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CAN A SCANNER SEE THE SOUL? PHILIP K. DICK AGAINST THE SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY

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INTRODUCTION

In the post-9/11 climate, the claim that we live in a surveillance society has become a commonplace. However, surveillance, like any other form of governmentality, does not proceed in a linear way, but ebbs and flows, and when particular events, socio-technical developments and a generalized climate of fear come together it can produce periods of 'surveillance surge' (Murakami Wood, 2009).The post-9/11 period is such a time, but it is far from the first. This paper aims to examine a previous period of surveillance surge in the late 1960s, by considering the science fiction work of Philip K. Dick, and in particular his bleakest tour-de-force, *A Scanner Darkly*.

A Scanner Darkly is generally thought of as being Dick's anti-drugs book, which it is (see Youngquist, 2000), but it is also one of his most interesting, amongst many others, on the subject of surveillance—indeed the importance of this theme is reflected in the title. It is the story of an undercover police operative known as 'Fred' who as 'Bob Arctor' is tasked with infiltrating a group of hippies in a near-future / alternate late 1960s / early 1970s Los Angeles, in order to find the source of a mysterious and dangerous psychotic drug, known as 'Substance D' (for 'death'). In his 'Fred' incarnation he has at all times to wear a 'scramble suit', which in order to defeat any attempt at identification makes him appear as a blur of constantly changing images of people.

As his identity is unknown even to other officers, he has also to report on himself as Bob Arctor, and eventually perhaps because he is playing the part too well buying more and more Substance D and taking more of it himself, is asked to make Arctor the focus of his investigation, wiring up his house with visual scanners and audio recording devices to monitor everything that happens there. The intense self-monitoring combined with addiction to Substance D flips Fred / Bob into a state of schizoid psychosis, unable any longer to appreciate that he is both of these people. Apparently worried by his erratic behavior, the police take him off the job. Under yet another name, 'Bruce', Fred / Bob is taken to a bizarre, cult-like rehabilitation organization, 'New Path'. Here the truth of his manipulation begins to unravel, though the book ends without any firm conclusion.

The paper will be divided into three parts: the first briefly considers the surveillance within the genre of science fiction writing; the second provides a surveillance studies reading of *A Scanner Darkly*; and the third places Dick's work within both a spatial and a historical context. It is argued that Dick's work not only reflects darkly a reality of the US state of the time, but also presages the kinds of changes to the Southern Californian landscape that would lead to the identification of a new neo-liberal type of (sub)urbanism of private gated communities and public space video surveillance. I conclude by asserting that Dick provides a much more radical critique and opposition to the surveillance society than the limited contemporary concern with privacy.

SCIENCE FICTION AND SURVEILLANCE [1]

Science Fiction can be defined as a creative response to the multiple possibilities offered by scientific discovery and technological development since the Industrial Revolution. Despite the various attempts to locate precursors of SF, contemporary SF is more specifically a product of the acceleration of socio-technical change in the Twentieth Century and indeed J.G. Ballard famously argued that Science Fiction is 'the strongest literary tradition of the twentieth century, and may well be its authentic literature' (Ballard, 1996: 193). SF has not gone unnoticed by researchers into surveillance. Despite the predominance of obvious examples like George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, source of the ubiquitous 'Big Brother' metaphor and a concentration on (popular) film, there have been some attempts to integrate SF fiction starting with Gary Marx's 1996 paper *Electronic Eye in the Sky*. Gary Marx has gone further than most by not simply analysing but also producing some quite amusing and interesting hybrid analysis-fiction, particularly in his 'Tom Voyeur' pieces (Marx, 2003), and Mike Nellis (2003; 2005) has begun a more extensive and systematic series of surveys.

