

The Search for Koinos Kosmos in Philip K. Dick's Fiction

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Received: 02/07/2020

Accepted: 10/08/2020

Published: 01/09/2020

Volume: 1 Issue: 3

How to cite this paper: Sevilla-Vallejo, S. (2020). The Search for Koinos Kosmos in Philip K.

Dick's Fiction. *Journal of Critical Studies in Language and Literature*, 1(3), 56-63

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46809/jcsll.v1i3.28>

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Abstract

As it has been previously studied, Philip K. Dick's work raises existential questions that do not have a clear answer, but they invite us to seek the truth. One of the essential themes in his writings is that our perception about reality is false (Idios Kosmos). In this sense, Philip K. Dick's statements and novels consider that human life is a constant struggle with obstacles. This paper analyses how his biography and readings led him to form a philosophical attitude that was essential in his writings. Then, the motives that distort the experience and the process of searching for the true reality are compared in three novels. On the one hand, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and *Ubik* show different futuristic dystopias where human values are endangered. On the other hand, *VALIS* is about the search of transcendence from a more realistic and autobiographical approach. The aim of this article is to reflect about the search of the *koinos kosmos* contained in these three novels.

Keywords: Philip K. Dick, Koinos Kosmos, Idios Kosmos, Transcendence, Mystical Experience, Schizophrenia

1. Introduction

Science fiction is a very broad genre because it covers very diverse texts under one name and even its definition can be complicated. There is a stereotypical and superficial image of what this genre represents: 'Robots, Spaceships'. Fernando Ángel Moreno begins his study with the following reflection: "Nuclear holocausts. Time travels. Lost civilizations. Extreme political systems. Mutants. Alternate history. So many motifs go into science fiction! Apart from the mere anecdote, could this all be heavily related to other aspects of knowledge?" (2010, p. 5). He states that, although the above elements may appear in science fiction stories, the essence of science fiction lies in its ability to reflect on reality and conceive situations that could actually happen.

Today's society is characterized by the speed at which everything is always changing. We have inherited the conception that humanity progresses, although perhaps we no longer know where to and that relentless and swift change jeopardizes our society' identity and ours (Sevilla-Vallejo, 2019a). "Even taking modernity in the most optimistic spirit, continual progress entails continual dissolution; to make new societies and even new human types is to destroy or exile or simply forget the old ones" (Palmer, 2003, p. 31).

Science fiction authors like Philip K. Dick account for the vital unrest in which humanity lives and try to provide answers to a world in which, in the terms of Zygmunt Bauman, there are no solid structures to hold on to. Philip K. Dick is part of a group of "authors who feel the need to represent the social situation in which they live in order to awaken the awareness of

those dragged by the confusion of the changes. These authors reflect society, both in the image they project and in the lies they hide” (Sevilla-Vallejo, 2017b). Philip K. Dick often writes that the human being does not perceive reality as it is, but what we live is an illusion or hologram. As Muriel Tagle synthesizes, this conception has a long tradition:

The idea of a phenomenological world superimposed on a hidden one has evident echoes in the doctrine of Gnosticism, but this in turn finds its roots in Plato. It refers to the belief that we live in a spurious, fictitious reality, which is superimposed on the real one that we can hardly glimpse. This is reminiscent of Plato and his theory of ideas, raised fundamentally in *The Republic*, where he states, broadly speaking, that there are two types of reality, the intelligible and the sensible. The intelligible reality is that behind the material –it remains intact, does not change and is, in turn, eternal in timelessness and represents the true being of the universe, as an idea or a symbol. And on the surface is the sensible reality, which is what we perceive as material things in permanent change, which due to their constant creation and destruction could never truly be or exist, but only remain as mere imitations of reality unintelligible (2014, p. 62).

