling than Adam's" (Newlyn 156) is no coincidence. In fact, it speaks a great deal about the author's sympathetic attitude towards women, as well as his treatment of Eve as heroine. Her inferior status incites reader sympathy, a feeling which is eventually replaced by a sense of respect, as Eve aspires to rise above her state of oppression. Although she fails in her mission to attain godhead, Eve is nonetheless represented, like Satan, as a fallen heroine; for, what arises from her brave attempt is a thing to be revered by humankind: the birth of humanism. Prior to the Fall, Adam and Eve are unable to distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood. They believe without reason and serve blindly as God's subjects. Eve's act of defiance is a way for her to take control of her own life and seek her own truths. Consequently, her transgression brings about the awakening of the self through knowledge, rationality, free will, consciousness and

imagination. Therefore, a subtextual reading of Eve reveals her strength rather than her weakness; for, although her "emancipation" (156) comes with a heavy price (her expulsion from Paradise, the agony of childbirth, and the condemnation of ensuing death), Eve's fallibility allows her to "grow toward experience and self-knowledge" (156) and comes with the possibilities of penitence and redemption.

Among those who support Milton's supertextual representation of Eve as a paradigm of female docility and submissiveness, there are a few well-known women writers, one of which is Mary Wollstonecraft's own daughter, Mary Shelley. In *Frankenstein*, Shelley rewrites *Paradise Lost* as one of Milton's "ardently submissive daughters" (Gilbert and Gubar 220), in an attempt to "minister to such a father by understanding exactly what he is telling her about herself and what, therefore, he wants of her" (220). Having said this, however, Gilbert and Gubar argue that "this apparent docile way of coping with Miltonic misogyny may conceal fantasies of equality that occasionally erupt in monstrous images of rage" (220). Such images are omnipresent in *Frankenstein*, resulting in the novel's transformation from a rationalization of Milton's misogynistic views to an expression of anxiety about the state of the female sex within a patriarchal society.

Shelley's novel serves as a Romantic adaptation of *Paradise Lost*, which—though it appears to reiterate Milton's work—in fact recreates the epic through the eyes of a woman. Her endeavour to come to terms with Milton's text actually develops into the story of her own female experience: her

repression, her social exclusion, and her "monstrous" sexuality. Her doubling of Milton's characters through the portrayal of her own allow for a hidden context to emerge, where the image of the female is ever-present. As Gilbert and Gubar argue:

> *Frankenstein* is ultimately a mock *Paradise Lost* in which both Victor and his monster, together with a number of secondary characters, play all the neo-biblical parts over and over again—all except, it seems at first, the part of Eve. Not just the striking omission of an obvious Eve-figure from this 'woman's book' about Milton, but also the barely concealed sexual components of the story as well as our earlier analysis of Milton's bogey should tell us, however, that for Mary Shelley the part of Eve *is* all the parts. (230)

Victor plays the parts of both God (for this creation of the creature) and Satan (for his endeavour to attain godhead). The creature portrays both Adam (as Victor's first creation) and Satan (as vengeful monster). Walton enacts the roles of Adam (when he is warned by Victor of the danger of knowledge) and Satan (in his ambition to acquire fame and glory as the first man to reach the North Pole). In a novel where the male characters take center stage while the females play a minor passive role, it is easy to presume the absence of Eve in *Frankenstein*; yet, a more generous reading of the novel's subtext removes the mask of each of these characters only to reveal the face of Eve.

The enactment of Eve can be seen during the creation of the monster, through Shelley's portrayal of Victor's metaphorical "pregnancy" (232) and subsequent labour. Gilbert and Gubar argue that the imagery surrounding this creation alludes to "Eve's fall into "guilty knowledge and painful maternity" (232). Like Eve, Victor aspires to attain a knowledge that is forbidden to man

and as a punishment, he "gives birth" to a horrifying creature. The connotative language found in *Frankenstein* serves as evidence of this: "infinite pains," (Shelley 34) "incredible labour," (30) "emaciated with confinement," (32) "a passing trance," (32) "oppressed by a slow fever," (33) "nervous to a painful degree," (33) "exercise and amusement would [. . .]drive away [disease]," (33-34) "the instruments of life," (34) etc. This depiction is particularly significant, not just because it calls to mind the birth of man's sin, but because it locates the exact point in the novel when Victor realizes his role as Eve.

Prior to this scene, Victor undergoes a transformation from the figure of Adam (during his innocent youth) to that of Satan (in his adult years); and yet, as Gilbert and Gubar argue, the shadow of Eve always lurks: "If the adult, Satanic Victor is Eve-like both in his procreation and his anxious creation, even the young, prelapsarian, and Adamic Victor is—to risk a pun—*curiously* female, that is, Eve-like" (234). An example of this can be traced in Victor's keen interest in literature as a means of discovering "the tremendous secrets of the human frame" (Shelley 32), which is contrasted with Eve's craving for "intellectual food" (Gilbert and Gubar 234). Another hint of Eve's presence can be found when Alphonse Frankenstein dismisses Victor's reading of Cornelius Agrippa[4] as "sad trash" and warns his son not to waste his time upon such a book. Alphonse's "censorship" (235) of Agrippa's book leads Victor to believe that his father is selfishly withholding "useful knowledge" (Shelley 21).

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[4] Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535), a German physician and author of *De Occulta Philosophia* (1531); also a reputed magician.

Similarly, Eve resents God's control over knowledge and aspires to see as He sees by eating the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. Although such scenes clearly portray the lingering spectre of Eve, it is only during the novel's creation scene that Eve actually materializes; for, it is precisely at this moment that Victor "discovers he is not Adam but Eve, not Satan but Sin, not male but female" (Gilbert and Gubar 234). This self-discovery also leads Victor to realize that being born a female means to bear Eve's scars, which mark her as fallen and brand her as a hideous monster to be despised.

Victor's creature can be considered as the embodiment of female monstrosity, as his physical disfigurement evokes Eve's "moral deformity" (Gilbert and Gubar 241). Furthermore, his narrative serves as a "philosophical meditation" (235) on the unfortunate position of women in a patriarchal society, where their sexual difference is feared and abhorred. According to Gilbert and Gubar:

> The discovery that one is fallen is in a sense a discovery that one is a monster, a murderer, a being gnawed by 'the never-dying worm' and therefore capable of any horror, including but not limited to sex, death, and filthy literary creation. (234-235)

The images of the "monster," the "murderer," and the criminal who is "gnawed" by her guilty conscience; each of these can be associated with Eve and her fallenness. Victor's creature encompasses all of these figures, as well as their respective associations with "sex," "death," and the "filthy" mingling of the two with respect to female reproduction. Shelley's depiction of the creature as a monstrous version of Eve reflects the patriarchal supertextual reading of

Paradise Lost and establishes how such an interpretation shapes her generation's perception of women.

Anne K. Mellor offers an insightful reading of the patriarchal fear of female sexuality, as well as the need to control that which is arguably the most valuable of female qualities, that which sets her apart from a man, her capacity to reproduce. Mellor argues that:

> By stealing the female's control over reproduction, Frankenstein has eliminated the female's primary biological function and source of cultural power. Indeed, for the simple purpose of human survival, Frankenstein has eliminated the necessity to have females at all. (274)

Frankenstein's desire to eradicate the female altogether represents the cultural anxiety of the *other* and also "supports a patriarchal denial of the value of women and of female sexuality" (274). In considering the Genesis story, one may argue that female otherness stems from God's creation of woman as an "afterthought;" as a being moulded from man's remains; as one whose purpose is to be, as Milton writes, man's "other half" (Book IV line 488). Despite her status as God's "second-favourite" creature, however, she is endowed with the ability to give birth to a human life, which elevates her status to that of a deity. The fact that such a power is reserved only for the female instils feelings of envy, fear and even hatred in the male, which are then followed by his need to retaliate, in order to gain a sense of control. This representation of the intense need to overpower the female is at the heart of Shelley's novel, wherein

Victor's desire to "pursue nature to her hiding places" (Shelley 32), portrays a type of rape metaphor:

> At every level Victor Frankenstein is engaged upon a rape of nature, a violent penetration and usurpation of the female's 'hiding places,' of the womb. Terrified of female sexuality and the power of human reproduction it enables, both he and the patriarchal society he represents use the technologies of science and the laws of the polis to manipulate, control and repress women. (281)

The feminization of nature, as well as Victor's narrative of "midnight labours," "unrelaxed and breathless eagerness," "the horrors of [. . .] secret toils" and "dabbl[ing] among unhallowed damps," (32) create a gothic setting in which nature and Victor appear to engage in a rape-like struggle. This violent theme is repeated several times throughout the novel, to show that no matter how much Victor tries to control his desire "to rape, possess, and destroy the female" (Mellor 281), the urge is—like his creature—monstrous and cannot be quelled.

One of the most significant recurrences of the rape theme occurs when Victor destroys the female creature he has undertaken to create for his monster. In his narrative, Victor relates how "trembling with passion" he "tore to pieces" (Shelley 115) the half-finished female. The brutality exercised by Victor reflects his affirmation of the "male control over the female body, penetrating and mutilating the female creature at his feet in an image that suggests a violent rape" (Mellor 279). This act is particularly important because of its exemplification of the male fear of female sexuality and the need to eliminate any potential of a sexually liberated woman, who poses a threat to the

patriarchal rule. Such a fear is evident in Victor's justification for the termination of the female creature:

> [. . .] she might become ten thousand times more malignant than her mate, and delight, for its own sake, in murder and wretchedness. He had sworn to quit the neighbourhood of man, and hide himself in deserts; but she had not; and she, who in all probability was to become a thinking and reasoning animal, might refuse to comply with a compact made before her creation. They might even hate each other; the creature who already lived loathed his own deformity, and might he not conceive a greater abhorrence for it when it came before his eyes in the female form? She also might turn with disgust from him to the superior beauty of man; she might quit him, and he be again alone, exasperated by the fresh provocation of being deserted by one of his own species.
>
> Even if they were to leave Europe, and inhabit the deserts of the new world, yet one of the first results of those sympathies for which the daemon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth, who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror. Had I a right, for my own benefit, to inflict this curse upon everlasting generations? [. . .] I shuddered to think that future ages might curse me as their pest, whose selfishness had not hesitated to buy its own peace at the price perhaps of the existence of the whole human race. (Shelley 114-115)

At first, Victor's reasoning appears to involve his fear of creating another violent being; however, as he continues to rationalize, it becomes clear that the determining factor behind his decision to destroy the female creature has to do with his anxieties about the creature's possible assertion of independence and her unrestrained sexuality. Victor is afraid that the female will resist the male creature's attempt to control her and assert the right to be her own person, think freely, and make her own decisions and choices. He is terrified at the notion that the two creatures may actually loathe one another, and even more so at the

possibility that the female may prefer to mate with biological men. Victor imagines the outcome of such a partiality as horrific, as it would lead to the rape of these men by the female creature, whose immense size and strength would overpower them (Mellor 279). Lastly, what Victor dreads most, and what leads him to savagely tear the female to pieces, is her ability to procreate an entire species of monsters which, he perceives, would threaten the human race. Consequently, Victor's pre-meditated slaying of the female creature represents the patriarchal fear of the revolutionary modern woman, who Mellor describes as "sexually liberated, free to choose her own life, her own sexual partner (by force, if necessary)" and one who "defies that sexist aesthetic that insists that women be small, delicate, modest, passive, and sexually-pleasing—but available only to their lawful husbands" (279). The emergence of such a woman breaks the carefully-constructed gender rules and threatens the patriarchal society on which such rules are founded. Consequently, Victor's response to the potential of such a woman is by carrying out the patriarchal desire to silence the woman by stifling her.

Although the female creature represents a literal interpretation of woman as monstrous, there are also many metaphorical implications in Shelley's novel which link female sexuality with death. I have already established one of these factors in my analysis of Victor's allegorical labour scene, wherein he gives birth to Eve, who simultaneously acts as the epitome of life and forerunner of death. Another example of the juxtaposition of sex and

death occurs in Victor's nightmare on the night in which the monster makes his first appearance:

> I slept indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her; but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. (Shelley 34)

Victor's dream is a crucial scene in *Frankenstein*, not only for its association of the female body with sex and death but also because it reflects Shelley's own personal sexual awakening. William Veeder recalls an event from Shelley's youth, where she and Percy Shelley first declare—and possibly even consummate—their love on her mother's grave. Veeder analyzes the symbolic nature of this act by arguing that: "Making love to the daughter involves Percy with the mother; uniting with the living woman bonds him with the dead" (114). In considering Victor's dream, this "blurring" (114) of daughter with mother can be interpreted as Shelley's portrayal of the familial relationship between female sexuality and death.[5] Sex equals death for Shelley, in more ways than one. Her mother dies just days after she is born. Her first sexual encounter occurs by her mother's grave. She becomes pregnant and gives birth to a daughter who dies shortly afterwards. Consequently, Shelley's description of Victor's dream illustrates the female transformation from virginal innocence to

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[5] George Levine argues that: "Every death in the novel is a death in the family, literal or figurative" (213). Moreover, Ellen Moers declares that: "Death and birth were thus as hideously mixed in the life of Mary Shelley as in Frankenstein's 'workshop of filthy creation'" (221).

sexual maturity. As long as a woman is ignorant of her sexuality, she remains, as Elizabeth initially appears, "in the bloom of health." Once she is exposed to the male "embrace," however, she is afflicted with the fatal disease of death.[6] The grotesque image of the worm-infested "folds" of the mother's flannel "both refer to and veil the underlying maternal folds" (Joseph 29). In doing so, Shelley represents female sexuality, not as a positive promise of life but, as the gruesome omen of mortality.

