



Lies, Inc.

Philip K. Dick

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Lies, Inc. Philip K. Dick

A masterwork by Philip K. Dick, this is the final, expanded version of the novella *The Unteleported Man*, which Dick worked on shortly before his death. In *Lies, Inc.*, fans of the science fiction legend will immediately recognize his hallmark themes of life in a security state, conspiracy, and the blurring of reality and illusion. This publication marks its first complete appearance in the United States.

In this wry, paranoid vision of the future, overpopulation has turned cities into cramed industrial anthills. For those sick of this dystopian reality, one corporation, Trails of Hoffman, Inc., promises an alternative: Take a teleport to Whale's Mouth, a colonized planet billed as the supreme paradise. The only catch is that you can never comeback. When a neurotic man named Rachmael ben Applebaum discovers that the promotional films of happy crowds cheering their newfound existence on Whale's Mouth are faked, he decides to pilot a scapship on the eighteen-year journey there to see if anyone wants to return.

Lies, Inc. Details

Date : Published March 9th 2004 by Vintage (first published 1966)

ISBN : 9781400030088

Author : Philip K. Dick

Format : Paperback 202 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction

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From Reader Review Lies, Inc. for online ebook

Lisabet Sarai says

Lies, Inc. is an incoherent mishmash, studded with brilliant ideas. Given the history of this novel (covered in an excellent Afterword in my edition), this isn't surprising. The book began life as a novella entitled *The Unteleported Man*. Dick was asked to expand the novella to novel length. He wrote new material and revised the existing work several times. However, the main chunk of expansion material wasn't even published until after his death, and at this point, nobody knew exactly where in the book it was intended to go!

So we have the "unteleported man" of the title, Rachmael ben Applebaum, determined to take the sole remaining starship from his father's ill-fated shipping empire on an 18 year journey to Newcolonizedland, on the distant planet of Formalhaut, normally reached by teleportation. One-way teleportation, according to the owners of this technology, so that none of the millions of immigrants eager to get off the overcrowded earth can ever return to tell those who remain whether the rosy tales of life in the new world are true or not. Everyone views Rachmael as insane - and if he isn't to start with, he will be by the end of eighteen solitary years - but he's determined to get to the bottom of the mystery (or hoax) by traveling the (more or less) old fashioned way. Plus this is the only way for him to save his ship from being attached by his creditors (Lies, Inc., the organization responsible for the teleportation craze).

Then, halfway through the novel, Rachmael suddenly shows up in Formalhaut, suffering from acute hallucinations due to the teleportation process (and possibly other psychic or pharmaceutical interventions). But by the end of the book, Rachmael is back on his ship, returning to earth after the evil plot of Lies, Inc. has been exposed and foiled.)

At which point I said WTF and stopped trying to understand.

However, there are some wonderfully Dickian notions in this book: factory workers doing quality control whose work is double-checked by trained pigeons; a terrorist attack that left residual traces of LSD in the world water supply, such that everyone must be educated to distinguish the inevitable occasional trip from so-called reality; synthetic versions of synthetic food stuffs...

Maybe the book should be read while in the grip of psychedelics. Maybe then it would make sense!

Kat Hooper says

ORIGINALLY POSTED AT Fantasy Literature.

In the early 21st century, Earth has become overcrowded and has begun to look toward space as a potential new home. Only one habitable planet has been found — Whale's Mouth — and it's said to be a paradise. Rachmael ben Applebaum's company has developed a spaceship that will take settlers there, but the trip takes 18 years. Just as business is about to begin, it's undercut by Trails of Hoffman, Inc., a company who has developed a new teleporting technology that will get settlers to Whale's Mouth in only 15 minutes. The only catch is that it's a one-way trip — once you leave, you can't come back. Ben Applebaum, whose company has been financially devastated by this new technology, discovers that the videos of happy settlers have been faked and thinks there's something nefarious going on at Whale's Mouth. After all, Trails of Hoffman is run by Germans, and their eugenic ideas have not been forgotten. Ben Applebaum also believes

that the United Nations, also led by Germans, might be in league with Trails of Hoffman. With the help of a company called Lies, Inc., ben Applebaum sets out on the 36-year round-trip to investigate and inform the world about what's happening in Whale's Mouth.