Philip K. Dick draws on pre-Socratic philosophers, Plato, Descartes, and Schopenhauer, among others, to point out that the sensible world is deceptive and encourages the reader to fully understand the drama of human existence. In this sense, this author brings a long philosophical tradition to science fiction. According to Paul Braudillard, science fiction is directly linked to the simulation, to the creation of an alternative world. Philip K. Dick has overcome the most classic sense of the term science fiction, in which science carries out a productive simulation where variations depend on technological development. Instead, Philip K. Dick delves into a simulation drill, showing how information comes to create a new reality (1991). The great Californian author had an enormous intellectual and artistic concern from a very young age. Emmanuel Carrère records in his biography that he was a great reader and a music lover. Among other topics, he read multiple psychology texts: “After a few sessions, supported by reference books restlessly noted down by his mother, the young Dick spoke with confidence of neuroses, complexes and phobias, subjecting his friends to personality tests” (Carrère, 2002, p. 9). Both philosophical theories and psychoanalysis point out that the human experience of reality is highly influenced by his mindset about it (Sevilla-Vallejo, 2019b). Human beings always look at the world from their perspective, which may not match what really exists:

When we speak of “reality”, we refer to the *koinos kosmos* for convenience, but the *koinos kosmos*, in the strict sense of the term, does not exist: its perception is the result of a conventional agreement between men, concerned about their relationships developing on stable ground; a sort of diplomatic fiction, the least common denominator between my *idios kosmos* and that of my neighbors’, assuming that my neighbors exist and that I am not alone in the world, as an uncompromising idealism would claim (Carrère, 2002, p. 25).

Philip K. Dick himself pointed out that the *idios kosmos* is evolutionarily earlier and deeper than the traces of *koinos kosmos* that we can achieve. According to this author, “a human child, at birth, still has years of a kind of semi-real existence ahead of him: semi-real in the sense that until he is fifteen or sixteen years old he is able to some degree to remain not thoroughly born, not entirely on his own; fragments of the *idios kosmos* remain, and not all or even very much of the *koinos kosmos* has been forced onto him as yet” (Dick, 1995). The readings of Philip K. Dick and his experience are intertwined to give a vision in which human beings are condemned to project their *idios kosmos* on the world: “What has happened will repeat itself again and again, wherever the kid runs head on into the *koinos kosmos*” (Dick, 1995). The human psyche tends to avoid looking at reality as it is, like the people who stay comfortably in the Platonic cave; however, sooner or later the external light enters and human beings have to face reality, not being prepared for it: “the breaking out of reality all around him; its presence, not its absence from his vicinity. The lifelong fight to avoid it has ended in failure; he is engulfed in it.” (Dick, 1995).

Many of Philip K. Dick’s stories are characterized because a “character, through any detail, discovers that something is wrong” (Carrère, 2002, p. 29). The character questions the idiosyncratic *kosmos* that others assume as evidence from the outside world to go in search of true reality. Human beings do not know themselves, so they must fight to discover who they really are or, as traditionally represented, to end the mask that constitutes the person. “Starting from the basic and obvious statement that a mask is meant to deceive, Dick again and again explores the possible relationships that may exist between the deceiver and the deceived, and between each and the mask itself, explores how the act of deception might change the relationships, and explores the possible impact of discovery of the hoax.” (Barlow, 2005, p. 7). The biggest problem with finding *koinos kosmos* is that it constantly changes. “What does one do when metaphysical and epistemological questions prove unanswerable and personal ‘reality’ becomes mutable?” (Barlow, 2005, p. 7). Human beings must accept this uncertainty, as the Nietzschean superman does, but do not quit the search for truth. Philip K. Dick has become a very influential author. His writings have inspired other narrations. Among them, as we studied before, it’s worth to mention *Fragments de Apocalipsis [Fragments of Apocalypse]* by Gonzalo Torrente Ballester (Sevilla-Vallejo, 2017a; Sevilla-Vallejo, 2018).