Whilst there are a multitude of short stories and novels that have surveillance aspects or contain passing references to surveillance technologies and practices, or deal with areas that touch on surveillance, for example espionage, crime and policing, oppressive societies, identity and psi-powers to name but a few, there were until recently relatively few American works dealing directly with the topic. None of the 'holy trinity' of surveillance dystopias—George Orwell's *1984*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and Yevgeny Zamiatin's *We* (to which one might add Kafka's *The Trial*)—are from an American SF tradition, however their influence on US popular surveillance discourse is undoubted (see: Marks, 2005). Surveillance was a concern of a major group of progressive US genre sf authors based in New York, the Futurians: in particular, Isaac Asimov, Poul Anderson and Damon Knight. In his 1956 short story, 'The Dead Past', Asimov portrays naïve university researchers acting for academic freedom against perceived stifling state control unwittingly unleashing a device, the 'chronoscope', on the world that will end personal privacy. Knight later responded with 'I See You' (1976), in which the ubiquity of surveillance leads not to social ruin, but to a safe, enlightened and trans-

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[1] 'sf' (in lower case letters) is the generally accepted critical abbreviation for the genre amongst genre literary critics, with 'SF' (upper case) used particularly by non-genre critics and academics. 'Sci-Fi' is generally considered to be a mildly derogatory term. I use 'SF' simply because it is easier to see on the page.

DAVID MURAKAMI WOOD

parent society in which privacy is thankfully forgotten. Anderson's, 'The Tunnel Under the World' (1955), tackles corporate rather than state control. In this highly effective satire, the characters are revealed as being tiny parts of a marketing experiment, whose every movement and reaction is recorded by corporations. Around the same time, Philip K. Dick too was already dealing with themes of surveillance and control. For example, in one of the best of his 'pulp' period novels, *Eye in the Sky* (1957), eight characters who are caught in a bizarre accident at a nuclear establishment are trapped in worlds in which each in turn gains total omniscience and whose rules reflect their own morality and capricious and arbitrary fears, worlds of the id.

Eye in the Sky and 'The Tunnel Under the World' can be seen as a precursor of the way that the 1960s 'New Wave' of SF literature that flourished mainly in the UK, but to a lesser extent though not with a lesser intensity in the USA, from the early 1960s into the 1970s. The New Wave intensified this interest in advertising, mass media synopticism and/or computer-facilitated state control. Key American examples include Norman Spinrad's *Bug Jack Barron*, a powerful satire of television; and Alfred Bester's psychedelic screwball comedy, *The Computer Connection*, which features a monstrous computer-human hybrid, whose omnipresence through modern telematics infrastructures creates a global web of surveillance.

Although Philip K. Dick is often considered part of the New Wave, he was more an influence and a fellow traveller rather than an actual member. However the commonalities are strong. One major weakness of social science consideration of SF has been its focus either on 'classic' mainstream SF, or on 'cyberpunk' (and after) and its neglect of almost everything else in the genre. Following analysts like Jameson (1991) it has become almost received wisdom that cyberpunk is exceptional because of its understanding of late capitalism and postmodernity. In the Encyclopedia of Science Fiction (ESF), Peter Nicholls makes it very clear that New Wave writers have far more in common with what is generally recognized as postmodernist within literary criticism (Nicholls, 1999). If one is to accept Brian McHale's view that postmodernist fiction is fundamentally about the move from epistemology to ontology, from knowing to being (McHale, 1987), then the New Wave writers were the vanguard of postmodern writing in SF.

The New Wave however was also genuinely bleak and often profoundly ironic in a way that cyberpunk generally was not. New Wave SF literature anticipates many of the themes later credited to cyberpunk and does so with far more overt and cynical politics. Arguably this reaches its apogee in British writer, John Brunner's *The Sheep Look Up* (1974) in which the lightest moment, as memorably described by SF critic David Langford, is provided by the English protagonists' realization that they can smell America burning! However several novels condemn the human race to a miserable and pathetic end, for example, Thomas M. Disch's *The Genocides* (1965) in which the last remaining humans (as well as all other large animal life) are exterminated as pests by aliens for whom the Earth has become simply a monocultural plantation. Dick shares this thoroughly bitter view of the world, indeed most of his books are concerned with (self) deception.