Lies, Inc. is the most inaccessible PKD work I've ever read. It actually starts off well — I loved the premise and couldn't wait to find out what was going on at Whale's Mouth. (Except that I still have no idea what was up with the rat in ben Applebaum's head.) But just as ben Applebaum sets out, things get really weird. Too weird. In the middle of the novel, ben Applebaum gets hit by an LSD-coated dart and most of the rest of the story is one big time-warped acid trip for him and for the reader. There's talk about paraworlds, hypnagogic experiences, paranoia, bad psychotherapy, and the illusion of reality. None of this is new for a PKD story, but this time the reader has no idea where or when the characters are. The plot jumps around in time and space and is so disorienting that the reader doesn't know what's going on. I think perhaps that if I read it a few more times, I could make more sense of it, but I really don't want to.

Suddenly at nearly the end of Lies, Inc., things get back on track. At that point, I said to myself, "This feels like someone dropped a huge acid sequence into the middle of a novella." After a few minutes of investigation on the internet, I found an afterword by PKD's literary executor, Paul Williams, explaining that that's exactly what happened. Lies, Inc. is an expansion of Philip K. Dick's novella *The Unteleported Man*. The huge awful chunk in the middle (you can tell exactly where it begins and ends) is an addition to the novel that was originally rejected (with very good reason) by Don Wollheim at Ace. It gets complicated after that, but basically it was added back in after Dick's death and patched up a bit by SF author John Sladek. The result is that a really cool novella was turned into something quite unreadable. I can recommend it only to PKD completists who want to know how weird it can get. To others, I suggest reading *The Unteleported Man* instead.

I listened to Lies, Inc. on audio. Brilliance Audio has just produced several old PKD works, and I'm excited about that! This one was read by Luke Daniels, who is fast becoming one of my favorite readers. His narration actually made the acid trip bearable — it's probably the only reason I didn't quit Lies, Inc.

Jack Tripper says

Wow, what an unmitigated disaster this was. What starts out as a pretty typical PKD tale, if a bit straightforward for him, descends into a hallucinogenic mess that was impossible for me to wade through. This is an expansion (rejected by his publisher) of his 1966 novella, *The Unteleported Man*, which I'd never read, but I have to imagine it makes more sense than this.

The story here, about a man who decides to take an interstellar trip to a supposed "paradise" planet to see if it really is paradise, or if the government is lying, was actually pretty interesting. But then, about 70-80 pages in, he gets hit with an LSD-laden dart that makes the next hundred pages or so almost nonsensical. I had no idea what was happening, though there was some stuff about parallel worlds, illusory worlds, etc., which is fine, but I had no clue as to what it had to do with anything, or what the main character was doing, or where he was, and I wondered what the people around him were thinking about the vegetative state he must be in and the catatonic stare he most assuredly has. I almost thought it was a joke while reading, I just couldn't believe that Dick thought this would be a good way to stretch his short novel out into a longer one.

I would give this one star, but I have to award it another half just for the immense size of Dick's balls in handing this in to his publisher.

1.5 Stars

Lyn says

Back in the first set of Saturday Night Live, the original (and funniest ensemble) that featured Bill Murray, John Belushi and Dan Akroyd, in 1979, Steve Martin made one of his many guest appearances. To the tune of a hokey piano accompaniment, Martin walks out onto the stage wearing a Hawaiian shirt and peers out into the audience, beyond the camera and asks in a country bumpkin twang: “What the hell is that?” He looks querulous, perplexed, confused but curious and asks again, “What is that dang thing?” This inquiry is repeated several times in a multitude of humorous variation and he is finally joined by Bill Murray, who squints, peers out into the crowd and wonders: “What the hell is that?”

And so holding Philip K. Dick’s posthumously published Lies, Inc., previously published as The Unteleported Man, I gaze into its mysterious pages and ask:

“What the hell is this??”

I am confused, perplexed, more than befuddled, but still curious:

“Huh. What the hell kind of dang deal is this anyway??”

According to Goodreads this will be my 39th PKD to read, so I’m no stranger to the strange, mystical, weird and maybe deranged world Phil invites us to join. I understand the place in the universe for shape shifting hermaphroditic exhibitionist prostitutes, classical jug bands, co-joined twins who share a head, telepathic slime molds, self medicating schizophrenics and the rest of the oddly populated world according to Dick.

And then we have Lies, Inc.