Shelley's representation of woman as the spectre of death also stems from her reading of Milton's Eve as a criminal who is responsible for the demise of humankind. Not only does Eve represent death in the natural sense, that is, as the Earth-Mother from whom we set forth in life and to whom we return in death; but, as C. S. Lewis argues, Eve is also connected to death in the sense that her "folly, malice, and corruption" lead to the "genesis of murder" (126):

> [. . .] she remembers that the fruit may [. . .] be deadly. She decides that if she is to die, Adam must die with her; it is intolerable that he should be happy, and happy (who knows?) with another woman when she is gone. I am not sure that critics always notice the precise sin which Eve is now committing, yet there is no mystery about it. Its name in English is Murder. (125).

Lewis's theory of Eve as the original source of murder is a theme which is reiterated in *Frankenstein.* The females in Shelley's novel are not only haunted

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[6] Here, "death" is meant not just in the literal sense but figuratively speaking as well. Victor's dream functions as a foreshadowing of the death of his wife. Linda Gill argues that Elizabeth's murder on her wedding night represents the death of woman as a subject once she is married (96).

by Eve's crime but continue to be punished for it. The slaying of William serves as evidence of this. As I have already established, Victor's monster can be interpreted as Eve's monstrous double. If read in such a context, one may argue that Eve is responsible for William's murder. Although Eve is guilty of this horrendous crime, the women in Frankenstein's circle suffer the consequences. As Gilbert and Gubar contend, "Elizabeth and Justine insist upon responsibility for the monster's misdeed" (232). For example, Elizabeth proclaims, "'O God! I have murdered my darling infant'" (Shelley 45); yet one may argue that it is in fact the voice of a remorseful Eve that we hear. Moreover, Justine's confession and punishment for a crime she does not commit serves as an ominous reminder of the original sin. As the daughters of Eve, both Elizabeth and Justine "inherit" their mother's sin and, therefore, assume their responsibility as the "murderesses" of humankind.

The idea of the female image as "inherited" calls to mind Harold Bloom's theory of "Poetic Influence," which deals with (but is not limited to) the anxiety that is felt by a strong poet with respect to the literary tradition shaped by the major poets of the past. As already established in this chapter, Milton's epic is a rewrite of the biblical story of Genesis, which deals with his anxiety about the Fall and justifies the ways of God, the Father, to man. In turn, Shelley revisits *Paradise Lost* in order to rationalize the ways of Milton, the father, to woman. Though both Milton's and Shelley's work attempts to stay true to the influential writings of their predecessors, they engage in what Bloom terms "poetic misprision," or a misreading of the precursor: "Poetic Influence—

when it involves two strong, authentic poets,—always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation" (30). Milton's misreading of *The Book of Genesis* unconsciously leads to the emergence of a subtext in which Eve is praised rather than blamed for the Fall. As for Shelley, she too misreads[7] Milton by portraying Eve as a monstrous creature, thus, completely disregarding the "open-endedness" (Newlyn 5) of *Paradise Lost*. This misreading can be interpreted as the result of a type of struggle between the "father-poet" and the "offspring-poet," wherein the latter seeks to "correct" what they believe are the shortcomings of the legacy left behind by the former. In exploring the works of *Paradise Lost* and *Frankenstein*, the precursor text and its successor, one is able to see the circulations of various readings of Eve throughout literary history. In *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Dick can be considered as the "grandchild-poet" resulting from the influence of Milton

[7] I feel that I must clarify what it is that I mean by Shelley's "misreading" of Milton's text, in order to avoid confusion with regards to my earlier argument that the reader has a choice in interpreting the supertext or subtext of *Paradise Lost*. What I mean by "misreading" involves Shelley's complete oversight of Milton's subtext. I refer to Newlyn who argues that: "The subtext of *Paradise Lost* offers a valuation of the fallen world which is integral to its meaning. All readers, at some level or other, respond to the insistent pressure of this subtext: it is the price of experience that they should do so" (65). Perhaps as a result of her mother's writing (which Shelley is said to have memorized word per word), Shelley misreads Milton's epic as a misogynistic text. If *Frankenstein* is to be considered a rewriting of *Paradise Lost*, as argued by countless critics, it should afford the same type of subtext: a celebration of woman underneath a plot which alludes to the female as a monstrous murderess. Instead, Shelley's novel offers nothing positive in its portrayal of women. Even those who consider Milton a misogynist cannot argue that the ending of *Paradise Lost*, where Adam and Eve leave Paradise hand in hand, creates a sense of hope and rebirth. Shelley's novel offers no such refuge, as all the female characters in the novel die, thus, leaving no potential for an optimistic outcome. Furthermore, the allusions present in *Paradise Lost* "guide the reader toward an interpretative choice" (68). In *Frankenstein*, such a choice is not afforded.

and Shelley; a ghostly presence felt in the form of a struggle between the familiar voices of his ancestors, which collide with his own voice.

In "Man, Android, and Machine," Dick argues that his writing represents characters who wear "a mask over a face" whose "true face is the reverse of the mask" (213). In applying this statement to *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* the android masquerading as human is not the villain one expects it to be because of our general misconception "that only bad people [wear] frightening masks" (213). Instead, behind the mask is a person more human than humans themselves. The words of Dick coincide with those of Bloom, who argues that: "The strong poet peers in the mirror of his fallen precursor and beholds neither the precursor nor himself but a Gnostic double, the dark otherness or antithesis that both he and the precursor longed to be, yet feared to become" (147). Here, Bloom asserts that poetic influence does not necessarily recreate the image of the dead poet. Instead, it reflects the successor poet as opposing alter ego of his/her forbear, which is both liberating, as it breaks free from the binds of the past, and frightful, because his/her work loses its legitimacy as a strong literary work in a tradition passed on from one major poet to another. In considering *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* as the end result of the influence of Milton and Shelley, I will demonstrate how the figure of the female cyborg (a term which I will use from here on interchangeably with the "android") wears a mask on top of another mask. Upon the removal of the initial mask, the face of Shelley's monster is revealed. In turn, when the final mask is removed, we see the face of Milton's Eve.

What is interesting about Dick's rewriting of Eve is the way in which he chooses to pick up where Shelley leaves off in his successful scientific creation of the female. In a sense, Dick picks up the pieces of Frankenstein's mangled creature and puts them back together, adding mechanical components and removing that which Victor feared most: her sexuality. This is the precise moment where Dick makes a "revisionary swerve"[8] in his rewriting of Shelley's tale in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* where he succeeds where Frankenstein has failed; that is, in creating an androgynous female. The name for such a being is termed by mainstream science fiction as the "cyborg." By eliminating female sexuality in the figure of the cyborg, I will argue that Dick creates a seemingly genderless being; yet, despite their androgynous nature, such cyborgs continue to be haunted by the figure of Eve and the femininity she has come to represent. Finally, I will show how, regardless of the cyborg's inability to procreate, Shelley's theme of "monstrous" reproduction is reiterated in Dick's work, as a means of showing the self-destructive consequences of usurping the female's reproductive powers.

Deriving from the term "cybernetics," which involves a science that studies electronic and mechanical devices and compares them to biological systems, the cyborg can be defined, in general terms, as: "a creature of interdependent cybernetic and organic elements" (Mason 225). A more

[8] The swerve, or *clinamen*, referred to by Bloom relates to the modern poet's breaking-away from his "Poetic Father" (42) by swerving from his precursor's context and establishing his own original idea. Bloom uses Satan's Fall as an example, by arguing that if, in falling from Heaven, he had swerved slightly instead of allowing himself to drop straight to the bottom, he might have landed in a different place and created something of "Great Originality" (34) rather than simply opposite.

exhaustive delineation of the cyborg, however, is drawn from the work of Donna J. Haraway, who first introduced this figure in 1985. In "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s," Haraway defines the term as follows: "A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" (50). The cyborg is not just a character from a science fiction novel, but a product of our "lived social relations," which play a crucial role in the construction of our political views, thus creating what Haraway calls "a world-changing fiction" (50). We are all cyborgs, Haraway argues, because we live in a time where, through "imagination and material reality," we "theorize and fabricate" (50) ourselves into a state of "cyborgism."

What is particularly striking about Haraway's manifesto is her representation of the cyborg as "a creature in a postgender world" (51). She argues:

> It has no truck with bisexuality, pre-Oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labor, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity. In a sense, the cyborg has no origin story in the Western sense [. . .] An origin story in the Western humanist sense depends on the myth of original unity, fullness, bliss, and terror, represented by the phallic mother from who all humans must separate [. . .] The cyborg skips the step of original unity, of identification with nature in the Western sense. (51)

Because it has no origin story, or subsequent sources of information of scientific and theoretical nature which spring forth from that origin story,

serving as a means of categorization, there can be no construction of gender or gender roles. What this removal of gender entails is an independence from Western society's "domination of abstract individuation," a resolution of "partiality," a "revolution of social relations in the household," and a "reworking" of Nature and culture, where the one no longer seeks to appropriate or incorporate the other (51). Both science and humanities have served as a gender-constructing discourse through the placing of the male and the female into polar and hierarchical groups wherein the latter is always classified as inferior to the former (Kirkup 4). The image of the cyborg expresses the limitations of such a reductive theory by "suggesting a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves" (Haraway 57). Although Dick appears to do just that, through his elimination of sex difference in his portrayal of the female cyborg, the androcentric novel cannot escape the sense of anxiety in terms of female sexuality, artificial femininity and the haunting image of Eve.

In an age of constant technological advancement, the science fiction genre visualizes what Mary Ann Doane calls "a new, revised body" (110) as a direct result of the interconnectivity between technology and the body; one which questions the idea of sexual difference as a classifier of human identity. Dick's elimination of sexuality through his portrayal of the female android exemplifies Doane's notion of a new body: that of the "andr(oid)-ogyny,"[9] a creature both male and female in nature. The female physical appearance,

[9] A term cleverly coined by Vivian Sobchack.

coupled with the male inability to give birth, renders Dick's cyborgs as androgynous; yet even so, the mingling of feminine and masculine entails only a blurring of gender, not its eradication. For instance, it is worth noting that Dick's portrayal of the female android steps away from the view of the woman as weak, domestic, passive, and gentle. Instead, the female androids are strong, intelligent, vicious, and skilful. Moreover, unlike the women in Shelley's novel, Dick's females play an assertive, important role in the plot development. Take Rachael Rosen, for example, who causes Deckard to develop feelings of empathy for androids; who tricks him into sleeping with her in order to impede his bounty hunting efforts; who murders his Nubian goat. Or, take Luba Loft, who cleverly confuses Deckard's reading of the Voight Kampf test and stages the novel's climactic scene, wherein she calls Deckard's own humanity into question. Even so, it is equally important to recognize that despite these prominent female roles, Dick's novel also subjugates and objectifies the female androids. Although the Rosen Association chooses to deprive the female android of reproductive capability, ironically, it takes great pains to ensure that they possess all the components needed to engage in "convincing" (Dick 170) sexual relations with human men. In fact, Rachael's declaration that "we androids can't control our physical, sensual passions" (Dick 172) suggests that one of the features built in the female Nexus-6 androids is that of serving as a sexual toy for human men.