It seems more plausible that actually what cyberpunk represented was a synthesis, a recombination of postmodern SF writing and its concern with 'inner space' (Ballard, 1962) with the continuing legacy of modernist SF with its focus on technological progress. However here again, Dick was there first. His novels are pulp (sub)urban meta-

physics. They blend the outer—technology, surveillance, and spatial transformation—with the inner—identity, absurdity and delusion. They are also both highly spatially and temporally located, as I shall show, and yet anachronistic. It is no accident that Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* was so readily able to be transformed into the original cinematic expression of cyberpunk, Ridley Scott's *Bladerunner*, or indeed that Richard Linklater's film version of *A Scanner Darkly* needed only minor changes to be an exemplary post-9/11 cultural artifact.

SURVEILLANCE AND PARANOIA IN THE 1960S AND 1970S

But Dick was both of and apart from the New Wave. His early pulp works predated this movement and he remained largely separate from it as he also was connected to but apart from the Beats. He was a creature of the 1950s rather than the 1960s however his themes were perhaps archetypical of the New Wave: drugs, reality, and increasingly unusual forms of apocalypse and technological apotheosis. The 1950s and 1960s saw growing surveillance by the US government of more of the world and greater numbers of its own people. The premise was laid out in a secret memorandum, National Security Council 68, written in April 1950. The Soviet Union was the 'slave state', a global threat, and this necessitated dominance of a 'Grand Area' worldwide by the American state to prevent the spread of communism (Chomsky, 1992). Within the USA, an ideologically homogenous internal political structure would support this project.[2] Dick grew as a writer in an increasingly paranoid society of the 1950s when McCarthyism meant that a writer with progressive social attitudes was regarded as automatically suspect (Garber and Walkowitz, 1995). The 1960s merely extended this. For the US ruling class, the 'threats' of communism, civil rights and black radical activism and anti-Vietnam protests, as well as the more diffuse threats to moral order of the 'sexual revolution' and feminism mean a kind of moral panic, and the gradually growing sense of the end of the post-war economic boom and Fordist capitalism. California, and Los Angeles were at the centre of this panic, especially after the Watts Riots (see Loo and Grimes 2004), which led to fears of an uprising of the excluded. This generated three main responses by the authorities, all of which we see reflected and extended in *A Scanner Darkly*.

PADDING THE BUNKER

The first was new defensive architecture and urban design with the idea that crime was something that could be 'designed out' whether positively or repressively (c.f.: Newman 1972). The geography of Dick's worlds are often absurd and, as with his technological vision, anachronistic. Dick's worlds are not our own, but imaginary parallels containing both recognizable and bizarre elements, and which often lack internal consistency, shifting and changing within stories or behaving differently for particular characters. It is for this reason that I argue that Dick's work is predominantly metaphysical. However, at the

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[2] This, of course, does not suggest that such a project was in fact possible, nor that the surveillance state in the USA was internally particularly intrusive or controlling by global standards of the time. The pervasive culture of detailed personal files, informers and denouncement in the Soviet Union and satellite states, particularly the former German Democratic Republic were perhaps the nadir of state surveillance.

DAVID MURAKAMI WOOD

same time some, Dick has a distinctive spatial vision which involves a particular landscape and spatial characteristics. Despite the towering cityscapes of the film versions of his work in *Blade Runner*, *Total Recall* and *Minority Report*, the worlds in Dick's original novels and stories are more frequently suburban. At least some of the nightmarish quality derives from the endless, hyper-real bright suburbs that began to sprawl around Los Angeles and other US cities, dominated by large bungalows or split-level houses in lawned lots, massive shopping malls and acres of car parking. It is a landscape of anomie and ennui, and the declining utopian dreams of the 1950s golden age of consumerism, of humanity at its most alienated from itself and from its environment.