An incomplete and insubstantial summary might go as follows: in a futuristic (2014) world where the Earth is overpopulated, scientists have figured out how to teleport people to a colony far distant in space, but they cannot come back by teleportation, and no trusted communication is available. Folks could fly there, but the space trip would take 18 years one way. Our intrepid hero doubts the veracity of the propaganda he has been fed and vows to fly his spaceship (now obsolete due to the technological advancements of the teleportation system and rescue the trapped colonists.

And that’s about when Hunter S. Thompson shows up with his mescaline and LSD fun sized combo meal and gets the party started.

Actually, I was very interested to learn that Phil had sought, in the months before his death, to re-write the story and from Lies, Inc. I can see traces of the theological quest he had begun in his VALIS trilogy writings and as evidenced in the The Exegesis of Philip K. Dick. I’d almost like to read The Unteleported Man to compare the two writings.

If I could just get someone to tell me:

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS???

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(2005.10.15)

R. says

PKD's *Go Set a Watchman*, his *Pale King*, his *Original of Laura* - take your pick, or pick 'em all. His last novel, an unfinished, incomplete and etcetera rework of a novella from the 1960s. For some reason, a coherency eluded him -- it was as if he was translating another reality by throwing cricket bones and consulting a mistranslated I Ching and filtering it all through dreams and drugs. But, God bless him, it often *works!* To my satisfaction, at least. Your mileage, she will vary - sometimes it won't even be miles we're talking about, from yardsticks to parsecs.

Would love to see an expanded *expanded* edition with all the reworkings (including the John Sladek rewrites) - maybe even more criticism and history (the afterword by Paul Williams - not *the* - is more a rushed thumbnail outline. Probably written high.)

The creditor robot scene was hilarious - up there with the scene in *A Scanner Darkly* where Charles Freck decides to off himself.

Tony says

LIES, INC. (1964). Philip K. Dick. ***.

First, a word about this book: It was first published in a magazine form under the title, “The Unteleported Man.” Dick then wrote additional material for a proposed book form, but he died before it could be included. The book ultimately published was the same as in the magazine. This edition was formatted in 1983 and 1984 to include the additional material, but ended up being the same as the original publication – save for a few additions by John Sladek. All that being said, it is not one of Dick’s best efforts. Although Dick set his novels in some future time, his real forte was the interaction among his characters. There was little of that in this title. What we get is pure futurism in terms of gadgetry and technology with a minimum of character development. This is not to say that that is bad; it is just not Philip K. Dick. The premise of the book rests on two earlier works: “The Essay on Population,” and, “A Modest Proposal.” If you know those two works, then you can almost forecast the path of the novel. I would recommend this novel for completists only, not the place where you jump in a begin your journeys with Dick.

Charles Dee Mitchell says

Over the past year I have read I think 15 PKD novels in more or less chronological order. I have read some good ones, some bad ones, some sloppy ones, and a couple of brilliant ones. *Lies, Inc.* is the first I have read the pissed me off. A certain level of incoherency comes with the PKD territory, and keeping up with what he is thinking and typing furiously onto the page is part of the fun. But this time out, he creates an irritating

mess.

This novel had a chaotic publication history, and it's problems stem from editors' determination, early on with Dick's approval, to make it into a book. In 1963 or 1964, PKD wrote, along with about a dozen other novels, *The Unteleported Man*, intended for *Fantastic Stories* or some other Ace Publishing outlet. (All this information comes from the afterward to the current edition of *Lies, Inc.* published by Vintage.) With the short novel already in hand, Donald Wolheim, publisher of Ace Books, received what he thought was a really cool cover painting and asked PKD to expand his novelette into book form so the cover might be used. PKD doubled the length of the novelette, but Wolheim, reportedly, was not please with Part Two. (If his reaction was indeed that mild, publishing, in the 1960's, remained a "gentleman's profession.") Part One appeared as part of an Ace Double. In 1979, now working with Berkeley Publishing, PKD had the idea of issuing the complete novel, although what he found of Part Two was missing around a dozen pages of text. PKD wrote a new opening, filled in most but not all of the gaps, and decided that Part Two, rather than succeeding Part One, should appear about halfway into Chapter 8 and end somewhere in Chapter 15. The book, retitled *Lies, Inc.* winds up in another 25 pages. It was not published until 1983, sixteen months of PKD's death and melodramatically labeled "uncensored."