If one is to regard Dick's representation of women in this way, it becomes evident that the author is exercising the same type of "half-releasing,

and half-restraining" of women as Milton does. On the one hand, the female androids are stripped of their reproductive power and given strong male characteristics, which seem to render them as man's equal; on the other hand, Dick restores their femininity in terms of the sexual gratification that they, like Eve, are expected to provide to men. Doane argues that such double representation stems from our fears concerning the subsequent loss of "knowledge of origins and subjective history" (117) through the achievement of technological reproduction; anxieties which are, as Doane explains, displaced onto the image of the female:

> [. . .] technology, the instrument of a certain knowledge-effect, becomes spectacle, fetish. But one gains ascendancy at the price of the other—pleasure pitted against knowledge. Historically, this dilemma has been resolved [. . .] by conflating the two—making pleasure and knowledge compatible by projecting them onto the figure of the woman. (117)

The patriarchal desire to produce a motherless being is a quest for knowledge. Technology is the result of that pursuit. Acquired knowledge through technology becomes an obsession, as shown in Dick's novel, as it is no longer simply about controlling the reproduction process but also about satisfying the male's fetishes. The more importance allotted to knowledge for pleasure, the better the chances of losing sight of who we are as human beings and where we come from. Dick's portrayal of the female android serves a reminder, in a world "overwhelmed by the special effects which are the byproducts of [. . .] technology" (117), of the knowledge of origins. Rachael Rosen, the first android of her kind, is the result of the scientific pursuit of knowledge. In turn,

knowledge is associated with the tree from which Eve eats the forbidden fruit. Rachael is then "linked to the mother's body" (117), to Eve, reminding us of ontological history.

The loss of history as a result of motherless reproduction also entails the lack of a potential future. According to Doane: "Reproduction is that which is, at least initially, unthinkable in the face of the woman-machine. Herself the product of a desire to reproduce, she blocks the very possibility of a future through her sterility" (112). In *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* sterility is a theme which is emphasized through the novel's characters, as well as its setting. The view of motherhood as "a limit to the conceptualization of femininity as a scientific construction of mechanical and electrical parts" (112) is evident in the Rosen Association's decision to create a female android without reproductive components. And, as I will now argue, the consequences of such actions are felt all too strongly in Dick's novel.

In contrast to Shelley's representation of the fear of monstrous procreation, Dick depicts the horror of a sterile Earth. In his portrayal of the aftermath of World War Terminus, Dick paints a morbid picture of a desolate, dying planet: "The morning air, spilling over with radioactive motes, gray and sun-beclouding, belched about him, haunting his nose; he sniffed involuntarily the taint of death" (*Do Androids Dream* 5). The scene portrayed in the novel is reminiscent of Milton's description of the gates of Hell, which "stood open wide, belching outrageous flame" (x. 232). What this suggests, then, is that the absence of the maternal creates a Hell-on-Earth, or as Christopher Palmer

describes it, "a sterile wasteland, composed of slug, ash, trash, rust, the pulped undifferentiated residue of a civilization which has destroyed itself and now nourishes nothing" (91). Man's ultimate victory over the maternal can be represented by their building of a nuclear weapon so powerful, that it wipes out Nature (the term is meant in the context of Earth-Mother) completely. Such a usurpation, however, does not come without a heavy price. First, the radioactive dust causes the gradual deaths of numerous animal species. Then, it begins to afflict humans with the debilitation of mental faculties. Finally, the destruction of Nature, which results from the male desire to acquire reproductive power actually, ironically ends in his own sterility as well.

In a setting plagued by infertility, the only sense of reproduction comes from the novel's incessant technological replication of material objects. For instance, Rachael Rosen tells Deckard that she is one of many identical Nexus-6 androids, one of which is the renegade android, Pris Stratton. She evidently explains her existence to Deckard by stating "I'm just representative of a type" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 165). The concept of reproduction through repetition becomes a disturbing theme, especially in the scene where Deckard and Rachael engage in sexual relations. Under normal circumstances, the sexual act which occurs between the two characters could carry symbolic implications of unity and the potential for regeneration. However, as Patricia Warrick points out, it in fact becomes a monstrous scene associated with dislocation and death, since Pris, Rachael's double, mutilates a spider at the same time that Rachael is making love to Deckard (Warrick 128). The

lovemaking between the two characters involves the theme of repetition as a means of reproduction in other ways as well. First, because of the fact that Rachael later informs Deckard that she has in fact repeated the act with other bounty hunters "seven," "eight," "nine times" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 175). And finally, in the notion that, by making love to Rachael, Deckard has in effect slept with an army of Rachael Rosens (Dick, "Notes on *Do Androids Dream*" 159), since, as she acknowledges herself, she is not a real person but a representation of a type.

Frederic Jameson refers to the depiction of "kipple" as another negative portrayal of reproduction in Dick's novel. Jameson defines "kipple" as "Dick's personal vision of entropy, in which objects lose their form and 'merge faceless and identical, mere pudding-like kipple piled to the ceiling of each apartment.' (from *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*)" (346). The reproduction of material objects in Dick's novel is interpreted by Jameson as the "obsessive compensatory theme of reproduction" (346). In a world where the population is diminishing, objects begin to take the place of humans, as a way to fill the Earth's empty spaces. This state of "kipple-ization," however, leads to confusion, disorganization and chaos. But more importantly, when the only things being reproduced are useless objects, the world experiences the "death of the subject", or "an end to individualism so absolute as to call into question the last glimmers of the ego (347).

In a novel filled with notions of sterility, motherlessness and monstrous technological reproduction, it is difficult to locate a potential of hope and

regeneration. And yet, through his portrayal of Iran, the novel's main human female character, Dick offers this sense of optimism. In essence, Iran represents the Earth Mother, Eve, and the most revered of her daughters, the Virgin Mary. Iran is the embodiment of these female archetypes because she takes on the "burden" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 211) of Deckard's hardships as if she went through them right alongside him. Furthermore, she is a source of solace to her husband, or what Dick refers to as "man's consolation," his "return to the mother, the woman, the Earth" (Dick, "The Android" 203).

In "The Android and the Human," Dick argues that woman is endowed with the ability to "reveal the authentically human" (202). This is highlighted in Iran's ability to recognize the artificiality of Deckard's toad when he does not. Iran's experiences a form of epiphany at the end of the novel, wherein she finally understands what it truly means to be human: to feel a sense of empathetic concern for another human being, a need to connect with another person, a desire for the well-being of others, and most importantly the ability to feel human emotions without the need of a mood organ. These are the things, as Dick portrays through Iran's shift of attitude towards her husband, which constitute the true meaning of humanness.

In "The Android and the Human," Dick contends that woman is a key figure in establishing the true meaning of humanness because of her ability to endure and transcend suffering and create life even in the midst of death. In terms of Christian ideology, Dick's theory holds true. If one is to consider Christ as the saviour of humankind, then one must afford the same

consideration to the Virgin Mary. Although it is Christ who is beaten and tortured, Mary suffers alongside him. As a mother who watches helplessly as her only son is being subjected to the most cruel and unjust persecution imaginable, Christ's physical pain equates to Mary's emotional anguish. As Dick contemplates the crucifixion scene, he remarks that the difference between the two spiritual figures is that Mary, the woman, is able to somehow survive the ordeal, while Christ, the man, perishes:

> It is not only an intrinsic property of the organism, but the situation in which it finds itself. That which happens to it, that which it is confronted by, pierced by, and must deal with—certain agonizing situations create, on the spot, a human where a moment before, there was only, as the Bible says, clay. Such a situation can be read off the face of many of the medieval Pietàs, the dead Christ held in the arms of his mother. Two faces, actually: that of a man, that of a woman. Oddly, [. . .] the face of Christ seems much older than that of his mother [. . .] and yet she came before him. He has aged through his entire life cycle; she looks now perhaps as she always did, not timeless, in the classical sense, but able to transcend what has happened. *He* has not survived it; this shows on his face. She has. In some way they have experienced it together, but they have come out of it differently. It was too much for him; it destroyed him. Perhaps the information to be gained here is to realize how much greater capacity a woman has for suffering; that is, not that she suffers more than a man but that she can endure what he can't. Survival of the species lies in her ability to do this, not his. Christ may die on the cross, and the human race continues, but if Mary dies, it's all over. (Dick, "The Android" 202)

Dick's argument that the sustenance of the human race rests on the female capacity to transcend anguish evokes one of Christ's final utterances, where he tells his mother "Woman, behold your son" and then turns to his disciple and says "Behold your mother" (The Holy Bible: King James, John 19: 26-27). This phrase can be interpreted as Mary's association with the prospect of

rebirth when faced with death. If one considers Christ's statement as extending beyond just the disciple, one may argue that Christ declares Mary to be the mother of all people and she who carries the promise of the salvation of humankind.

The same prospect of rebirth in an environment filled with death and decay can be found in Dick's portrayal of Iran Deckard. As I will now argue, through her association with the Virgin Mary, Iran represents the emblem of hope for a future wherein the Earth's vitality is restored. Furthermore, she is depicted as the potential saviour of the human race.

When Deckard returns home at the end of his bounty hunting mission, he brings with him a box containing an electric toad[10] which he finds in the desert. Iran remarks how Deckard holds the box "as if it contained something too fragile and too valuable to let go of" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 212). She resolves that it must hold "everything that had happened to him" (212). Symbolically, the box contains Deckard's tribulations, the metaphorical crucifixion of the person he used to be prior to his realization that "electric things have their lives too" (214). The fact that Iran takes the box from Deckard suggests her willingness to look inside and understand Dick's pain, even carry his burden as if it were her own. Like the Virgin Mary, whose face

[10] In terms of imagery, the toad is an ambivalent animal. Generally, it is considered a negative symbol, representing "darkness and evil, avarice and lust" (Tresidder 480). Through its amphibian transformation, however, the toad signifies "birth and re-birth," "longevity and riches" (480). To connect this to Dick's novel, the toad portrays the present state of the earth as a desolate wasteland; however, through Deckard's maturity, it also symbolizes the impending birth of the android race (which is implied through the electric nature of the toad) and rebirth of humankind.

gives Christ a moment of consolation while on the cross, Iran provides solace to Deckard. Furthermore, the association of Deckard's slumber with "long deserved peace," as well as Dick's portrayal of "dust sifting from his clothes and hair" (215) as he lays on the bed, suggest the character's symbolic reconciliation with the Earth Mother through a form of death metaphor. The novel ends on a bright note, however, with Iran's determination to maintain the artificial toad's "vitality" (216), which exemplifies Dick's argument that the survival of a species depends on the female. The description of a "perpetually renewing puddle" (216), which the pet store clerk suggests for the electric toad, can be interpreted as an obvious indication of the novel's optimistic conclusion. Water is, after all, considered as a symbol of life, cleansing and rejuvenation. In this final scene, Dick connects the figure of the female with the symbol of water in order to conclude that woman is the essence of human life and that it is only through her that the "perpetual renewal" of human life can continue to exist.

Chapter Two

Defining the "Human"

In a speech given at the Vancouver SF Convention at the University of British Columbia in 1972, later published under the title "The Android and the Human," Philip K. Dick states that man's mechanical creations are coming to life:

> [. . .] our environment, and I mean our man-made world of machines, artificial constructs, computers electronic systems, interlinking homeostatic components—all of this is in fact beginning more and more to possess [. . .] animation. In a very real sense, our environment is becoming alive, or at least quasi-alive, and in ways specifically and fundamentally analogous to ourselves. Cybernetics, a valuable recent scientific discipline [. . .] saw valid comparisons between the behaviour of machines and humans—with the view that a study of machines would yield valuable insights into the nature of our own behavior. (183-184)

This statement is particularly important, not only because it reflects Dick's science fiction works, many of which deal with the humanization of robots, but because the author makes us realize that this romanticized notion may not be as far-fetched as one would think, if we were to apply it to our every day lives. As humankind strives to create a state of utopia through the creation of artificial constructs built to better our lives, Dick believes that we are losing the vitality that makes us human and are turning into the mechanical beings represented in his works, while his android characters, so feared for their artificiality, are actually coming to life and displaying genuine human traits. In arguing this fact, Dick forces us to take his work more seriously, that is, not just

as a fantasy novel but, as a philosophical text aimed at exposing the pseudo definition of the "human."

Similarly to the study of cybernetics, Dick uses androids in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* as a device in order to demonstrate the blurring line between the human and the non-human, or machine. Although the novel was written in the late 1960s, Dick, like other science fiction authors, foresaw the creation of a being physically identical to humans. In his work, he portrays a futuristic world, set in 2021, where humankind has created a type of robot that is arguably more authentically human, in terms of our conventional definition of humanness, than an actual biological person. Dick would not live to see how what may have seemed like a fantastic notion at the time was actually on its way to become a reality, and sooner than he thought. The end of the twentieth century saw both scientific and technological breakthroughs in the creation of Dolly, a genetically cloned sheep, as well as through the production of mechanical constructs (i.e. computers, automated telephone response lines, toys, etc.) that look, think, and act, human. Much of Dick's science fiction, which questions society's conventional definition of humanness in a world where those who we call non-human often display more human characteristics than human beings themselves, may very well transfigure into a moral dilemma.

With the fast-paced advancement of the scientific and technological fields, it may simply be a matter of time before the world is introduced to the first lab-produced or mechanically-generated human being. If faced with such a future, how are we to distinguish between the human and the "non-human?"