As Emmanuel Carrère describes it, Philip K. Dick's youth was lonely and prone to psychological problems from the start. He had a strong sense of unreality that peaked in 1974, when he had a mystical/hallucinatory experience in which he was revealed that there were two worlds, the one the senses grasp and the real one. He gave a speech in Metz to explain that experience (Dick, 1977). In that experience, he confirmed that the intuition that had always had was true and became the pillar to build his narrative on. Philip K. Dick identified with schizophrenia and began to theorize about it. "What distinguishes schizophrenic existence from that which the rest of us like to imagine we enjoy is the element of time. The schizophrenic is having it all now, whether he wants it or not; the whole can of film has descended on him, whereas we watch it progress frame by frame." (Dick, 1995). According to him, while healthy people live in a diachronic way, the schizophrenic faces all their experiences, emotions and thoughts synchronously and this overflows them. "His fears are justified. Things are unendurable, as well as hopeless, as well as beyond his control." (Dick, 1995). The schizophrenic suffer a lot and, at the same time, have a very deep perception of their experience, because they have it all before their eyes. In Philip K. Dick's works, the disturbed characters are those who have a more seer vision. Prophet Mercer in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* had brain damage that awakened his ability; inertials in *Ubik* are those who have psychic powers, behave more strangely; and Horselover Fat has the same experience as Philip K. Dick and a severe depression that, however, makes him understand reality in greater depth than the rest. Philip K. Dick argued that altered states of consciousness such as schizophrenia and the state resulting from the consumption of LSD allowed us to understand the real world and even anticipate the future, even if at the cost of being trapped by it. "It would be a greater loss than gain; we would have induced our future into being consumed by the present: To understand the future totally would be to have it now." (Dick, 1995). That is, those who cross the barrier of perception of reality enter the *koinos kosmos*, which makes them wiser, but also overwhelms them and separates them from the rest of humanity.

Philip K. Dick also had an acute sensitivity to political control, so widespread in an America obsessed with the Communist threat. For example, the government administered tests that "were presented as opinion polls, when in reality were undoubtedly tests intended to determine to what extent people thought correctly" (Carrère, 2002, p. 23). Along with the perception that reality is holographic, Philip K. Dick developed a theory about the forces that control the population. Technological means facilitate the possible manipulation of reality. "What if the images of Vietnam that appeared on television were shot in a studio with blank bullets, models and ketchup? What if the Vietnam War didn't really exist? What if nothing in the world existed, apart from the room he was in, other than the large, prematurely aged body he looked at in terror in the mirror and whom he should call 'I'?" (Carrère, 2002, p. 100). However, political oppression is only one element of a broader existential reflection. Deep down, Philip K. Dick faces the question of whether the combined experiences that make up a life make sense. "He had always refused to accept, with all his being, the idea that chance was the engine of what happened to him, a dance of electrons without a choreographer or a series of random combinations. For him, everything had to have a meaning. He had lived and explored his life according to this postulate. Now, based on the idea that there is a hidden meaning in everything that happens, we fatally fall into the idea that there is also an intention" (Carrère, 2002, p. 100). He constantly searches for the meaning of human suffering, loneliness and need for transcendence.

Philip K. Dick's search does not lead to a unique answer, but rather he realizes that reality is constantly changing and human beings' life is essentially irrational. "Dick was fascinated by the implications of chaotic unpredictability, wanted to dig into it, wanted to try to discover whatever truths might lie behind it, what reasons there might be for it and what limitations of human perception it indicates. Chaos, to him, is the encompassing concept around one important aspect of the human predicament—our inability or chronic failure to clearly understand patterns and relationships, be they human to human, human to machine, creator to created, perceptor to environment, or, in fact, of any type whatsoever." (Barlow, 2005, p. 11-12). Consequently, he does not offer answers but rather confronts us with the big questions: "In interviews, just as in his books, Dick loved to present blanket statements and then contradict them, thereby forcing his interviewers and readers to immediately face something of the chaotic type of situation Dick saw as life itself." (Barlow, 2005, p. 12).

Next, we are going to study the relationship between the apparent reality in which the characters live and the transcendental search for the authentic reality carried out by their protagonists. There are a lot of works by Philip K. Dick that are suitable to this subject.



Image 1. Books by Philip K Dick. Image free of rights retrieved from: https://es.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Dick_bookshelf_b%26w.jpg

We have chosen three novels that allow connecting two Philip K Dick's more fictional texts with one of his more autobiographical texts. However, this study must be completed.