However *A Scanner Darkly* also exists in what Lianos and Douglas (2000) call a thoroughly 'dangerized' world, where categories of dangerous persons and places are reinforced by Automated Socio-Technical Environments (ASTEs). The fears that spark surveillance are the fears of escape and deviancy from this consumer utopia—the 'bad' consumption of drugs, petty theft and the minor threat of long hair and dirty clothes. The surveilled are those who do not or cannot buy into this utopia, but instead like George, near the start of the novel, wonder at the up-market malls with their clean white pharmacies full of legal drugs and the gated apartment complexes, but into which he cannot enter, lacking the necessary smart identification, and afraid of surveillance by "uniformed armed guards at the mall gate checking out each person. Seeing that the man or woman matched his or her credit card and that it hadn't been ripped off, sold, bought, used fraudulently", or "ready to open fire on any and every doper who scales the walls" (6).[3]

Dick here anticipates the analysis of Los Angeles in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly by Mike Davis in *City of Quartz* (1990), but also Ed Soja, Mike Dear, Steve Flusty and others in the 'LA school' of Geography. Los Angeles in many ways was seen as exemplary because of its contradictions: a massive modern metropolis faced with the permanent threat of a devastating earthquake that could wipe it out completely; a city of the global north, with a massive immigrant population from the global south; a playground for neoliberal capitalism with massive inequalities. Davis identified the key middle class activity in this frontier example of neoliberal urbanism as 'padding the bunker' (Davis, 1998: 364), a paranoid securitizing reflex, characterized by the privatization of public urban space through commercial management, public space video surveillance (CCTV), private security and gated communities. Driven by a bourgeois moral panic (see Cohen, 1972), this generalized sense of insecurity expressed itself in things that were felt to be controllable (personal safety) even though the fundamental causes were psychic insecurities generated by the real threat of total devastation. Macro-insecurity expresses itself in obsessive and personalized micro-security.

POETIC TECHNOLOGIES OF EXPOSURE AND CONCEALMENT

The second response of the US authorities was the intensification of the technological underpinnings of surveillance, to create new 'dataveillance' systems (Clarke, 1988). This is the basis of the contemporary 'control society' (Deleuze 1990) with the database as its exemplary mechanism. The first attempt to create a new US central state data-

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[3] For further consideration of the spatiality of *A Scanner Darkly*, see Bertrand (n.d.).

base of personal information was made in the 1960s by President Lyndon B. Johnson, and this was followed again in the 1970s by President Gerald Ford (Solove et al, 2006). The potential of the database saw critiques from academics like Arthur Miller (1971), and James Rule (1973).

A distinction can be drawn between SF works like 'The Dead Past', which are based around an entirely imaginary, even poetic, technology; and 'harder' SF works, which feature technologies that are plausible developmental possibilities. Dick's technologies, like his worlds more generally, are an unorthodox and anachronistic mixture of old, new, and yet-to-come; existing, possible and imagined. For example his identity-concealing scramble-suits are entirely imaginary, yet his scanner and audio recorders are no more advanced than anything that could have existed at the time he wrote *A Scanner Darkly* in the early 1970s, with the exception of the holographic playback device. The scramble suit serves as poetic as well as narrative device: while it is a counter-surveillance technology designed to conceal, and to defeat surveillance—scrambling others' view of Fred / Bob Arctor—at the same time he is himself undergoing a breakdown of his own sense of identity and personhood. Similarly the scanners are a central source of metaphysical speculation for Fred / Bob, a theme to which I shall return below.

A Scanner Darkly outlines a highly complex relationship between the notion of humanity and the technological or the non-human, the living and the dead. Dick is constantly testing the boundaries of the human and non-human, revealing the micro-technopolitical interplay, the limitations of each. This is not in the manner of the 'cyborg' concept so beloved of extropians and cultural studies academics alike and that offers some hope of transcendence, rather it is a kind of dehumanization. Technologies in Dicks' novels do not extend humanity in the way that Dick's contemporary, Marshal Mcluhan, argued, rather they limit, confuse and even replace them. This complex relationship is at its most extreme and revealing when after his breakdown, Fred / Bob (now known as Bruce) takes part in some group therapy at the New Path treatment centre. 'The game' as the therapy is known, consists largely of abuse by staff and other patients:

'Bruce,' Mike said, 'what's the matter? What brought you here? What do you want tell us? Can you tell us anything about yourself at all?'
'Pimp!' George screamed, bouncing up and down like a rubber ball. 'What were you, pimp?'
The Chinese girl leaped up, shrieking, 'Tell us, you cocksucking fairy whore pimp, you ass-kisser, you fuck!'
He said, 'I am an eye.' (200)

