

Analyse imposter and
show how it is typical
of dick's work essay



**ASSIGN
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Phillip K Dick was the author of over one hundred short stories in his lifetime focusing primarily on questions surrounding personal identity. His stories often featured references to an authoritarian government and are delivered with a definitive feeling of paranoia. ¹ As a short story writer his work was true to the style, making use of time lapses and dead time and captures the glimpse of time that John Davies refers to: ‘ A short-story captures a moment in time. It can by its size be only a glimpse. A short story offers a past and a future that aren’t there. ‘

Dick was succinct in his writing technique. His descriptions are precise and avoid over complications. Being true to the genre of science fiction, he wrote in a methodical scientific manner with the use of complex sentences such as ‘ Peters was in a hurry; below him, rumbling under the floor, the jets were wide open’. The glimpse of the story offers the reader enough to follow the story, yet leaves much to assumptions, often which are incorrect and this misinterpretation is what Dick plays upon in the ‘ Imposter’.

He also uses this to create the thrilling twists found in the short stories. The last scene is set in the forest and creates a suitable climax to the story through a number of techniques. The use of simple and implied sentences is evident throughout and creates tension and suspicion. “ Only a matter of time. ” The use of this short implied sentence lets the reader make assumptions: that it is referring to the capture of Olham. In hindsight, it is relating to the detonation of the bomb.

This misinterpretation is important in leading the reader down the wrong chain of thought, thus making the ending more satisfying and shocking while

creating an enigma: Olham walked quietly through the wood. Mile by mile, each part of the county was being measured off, laid bare, searched, studied, examined. ‘ The sentences shown are laid out methodically and scientifically; this can be seen in a number of Dick’s work. 3 There is a great belief in science in society and by setting it out in this way, it leads the reader into believing there is no escape for Oldham and this only adds to the tension created. This is particularly effective as it is directly after the initial reference to time running out: it gives the effect that the story is coming to a close.

It was morning. Sunlight filtered down through the broken trees, onto the man crouching at the edge of the clearing. ‘ Similar to the previous quotation, a short simple sentence is used. In this context, it allows the passing of dead time in a concise manner. There is a distinct lack of metaphors or similes throughout the story and this sentence is a clear example. Despite the lack of metaphors and similes, it is informative and creates the scene successfully by focusing on small details such as the sunlight. This gives us a taste of the surroundings and allows an image to be created.

The simple sentences are often used for tension such as ‘ Olham took a deep breath. ‘ It concentrates on his breathing, the deep breath signifying almost a stop in time. It is somewhat ironic in the way that he is a robot and traditionally does not need to breathe. Dick is unusual in his use of dialogue he presents it more interestingly than traditional sci-fi writers. His talent to bring out the character’s thoughts in speech and further the themes and

questions of identity are evident. " I knew, of course, that the robot had never reached me. But I had no way of proving it.

Sometimes it isn't possible to prove a thing right away. That was the whole trouble. There wasn't any way I could demonstrate that I was myself. " This short extract is a fitting summary to the entire short story. It asks the question, as do many other short stories by Dick, how can you prove your identity? It presents the theme in an eerily uneasy fashion with the repetition of the lack of proof coming across as suspicious. Although on first reading it settles the reader into a false sense of security, making the ending more rewarding through its robotic repetition.

The ' Imposter' is typical of Dick's work in a number of ways. The use of simple sentences can be seen in all of his work as in Human Is, " Jill bit back the tears. ' This demonstrates how effectively emotion can be shown by use of a short, dramatic sentence with no elaboration. Similes and metaphors are not generally seen in the short stories and Dick offers a cryptic clue into this: ' Metaphors. I never heard him use a metaphor in all our five years together. He said metaphors were inexact. Misleading. ' Human is

This could be seen as an insight into the opinion of Dick himself as well as the character, commenting on how a scientific approach does not welcome metaphors or similes, as they are technically incorrect. Therefore, sci-fi should take a similar approach; explaining the lack of such language in his work. As mentioned previously, Dick uses dialogue to carry the story and is a very typical attribute to his work. Progeny is an example of how the speech

further the text. Revealing how Peter is so distant from Humans and they appear a different specie. “ He was very emotional”.

This line alone shows how Peter has adapted to the robots, having little contact with humans causing them to appear irrational and over the top. This gives an excellent sense of what the character has become in only a short comment. There are clear technical similarities in Dick’s work, as well as this, there are important connections between the stories and themes. The world in which ‘ Imposter’ is set is the same as most of the other stories. Naming the world, ‘ Terra’ adds familiarity to his writing, as the word means ‘ territory; in Greek. Dick uses everyday words and phrases intelligently to give a sense of reality.

It can be seen in ‘ Imposter’ when he writes ‘ I’d like to take a camping trip to those mountains outside of town’ and also in ‘ Progeny ‘ when Ed had a cup of coffee and Janet sipped at a brandy frappe. This combination of old and new adds realism and makes the future world more believable. Overall, Dick’s stories follow the same themes of human manipulation, questioning the fabric of life and what defines free-thinking, while focusing on identity. Brunner puts it well when he writes that: ‘ Illusions substituting for reality crop up in virtually every book Dick has written.

He is – one must say this – obsessed with the idea that a human being might be manipulated by unseen forces, and consequently exploits the ultra-humanoid robot both literally and symbolically. ‘ The stories all end with a feeling that the robots have succeeded in their goals, taking a negative viewpoint to how humans can distinguish and establish identity. Imposter

and Progeny in particular showing a common theme of the robots growing more human throughout the stories with the exact opposite happening in Human is with the character becoming dehumanize and robotic.