How can our perception of humanness remain stagnant in a world of constant evolution, where the conception of a new species is viable? These are some of the questions dealt with in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* which I will seek to answer later on in my thesis but first I will examine the various characteristics considered to be human and seek to understand how Dick views our definition of humanness as problematic.

If someone were to ask us to define what it means to be human, we would probably be inclined to point out our biological components. In technical terms, humans are bipedal primates originating from the mammalian species of *Homo sapiens*. Factors such as evolution, physiology and genetics, constitute our scientific classification as human beings. Yet if we descend from mammals and still share most of our DNA with our evolutionary relatives, the chimpanzees, why are the latter classified as animals rather than humans? The answer to this is that biology is only one of the criteria necessary to be considered human. Society and culture also play a crucial role in establishing what is considered human and what is not.

Though biology defines the human from a physical and scientific standpoint, society and culture determine what it means to be human in terms of one's behaviour and actions. Each of these factors has played a vital role in the formation of our traditional definition of the "human." In a social context, to be human means to be capable of abstract reasoning, language and self-reflection. It also relates to the ability to create groups and social structures, ranging from families to nations, by communicating and exchanging ideas with others; to

establish traditions, rituals, values, ethics and laws, all of which represent the foundation of human society. What defines the human in terms of culture is one's desire to understand the world that surrounds him/her, to uncover his/her purpose on Earth, and to account for unexplainable phenomena through mythology, philosophy, religion and science. In a cultural context, our traditional perception of the human also refers to our appreciation for beauty and aesthetics through means of expression such as art, literature, and music. Besides the biological prerequisites, the social and cultural aspects form a blueprint of what constitutes the human and any being that falls short of one of these crucial elements, or that fails to develop any of the previously mentioned abilities and behavioural patterns, is excluded from the human and categorized as non-human instead.

Society appears to place more weight on the social and cultural factors, in order to distinguish the human from the non-human because it deems such factors as inherently human traits. In fact, most dictionary definitions for terms that contain the word human focus on behaviour rather than biology. For example, "human-words" such as "humane," "humanitarian," and "humanity," are linked with concepts of sympathy, kindness, emotion, and philanthropy, all of which relate to one's conduct towards others, rather than his/her genetic make-up. In Dick's novel, the definition of the human is intricately linked with the concept of empathy, the ability to put oneself in someone else's shoes and recognize that person as a human being and not just an object. In *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* the only means to distinguish the androids from

humans is by testing one's empathy using the Voight-Kampff device; yet to imply that being human means to possess the ability to be empathetic towards others, raises serious concerns, as there are certain groups that do not possess this quality and still fall under the category of the "human." If one agrees that empathy is something which is learned rather than inborn, then it is morally unjust to "retire" beings that have been denied the opportunity to develop this characteristic. After all, if we were to exercise the same means of extermination on the mentally ill, or even young children, who are unable to display empathy towards others due to their under-developed, or infantile minds, our actions would be branded as immoral and inhuman.

In considering all the factors discussed as a model used by humans to distinguish themselves from others, I wish to apply these prerequisites to Dick's portrayal of the androids, in order to determine whether they can be considered human. Although the biological differences prevent androids from being classified as humans, Dick's mechanical constructs are portrayed as being physically identical to human beings and as displaying remarkable characteristics that are distinctively human in nature. I will argue that even though they do not share the same genetic make-up as human beings, the androids should not be stripped of their right to be recognized as human. Having been created by man, and in man's image, they are the "technologically-induced" offspring of humankind, a new breed of "transformed humans," or "metahumans" (Barr 25). Even though they do not possess all of the attributes found in human beings, to deny their existence as

significant entities of the universe and dismiss them as a threat to humankind would be to commit anthropocentrism.

Dick creates android characters that possess such striking human attributes, that it is virtually impossible to distinguish between them and their human counterparts. In doing so, the author points out the arbitrariness of the definitions assigned and rules enforced by man in order to depict the human (Barr 25). If one analyses the main android characters in Dick's novel, it is clear that the line between the human and the non-human is not only blurred but virtually erased; something that Dick does on purpose to free the notion of humanness from its confinements and prove that it can encompass other beings, such as the organic constructs in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

In the character of Roy Baty, the renegade android leader, we see that what appears as a cold-blooded mission to destroy humankind may in fact be that Roy is forced to resort to violence because he is overwhelmed by the human need to survive and protect his species. Roy is not trying to usurp man by mimicking him. He is simply being human and trying to give purpose to his life by adopting the same values, ideologies and practices employed by humans and to ensure the welfare of his fellow humanoids. Dick highlights the humanness in his android characters, as thus:

> I have, in some of my stories and novels, written about androids or robots or simulacra—the name doesn't matter; what is meant is artificial constructs masquerading as humans. Usually with a sinister purpose in mind. I suppose I took it for granted that if such a construct, a robot, for example, had a benign or anyhow decent purpose in mind, it would not need to so disguise itself. Now to me, that then seems obsolete. The constructs do not

> mimic humans; they are, in many deep ways, actually human already. They are not trying to fool us, for a purpose of any sort; they merely follow lines we follow, in order that they, too, may overcome such common problems as the breakdown of vital parts, loss of power source, attack by such foes as storms [and] short-circuits [. . .] (Dick, "The Android" 185)

Having failed to pass as a human and induce the sense of empathy through drugs, Roy finally understands that androids are in fact different from human beings; but they are nonetheless human. Roy's hope is that once Buster Friendly reveals the truth behind Mercerism and exposes "the whole experience of empathy [as] a swindle" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 185), the human race will be forced to reconsider their concept of the human and accept androids as sacred beings who have the right to exist and enjoy the same rights and freedoms as human beings.

The character of Irmgard Baty, Roy's wife, also possesses significant characteristics which make it difficult to identify the human and the android. The first and most obvious is her physical appearance. In her depiction as "lovely in the manner of Greta Garbo, with blue eyes and yellow-blonde hair", Irmgard clearly represents the epitome of female beauty (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 134). Because of humankind's fascination with beauty and its treatment as an aesthetically pleasing, valuable art, one can easily be distracted by Irmgard's striking beauty and fail to notice that she is an android. Furthermore, Irmgard seems to understand the human condition more than the other androids, even if only from an objective standpoint. Although she cannot fully comprehend human emotions, for example, she cannot understand Isidore's

distress when she and her android companions cut the legs of spider to see what will happen, Irmgard appreciates the way in which Isidore has accepted them without prejudice and, at times, even seems sympathetic towards him.

Although both Roy and Irmgard Baty do display human characteristics, Deckard has no scruples about killing them because he generally believes them to be a threat to humankind. The same cannot be said about the character of Luba Loft, however. In fact, of all the renegade androids Deckard has had to retire, Luba Loft is the one whose death disturbs Deckard the most. The reason for this is that she forces him to question the humanness of the androids and, more significantly, his own humanity.

Prior to his encounter with Luba, Deckard views androids as "solitary predators" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 27) and firmly believes that they should be eliminated if they deter from the purpose assigned to them by their human creators because in doing so they become a liability. The bounty hunter declares that "a humanoid robot is like any other machine; it can fluctuate between being a benefit and a hazard very rapidly" and that as benefit, the android does not pose a danger, and therefore should not need to be retired (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 35). When Deckard initially meets Luba Loft, an android trying to pass as a human opera singer, he is "surprised at the quality of her voice", which he "[rates] with that of the best" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 86) opera singers he had ever heard. Yet rather than recognize the ability to express her creativity through music as a human quality, Deckard sees Luba's talent as more reason to extinguish her life because it makes her too human:

"Perhaps the better she functioned, the better a singer she is, the more I am needed. If the androids had remained substandard [. . .] there would be no problem and no need of my skill" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 86-87).

Luba challenges Deckard in a way that no other android has before, questioning the concept of empathy as a defining factor of human versus non-human identity. She confuses Deckard's reading of the Voight-Kampff test and makes him doubt its accuracy by suggesting that he may be an android himself because of the lack of empathy he feels for his android victims. For example, when Deckard points out the fact that "an android doesn't care what happens to another android", Luba turns the tables on Deckard and cleverly responds "then you must be an android [. . .] Because your job is to kill them, isn't it?" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 89). Consequently, of all the characters in Dick's novel, it is Luba who provides the most insight into the double standards of humans by confronting Deckard for judging individuals for their empathetic deficiency when he himself clearly lacks this quality.

Through the character of Luba Loft, Dick asks one to consider this: if the concept of empathy involves one's ability to be aware of, relate to, and vicariously experience the feelings, thoughts and occurrences of others, then how can one expect androids to be empathetic when they are refused the opportunity to partake in human society and stripped of the right to evolve? The fact that humans program their life span to less than five years denies them the possibility of social development and, therefore, the androids are very limited in what they learn and experience during their short existence. As a

result, they know very little about human empathy and are certain to fail the Voight-Kampff test.

This is evident when Deckard administers the test to Luba, as the android struggles to understand the bounty hunter's questions and imitate an appropriate empathetic response. During the test, Luba attempts to hide her lack of knowledge with respect to various terms referred to in Deckard's questioning, through the guise of semantic unfamiliarity. Ultimately, when Deckard begins to describe a social scenario that she is familiar with, she hastily interrupts with an answer, in a desperate attempt to show the bounty hunter that she understands. When Deckard snaps at her for answering prematurely what was in fact not the question, she bursts out in complete frustration: "But I understand that; why is a question I understand the wrong one? Aren't I *supposed* to understand?" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 92). The only thing separating the android from the human is the empathic faculty. The only determining factor of whether Luba will live or die is based on "thoughts" and "impulses" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 117), which she does not fully understand, nor is even given the opportunity and freedom to learn. She attempts to understand human empathy and mimic this ability, yet once her android status is confirmed, she realizes that it is useless to do so. No matter how hard she tries to play the part of the human, she will always be considered an inferior, inhuman being, simply "imitating [. . .] a superior life form" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 117).

Furthermore, the fact that they are "born" into adulthood and deprived of the crucial developmental stages of childhood and adolescence makes the androids ignorant to many of life's experiences because they have not been exposed to many social situations, since their sole purpose is—not to evolve as all living creatures do but to serve as a human's slave. This is something that Luba understands, as is evident from her fixation with a painting of a young girl, namely Edvard Munch's *Puberty*: "[Luba] stood absorbed in the picture before her; a drawing of a young girl, hands clasped together, seated on the edge of a bed, an expression of bewildered wonder and new, groping awe imprinted on the face" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 115). It is clear that her fascination with this painting does not represent her interest in art as a means of mastering her imitation of a woman. Instead, the fact that she asks Deckard to buy a reproduction of the painting for her before he kills her, as if to grant her a dying wish, shows that it holds a sentimental value to her. The painting represents the experience of puberty, the transition from innocent child to sexually awakened woman, something that Luba never has the opportunity to experience.

Initially, when Deckard offers to buy the original painting for her, Luba responds, "it's not for sale" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 115). Perhaps what Luba implies here is that she is resigned to the reality that she will never experience what it is like to grow, physically, mentally and emotionally, from a young girl to a woman, because such an experience is only reserved for humans. Ironically, the only way she can experience a sense of puberty is by acquiring a

copy of the painting, since she herself is a reproduction; the shadow of a human being, just like the shadow of the girl in Munch's painting.

Even though Deckard knows that Luba is an artificial reproduction of a human being, he cannot shake the feeling that she is different from other androids; that she is somehow human. Her musical talent, her appreciation of art, her desire to exist and experience all the stages of human life, her apparent physical pain after being shot by Resch: these are all factors which affect Deckard and force him to question whether or not androids like Luba have souls (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 118). Deckard's fascination with Luba's artistic talent recalls Walter Benjamin's argument that "mechanical reproduction of a work of art [. . .] represents something new" (Benjamin 1167). Through her act of imitating art, Luba establishes her own individuality by delivering a performance of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* that is so outstanding, it actually becomes an innovative work of art in itself which is worthy of reproduction. Yet even though he is enthralled by her voice and derives a sense of pleasure in hearing her sing, Deckard is also bothered by the fact that Luba may be more talented than many human opera singers. In his statement that "perhaps the better she functions, the better a singer she is, the more I am needed. If the androids had remained substandard, [. . .] there would be no problem and no need of my skill" (Dick 86-87) Deckard displays the fear that androids will become superior to humans and will "shatter tradition" (Benjamin 1170) by turning into the original objects of veneration while we will become their subordinate reproductions.