All of the above is more interesting than anything else about the book. I will not pretend to summarize the plot, but Part Two has the main character appearing on another planet under the false identity that had been assigned to a different character. He is immediately injected with LSD, and PKD wallows in a hyperbolic description of the LSD experience for almost fifty pages. Somebody, more dedicated than myself, might dig up a copy of the short *Unteleported Man* and see if it makes sense. But *Lies, Inc.*, spins so seriously out of control that I cannot even recommend it for PKD Completists. It is only for PKD Masochists.

Darwin8u says

"If you are wise, Matson said to himself grimly, you never take one-way trips. Anywhere. Even to Boise, Idaho...even across the street. Be certain, when you start, that you can scramble back."

-- Philip K. Dick, *Lies, Inc.*

The novel was originally published as a novella titled 'The Unteleported Man' in the *Amazing-Fantastic* back in 1964. The publisher rejected his original expansion idea, which was later added back in (about 1/2 through Chapter 8). If you are reading this going "WTF" you are probably reading the expansion. The novel itself deals with themes of fascism, control, death, technology. None of these themes are new to DICK. DICK was working this novella back into novel form right before he died and there were a couple (not huge gaps) left when he took his one-way trip. Not that it matters. When you are dealing with post "2-3-74" PKD, gaps and jumps and "WTF" moments are part of the literary landscape.

Anyway, If you are only going to read ONE Dick novel. Skip this one. If you are only going to read ten Dick novels, yeah, probably still best to skip this one too. But if you **just can't get enough Dick**, well, *Lies, Inc.*,

at its core is both an old and a new novel, both a traditional SF and a experimental novel written on ACID. But my warning stands. If you are new to PKD, this may just be a one-way trip out of PKD land.

Printable Tire says

Utterly retarded.

Chiara says

Questa volta, Philip K. Dick non fa centro, lasciandomi un senso di totale smarrimento. La storia parte bene, aprendo un classico quanto inquietante quadro di utopia/distopia, a cui il lettore medio di fantascienza dovrebbe essere abituato. La trama risulta semplice e lineare, ma riesce ad incuriosire: l'uomo, costretto a vivere su un pianeta Terra sovraffollato, trova la soluzione con una colonizzazione di massa di un pianeta recentemente scoperto, Bocca di Balena, situato in un remoto sistema "solare". Ciò che si nasconde dietro questa apparentemente idilliaca nuova terra promessa non è noto, tanto da far sorgere parecchi dubbi ai pochi che osano porsi qualche domanda, in quanto la nuova colonizzazione ricorda in modo fin troppo sinistro ed esplicito la deportazione di massa nei campi di sterminio ad opera dei nazisti. I protagonisti decidono così di indagare per portare alla luce la verità, qualunque essa sia, e partono alla volta del tanto decantato pianeta.

Purtroppo, a partire da circa metà romanzo, quando la concentrazione è più viva che mai, si entra in un totale stravolgimento di tutto: ci si ritrova catapultati in un trip allucinogeno di LSD, paramondi, distorsione del tempo, libri che predicano il futuro condizionando la mente, alieni che (forse) assumono sembianze umane, gente a caso che fa cose, gente a caso che dice cose, cose a caso che succedono e basta. Una scena dopo l'altra, il lettore viene immerso in un capitolo più WTF?! dell'altro, finché il filo viene perso del tutto, e tanti saluti. Dick è notoriamente bravo nel ricreare le sensazioni di alterazione dello spazio-tempo, comprese quelle dovute alla droga. Purtroppo in questo caso la mia sensazione è che ci sia semplicemente troppa roba, e devo ammettere, anche con un po' di vergogna, che in alcuni passaggi non ci ho davvero capito niente; alcuna gente non ho nemmeno capito chi fosse; sui paramondi alzo le mani, perché nella mia mente c'è il vuoto.

Gli ostici ed altisonanti paroloni futuristici, anziché contribuire ad immergere il lettore nel mondo creato, proiettato nel futuro, creano ancora più confusione, rendendo la trama, che già era un guazzabuglio, ancora più arzigogolata, finché rimane solo il delirio, e si assiste impotenti allo sfacelo di quello che prometteva essere un Signor romanzo.

Debole il recupero finale in cui si cerca di far tornare a combaciare i pezzi del puzzle, e francamente, anche se non posso parlarne per evitare spoiler, anche il finale in sé non mi è piaciuto particolarmente.

Ora che ho terminato la lettura, leggo che anche la pubblicazione di questa opera non ha avuto un percorso felice, ma non faccio fatica a capire il perché. Anche i migliori sbagliano, pazienza.