2. Technological means for a community experience in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? takes place after the World War Terminus, a future nuclear conflict after which the atmosphere has become so polluted that the planet is barely habitable. Society has lost a good part of human contact and spirituality, until a technology appears that generates a sense of community and faith in transcendence. The Earth after World War Terminus is very much like our society in the existential background. People focus more on material aspects and entrust their social life to technology rather than reflect on their own lives and communicate directly. Religion is based on the struggle of Wilbur Mercer, a man who, after a mutation, is able to bring life back. Believers connect with Mercer and the rest of humanity through the empathy machine, where they share other people's emotions and Mercer's struggle. He tries to free humanity from the tomb world and lead them to the light world or *koinos kosmos*. "Philip K. Dick is inspired by Ludwig Binswanger work in his representation of schizophrenia and even he takes the expression "tomb world" to refer the fall of Wilber Mercer." (Sevilla-Vallejo, 2018). The tomb world is the suffering experienced by those who discover that they have been living a virtual reality (*idios kosmos*), until the moment when they find the strength to go in search of the authentic reality (*koinos kosmos*). Mercer follows this path for humanity. He climbs a mountain, but some characters called Killers try to finish him off and, after much hardship, manage to knock him down. Mercer then spends some time lifeless in the tomb world, until he regains his ability to bring life back and resumes his climb up the hill, where his sacrifice is repeated. Mercer's sacrifice and rebirth refer to Christianity. "Mercer is a Christ-like figure. His name is reminiscent of the word 'mercy', one of the central tenets of Christian ethics. His empathy, climb, death, and resurrection at his very own "place of skulls"—a common translation of Golgotha— 'a pit of corpses and dead bones'" (Viskovic, 2013, p. 167). The empathy machine allows people to believe in joining the suffering of all humanity. "The subject experiences the thoughts and feelings of everyone involved, including Mercer, and adds their own subjective experience into the mix." (Viskovic, 2013, p. 164).

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? raises human beings' fight, in the midst of all the cruelties and evils of the world, to find happiness and believe in the promise of salvation. This search divides people into two groups:

...those for whom the reality of reality is light, life and joy, and those for whom it is death, tomb and chaos; those who see Christ in the depths, and those who, like Dostoevsky's Svidrigailov, portray eternity as a dirty bathroom covered in spider webs; those who believe in infinite love and mercy, nevertheless Auschwitz, and those who know the unfathomable horror of all things, despite the blue of the sky and the pleasures of life [...] the truth should be found in a field and not in the other. There was no chance of compromise. In Christian terms, which recently were also Dick's, there are two possibilities: either the Christ has risen or not (Carrère, 2002, p. 81).

This novel points to a symptom that shows a social problem. People interact coldly, distantly, and sometimes aggressively. At the beginning of the text, Rick Deckard leads an absolutely isolated life and he is far from the only one who works like this. "The origin of all evil, Dick thought, is in withdrawing, in locking oneself in, which, in psychiatric terms, diagnoses schizophrenia" (Carrère, 2002, p. 86). In addition to Mercer's religion, the novel raises another great issue, which

has been brought to the movies in *Blade Runner*: the androids or replicants. Technology has reached such a degree of development that there are companies that create these machines that resemble human beings. The most cutting edge is Rossen Association, which has developed Nexus-6, which is so similar that the Voigt-Kampff Empathy test is no longer completely reliable in differentiating a human from an android. So there is “the disturbing similarity between the” ‘android’ personality and the ‘schizoid’ personality, which Jung wrote through the permanent economy of feelings. Schizoid think more than they feel. They have a purely intellectual, abstract understanding of the world and their speech, a reduction to atoms of set of elements that are never reflected in a *real* emotion or thought” (Carrère, 2002, p. 86). As we have previously studied, not only people with psychic disorders, but any of the people featured in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* fall virtually short of empathy and can only gain it through the empathy machine (Sevilla-Vallejo, 2018). In fact, androids react with apparently much more emotion than humans. They are an artificial reality that, paradoxically, could be much more real than humans themselves, because “their program allows them to simulate suffering in a convincing way, what authorizes us to consider that suffering unreal or not to share it?” (Carrère, 2002, p. 87). Human beings appear confined in themselves by their selfishness and materialistic character and the only hope against this is Mercerism; however, it is discovered that Mercer’s images do not show a true sacrifice but a studio recording.