This is the organ without a body rather than the body without organs. Fred / Bob / Bruce has become by this stage in his view, not exactly a machine, not exactly a human, but only the mechanical watching components of a human being. He has been both reduced to a function—watching, but no longer possesses the ability to determine what this watching means or what purpose it serves. As Fred / Bob remarks earlier when considering the surveillance of his home, 'Whatever it is that's watching, it is not a human. Not by my standards, anyhow. Not what I'd recognize.' (145). As well as machines taking the place of humans, in *A Scanner Darkly* humans become machines. Fred/Bob/Bruce is still part of what Haggerty and Ericson (2000) adapting Deleuze and Guattari, called the 'surveillant assemblage', a shifting set of components which are

DAVID MURAKAMI WOOD

aligned towards a particular surveillant end. However, as a commentary by an agent, Mike, who has been charged with taking Bruce to the 'farm' an outdoor section of New Path, reflects:

The living, he thought, should never be used to serve the purposes of the dead. But the dead—he glanced at Bruce, the empty shape beside him—should if possible, serve the purposes of the living. That, he reasoned, is the law of life.
And the dead, if they could feel, might feel better doing so.
The dead, Mike thought, who can still see, even if they can't understand: they are our camera. (210)

Mike clearly accentuates the understanding that Fred / Bob / Bruce no longer counts as a living human. He is a dead person, a thing, but still an operational one: he has become a mechanism, as he himself acutely realized. As such his purpose is to observe, to become a component in the surveillant assemblage.

At a simple level, the equation of camera with eye is commonplace in public and academic discourse of surveillance, and there are many examples. For Dick however, the visual is metaphysical: the concept of seeing raises fundamental questions of the nature of human existence. In one long section containing the quotation with which I prefaced this paper, Fred / Bob is reflecting on whether the scanners that have been installed in his house will enable him to understand his increasingly disordered and disassociative life.

What does a scanner see? he asked himself. I mean, really see? Into the head? Down into the heart? Does a passive infrared scanner like they used to use or a cube-type holo-scanner like they use these days, the latest thing, see into me—into us—clearly or darkly? I hope it does, he thought, see clearly, because I can't any longer these days see into myself. I see only murk. Murk outside, murk inside. I hope, for everyone's sake the scanners do better. Because, he thought, if the scanner sees only darkly, the way I myself do, then we are cursed, cursed again and like we have been continually, and we'll wind up dead this way, knowing very little and getting that little fragment wrong too. (146)

Can the scanners 'do better', will they enable Fred / Bob to see clearly and make sense of a world that seems to his eyes increasingly devoid of sense and purpose?

This purpose is vital. Dick's works can be seen as a series of constantly rewritten attempts to approach an understanding of the nature of reality. Obsessed with St Paul, Dick however tended towards the opponents of Pauline Christianity, the Gnostics. The title of *A Scanner Darkly* is derived from St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (13, 12), usually quoted for its references to faith, hope and charity (or love) in which Paul argues that human perceptions cannot hope to know the self as God can know it: "for now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.' In the Gnostic view, our entire existence and appearance is a form of deception: our true selves are in fact a worm-like being created by the Rex Mundi (the false god), and only veneered with consciousness and beauty by a briefly sympathetic but usually distant true deity. Thus God is neither omnipresent nor all-seeing but in fact uncaring—a fact that in Dick's Gnosticism accounts for the surreal pain of his worlds. It is the lack of caring divine surveillance (see: Smidt-Burkhardt 2001) that makes human life absurd and demeaning. This use of surveillance technologies for caring social interaction is something emphasized by David Lyon in arguing

that Foucault's panopticism is altogether too cynical and too pessimistic (Lyon, 1994). Many surveillance technologies have a positive purpose whether in public safety, in providing for medical and social security needs, or indeed, increasingly, for sociability or pleasure (McGrath, 2004).