Jacob says

You know the face only a mother could love? This is a book only a serious PKD fan could complete. It's a shame because the premise is such a grabber: a company offers ongoing transportation to a paradise planet in another solar system, except it's only one-way, and someone gets it into their head that the paradise planet must not be all they claim if they don't let anyone come back, so he decides to head there in a regular ship so he can come back to expose the company.

Spoilers ahead! Believe me, I'm doing you a favor in saving you from having to read it yourself.

It's hard to screw up such a solid premise, but here's how you do it: let the setup drag once you've already established that something is rotten in Denmark, so the protagonist doesn't get to ship off for a while and just hangs around feeling like a loser (was this autobiographical?). Have him suddenly decide to just teleport halfway through the story since he can't launch his ship, so at least the reader will see what the distant planet is like -- after all, that's the big payoff in the story. Steal the payoff away by shooting the protagonist with an LSD-laced dart right after he arrives, so he's on one long drug trip and can't tell reality from hallucination (again, autobiographical?). Allow everyone who supported him to come through the teleporters, then defeat them so their situation is hopeless and they lose. That way you only get to find out what the planet is like if you're suffering with the characters in a hopeless situation.

Suddenly change the story so that the protagonist didn't teleport after all and actually just left Earth in his ship. Then make the bad guys capture him so he either still fails or fails all over again, depending on what kind of sense you made out of the story earlier. Sprinkle the writing with all kinds of unannounced shifts in perspective and reality so the reader can't make sense of what's going on, and can't easily tell if it's the book or he's just THAT tired (he is that tired, but trust me: it was the book).

I think it's actually hard to make a story this incoherent, so maybe PKD deserves some credit for avoiding any accidental excitement. If the protagonist had done a single thing on the new planet, if anything had happened on his abortive space journey, or if we'd learned more of what the bad guys are doing and what their plans are, this would have been more worthwhile. Also, at 200 pages, it's a mercifully short novel for the amount of effort required to get through it.

All is not completely lost, although I did come close to a 1-star rating. I gave a bonus half star for mention of Oakland on the first page, and it was nice to see a reference to San Diego (if not Portland or Oregon). Part of the incoherence is from PKD making up lots of vocabulary, but you can tell many of the words were made up on purpose with a sense of humor. My favorite of these is "disemflapped". It's kind of like his short story Service Call, which was MUCH better than this drivel, where one character tells another "I've come to fix your swibble." That line tickled me enough I still remember it years later. And that's why I'm a PKD fan :)

Sandy says

Of all the sci-fi novels by cult author Philip K. Dick, "The Unteleported Man"--in its later, expanded version known as "Lies, Inc."--has the most complicated publishing history. Those who are interested in the minutiae of this nearly 40-year saga are advised to seek out Paul Williams' afterword in the currently available Vintage edition. In a nutshell, let's just say that "The Unteleported Man" first saw the light of day in the December '64 issue of "Fantastic" magazine and then in one of those cute little "Ace doubles" in 1966. It wasn't until 1983 that the expanded edition appeared, incorporating 100 pages (around 30,000 words) of Dick's manuscript that had been previously rejected by Ace editor Don Wollheim, but with some missing sections still. The Vintage edition now in print reinstates Dick's original vision of the book...or, at least, as much as he could arrange before his untimely death in 1982. The result is one of Dick's most challenging books, those extra 100 pages (pages 73 - 173 in the Vintage edition) having served as a bone of contention among Dick's fans for years now.

In the novel, we meet a young man with the unusual name of Rachmael ben Applebaum. His family's interplanetary shipping business has recently been made obsolete by the one-way teleportation device of the outfit whimsically known as Trails of Hoffman, Ltd. With this new device, colonists can make the 18-year journey to the distant planet of Whale's Mouth in a mere 15 seconds. The only catch: They can't return the