Towards the end of the novel, Buster Friendly strikes the blow by revealing, with evidence in hand, that Mercerism is a hoax, the opium of the people, distributed by a Machiavellian government that has organized its ban for the sole purpose of increasing its consumption. The mountain scene is shot in a studio and is broadcast by a channel other than the television program, but in the same style. Mercer himself, whose followers were already wondering, at first, whether he was human or an archetypal entity introduced into Earth culture by some unfathomable cosmic will, is nothing but a second-rate actor, an alcoholic, a veteran of forgotten television series who, to play the role of his life, in which he is assaulted with rubber stones and ketchup blood, has known no other pain than to spend the hours of filming without whiskey (Carrère, 2002, p. 92).

So the little empathetic humans follow a prophet who, in reality, is a failed and drunk actor. And, despite everything, to give it a new turning point, Wilbur Mercer appears before Rick Deckard and J.R.R. Isidore, the two protagonists, to show them that the faith in him is true nonetheless. As Richard Viskovic concludes in his article, Philip K. Dick’s novel casts doubt on whether the characters’ religious experience is true, and yet the search for empathy and true belief is necessary for humanity. As we have said, Philip K. Dick leaves us in uncertainty because every “story was a simulation. If a cunning forger had wanted to write in Dick’s “style”, or a computer scientist wanted to create a program capable of writing like Dick, the result would have been similar to that” (Carrère, 2002, p. 97). Human beings rarely have evidence that what they live is real. “However, he had written it. And it was him, nothing out of the ordinary, perhaps, but real, authentic: Phil Dick, not an android placed behind everyone’s back in Phil Dick’s place. Of that he was sure.” (Carrère, 2002, p. 97). As the androids of the novel experience, we cannot know whether we are also androids or if the author is. Still, “if I had been an android, I would have been just as sure I was. I would have followed the same exact reasoning. And to be honest it even was a typical android reasoning. And realizing that, he would feel fear, because he would have been programmed to feel it.” (Carrère, 2002, p. 97).

2. Half-life, between Life and the Afterlife in *Ubik*

One of humanity’s big questions is what happens after death. As Schopenhauer studies, the human being is aware that life is a path to death, but we hold a thirst for eternity. *Ubik* refers to a mysterious substance that rescues a part of us from the organic decay that life brings. In this novel, Glen Runciter runs a company of anti-psychics or anti-PSYS, who prevent telepaths from reading or influencing the thoughts of the population. Glen goes to visit his wife, Ella Runciter, who is at the Beloved Brethren Moratorium, which is a cryonization complex in Zurich. When someone is in a very serious state of health, such that it is not possible for them to recover, the Beloved Brethren Moratorium can keep the person in half-life, where they remain in a state of torpor, in which it is possible to speak with them. Half-life is a mysterious state, between death and life, where the existence of people can be extended. Glen Runciter is commissioned to protect Stanton Mick’s properties on the Moon from psychic attacks. So Glen Runciter, Joe Chip, the company’s chief technician, and their best inertials, who are people with anti-psychic powers, travel to the Moon to accomplish the task. Then, a bomb explodes and they find out that it was a trap surely set by Ray Hallis, who runs the rival company of psychics, those who try to influence people’s minds. Glen Runciter is apparently mortally wounded. So they take him to the Beloved Brethren Moratorium. However, Joe Chip begins to receive messages from him saying that those who actually died in the explosion were the inertia and him.

