



The Philosophy of Science Fiction: Henri Bergson and the Fabulations of Philip K. Dick

James Edward Burton

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The Philosophy of Science Fiction: Henri Bergson and the Fabulations of Philip K. Dick explores the deep affinity between two seemingly quite different thinkers, in their attempts to address the need for salvation in (and from) an era of accelerated mechanization, in which humans' capacity for destroying or subjugating the living has attained a planetary scale.

The philosopher and the science fiction writer come together to meet the contradictory imperatives of a realist outlook—a task which, arguably, philosophy and science fiction could only ever adequately undertake in collaboration. Their respective approaches meet in a focus on the ambiguous status of fictionalizing, or fabulation, as simultaneously one of mechanization's most devastating tools, and the possibility of its undoing.

When they are read together, the complexities and paradoxes thrown up by this ambiguity, with which both Bergson and Dick struggle on their own, open up new ways to navigate ideas of mechanism and mysticism, immanence and transcendence, and the possibility and meaning of salvation. The result is at once an original reading of both thinkers, a new critical theory of the socio-cultural, political and ethical function of fictionalizing, and a case study in the strange affinity, at times the uncanny similarity, between philosophy and science fiction.

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