same way. Rachmael, suspicious of just what might be going on on Whale's Mouth, decides to venture there the old-fashioned way, proposing to make the 18-year trip by himself. But what he finds when he ultimately DOES reach the colony world certainly pulls the interstellar rug out from under him...and the reader! Those 100 pages of Whale's Mouth material, absent from the original novella, comprise some of Dick's most way-out speculations on the nature of objective reality; as brilliant as they are hopelessly frustrating, they represent Dick at his most extreme. Incorporating a very hallucinogenic LSD trip, hypnotically induced "para worlds" AND a time-warping device, this section is somewhat difficult (to put it mildly!) to get a handle on, and can almost be seen as one big psychedelic red herring. Skipping those 100 pages (in other words, jumping from page 73 to 173) and reading just the original short novel may be more satisfying for many readers, but even read this way, some mind-warping dilemmas spring up as regards time paradoxes. I have read "Lies, Inc." twice now and continue to be baffled by it. The Byzantine plottings of the two warring factions and the significance of the initial computer snafu on page 3 remain elusive to this reader. I can almost barely put the darn thing together in my head, but please don't ask me to explain it out loud. Let's just say that Dick fans who thought the plottings of "The Simulacra" and "The Penultimate Truth" to be complex, and those who thought the drug-induced reality bending of "The Game-Players of Titan" and, especially, "The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch" to be a bit headache inducing, are really going to be in for some tough sledding here!

But perhaps I am being a bit too harsh. Although I do agree with British critic David Pringle when he calls the novel one of Dick's "least satisfactory books," and with Dick biographer Lawrence Sutin when he says that the novel is "damn weird," I still maintain that even a failure of a novel from P.K. Dick is more fascinating and readable than a "success" by many others. "Lies, Inc.," though ultimately largely incomprehensible, remains eminently readable and entertaining. It exhibits the influence of the then hugely popular spy craze, features an excellent acid trip depiction, contains what might be the first use of the word "psychotronic" (sorry, Michael Weldon!) and foresees the unification of Germany a good 25 years before the actual event. (If only Dick's prediction of a Federation of Semitic Peoples could come to pass!) And yet...is it a mistake on Dick's part that on page 85, the "white-oak blonde" is referred to as Gretch (Borbman), and then on page 92, she becomes Sheila Quam? Or is this just another cerebrum-twisting aspect of the acid trip in the para world undergoing a time warp? Take two Excedrin, read the novel and get back to me....

David Hallman says

For fans of Phillip K. Dick, this posthumously compiled novel, works with many of the themes common to most of Dick's work. Reality, para-worlds, paranoia, and government conspiracy all manifest themselves in the final published novel, but unlike other more recognized titles, fails to draw these themes together coherently enough to make for a pleasurable reading experience. More than half of the text is devoted to discerning the variety of different para-worlds that characters perceive, reaching no consensus as to which para-world, if any, represents a structured reality that can be agreed upon. Add on top of that several overlapping conspiracies, an underdeveloped plot-line concerning time travel, and a disjointed storyline that feels as mismashed as this book's amalgamation apparently was (according to the afterward by Paul Williams), and you have one of the least readable books in the PKD library.

Much of PKD's fiction lends to an acquired taste, the language often being reinvented on the fly to fit the bizarre worlds laid out before the reader. *Lies, Inc.*'s language requires more patience than many of PKD's meta-psychedelic masterpieces (UBIK). But the utter travesty of this novel is its inability to move the plot along to a reasonable conclusion, as characters grapple with meta-realities and Dick struggles to find the language to convey what seems to be the unconveyable. And that is a shame because this novel seemed to have promise, a solid PKDesque foundation which soon became obliterated by campy psychedelic imagery and an unexplained time shift in the storyline.

As this was touted as the final, correct and unmolested version of *The Unteleported Man*, readers might expect one last mind bending tale from the Sci-Fi giant. Yet, as with most posthumously published novels, *Lies, Inc.* is a blemish rather than a shining jewel in the complete works of Phillip K. Dick.

Gregory says

If you don't have some time to dedicate to this novel then don't bother picking it up. The amount of detail is abstract on it's own. The story is very typical of Dick - Nazis won the big one - everyone has a German sounding name - teleportation devices with unknown destinations - otherworldly soldiers that shoot LSD tipped darts and send your brain to another dimension - Yah its all there - classic Dick. Oddly enough this was originally titled the unteleported man and it was the first title of his that I ever picked up but I waited until I had read more than half his catalogue to actually finish it. It's like many critics say, If there was such thing as black science fiction this is your guy and theyre right! If you can get through this book congrats because it is a challenge.

Jack Stovold says

My Philip K. Dick Project

Entry #35 - The Unteleported Man / Lies, Inc. (written Nov. 1964-Mar. 1965, published Sep. 1964)

Wow! Now this is a MESS. A glorious mess, yes, but still a mess.

In fact, I'd been kind of dreading dealing with the whole The Unteleported Man / Lies, Inc. problem. (See, I don't even know what to call it.)