Any subversion of the panoptic impulse of what Dick refers to as 'the authorities' is tempered by a dose or two of political economic reality in the form of a message from his superiors that Fred / Bob is not in a position in the hierarchy to understand the complete situation:

'What we think isn't of any importance in your work,' Hank said. 'We evaluate; you report with your own limited conclusions. This is not a put-down of you, but we have information, lots of it, not available to you. The broad picture. The computerized picture.' (83)

The purpose of surveillance is to assert some kind of control, however in order to do this one has to establish the categories within which one is working: identity has to be certain; and behaviors, actual or potential, have to be defined. The establishment of categories and identity is therefore crucial to all surveillance practices and technologies, as for the surveilled, is the performance of those identities.

The issue of identity, behavior and performance under surveillance is central in *A Scanner Darkly*. Even Bob Arctor's name reflects being undercover, his pretence, his 'posing as a nark', as he confusedly puts it. This aspect of his identity becomes clearer to him when the scanners are installed in his home, and he realizes he is going to have to somehow creatively edit the scans of himself without revealing his identity as a Special Agent, 'In the script being filmed, he would at all times have to be the star actor. Actor, Arctor, he thought. Bob the Actor who is hunted; he who is El Primo huntee.' (105).

One of the most strange and powerful passages in the novel is one in which Fred / Bob speculates at length about what surveillance might reveal about the secret lives of ordinary people he knows:

A nightmare, a weird other world beyond the mirror, a terror city reverse thing, with unrecognisable entities creeping about; Donna crawling on all fours, eating from the animals' dishes… any kind of psychedelic wild trip, unfathomable and horrid.

Hell, he thought; for that matter, maybe Bob Arctor rises up from deep sleep and does trips like that. Has sexual relations with the wall. Or mysterious freaks show up who he's never seen before, a whole bunch of them, with special heads that swivel all the way around, like owls'. (103/104).

Surveillance then for Bob / Fred is not about establishing trust but about just how far he is unable to trust anyone, himself included. The fantastic imaginings of Fred / Bob are about as far away from the concept of surveillance as banality or the trivialization of reality TV. However what the surveillance does reveal is indeed banal although terrible enough: his suspect flatmate, Barris, is not a spy but a sociopath who is quite prepared to let their mutual friend, Luckman, suffer or even die instead of saving him from choking. Nevertheless, Fred considers that Barris might be aware of the scanners and is simply performing for them, 'He's building up his act, Fred realized. He's getting his panic-and-discovery act together. Like he just came onto the scene' (111). Bob Arctor, not surprisingly for the reader, appears to be trying to hide something. Fred

DAVID MURAKAMI WOOD

by this stage is becoming increasingly disassociated from his undercover alter-ego, and is confused by the drifting behavior of Arctor, 'What is Arctor doing? Fred wondered, and noted the ident code for these sections. He's becoming more and more strange. I can see now what the informant who phoned in about him meant' (151). Of course, what he is doing is wandering the front room reflecting on the experience of being surveilled and performing for the scanners:

> Immediately, he felt something watching: the holo-scanners on him. As soon as he crossed his own threshold. Alone—no one but him in the house. Untrue. Him and his scanners, insidious and invisible, that watched him and recorded. Everything he did. Everything he uttered.
>   Like the scrawls on the wall when you're in a public urinal, he thought. SMILE! YOU'RE ON CANDID CAMERA! I am, he thought, as soon as I enter this house. It's eerie. He did not like it. He felt self-conscious. (145)

This sense of profound unease under the gaze, and the complex relationship between voyeurism and surveillance has been examined in several recent sociological works on surveillance, particularly Gary Marx's 'Tom Voyeur' pieces (2003). It also reminds us that the connection between surveillance, performance and entertainment (McGrath, 2004) is also nothing new.

TARGETING SURVEILLANCE

The third major response of the US state to the perceived threats of internal subversion was exactly the kind of targeted, informer-centered surveillance of *A Scanner Darkly*. Whilst the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) were already well-known, new and more shadowy organizations and operations were created. These included what became the largest and most well-funded US intelligence organization, the National Security Agency (NSA), founded in 1952, the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) in 1961 (Richelson, 2007), and the multi-agency (but FBI-led) COINTELPRO operations against internal political opponents throughout the 1960s and beyond (Davis, 1992; Churchill and VanderWall, 2002).