So far, I have listed several characters in Dick's novel that display remarkable human attributes, which cloud our ability to distinguish between the human and the non-human. I now wish to explore the character of Rachael Rosen, who stands out from the rest because, unlike the renegade androids, she has been programmed to believe that she is a human being. Through the implantation of false memories, Rachael is designed by the Rosen Association as a means to disprove the accuracy of the Voight-Kampff test. By passing her off as an authentic human who fails the empathy test simply because she has spent most of her life on a space craft far from Earth, the Rosen Association would be able to argue that the test is ineffective and that it may have inadvertently caused the deaths of authentic human beings. When their plot fails, however, Eldon Rosen is forced to confess the truth to both Deckard and Rachael. Yet even after her true nature is revealed, it seems that Rachael continues to evolve on her own, as she experiences human emotions and impulses which make her appear "as human as any girl [Deckard] had known" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 172). She falls in love with Deckard and, as a result, begins to understand the concept of human empathy: "I love you. If I entered a room and found a sofa covered with your hide I'd score very high on the Voight-Kampff test" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 170). Her feelings for Deckard seem to awaken a wide array of emotions, such as cheerfulness, melancholy, jealousy and spitefulness, none of which are present in any of the other androids in Dick's novel. These reactions, which occur spontaneously,

rather than as the result of robotic programming, are very humanlike in nature and give rise to the possibility that androids can develop human emotions.

In "The Android and the Human," Dick invites his audience to re-evaluate and challenge past ideologies relating to humanism by asking themselves:

> What is it in our behavior that we can call specifically human? That is special to us as a living species? And what is it that, at least up to now, we can consign as merely machine behavior, or by extension, insect behavior, or reflex behavior? (187)

In doing so, Dick puts our perception of the human on trial in terms of its exclusion of other living entities by denying of the viability of such entities simply because they do not fit into our traditional standards. Furthermore, in contemplating these issues, Dick seeks to demonstrate how the "machine behaviour" for which we denounce our mechanical constructs as artificial rather than authentic, is very often displayed in humans. Once again, this calls into question society's notion of the "human," as it presents us with a situation where a human acts more like a machine than the machine itself.

The very same questions raised in Dick's philosophical work are echoed in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* where one is confronted with the struggle to decide who is more human, Dick's biological or android characters. As seen in the present chapter, if one is to apply our traditional definition of the human to some of the key android characters in Dick's novel, these mechanical beings do in fact possess striking human characteristics. That is, even if they cannot be classified as humans in the genetic sense, they nonetheless behave in

ways that are very human. Although one might not be inclined to question the authenticity of Dick's biological characters, on the grounds that the novel simply implies that they are humans, a deeper analysis reveals that these characters display very machine-like behavioural patterns. For example, in Dick's futuristic Earth, which has just been hit by World War Terminus, humans have become so emotionally detached from one another due to the considerable decrease of human life, that they rely on the "Penfield mood organ," a device used to "dial" moods, just to be able to feel and respond to a given situation. Having said this, the questions that Dick brings up force one to challenge traditional beliefs about what makes us human and determine if we are actually qualified to claim that title for ourselves.

One of the factors we rely on to distinguish humans from animals is that we view ourselves as free agents who have the capacity to decide or choose and who consequently act on such decisions or choices. The general belief is that, although animals share some of the characteristics as primitive humans, such as the instinct to survive, and perform similar actions, like hunting for food, they are not free to act otherwise than they do. While animals may act purposefully in certain situations, it is important to distinguish them from humans by understanding that it is their animalistic nature which drives them to behave that way.[11] Humans, on the other hand, have the capacity to reason, the

[11] In *Free Will: A Very Short Introduction*, Thomas Pink uses the shark as an example of the "unfreedom of animals." He argues that, just as we go to the supermarket in order to obtain food, the shark doubles back in order to catch a fish for the purpose of eating it. Yet, although both shark and human act with the purpose of acquiring something that they want, a shark's

freedom to make a choice about how they will act, and the ability to carry out a voluntary action in order to achieve a goal.

If one applies the same theory to machines, the fact that they perform tasks similar to humans does not necessarily mean that they have the freedom to choose their actions. Instead, one may argue that they do so because they have been programmed that way:

> [. . .] to assign motive or purpose to them would be to enter the realm of paranoia; what machines do may resemble what we do, but certainly they do not have intent in the sense that we have; they have tropisms, they have purpose in the sense that we build them to accomplish certain ends and to react to certain stimuli. A pistol, for example, is built with the purpose of firing a metal slug that will damage, incapacitate, or kill someone, but this does not mean that the pistol wants to do this. (Dick, "The Android" 186)

Dick recognizes that mechanical constructs are not in charge of their actions because we build them for specific purposes and decide what it is that we expect them to do. Having said this, though, one must ask oneself whether or not humans are truly in control of their own destinies. Although we would like to believe that we are free to think, act and do as we like, there are so many things in our lives that we do not have control over that, as Dick suggests, "free will for us—that is, when we feel desire, when we are conscious of wanting to do what we do—may be even for us an illusion" ("The Android" 186).

The concept of free will is one of the oldest and most complex philosophical debates known to humankind, as it is an issue which calls into

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purposiveness is the result of built-in desires and instincts and not of a freedom to exercise control over its actions. (Pink 22-23)

question whether or not we are truly in charge of our actions. The *free will problem*[12] stems from the uncertainty as to whether we are in fact free to decide our fates, or if how we choose to act is inevitable due to causal determinism, which Thomas Pink defines as follows:

> Causal determinism is the claim that everything that happens, including our own actions, has already been causally determined to occur. Everything that happens results from earlier causes – causes that determine their effects by ensuring that these effects must occur, leaving no chance for things to happen otherwise. So if causal determinism is true, then at any time what will happen in the future is already entirely fixed and determined by the past. (Pink 13)

In his work, Dick points out the fraudulence of our claim to be more authentically human than the android on the grounds of causal determinism. The author argues that we are not as free as we would like to believe; that our actions are not our own; that we are simply pawns to history and political rule, which have shaped us into the very robots we fear ("The Android" 187). Everything we think, feel, and do, is the result of our influence by "the false values, the false idols, the false hates of the previous generations" and by the government that entraps us with its slogans and ideologies, thus, reducing us to instruments of seemingly "good" abstract causes (Dick, "The Android" 188). If, then, the concept of free will is another important factor in distinguishing the

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[12] The free will problem deals with the issue of how we can truly claim to be in complete command of our actions when factors beyond our control, such as our historical pasts, the nature of the universe in which we live, and even many of our desires and feelings, clearly influence how we act. Pink argues that there are two main philosophical positions relating to this problem, the first being Compatibilism, or the notion that freedom of action is consistent with causal determinism. The second position, Incompatibilism, deals with two schools of thought: Libertarianism, or the belief that we are totally free and that causal determinism is false, or Scepticism, the idea that freedom is altogether impossible in that it is inconsistent both with causal determinism and causal indeterminism. (Pink 1-21)

human from the "non-human," how are we to explain that, like machines, our actions may be controlled by forces beyond our control?

The lack of voluntary activity displayed by the novel's protagonist portrays humankind's loss of free will and its replacement by submissive action instead. The character of Rick Deckard often comes off as weak, passive, and lacking in the qualities generally associated with a hero. Throughout the novel, Deckard struggles with his society's conventional values, yet is not strong enough to turn his reasoning into a voluntary act of heroism. Even though he doubts the morality of his profession as a bounty hunter on numerous occasions, he still proceeds to retire each of the rebel androids because his government has "programmed" him to believe that they are his enemies. Consequently, what motivates Deckard to exterminate the androids does not result from his own willingness to kill, but rather from his belief that he is serving a "good"[13] purpose in doing so.

Although, subconsciously, Deckard is aware that the androids do not really pose a threat to his planet—that they are not here to usurp man but to live freely amongst men—the bounty hunter chooses to act as a follower rather than as the heroic leader that one would expect him to be as the novel's protagonist. Rather than take a stand for truth, Deckard allows the government to use him as an instrument to do its bidding, which it bases on false opportunistic values. This is what Dick refers to when he states that:

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[13] Dick uses the word "good" derisively in "The Android and the Human," in his argument that society uses men as pawns to do their bidding by claiming that such actions are for a good cause.

> [. . .] although biological life continues, metabolism goes on, the soul—for lack of a better term—is no longer there, or is at least no longer active. And such does exist in our world—it always did, but the production of such inauthentic human activity has become a science of government and suchlike agencies now. (Dick, "The Android" 187)

Deckard betrays his principles in order to do what his government expects of him, partly because he expects to be rewarded for his obedience by earning enough bounty money to buy himself a real living goat. Yet at the end of the novel, his goat is murdered, suggesting that Deckard receives a less-than-heroic reward for the highly expensive price of his soul.

Whereas Dick's protagonist fails as a hero, Roy Baty, the novel's antagonist, surprisingly exudes qualities which make it possible to consider the android as the actual hero in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* As David Desser argues:

> Batty's heroism is of a richer mythical nature as he becomes a true questing hero, one who is on a metaphysical as well as literal search, whereas, on one level, Deckard is merely a man doing a job [. . .] And while both Batty and Deckard undertake 'missions,' Batty's mission is the more emotionally satisfying one for the audience. (55)

Not only does Baty possess the strength and courage missing in Deckard, but his actions often rise above what humans believe to be the shortcomings of androids, implying that the latter may be more human than the former think. Though Deckard falls short of engaging in any real voluntary endeavour,[14] Baty assigns a purpose to his existence (to prove that android life is sacred), makes a

[14] Even when he is intimate with Rachael Rosen, it is only after she orders him to "take off [his] coat . . . so [they] can go to bed." (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 167)

decision (formulates a plan to gather a group of androids and convince them to escape from Mars), and takes voluntary action in order to achieve his desired goal (flees to Earth); all factors which lead to the suggestion that at least some androids are capable of exercising free will. Furthermore, unlike Deckard, Baty exhibits strong leadership skills and possesses the strength to rebel against the forces that bind him, both of which are admirable human qualities believed to be missing in androids; and not to mention, both of which place him in the same ranks as other archetypal heroes which we have come across in human history.

In John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Satan has been considered by some to be the true hero of the epic poem. The rebellious angel is admired for his strength and bravery, even if his efforts prove to be futile and his mission a failure. As Desser argues:

> The place of Satan in *Paradise Lost* has given rise to an important textual issue revolving around the question of who is the real hero of the narrative. Milton's intentions are clear on this point, namely that Adam is the hero, but the text's intentions seem less clear. The possibility of reading Satan as the hero is very real. Satan can be seen as the ultimate rebel who begins as God's brightest angel and who falls ignominiously into the depths of Hell. By the standards of classical tragedy, Satan is the ultimate tragic hero. The Romantics, of course, especially Byron and the Shelleys, found in Satan the real hero of Milton's epic. Even Milton himself introduces the possibility of reading Satan as the hero not only by the standards of classical tragedy (with which Milton was intimately familiar, needless to say) but through the amount of time devoted to Satan. (55)

As in *Paradise Lost*, Dick may also intend for Deckard to be the novel's hero; however, one cannot ignore the fact that Baty exerts a certain presence and

passion that commands attention. In fact, when he is first introduced in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* he is described as "large," "intelligent," "sombre," and "brutal," with "bright eyes" (Dick 134). Compared with Milton's depiction of Satan as "huge in length" (i. 209), "darkened so, yet shone above them all" (i. 598-599) "of dauntless courage" (i. 603), and "with eyes that sparkling blazed" (PL i. 193-194) there is little doubt that Baty can be associated with the fallen angel/hero. The possibility of an android hero, in a novel where androids are viewed as incapable of any authentic actions, emotions and leadership qualities, is striking because it implies that, like the concept of the "human," things are not always either black or white. Sometimes one must find a grey zone in order to discover a new reality; one which considers the androids' humanness and treats them as authentic beings rather than as villainous fakes.

What is even more fascinating about Desser's analysis of Roy Baty is that, in addition to his association of Baty as Satan, Desser recognizes certain Adamic qualities in the android as well: "Batty, like Adam, was created by God (Tyrell)[15] to live in Eden [. . .] But Batty has questions about his life and so he seeks answers, tasting the forbidden fruit, the fruit of Earth" (55). Considering the similarities between Baty and Adam, the former could very well be interpreted as a representation of the latter, which would raise Baty's hero status on a much higher level, as he would be perceived as the android whose "fall" leads to the evolution of all future androids:

[15] "Tyrell" refers to "Tyrell Corp.," the film version of the Rosen Association.