From the moment of the explosion, strange events begin to happen. Time begins to run backwards and Joe Chip and the inertials are the only ones who remember the time that disappears before their eyes. In addition, something or someone is killing all those who went to the Moon one by one. Joe Chip tries to find out what has happened in the reality in which they live for everything to have transformed in that way. This situation between science fiction and fantasy responds to Philip K. Dick’s quest: “If reality exists, thought Dick, it exists in action, not in the fact of perception” (Barlow, 2005, p. 88). Reality is expressed in constant change and is incomprehensible until Al Hammond, one of the inertials, realizes that the explosion did indeed affect them. Somehow, it makes them go back in time differently and will end up killing them (p. 122). Later, Joe Chip understands that they are all in the half-life and that they are losing the memory of the living world. The only hope of not disappearing entirely passes through the Platonian theory that there is something internal and unavailable to degeneration

(p. 135). Each chapter of the novel begins with an advert for the Ubik product, which solves any human problem. It seems like a joke, but in reality Ubik “was the saving force that takes us out of the jaws of entropy, out of the perversity of the demiurge and of death” (Carrère, 2002, p. 105). Ubik is a mysterious substance that has created the universe, it is the word, the name that no one knows (221). Joe Chip realizes that he begins to experience the tiredness and cold that inertials felt before disappearing. He needs Ubik not to disappear (p. 182). However, this product cannot bring him back to true life, but keep him in an intermediate state, that is, something of the human being endures, although he does not experience reality, but a kind of uncertain dream. Emmanuel Carrère points out that in Philip K. Dick “something deeper in him believed, against his will, in eternal darkness, in triumph, not of nothing, but of living death” (2002, p. 106).

Ubik is a story about how life falls apart without human beings being able to do anything except trust something that helps them to continue to exist beyond life in a mysterious way. The haunting *Ubik* became for Philip K. Dick a symbol of the struggle to stay. So, on one occasion he fell madly in love with a girl: “He told her that he loved her, that he wanted to marry her and live with her. If she did not accept him, he would die, the world around him would collapse, as in *Ubik* (being surrounded by admirers, he had become used to quoting his works as if everyone knew them). Indeed, she was to him like the benefit Ubik: the way, the truth and the life. Did he want to live or die? Or more generally, was he in favor of life or death? (Carrère, 2002, p. 129).

3 .The Search for the Fifth Savior in VALIS

As we have said, in 1974 Philip K. Dick had a mystic experience that confirmed that the common reality was an illusion that covered the true reality. In VALIS, Philip K. Dick and Horselover Fat appear as characters. Horselover Fat has the same revelation as the writer Philip K. Dick:

Since February 1974, that almighty divine entity had contacted him directly and he had given it a secret name: Valis. This acronym for Vast Active Living Intelligence System had, according to Phil, the advantage of being purely descriptive and exempt from sentimental deism: a computer program name. A few years earlier he had given it the name of Ubik: what is everywhere, what is ubiquitous. And, more or less consciously, when writing the slogans that made the epigraph in each chapter of his bard-novel, he had made it clear that he called that what Saint John, in the prologue of his Gospel, calls the *Logos*, that is, the Word (Carrère, 2002, p. 152).

VALIS is a valuable testimony about the fictional universe and the existential reflection of Philip K. Dick. In the dialogue Horselover Fat and the character Philip K. Dick delve into the search for world salvation and the belief in transcendence. “In VALIS Dick presents, in two characters, two versions of himself, one a believer in an odd personalized Christianity, one a skeptic about everything—though he never rejects the possibility of truth in any system of belief.” (Barlow, 2005, p. 7). The plot is very simple. Following the news of Gloria’s death, Horselover Fat falls into a depression that drives him mad. At the beginning of the book, the character Philip K. Dick declares “I am Horselover Fat and I am writing this in third person in order to achieve a much-needed objectivity” (p. 14). Writer Philip K. Dick splits into two personalities: Horselover Fat and Philip K. Dick character, who discuss the search for true reality through faith. We are going to try to summarize in this brief work the journey that Horselover/Philip follows, but, given its complexity and the contradictory nature with which it is related, our study will necessarily be partial and debatable. In his terrible pain, Horselover seeks a faith to lean on, but, seeing the suffering of the world and the absurdity of human life, he thinks that God cannot be omnipotent or must be irrational (p. 34). Free will does not satisfy him in response to pain (p. 36). Horselover swings between two radically different options, according to the play on words (p. 41):