Actually, scratch that. For the rest of the review, I'll be using Lies, Inc. as that was what Dick titled it during his final rewrite. For PKD fans who are interested in reading this, as I was, but unsure what to do, let me try and clear it up for you as best I can.

There is no definitive version of this story, although I think the newer Mariner edition is the closest. Dick originally wrote "The Unteleported Man" as a short story, or novelette. This was published in a Fantastic Stories magazine, and Dick's editor at Ace Books suggested to Dick that he nearly double the length (by adding to the ending) and they would publish it as a novel. Dick did so, but the editor didn't approve of the material, and so it was published as one half of an Ace Double Novel as it was in the magazine. I believe to read this original version, you would either have to get the original magazine, or the Ace Double, both of which would probably be expensive and hard to track down. Then ten or so years later, when the Ace copyright expired, Dick sought to have the book republished in the longer version, which he had written. However, there were two problems. Dick couldn't figure out how to unite the two halves of the book, and there were four pages missing from his 1965 expansion. Dick set about rewriting and expanding, so he wrote a new opening and rejiggered some of the material in the original novella. Unfortunately, Dick died before he could complete his rewrite, so the Berkeley edition published in 1983 was the original novelette, and the expansion material with three gaps indicated in the text from the missing pages. A later edition found the revisions Dick was making for the Berkeley edition, and another writer filled in the gaps. However, after that, the original missing pages were also found. The most definitive edition now is the Mariner edition, which includes the novel and the expansion with Dick's intended revisions and the missing pages. Dick's revisions also include some minor deletions here and there, so there is no one version that contains every word, however. Whew.

My solution was to buy both the Berkeley edition and the newest revision, which fortunately turned out to be the Mariner edition. In trying to unravel this whole mess, I consulted the internet, but most of the sites I

found described the situation before the Mariner edition was published. Fortunately, the afterword in the Mariner version made the situation clear. If you're only going to get one version, I would recommend the Mariner edition. However, I had the interesting experience of reading both side by side, simultaneously, a chapter or two from each at a time.

First of all, they start differently. Dick's new beginning introduces us immediately to Lies, Inc. and the rats, one of my favorite conceits from the beginning of the book. The entire rat subplot (in which protagonist Rachmael ben Applebaum lives a mysterious double life as a rat in some alternate reality) adds a lot of spooky, mystical atmosphere to the beginning of the book but suffers as it disappears completely with no warning about a third of the way through. This is a weakness of the book, probably part of the rewrite Dick never got to finish, disappointingly. It's interesting to compare scenes played straight in the older version, where in the new version, poor Applebaum finds his rat reality superimposing itself over his life.

The rat example is just the most glaring example of a larger problem of this book. It's all over the place, and the tortured publication history is only partially to blame. It can be fairly difficult to follow at times. It's insanely complicated and packed with bizarre ideas, even for a Dick book. I enjoyed it a great deal, but after finishing it and reflecting on it a bit, I started to remember all the dropped plot threads I had been looking forward to more of, and felt some disappointment.

But man, this book is insane. Up to a certain point (anyone who has read this will know exactly what point I mean), it's actually relatively straight-forward for mid-period Dick, but once we go down the rabbit-hole here, you might find yourself needing some air. The expansion here was written not long after Dick's experience with LSD, and Dick did not have nice trips. He had terrifying trips, and he was nice enough to give you a little taste of what that's like here. To me, what it is most frightening here is the fact that time loses its meaning. Applebaum experiences in a short time what to him seems like thousands of years. And he is conscious of his reason and rationality disintegrating, but completely powerless to stop it. Reading this, it was almost viscerally panic-inducing.

After his initial freak-out, Applebaum and others find themselves trapped in para-worlds, a series of terrifying realities, where the rules are written by mysterious forces, and everyone seems to be vaguely malevolent, multi-ocular, self-cannibalizing, sea creatures with obscure motives in disguise, eager to push on you a book that seems to write the future. Did I mention it was weird?

How this all ties into Newcolonizedland on Whale's Mouth, and the Trails of Hoffman company and New Whole Germany's secret war on the UN and Lies, Inc. is unclear. I haven't even mentioned tons of things going on with Dr. Einem von Sepp and his disturbing experiments, the colony itself, Al Dosker and a million other things. There's a lot going on, and I'm not going to lie and say Dick really all brings it all together. But the book has a strange, entrancing logic of its own, and it seems that the various mysteries here might be more satisfying left unsolved, all though it would have been nice to have a little more light shone on them. Or maybe I'm really missing something big here.