> Before the Fall, Man is without sin, but he is also without knowledge, without true love, for he must experience love's opposites to appreciate fully its blessings. This is to say that Man in Eden is not really yet Man; thus the Fall is somehow fortunate, for now Man has a choice in his acceptance of God, in his pursuit of knowledge. (Desser 56)

Adam's Fall is often celebrated because of the belief that it was necessary in order for future generations of humans to fully appreciate all of life's wonders, such as the glory of God, truth, freedom, knowledge, and love, and grow as intelligent beings rather than mindless subjects. If one would grant the same consideration to Baty, one might be inclined to argue that leading up to his "fall," Baty is simply a being trying to come to terms with his existence. By the time Deckard finds him, Baty has succeeded in leading, learning, and loving; all considered human acts. At the time of his "fall," Baty has become a man; however, he is not afforded the same possibility of redemption like Adam. In Baty's case, there is only the promise of death. Because the novel ends on an optimistic note, however, one must consider that Baty's death is not in vain. When Iran informs Deckard that the toad he found in the desert is actually electrical, rather than be disappointed, Deckard responds that he prefers to know the truth rather than be deceived. His response to Iran that "the electric things have their lives, too" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 214) indicates Deckard's evolution from an individual who blindly accepted whatever ideologies his society fed him, to a man who finally recognizes the sentience in others. Having said this, Baty's fall can be read as the rise of a new type of

android race that will finally be acknowledged as human and share the same rights and freedoms as humans.

In a world of constant evolution, where old species are dying and new ones are emerging, it no longer makes sense to limit what we perceive as human attributes to human beings alone. Clearly, there are other entities in our environment that think, feel and act like us, and the fact that they may not meet our all of the criteria by which we define the human does not mean that they are to be entirely dismissed as such. The fact remains that our traditional definition of what it means to be human should not be read as a blueprint. There is still so much about the universe in which we live that we do not understand. For example, how are we to truly ascertain the fact that animals do not possess the freedom of voluntary action when some animals, such as chimpanzees and dolphins, have been found to display higher levels of intelligence in comparison to other animals? If in fact they do have the capacity of rational thinking and the freedom of choice and action, have these animals not earned the right to be considered as human, deserving of the same rights as us?[16] Definitions are

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[16] Although some may argue that even the most sophisticated of animals are not intelligent enough to exercise the capacity for free will, we do not yet know enough about such animals, scientifically speaking, to dismiss the possibility that they may deserve to be considered human. Marilyn Gwaltney argues:

> . . . intelligence is to be respected wherever it is found. Intelligent beings, of course, are the rational, self-conscious, purposive beings we have described as persons.
>
> But extending personhood to the non-human or the unconventionally human is no longer an activity that should be confined to the art of the science fiction writer; it must be seriously contemplated by scientists and lay persons in respect to any endeavor dealing with consciousness. If chimpanzees, gorillas, dolphins, whales, etc. meet the criteria of personness to the same degree as

necessary in society because they answer many of our questions and allow us to establish a collective understanding amongst each other; however, as evolution occurs, definitions should be revised accordingly, rather be permanently set in stone. As Dylan Evans argues:

> Definitions are useful for resolving disputes, but they can easily become intellectual straitjackets, tempting people into the mistaken belief that words have fixed or essential meanings that should be defended against the tide of cultural change and scientific progress. (101)

To adopt our traditional definition of the human as a blueprint is to discriminate against and objectify everything else that does not fall under that definition. Consequently, in viewing other things and people in this world as objects rather than subjects, we lose the very thing we are trying so hard to protect—our humanness.

Even within the confines of our conventional humanistic philosophy, I have demonstrated how each of Dick's androids possesses many qualities which give them the right to be called human; still, the biological humans in Dick's novel refuse to acknowledge the humanness of their artificial constructs. The reason for this is the perception that androids lack human consciousness;

> some humans, why should they not be extended the same moral and legal rights? Or conversely, if we deny such moral and legal rights to highly intelligent animals, why should we not deny them to some types of humans? . . . Animal behaviorists and medical researchers using animals must consider whether their subjects might meet the criteria for personhood. If they think they might meet those criteria, then they must either stop their research or proceed as though they were dealing with human subjects. (Gwaltney, 38)

Thus, if evidence leads us to fact that some non-humans possess an intelligence that could very well be interpreted as human, our traditional perception of personhood (which Gwaltney uses interchangeably with the "human") should be extended to include such non-human beings.

the belief that a human body without a human mind simply cannot be called human. However, modern sciences such as cybernetics, artificial intelligence and virtual reality, give rise to the possibility that consciousness can be disembodied and transposed onto a separate location without change (Hayles 1). Consequently, this forces us to revise our humanistic views in favour of a new type of philosophy: that of the posthuman.

N. Katherine Hayles argues that the posthuman takes shape through three interconnected concepts: (a) the notion that "information lost its body," (b) the "cyborg," which "was created as a technological artefact and cultural icon in the years following World War II; and (c) the idea that our historic assessment of the human is "giving way to a different construction called the posthuman" (2). In Hayles' theory, information, which the author identifies as human consciousness, is no longer attached to the human body and is instead viewed as an element which can be displaced onto other entities without losing its effect. Dick's representation of false memory implantation depicts such a transfer of human consciousness, which makes it easier to consider the androids as human. Next, the cyborg can be viewed as the "informational pathway connecting the organic body to its prosthetic extensions" (2). Such a figure is represented through Dick's portrayal of the "organic" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 173) android, a literal embodiment of the "union of the human with the intelligent machine" (Hayles 2) that is central in the expression of the posthuman. Finally, the view that our historical consideration of the human is being reworked into the posthuman involves the discarding of the "I", or

"'natural' self" (3) in favour of the "we," or a self that is the product of the collective collaboration between human and machine. This communal merging for the purpose of establishing a common sense of self can be seen through Dick's portrayal of Mercerism. Hayles helps us to understand this by arguing:

> The moment a human grasps the empathy box, his consciousness fuses with that of unknown and unnamed others. He is both alone and in company, cut off from his surroundings and in emotional communication with other human beings [. . .] The empathy box interpolates the private delusions of the subject into a shared ideology that inscribe his characteristic experiences into scripts invested with religious, political, and social significance (177).

Thus, Mercerism is a form of expression between the human and the android, or alien other, wherein the two entities can share various ideologies of social and cultural importance and formulate a common posthuman identity.

As I have demonstrated by embedding examples from Dick's text into Hayles' definition, the shift from humanism to posthumanism is something that is represented in the novel. In the form of a subtextual answer to the complex question of what constitutes a human, Dick calls for Hayles' reworking of our traditional views in order to correspond to modern-day sciences, such as cybernetics, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality. Although such sciences have been termed as "antihuman" and "apocalyptic" (Hayles 288), they should in fact be revered for the "smarter environments" (289) which they help to construct. Humans look to their artificial constructs as a means to better their lives. And, machines are created and programmed by humans. Both species depend on one another for sustenance. Thus, rather than fear the non-human,

Dick's novel asserts that we should embrace the posthuman, a merging of the organic and artificial in order to assure a "long-range survival of humans and of the other life-forms [. . .] with whom we share the planet and ourselves" (Hayles 291).

Chapter Three

The "Self" and the "Double"

In exploring the question of what it is that makes us human, the concept of consciousness comes into play as an important distinction between ourselves and our mechanical counterparts. As I argued in the previous chapter, our belief that robots cannot engage in the same thoughts, perceptions, sensations and emotions as us serves as a boundary marker, dividing human and machine. The issue of whether non-humans can develop consciousness is the subject of controversy, as it raises the question of how the presence of consciousness can be assessed in certain classes of humans, such as in young children and the mentally-ill. In the present chapter, I wish to examine whether Dick's androids possess individual consciousness and, if so, to what extent. Furthermore, in studying the nature of the "self," I will draw on the psychoanalytical theory of the Double, in order to demonstrate how Dick's androids represent certain aspects of ourselves, which further highlights the possibility that they are human.

In general, the terms "human," "person," and "self" can be used interchangeably because of their synonymous meaning; however, as Marilyn Gwaltney argues, "that synonymity does not necessarily hold if androids like those in [Dick's] novel exist" (33). Although the androids are almost identical to human beings, the latter do not accept the personhood of the former. Instead, they dismiss any indication of individual consciousness as the result of technological programming. According to Gwaltney, the humans in Dick's novel expect the androids "to meet certain functional criteria before being declared to be a person or to have a self" (33). In order to determine what this

criterion consists of and decide whether or not Dick's androids qualify as persons, I will draw on Gwaltney's article, "Androids as a Device for Reflection on Personhood," which offers a list of prerequisites with respect to what we typically define as a person.

Before one resolves whether Dick's androids possess a self, one must determine what it actually means to be a person. According to Gwaltney, the first characteristic of personhood that comes to mind, in a traditional Western context, is the possession of a soul. The author argues that the general view of the self is "that it is the non-material substance that gives continuity and reality to individual human personality. That is, it is the soul" (34). The notion that the soul is the foundation of self, which transcends the body and continues to exist, even after death, is widely believed; yet most modern philosophers and psychologists agree that there is no concrete evidence to support the idea of self as metaphysical matter. Consequently, if there is no way of knowing if the self consists of an immortal soul, then how can this be considered a defining factor of the androids' personhood? Even with this in mind, however, society continues to view the soul as an integral part of the self. In fact, it is viewed in spiritual terms as the very essence of a person. Without it, we are simply bodies without life; much like what the humans in Dick's novel consider the androids to be.

Other prerequisites of what constitute a person are rationality and one's self-consciousness. I have shown, in the previous chapter, how humans possess the ability to set a goal and act for the purpose of achieving that goal. In Dick's

novel, even though humans program the androids to carry out hard labour in their place, the fact that they are able to fulfill their purpose demonstrates that the androids are in fact able to act purposefully. Gwaltney argues that, "to act in such situations, the androids must be able to think like human beings, not like today's computers with all possible decisions programmed but as self-regulating, self-correcting beings" (35). Thus, the fact that the androids act autonomously with the purpose of completing their tasks strongly suggests that they meet this principle of personhood.

The final criterion listed as a determining factor in what may be considered as a person, or self, is the freedom to choose one's pursuits. Gwaltney argues that being a person "means having an awareness of being an identity over time, an identity that can act to achieve a variety of ends or goals, and that, furthermore, can choose among that variety of goals" (35). The very fact that Dick's renegade androids "choose" to have a better life, they "choose" to flee to Earth, that some of them even "choose" careers for themselves (i.e. Luba Loft as opera singer, Buster Friendly as TV personality, Garland as police officer, Max Polokov as "chickenhead" garbage collector and also as WPO Soviet officer) and live among humans, clearly indicates that some of the androids already possess this criterion. I say "some" because not all of Dick's android characters share the same self-determination. For example, contrary to Gwaltney's argument that Rachael Rosen displays the greatest sense of self and freedom of choice, it seems that Rachael sometimes acts more like an android "serving" a purpose rather than "choosing" one; for although Rachael

"chooses" to help Deckard by providing him with a weapon to kill the renegade androids and she later "chooses" to murder his goat, the fact that she is under the control of the Rosen Association (who order her to seduce Deckard for the purpose of rendering him incapable of retiring another android) indicates that she is neither in control of her own actions, nor free to choose her own destiny. Instead, Roy Baty can be read as the character who exhibits the greatest sense of self because he recognizes his individuality, his right to be free and to live a fulfilling life. Furthermore, Baty chooses to assert those rights by taking an active role and carrying out a plan to gather his android companions and flee to Earth in search of a better future.

Based on these principles of personhood, it is clear that the that androids in Dick's novel can be regarded as individuals; however, their lack of empathy and the fact that they have "skipped" infancy, childhood and adolescence, all crucial stages in the development of the human self, renders them as incomplete persons, somehow "defective" or "not quite right" (Gwaltney 35). Consequently, this brings forth the question of whether or not the self is developmental and, if so, whether Dick's androids can only become persons through acquired knowledge and experience. Also, the androids' developmental deficiencies raise the moral dilemma surrounding the type of person society would generate, if it actually succeeded in bypassing the stages of human development and created an adult, fully-grown at the time of his/her "birth." According to Gwaltney, such an individual would possess "all the intellectual, emotional, and physical capacities of an adult human being but

with no experience in learning how to use those capacities" (36). What Gwaltney describes here is a being who, like a toddler, has little understanding about the environment and the people surrounding it; someone who has not gone through the normal developmental stages of the average person's life; who lacks the ability to rationalize and be empathetic towards others. Though Gwaltney labels Dick's androids as an "interesting thought experiment" (36) in terms of the consequences of the creation of an artificially-produced adult, such an experiment is not new to the field of science fiction, as other authors have dealt with the issue in the past.