In *A Scanner Darkly*, Fred / Bob when calling his dealer and paramour, Donna, reflects on the fact that, as a Special Agent, he knows the telephone is monitored, but that he is also aware of the incompleteness, of the shortcomings of this monitoring:

> Every payphone in the world was tapped. Or if it wasn't, some crew somewhere just hadn't gotten around to it. The taps fed electronically onto storage reels at a central point, and about once every second day a print-out was obtained by an officer who listened to many phones without having to leave his office. He merely rang up the storage drums and, on signal, they played back, skipping all dead tape. Most calls were harmless. The officer could identify ones that weren't fairly readily. That was his skill. Some officers were better at it than others.
>   As he and Donna talked, therefore, no-one was listening. The playback would come maybe the next day at the earliest. If they discussed anything strikingly illegal, and the monitoring officer caught it, then voiceprints would be made. (24)

By the time that Dick was writing *A Scanner Darkly*, there had been a gradual drip-feed of information about these secret organizations. Information about the NSA began to emerge almost immediately after its creation. Particularly embarrassing was a spy

scandal in 1960, when two of its employees William Martin and Bernon Mitchell, defected to the Soviet Union and appeared on TV from Moscow to denounce their former employer. However it was not until the 1970s that the extent of the US secret state became more widely known among researchers, journalists and activists. A series of articles in the *New York Times* in 1971 threatened to reveal, amongst other revelations in 'the Washington Papers' about the Vietnam conflict, the ability of the NSA to listen in on the scrambled telephone conversations of Soviet officials. The US government took various forms of legal and intimidatory action and managed to prevent publication of the offending aspects (Bamford, 1983). This was followed by an article in the radical magazine, *Ramparts*, in August 1972, which purported to be the revelations of one 'Winslow Peck,'[4] and supported by another anonymous ex-NSA whistle-blower in an interview with the Australian magazine, the *Nation Review,* the next year. (*Nation Review*, 1973).

By 1975, when *A Scanner Darkly* was being rewritten by Dick, the concern caused by the various reports was such that it led to a number of official investigations, over a period termed the 'Season of Inquiry' by American intelligence researcher Loch Johnson (1988). The Pike Committee in the House of Representatives led to CIA Director, William Colby, accidentally making reference to international telephone tapping operations, the first such public revelation. The most important was perhaps the *Select Committee To Study Governmental Operations With Respect To Intelligence Activities*, convened by the United States Senate and known after its Chairman, Senator Frank Church of Idaho, as the Church Committee. The Committee investigated abuses by the various American intelligence services, particularly the establishment of 'Watch Lists' of individuals who were thought to be a threat to national security, including anti-Vietnam War and civil rights activists. The NSA had established such lists at the request of the FBI and other internal agencies, from 1969, in an operation known as "Sensitive SIGINT Operation Project MINARET":

established for the purpose of providing more restrictive control and security of sensitive information derived from communications as processed [blank-------------] which contain (a) information on foreign governments, organizations or individuals who are attempting to influence, coordinate or control U.S. organizations or individuals who may foment civil disturbances or otherwise undermine the national security of the U.S. (b) information on U.S. organizations or individuals who are engaged in activities which may result in civil disturbances or otherwise subvert the national security of the U.S. (US Senate, 1976: 149/150)

The people on the Watch Lists covered a wide range of dissenters including Dr Benjamin Spock, parenting expert and prominent spokesperson against US involvement in Vietnam, actress Jane Fonda, known to right-wing politicians and media as 'Hanoi Jane', and many others. It was a combination of factors that had inspired the original motion to the Senate: articles like the *Ramparts* piece; complaints by people who had experienced intelligence service harassment: and finally the existence of NSA/FBI

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[4] Despite the identification of Peck with a Washington lobbyist with the equally colourful real name of Perry Fellwock, there has been doubt cast on the authenticity of his testimony (Forwarded message to *Cryptome* from 'Gomez', available on-line at: http://jya.com/nsa-debunk.htm).