GOD IS NO WHERE
GOD IS NOW HERE

Horselover works in an exegesis (as the author Philip K. Dick also wrote one) to explain reality. According to it, the true reality is captured by the Mind, which is immortal and is not governed by space or time. Reality is made up of two principles: the dark one (the Empire), which projects holograms so that humanity does not know the true reality; and the luminous one (the plasmate), who tries to discover the true reality (*koinos kosmos*) (p. 169). The plasmate is living information, where the universe remains. The plasmate can cross with a human being to create a homoplasmate, where the mortal human and the plasmate come together, as Christ first did. Homoplasmates testify to the truth of the plasmate, but they are chased and killed so that they do not reveal to humanity the true reality. In VALIS, it is said that there have been four saviors, who perished (Apollo, Asclepius, Elijah and Christ). The early Christians tried to show the plasmate, but they were killed in the year 70 after Christ and enigmatic characters called the Empire imposed a hologram (the Black Iron Prison) that deceived humanity until Horselover discovered the deception in 1974. “The symbolism of the Black Iron Prison is both ancient and modern, recalling on the one hand the Iron Age and the advanced military technology of Rome, and on the other the machines and metallurgy of modern industrialization. In terms of modernity, in its capacity for imprisoning people while remaining invisible to them, it resembles Marx’s alienation and commodity fetishism, and Foucault’s panoptic society” (Burton, 2008, p. 265).

At the beginning of the text, the narrator says that God is gracious because he keeps him in ignorance of the future (p. 13). However, the human being is destined to seek the Savior and thus achieve authentic enlightenment. One of the problems is that the various rescuers do not fully achieve their goal: “the gods somehow fail. Saviors appear to return to worlds feeling the full brunt of entropy. They return to worlds falling apart or, at least, worlds retreating from the limits of entropy into another chaos, stasis” (Barlow, 2005, p. 187). Horselover finds that the various religions, although they take different forms, try to bring the human being closer to knowledge: “Dick’s own beliefs were moving in that direction, that God appears differently to each” (Barlow, 2005, p. 193). Although at first the character Philip K. Dick and his other friends are skeptical that Horselover’s mystical experience is real, one day one of them watches a movie that tells the same thing and they all begin to believe that it is possible (P. 181). They meet with the people who have made the film and they tell them that the Fifth Savior is among them, she is a girl of great wisdom. Everyone is excited at the prospect of the world finally being saved from the blindness and pain they are immersed in, but this will fail again. And, despite everything, Horselover Fat does not give up because he does not lose hope to discover the Savior. “The crucial point that I want to derive from the comparison of Paul and Dick below is that this unity exists only to the extent that it is believed in: grasping the power of fabulation lies in the realization that by believing otherwise one may render the world, and oneself, otherwise” (Burton, 2008, p. 270). He keeps fighting to destroy the hologram and really see reality. “Thus in addition to the temporality of the Black Iron Prison and the Palm Tree Garden¹ respectively, there is ‘our time’, the time of the now (*ho nyn kairos*) in which Empire and its illusory temporality are beginning to end” (Burton, 2008, p. 274). Humanity is destined to an endless search to recover the world of ideas, where it is immortal “as a single Immortal Man” (p. 300).

4. Conclusions

Philip K. Dick's studied works reflect a vital and literary search for truth beyond appearances. Human beings have many difficulties in perceiving reality (*koinos kosmos*), both because they form a particular image of it (*idios kosmos*) and because there may be political interests that want to hide it. This search has a transcendent value, to reflect about the essence of humanity, about what lies after life, or about the creator of the universe, and it has no end because the truth of the human being is changing. Although *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, *Ubik* and *VALIS* have very different plots and are written with different techniques, all of them have this search for *koinos kosmos* in common. These texts show characters that aren't sure at all about what they experience because of their lack of empathy, the difficulty to differentiate reality from half-life and the difficulty to differentiate schizophrenia from illumination, respectively. To sum up, these texts explore about the reality beyond appearance and all of them are representative of the biographical facts and readings that were condensed in his mystical or hallucinatory experience in 1974. As we have mentioned, Philip K. Dick connected current science-fiction with a long tradition about a phenomenological world superimposed on a hidden one and made this idea part of his own way of understanding reality.

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Endnotes

¹ Real world or *koinos kosmos*