The image that Gwaltney uses to describe the frame of mind of a man-made being like the ones depicted in Dick's novel is that of an immature child trapped in an adult's body. The author argues that:

> Such a being would, of course, be potentially self-reflective, and would, in a relatively short period of time, become aware of the absence of useful necessary knowledge and experience, just as the human child does. No one expects a toddler to have empathy. He is too socially inexperienced. Neither does one expect a toddler to have control over murderous emotions. But as the child grows in experience, she gains in empathy and self-control. (36)

Gwaltney's description depicts the frustration that would arise from the being's eventual realization that he/she is intellectually and socially "deformed" in comparison with human beings. As Gwaltney argues, no one expects a child to display a sense of empathy, or have control over their feelings. Yet, we do expect the child to eventually grow out of their immature state into adulthood. Because of their short lifespan, the androids are not granted the same

opportunity to mature and improve themselves as persons. As a result, humans view the androids as "unnatural," even though, essentially, they are the ones responsible for building them this way; and the androids view themselves as "incomplete" persons, as they are aware of their "potentiality for knowledge and accomplishment" (Gwaltney 36), yet also conscious that they will not be in existence long enough to live out their aspirations.

Gwaltney's image of "the frustrated rage of a child expressed in the body of an adult" (36) also calls to mind another familiar figure, namely, that of the creature in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Shortly after the creature in Shelley's novel is born, he is abandoned by his creator and left utterly alone. Like a young child, he is inexperienced, bewildered, and completely unaware of the harsh society that awaits him. Through the experience he acquires while trying to fend for himself—and by experience I refer to the creature's learning of basic survival and language skills—he becomes aware of his social exclusion and develops feelings of bitterness and hatred towards humankind.

Anne McWhir explores the social effects of education in *Frankenstein*, by arguing that the creature "is trapped in the abyss between the ideology his education teaches and his own experience of a rejecting world" (73). The creature constructs his sense of self through books such as *Paradise Lost*, which he reads as true history and bases himself on, only to face the harsh reality that "their lessons have formed him for a world that will not accept him" (McWhir 74). He believes that by acquiring knowledge of language, he will attain the power to alter his miserable situation by proving that he too is as "competent as

natural man" (McWhir 79); yet he realizes all to quickly that his education offers him no recourse against a society which refuses to look beyond his physical deformity and recognize his personhood.

To tie this together with Dick's novel, the androids are designed to look, think and act like humans and are programmed to replace us in specific laborious tasks. They are expected to be our exact replicates without overstepping their boundaries by claiming authentic humanness or the possession of a self. It is a frustrating message that humankind sends to these beings: that they are good enough to pass as humans and do their "dirty work," yet they do not deserve to be viewed as persons. The Nexus-6 type androids are even portrayed as being intellectually superior to human beings; yet, like Shelley's creature, this does not earn them any respect or self-worth in society. Instead, the human race views them as objects, not persons.

But what if the androids were already programmed with the maturity of an average human adult and implanted with an artificial human consciousness which would make them believe that they experienced the developmental stages of infancy, childhood and adolescence? Would such a being be deemed a person? Would they consider themselves to be a person? As argued earlier in my chapter, Dick's androids are perceived as defective persons by the society in which they dwell. Yet there is one android, the character of Rachael Rosen, that is different than the rest; that seems more normal, more complete; like an actual person. The reason Rachael appears more human than the rest is because she is given false memories in order to believe that she is actually human. This

accounts for her sense of self and the reason others see her as an authentic person, rather than an imitation.

Once Rachael learns that she is in fact an android, however, her sense of self is threatened and she begins to question the nature of her existence and individuality. As a consequence, Rachael undergoes what Gwaltney terms as "one of the most painful of human experiences: an identity crisis" (32). The fact that Rachael is caught between what she has been programmed to believe and the knowledge of her true state makes it difficult for Rachel to figure out where she stands as a person. For example, in her discussion with Deckard about Pris, her android double, Rachael identifies with both her human and android nature:

> You know what I have? Toward this Pris android [. . .] Something like [empathy] [. . .] Identification [. . .] We *are* machines, stamped out like bottle caps. It's an illusion that I—I personally—really exist; I'm just a representation of a type. (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 165)

Rachael identifies with Pris, which indicates that she is capable of displaying empathy; yet she immediately reduces her authentic human behaviour to a mere illusion produced by mechanical programming. The whole scenario plays out like a struggle between two selves, as Rachael is torn between her perception of herself as a unique human being and as one of countless identical Nexus-6s. She attemps to come to terms with her identity as an android; however, her human side interferes:

> Androids can't bear children. Is that a loss? Is it a loss? I don't really know; I have no way to tell. How does it feel to have a child? How does it feel to be born, for that matter? We're not

> born; we don't grow up; instead of dying from illness or old age we wear out like ants. Ants again; that's what we are. Not you; I mean me. Chitinous reflex-machines who aren't really alive. I'm not alive! (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 169)

When she thinks of all the things she will never get to experience, like motherhood, illness, old age and death, Rachael feels a sense of loss. Each of these factors represent the possibilities that were attached to her human self, which have now been stripped from her because she is no longer considered to be alive by human society. Her distress at the realization that she is not a unique person but a copy of many identical androids reflects her desire for individualism. And such a need for an authentic self depicts yet another example of the androids' potential for consciousness and shows how, as Dick's title suggests, androids "dream" about being persons.

Having demonstrated how Dick's androids can be considered as individuals, I now wish to shift my focus onto the study of the android as a literary motif of the double, or *Döppelganger*, and its relationship to personhood in terms of mirror image, opposing self, and fragmentation of a single mind. Each of these factors offers invaluable insight on the history of the *Döppelganger*, its literary function, and the questions that such a figure raises about authentic versus false identity. I will not only show how many of the main characters in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* act as doubles of one another, but will also establish an intertextual link between Dick's characters and those of *Frankenstein* and *Paradise Lost*, who I will argue function as doubles of each other. This doubling of monumental literary figures is

important, as it clearly displays the influence of the predecessor artists on Dick and rematerializes some of the primitive anxieties dealt with in the former texts. More importantly, Dick's seemingly endless doubles and the constant questioning of the reality of one's identity create what Sigmund Freud describes as an "uncanny" setting, where the familiar actually transfigures into the unfamiliar, the disconcerting, and the terrifying.

One of the most interesting aspects of Dick's fiction—and not to mention the most critiqued—is his use of the android as literary device in order to portray one of the oldest figures known to literature: the Double, or *Doppelgänger*. Using the myth of Echo and Narcissus, C. F. Keppler describes an early instance of the Double, that of Narcissus's reflection in the fountain. Although such an image may not incite the same intrigue as it does when we are children, the figure of the Double still holds a sense of mystery with respect to its relationship to the original self:

> Today things like reflected sound waves or light waves are no longer the mysteries they were for us in our childhood, or for adults in the cultural childhood that produced such stories as that of Echo and Narcissus. Nevertheless, in one form at least the mystery of simultaneous unity and duality has lived on, and remains as mysterious as ever. (2)

Thus, what is mysterious about the Double is no longer the fact that it serves as a mirror reflection of one's self but that it is not necessarily an exact physical and psychological duplication of the original self; that it is instead both united with and separated from the original self. And it is this sense of intrigue that has made the Double one of the oldest known literary figures.

The age-old figure of the double is described by Keppler as follows:

> This is a figure which has appeared repeatedly throughout the creative literature of the world, best known by his German name *Doppelgänger*, or in English-speaking countries by the name 'Double.' His appearances have been sporadic, but they have been on the whole extraordinarily frequent, dating from beginnings so early that we must guess at their antiquity, and continuing up to the present day. Furthermore, while as an impossible blender of opposites he is of course a fantasy, his role has not (as is often supposed) been that of a crude spine-chiller like the spectres of Gothic Romance; he is far too difficult and demanding a figure, demanding of both writer and reader, to be included for a cheap thrill. He has played his part in some of the greatest works by some of the greatest authors and almost never has this been a minor part, for there is something about him, for good or ill, that makes him tend to dominate whatever the situation he is placed in. Strange he is bound to be: a figure of the shadowy unknown, retaining in his most benign aspects some of the uncanniness of shadow land. Yet he is neither a mere trick nor a mere convention; on the contrary, from the persistence of his appearances he would seem to be a product of very considerable importance to the writers of world literature; he would seem, in other words, to have his roots deeply fastened in the soil of human thought and experience. (2)

Keppler's description is particularly useful in analyzing Dick's work because it encompasses all that Dick conveys through his portrayal of the androids. First and foremost, the fact that even though Dick's novel is set in the future, using the androids as Doubles is a theme borrowed from past authors, like Mary Shelley and John Milton, in order to revisit certain anxieties expressed by his predecessors. Furthermore, although the androids are Doubles of ourselves, they possess a sense of "the shadowy unknown," which upsets our sense of

normalcy and excites feelings of fear, repulsion and/or distress, which Freud calls *unheimlich*, or uncanny (Freud 930). In addition, the androids do in fact play a major role in the novel, as it is through them that Dick catalogues his most important ideologies and concerns about the nature of our humanness.

The android as *Doppelgänger* in Dick's novel represents the resurfacing repressed anxieties stemming from the past, mostly relating to humankind's age-old questions about our relationship with the universe and with God, which then transfigure into the uncanny.[17] According to psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, the most prominent themes of uncanniness are all concerned with the phenomenon known as the Double: a character that is considered as identical to someone else because of the indistinguishable physical characteristics they share with that person. This relation, Freud argues, is highlighted by mental processes where: a) both the original self and the Double share the same emotions, knowledge, and experience; b) the *Doppelgänger* divides itself from the original self and interchanges its personhood with that of someone else, who it better identifies with; c) there is a constant "repetition of the same features or character-traits or vicissitudes, of the same crimes, or even the same names, through several consecutive generations" (940). Whatever the case may be, the quality of uncanniness comes from the fact that the Double originates from an

[17] Given the complexity of defining a concept that, in some languages, does not even exist as a word, Freud uses two approaches to study of the "uncanny": 1) the etymological history of the word in various languages and 2) the listing of persons, things, sense-impressions, experiences and situations which arouse in us the feeling of uncanniness, and then determining the unknown nature of the uncanny based on the common factors shared in each such examples. Freud argues that both approaches come to the same conclusion, that: "the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar." (Freud 930)

infantile stage, when it is seen as an unthreatening aspect, and subsequently develops into a thing of terror in one's adult years.[18] Let us consider the concept of the soul, which Freud refers to as man's first Double, as an example. The immortal soul reflects our once primitive and childhood stage of uninhibited self-love, resulting in our desire to transcend the finality of the death and live eternally. We once believed that the soul was a Double of the body in that when the body dies, the soul offers a comforting assurance of immortality. As time passed, however, and people began to lose faith in the concept of the immortal soul, the return of our earlier fears forced us to view the figure of the double as the uncanny reminder of our inevitable mortality.

Going back to the mental processes mentioned by Freud, which are projected by the figure of the double, I now wish to demonstrate how the androids in Dick's novel reflect each of these, namely: the double as mirror image, as a fragment of a single self, and as other or opposite self. Furthermore, I will argue that Dick's androids clearly display many of the same qualities as past doubles in literature—and more specifically—the characters of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, who act as doubles of Milton's characters in *Paradise Lost*. Consequently, this intertextual link between characters does exactly what Freud argues in that it forces the return of past fears, which although we are able to repress temporarily, re-emerge to haunt us.

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[18] An example that Freud uses is one's childhood wish for our dolls to come alive, which is at that stage considered a pleasant thought, yet a very frightening our adult years (Freud, 941).

In *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* the figure of the android as man's mirror image reflects man's primitive feeling of self-love, as well as the eeriness that follows when one actually encounters one's Double. Like the mythological figure of Narcissus, Man is in love with himself, in the sense that he believes that he is beautiful and unique in the universe. This concept of human narcissism is one that has been represented in science fiction and treated as something that turns into an obsession: Man's need to create a perfect reproduction of himself. This stems from the belief that, having been created in God's image, Man deserves the same godly rights and privileges as his Creator.

In *Frankenstein*, Victor expresses this belief in his aspiration to create "a new species [that] would bless [him] as its creator and source" and "would owe their being to [him]" (Shelley 32). His goal is to be like God and create a being as "complex and wonderful as man" (31); yet when he comes across his creation for the first time, Victor is horrified by the results:

> How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful!—Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion, and straight black lips. (34)

Unlike Dick's androids, which are exact duplicates of human beings, Victor's creature cannot be seen as Victor's double in the literal sense. Metaphorically speaking, however, the creature can be read as his creator's mirror image. The

exaggerated hideousness portrayed by Shelley highlights Victor's inability to recognize himself in his creature's reflection because it portrays all that is "ugly" in Man. Consequently, Victor subconsciously refuses to see his creature as an image of himself because to do so would mean to recognize that he is just as monstrous.

Similarly, the humans in Dick's novel set out to construct a being virtually identical to themselves, yet when they succeed in doing so, they categorize them as "unnatural phenomena" (Francavilla 9) to be feared and enslaved, rather than acknowledged as a new class of human species. The Rosen Association comes so close to creating the perfect replicate of Man that, as Joseph Francavilla argues, "the contrast and oppositions between the human and the android becomes blurred" and "the contrasting characteristics of each life form switch sides" (9). Thus, as the android becomes more animate and the human more inanimate, there is a sense of "intellectual uncertainty" (Freud 937) as to which entity is alive and which is not. This intellectual uncertainty translates into a feeling of uncanniness, where the familiar—all that we know about humanness—transforms into the unfamiliar, leaving one to feel a sense of confusion and dread.