DAVID MURAKAMI WOOD

Watch Lists coming to the attention of the Attorney General, who was worried about the potential conflict with the US Constitution of mass telephone tapping.

Loch Johnson, in his study of the CIA, mentions that FBI watch lists in the early 1970s were compiled on a sweeping basis, for example all black student union members regardless of their involvement in actual activity or protest, and more generally, any student activist. This is sometimes attributed to a particular climate of lawlessness typified by Tom Charles Huston, a White House Official in the Nixon administration, who wrote of a report for the President advocating the removal of legal restraints on the intelligence services. However, with or without his knowledge, most of the activities he advocated were already going on. The Huston Plan, and the other actions revealed by the Church Committee were not so much isolated incidents of 'abuse', rather they were a rare glimpse into the workings of the core of the secret state. As Johnson (1989, 149) argues in remarkably Dickian terms, the Church Committee and related investigations revealed that "the nation's chief executive may as well have been a mannikin in a storefront display… the President was irrelevant".

The whole notion of an informer society had an important intersection with Dick's personal life. Around the time that he was preparing and writing *A Scanner Darkly*, he was involved in curious series of exchanges with both other SF authors and editors and the FBI over the possibility that he was being conspired against (Philmus 1991; see also Sutin, 1991). The usual interpretations of this is that he was experiencing drug-induced or another form of paranoia. However the possibility that Dick was actually playing a role, experimenting at the edges of America's surveillant assemblage in order to derive material for *ASD* has not, so far as I know, been considered. This view is perhaps supported by the fact that *ASD* contains passages that can be seen as apologies to those involved (he never apologized in real life).

CONCLUSION

Dick's vision in *A Scanner Darkly* remains remarkable for four main reasons. Firstly, he provides not only a perceptive commentary on the contemporary politics and practice of surveillance in the USA, but also anticipates many of the key themes of surveillance studies. As Mark Poster (1989) argued, digital surveillance results in the creation of data subjects in databases. Deleuze (1990) termed these 'dividuals' — divided individals. They are not simple replicas, but new and selves which may be acted upon (or increasingly, act) without the knowledge of the original. Lyon (2001) has argued convincingly that data subjects are now often more important in terms of social identity and life-chances than bodily selves (Lyon, 2001; c.f.: Graham and Wood, 2003). In his consideration of the multiple roles and the breakdown of personality experienced by Fred / Bob / Bruce, Dick provides us with a dramatized version of this new situation of subjects as multiple material and virtual bodies under surveillance.

Secondly, and related to this, Dick makes it clear that there is no clear dividing line between a clear-eyed and objective understanding of surveillance, and paranoia. As Harper (2008) has pointed out, surveillance and paranoia are intimately linked in psychological terms as well as in popular culture. It is very easy when studying surveillance to lose solid ground and step into the more unstable territory of paranoid

speculation; however at the same time, the accusation of paranoia can also be an easy way to dismiss what TS Elliot, in *The Four Quartets*, called "too much reality". Thirdly, in his consideration of the space of surveillance, Dick could also be argued to have anticipated the fortified, surveillant landscapes that have come to typify the neo-liberal urbanism identified by Mike Davis. To bowdlerize the title of a recent collection on this theme by Davis (Davis and Monk, 2007), Dick recognized the quotidian 'evil' of these supposed paradises, the hyper-consumer heterotopia, a long time before many more mainstream commentators.

Dick's politics connects all of these together. The conventional politics of surveillance is rooted in concepts of the integrity of the person and privacy: this conventional view, reflected in stories like Azimov's 'The Dead Past' is that surveillance equals intrusion and that boundaries must be set, either technological and/or political to prevent personal privacy from being eroded too much. However, Dick's politics, bound up as they are in his mystical search, seem to regard surveillance much more strongly as both inevitable and destructive of attempts to create integrated, whole personalities, cohesive communities or caring technologies. In this, he goes far beyond simply an argument for surveillance with privacy, to stand against the surveillance society entirely.

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DAVID MURAKAMI WOOD

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DAVID MURAKAMI WOOD