Anyway, if you want a confounding, endearing, maddening completely Phildickian ride, you don't need to look much farther than this. The fact that there isn't even one definitive version, or even narrative that can be agreed on, seems to put a suitably meta spin on the whole thing.

My edition: The Unteleported Man: Berkley Books paperback, 1983
Lies, Inc: Mariner Paperback, 2004

Up next: "Counter-Clock World"!

December 4th, 2012

Mark says

Disappointing. The afterword, which I wish had been the foreword, explained that this was Dick's expansion of an earlier novel, *The Unteleported Man*. The original novel, a mere 100 pages, was the part I liked. The added-on section (another 100 pages), which Dick inserted into the middle of the book, started exactly where I started to lose interest in the book. His obsession with LSD, hallucinations, and subjective experience-- usually interesting in books like *A Scanner Darkly*, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, *UBIK*, etc.-- didn't work here. I can see why the original publisher of *The Unteleported Man* wasn't interested in republishing it with Dick's added material. He was creative, and prolific, but he did write a few duds. *Lies, Inc.*, as an expansion, is one of those duds.

Bethany says

I don't know what it was, but I *really* struggled to follow what was going on in this book.

Ira Nayman says

I read a lot of science fiction and fantasy these days. I'm looking, as always, for books that will surprise and delight me. What I usually get are books that are competently written, with reasonably solid characters and an easily comprehensible plot. They are often driven by a strong idea. But, because they are largely small variations on well worn subjects, they hold few surprises, which does not delight me.

Philip K. Dick's *Lies, Inc.* is a deeply flawed book. But, it was full of surprises – oh, boy, was it full of surprises – and I have to say that I was delighted all the while I read it.

Millions of humans have teleported to Fomalhaut IX by transporter. But, it's a one way trip, and people on Earth are beginning to suspect that information coming back from the colony paints a much rosier picture of what awaits immigrants than what is really there.

The book comes in two parts which do not fit well together. The first is a straightforward telling of a mad plan by interstellar shipping magnate Rachmael ben Applebaum, his empire falling into financial ruin, to take the last ship he owns to Fomalhaut IX, an 18 year journey which would allow him to return with news about what was really happening on the colony. The second part focuses on ben Applebaum teleporting to Fomalhaut IX, almost immediately being drugged with LSD and possibly accessing paraworlds, surreal alternate realities that seem to coexist with the colony planet.

While the first part of the story is straight up science fiction, the second is an hallucinogenic journey into paranoia and madness. The book has a split-personality that is an interesting way of looking at Dick's writing; the two parts, written at two very different points in his career, show how much his writing had changed in the interim. However, they really don't work together in a single volume.

Other problems with integrating the two elements in the book crop up, such as character motivation. The decision by ben Applebaum, so concerned with interstellar travel, to teleport to Fomalhaut IX instead was not credible, especially when he claimed to be partially motivated by a love for a female character that he hadn't previously shown. Worse: when he uses a time machine-like device to go back to before he teleported, he is back on his ship, about to make the 18 year journey, all feelings for the woman forgotten.

It's also true that, after the excursion into paraworlds, what ben Applebaum actually finds when he reaches Fomalhaut IX is highly anti-climactic.

Given all of this, why would I give *Lies, Inc.* four stars? Because it's so bizarre, so alive in ways that more solidly written fiction isn't. Dick is reaching for something that is uniquely, fascinatingly his own. The fact that he doesn't achieve it has to be acknowledged, but the fact that he is trying something most other authors wouldn't go anywhere near is very attractive to me nonetheless.

Harrison Phinney says

This is a challenging book to review. It is like Lynch's *Mulholland Drive*, but literally on acid. The structure and plot are labyrinthine in four dimensions. This is unfortunate because there is an incredibly interesting story here, but it's almost impossible to get to. I am giving 2 stars because this is a dangerous book for any non-diehard PKD fan to encounter. As another review mentioned, this book could single-handedly turn someone off to PKD, and that would be a travesty. Even as a PKD worshipper, this book was a tough read. I do think it would be rewarding and fun to map out, to wrest something coherent from this time-traveling, ego-melting, hallucinogenic maelstrom—but I have neither the time nor the spare brain cells to attempt such a thing. Read at your own risk, and discuss ONLY with the most ravenous PKD fans. Mindburn guaranteed.