The psychoanalytic concept of intellectual uncertainty is central to Dick's novel, as there is a constant questioning of which is the "authentic" self and which the "replica." In fact, the use of doubles within the novel is so exhaustive that one can write an entire paper arguing how each character serves as a mirror image of another, in order for Dick to confuse his audience by

blurring the line between the android and the human. It is not my intent to embark on such an exhaustive analysis, however, therefore I will limit my study to only a few examples of the Doubles depicted in the novel and discuss the way in which it represents the intellectual uncertainty referred to by Freud.

In the scene where he is arrested and taken to an alternate police department which he has never heard of, Deckard encounters his mirror-image Double, another bounty hunter by the name of Phil Resch. The uncanny similarity of the police department where he is being detained and his own causes Deckard to question which reality is authentic: his own, or the one taking place in this other police department. His confusion is only heightened with the introduction of Phil Resch, who is also in the business of executing androids. When confronted with the problem of being unable to distinguish whose life is an inauthentic reality, Deckard and Resch begin to question which of them has been implanted with a "false memory system" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 111), something that the manufacturers of the androids create which makes the androids believe that they are human. Either one of them could be an android yet—initially—neither recognizes themselves as such. Neil Easterbrook refers to this as the "conceit of doubling—authentic doubles [that] do not recognize themselves as double" (27). It is only when Resch suspects that Deckard is keeping a secret from him—that Garland may have told Deckard that Resch is an android—that Resch begins to contemplate the idea that he may not be human.

Even though Deckard and Resch are not identical to each other, their resemblance in character and shared life experiences render them as mirror images of one another. Neil Easterbrook contends that "Phil Resch serves as Deckard's mirror image, especially to provoke his own doubts about his status and personal identity, for he becomes 'alien' even to himself" (27). In considering Easterbrook's argument, one may argue that the fact that Resch is Deckard's mirror image is suggestive that, in the midst of Resch's identity crisis, Deckard finds himself in the same predicament. Deckard is disgusted with the cold brutality with which Resch assassinates the androids and determines that Resch must be an android himself because of his lack of empathy. When Deckard administers the Voight-Kampff test and it turns out that Resch is in fact human, Deckard is thrown off balance. His faith in empathy as an innately human trait, in his profession, and in the very nature of his existence, is called into question. He insists on administering the test to himself in order to satisfy his own intellectual uncertainty as to the authenticity of his human existence.

In a novel permeated by the presence of doubles,[19] it is ironic that the only identical duplicate characters found in the novel are those of Rachael Rosen and Pris Stratton. Rather than represent them as mirror images of one another, however, Dick portrays the two as the separate fragments of a single self. There are several instances in the novel that support this theory, the first

[19] Even the plot itself is presented as a double narrative where, as Patricia Warrick argues "the Isidore chapters are interwoven with the Deckard chapters, the action in one echoing the other but reversing it" (123).

one being the fact that Pris initially introduces herself to Isidore as "Rachael Rosen" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 59). A second hint that Rachael and Pris are two aspects of the same person can be found when Rachael reveals to Deckard that Pris "is the same type as I am" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 164) and later declares herself a "representative of a type" (Dick, *Do Androids Dream* 165). Although the novel insists that the two characters are of the same "type," they are in fact very different. On the one hand, Rachael, the original Nexus-6 model, is represented as feminine, approachable, and refined. On the other hand, Pris, the replicated version of Rachael, is portrayed as masculine, cold, and sadistic. In psychoanalytic terms, the two characters represent the concept of the double's dissociation from its original source for the purpose of self-identification. Consequently, a perpetual struggle ensues between the original and its double, wherein there is a constant balancing and negating of the one facet of the self with the other. For example, when Rachael is making love to Deckard, Pris is mutilating a living creature; hence, the representation of a struggle between two opposite psyches is occurring. If one considers that both scenes are meant to be envisioned by the reader simultaneously, sex and death are united and although the two seem to contradict each other, they both exist. By the novel's conclusion, Rachael not only comes to term with her darker side but actually surrenders herself to it by allowing jealousy and rage to cloud her judgment and lead her to murder Deckard's goat. Such an act reflects the fusion of human emotion and android indifference as a means to show how we are all in a sense both human and non-human:

> The act conflates her jealousy of the goat with revenge for Deckard's killing her friends. The mixture of human passion and cold calculation in Rachael's responses shows that she combines within herself attributes of the dark-haired girl and of the android. The closer the relationship [with Deckard] gets to intimacy, the wilder the oscillations between these subject positions become." (173)

The Rachael Rosen that we see at the end of the novel, the one who viciously kills an animal, is a far cry from the woman who initially tells Deckard that she would "never" (44) terminate an innocent life. This does not, however, reflect the manifestation of Rachael's fear that her evil double will murder her and take over her life. Instead, Pris has always been a crucial part of Rachael's existence, representing the dark, mechanical side of human nature which is drawn out, ironically, through human experience, emotion and our relationships with others. The struggle between Rachael and Pris is also one between life's contraries: life and death, logic and emotion, masculine and feminine etc. The fluctuation between each set of concepts is represented by Dick, through his portrayal of Rachael and Pris, in such a way that, although they are polar opposites, both exist and form two halves of a single authentic self.

Unlike some of the other doubles portrayed in Dick's novel, Rachael and Pris never meet. Even so, Dick's readers get a sense of an ongoing struggle between these women through the novel's double narrative. In Marxist terms, this invisible war between Rachael and Prise can be considered as class-based: the capitalist (Rachael) versus the working class (Pris). Rachael is involved in a large and profitable corporation, while Pris works as a domestic slave. Rachael has a good educational background, while Pris does not. And, Rachael

appears to have the financial means to afford her own living space, while Pris is homeless and presently living off the charity of Isidore in a run-down apartment. According to Marx, "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Marx and Engels 219). Although they never come across each other, the history of this political struggle affects them and pins them against each other. It classifies Pris and Rachael as polar opposites and forces them to become class enemies.

Another interesting fact about Dick's portrayal of the double is the ways in which it manifests itself through continual repetition. The character of Roy Baty exhibits many of the same personality-traits and actions of previous doubles in literature, therefore portraying the return of the repressed in humankind. In considering that *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* revisits themes from *Frankenstein* and *Paradise Lost* and their interpretation of the story of Genesis, one may argue that Baty is the intertextual double of Shelley's creature and Milton's Satan. As Francavilla argues, "Roy Batty, like Frankenstein's monster, is a Promethean rebel struggling against the tyrannical ruling authority who created him and who rejects his pleas for 'more life' with his Eve-like mate and his own kind" (8). Indeed, Baty can be viewed as the monster's futuristic double, if we consider the emulation of the latter's story in Dick's representation of Baty. The similarities between Baty and the monster create a sense of the uncanny in that they remind us of the anxiety expressed by Shelley with respect to the dangers of seeking to achieve godhead through science. Moreover, the similarities connect the two characters with another key

figure, their predecessor double, Milton's Satan. Both in *Frankenstein* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* the image of Satan—one of the earliest instances of the double—is recalled as a means of evoking the return of our unconscious fears. Baty, Frankenstein's monster, and Satan represent the constant repetition, from one generation to the next, of past human conduct and ideologies. Images of hate, violence and rivalry repeat themselves from one double to its descendant, creating an incessant imitation of actions and ideas, which always lead to the return of the same primitive belief in the immortal soul coupled with the anxiety surrounding the "other" as harbinger of death. This Freudian notion is also explored by Francavilla who argues that:

> On the one hand, we view the android or robot with awe and wonder [. . .] They are the perfect creations we hope for, replications of ourselves. We envy their perfection, their flawless, strong, tireless bodies. They satisfy our wish for immortality, for housing our soul and mind in a precisely engineered body, free from injury or disease. On the other hand, androids and robots are projections of our fears concerning dehumanizing technology run rampant and scientific creations out of control. In fact, these artificial forms of life mainly have been seen in fiction as dangerous and demonic. Even early legends concerning the creation of artificial life [. . .] express the strong fear that [it] will turn demonic, will run amok, and will very likely threaten its human creators. (7)

Francavilla's analysis exemplifies my argument that Baty, in his characterization as the intertextual double of Shelley's monster and Milton's Satan, represents the re-emergence of primitive notions which repeat themselves throughout history and serve as a reflection of our innermost fears. Like his predecessor doubles, Baty is the result of humankind's narcissistic desire to recreate a perfect version of ourselves, free from the confines of illness

and death. Similarly to the monster and Satan, however, Baty represents the fear of rivalry that could occur, following the creation of such a perfect being, where the doubles compete "for the same space or location, the same position or rank, the same right to existence" (Francavilla 7). Even more frightful, Baty represents the fear that the replicated self may appropriate the original. Having said this, Dick's doubling of characters outside of the context of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* represents humankind's hidden impulses, which, despite our best attempt to bury them, find their way back to the surface through the familiar, and metamorphose into the unknown, the dreadful, the horrifying.

In this chapter, I have argued that Dick's androids can be considered as authentic persons, on the grounds that they fit into our prerequisites of what a self consists of. But the purpose of Dick's androids is not a simple question of whether or not they are human, or independent individuals. The androids also serve as a literary device used by Dick to express a critique of the state of human identity as well. Through his portrayal of the android as an exact human reproduction, Dick brings us face to face with our mirror-image, the result of which is not the Narcissistic love that humankind originally hopes for. Instead, the person we see in the mirror reflects the fear, hate and hypocrisy of the human race.

Conclusion

Philip K. Dick is an author whose career centered on the portrayal of mechanical constructs coming to life and masquerading as humans. Yet he did not foresee the full magnitude of such a scenario and how it might one day become a possibility: " [. . .] inadvertedly I blended the human and the construct and didn't notice that such a blend might, in time, actually begin to become part of our reality" (Dick, "The Android" 185). What began as a talent of telling fictional stories about aliens, androids, machines and their interrelationships with humans actually developed into a philosophical quest to ascertain the concept of reality, as well as what constitutes our definition of the human. Dick states:

> I can honestly say that certain matters absolutely fascinate me, and that I write about them all the time. 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 stories. I have investigated those two interrelated topics over and over again. I consider them important topics. What are we? What is it that surrounds us, that we can call the not-me, or the empirical or phenomenal world? (Dick, "How to Build a Universe" 260)

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? is the result of Dick's fixation on the issues of reality and the human. And what is particularly striking about the novel is how the author is able to draw his readers into a web of questioning, repeating and confusing, in order to demonstrate how what we know to be the "true" meaning of the human is in fact a lie.

In writing this thesis, I have attempted to identify the factors involved in the formation of the human and show the injurious consequences when one

considers such features as absolute. In the first part of my study, I have argued that Dick's text reflects anxieties of the past regarding the human condition and, more specifically, the state of womanhood by considering *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* as a rewrite of *Paradise Lost* and *Frankenstein*. In doing so, I have shown how the females in Dick's novel act as the intertextual doubles of Frankenstein's monster and Milton's Eve and show how Dick swerves away from the predecessor texts by rewriting the feminine into the image of the cyborg, a androgynous creature. Secondly, I have demonstrated how the world is in a state of constant evolution, thus, our antiquated ideas of the human are in need of revision. Hayles states that humanism is in the process of extinction and that modern sciences have rendered us as "posthuman." Ironically, Dick envisions such a state of the human long before its arrival, through his portrayal of the android: a being that represents the literal embodiment of the blending of the artificial with the organic. Next, through my evaluation of the social construction of "self," I have concluded that Dick's androids are socially excluded as persons on the grounds that they are dismissed as lifeless non-humans, even though they exhibit signs of animation and individualism.

Finally, if there is one quote which I believe sums up Dick's views on authentic human identity, it is found in Deckard's declaration that: "The electric things have their lives, too. Paltry as those lives are" (Dick 214). Not only is this statement a prophecy of things to come, that is, his view that our mechanical constructs are coming to life; but it also pinpoints the answer to Dick's question about what it means to be human: the ability to empathize with,

embrace and respect other forms of life. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* serves as a rejection of society's conventional delineation of the human, which divides, constrains and commits the act of anthropocentrism. The author calls for a reconstruction of the human, which can only be achieved through "merry defiance" and "spirited, although not spiritual, bravery and uniqueness" (Dick "The Android" 209). If one would only release their inhibitions and recognize that they are in unison with their double, the android, the other, Dick suggests that the future will be a much better place for humans and non-humans alike.

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