



Time Out of Joint

Philip K. Dick

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Time Out of Joint is Philip K. Dick's classic depiction of the disorienting disparity between the world as we think it is and the world as it actually is. The year is 1998, although Ragle Gumm doesn't know that. He thinks it's 1959. He also thinks that he served in World War II, that he lives in a quiet little community, and that he really is the world's long-standing champion of newspaper puzzle contests. It is only after a series of troubling hallucinations that he begins to suspect otherwise. And once he pursues his suspicions, he begins to see how he is the center of a universe gone terribly awry.

Time Out of Joint Details

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From Reader Review Time Out of Joint for online ebook

Oscar says

No puedo empezar sin hacer mención a la criminal sinopsis de la contraportada de esta novela, que creo que ha seguido sucediendo incluso en ediciones de otras editoriales (véase Minotauro). Yo cometí el error de leerla y me fastidió toda la lectura, porque no hacía otra cosa que esperar, porque ya sabía que tenía que suceder, lo destripado en dicha sinopsis. Una cosa es picar la curiosidad del lector contando algo que suceda en los primeros capítulos, porque algo hay que contar, eso es indiscutible. Pero que desvelen hechos que tienen lugar en el último cuarto de novela, eso es imperdonable, un crimen. Y el hecho es más grave si cabe cuando estamos hablando del germen de la novela, del motor principal que la mueve. Ya he dejado la costumbre de leer sinopsis, prólogos y según qué reseñas antes de empezar una novela, pero aun así sigo cayendo de vez en cuando.

‘Tiempo desarticulado’ (Time Out of Joint, 1959), del norteamericano Philip K. Dick, tiene como protagonista a Ragle Gumm, que lleva una idílica vida junto a la familia de su hermana. Su principal actividad consiste en participar en el concurso del periódico, que siempre gana. Paulatinamente, vamos asistiendo a inquietantes revelaciones que nos harán dudar de la realidad de los personajes. Y ya está, no se puede contar nada más sin entrar en el consabido *spoiler*. La novela transcurre sin prisas, pausadamente, pero engancha desde el primer momento.

Tras finalizar la lectura de ‘Tiempo desarticulado’, queda patente la influencia posterior que tuvo en diferentes productos de ocio, ya sean libros, películas o series de televisión. No cabe duda de que Dick fue todo un visionario.

Ajeje Brazov says

Assolutamente fenomenale, Dick riesce a raccontare una storia con varie sfaccettature, realtà e fantascienza si mischiano in modo incredibile e alla fine ne esci disorientato non riuscendo più a capire dove lo scrittore voglia andare a parare.

L'inizio parte tranquillamente, come in un racconto di vita quotidiana, tra emozioni e stati d'animo, poi subentra la tensione, la suspense che tiene il lettore col cuore a 1000, come nei migliori thriller ed infine... meglio leggerlo!!!

Un capolavoro.

Darwin8u says

A book that could have inspired both Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow (anticipation of anticipation of rockets) and the Truman Show (community set up around one man). While I give it points for anticipating a couple generations early the narcissism of the 21st century, the absurdity of American Exceptionalism, the shallow falseness of community on FB, etc., it was in the end just too damn slow. Most of the narrative was underwater. There was no rush. There were no prose daisies to pick as I picked through the pages. It was good just not great. It was PKD, just not great PKD.

Roberto says

Ritorno al futuro

Chissà che sensazioni proveremmo se nella nostra vita quotidiana cominciasimo a notare strani dettagli che non quadrano, qualche comportamento anomalo, qualche discrepanza di tempo, la sensazione che le persone che ci circondano stiano in qualche modo mentendo? Se le attenzioni di nostra moglie sembrassero false (ok, più del solito...), il salumiere sembrasse addomesticato, il taxista stranamente amichevole, il lattaiolo interessato?

Può essere la realtà un'illusione? Cosa è la realtà? Se ciò che vedo, sento e percepisco non è reale, chi sono io veramente? Non posso che iniziare a dubitare di me stesso e anche sulla stessa concezione di esistenza.

Qui l'idea di fondo è visionaria e molto intrigante, ha ispirato con successo scrittori e registi venuti dopo, ma a mio parere non è sviluppata particolarmente bene.

Dick aveva tante idee interessanti, tra cui quella dell'alterazione del tempo, ma la realizzazione probabilmente non era il suo forte. Lo stile narrativo è abbastanza banale, l'azione è statica, la storia senza guizzi particolari. Il libro mi ha catturato solo da un certo punto in poi, quando iniziano ad accadere strani avvenimenti e incongruenze ai protagonisti. Purtroppo la fine è confusa, poco credibile e non in linea col resto del romanzo.

Rimane l'idea, di un romanzo ambientato solo in apparenza negli anni 50, il cui protagonista, contornato solo in apparenza di amici e parenti, svolge un'attività che solo in apparenza è quello che è. Da qui ossessione, inquietudine, disperazione, alienazione.

Solo Dick poteva arrivare a questo livello di sofisticazione...

spikeINflorida says

An early PKD novel, *TIME OUT OF JOINT* is not as trippy, surreal, or fractured as his later works. Yet some of the author's trademarks are in evidence here such as smoking cigars, snappy shoes, uncivilised civil war, disconnected discussions, and copious amounts of paranoia. The story contains strong echoes of the movie *The Truman Show*. I wonder if R.A. Henlein borrowed a story subplot here for his eponymous *The Moon Is A Harsh Mistriss*. This book isn't recommended for readers not familiar with Philip K. Dick.

Cenhner Scott says

No quería empezar a leer a Philip Dick leyendo el libro de *Blade Runner* de puro jodido que soy nomás. Así que compré este, que estuvo sus buenos meses esperando ser leído.

Esto es ciencia ficción escrita en la década del 60 (1959, en realidad), así que contextualizar ayuda un poco: fresco el recuerdo de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, el miedo a los rusos y el comunismo...

Si viste *The Truman Show* (y me niego a creer que hay gente que aún no vio *The Truman Show*), las

similitudes son casi demasiadas. Y cuanto más te acercas al final, la cosa empeora porque se convierte en Wayward Pines muy descaradamente.

Aunque lo correcto es decir que Truman y Wayward son los que "se inspiraron" en este libro.

Lo que me sorprendió de Dick es cómo se cuelga filosofando. Filosofía pura, dura, de esa que te hace hacer un esfuerzo para entender el concepto al que quiere llegar. No es que sea algo malo per se, pero no es lo que esperaba de una novela de ciencia ficción.

Así y todo, voy a darle otra chance. Sólo tengo que encontrar alguna otra novela que me llame la atención, porque sigo renegado con el del sueño de las ovejas.

Lyn says

Philip K. Dick's Time Out of Joint may very well have influenced the producers of the film The Truman Show.

Orson Scott Card may also have gotten some ideas for Ender's Game. PKD tells this one close to the vest for the first half of the book, slowly developing the action and leaving some M. Night Shyamalan type clues along the way for the reader to pick up.

This was published in 1959, one of his earlier novels and an observant reader of PKD will notice a more subtle approach than some of his later, Kafkaesque absurd and over the top science fiction vehicles. But even this early some ubiquitous themes emerge such as latent conspiracy theories, paranoia, mirror image delusions of grandeur and references to mental illness and self destruction. Also present are familiar classical, biblical and psychological references.

Published and marketed along with his SF canon, but written during the period of his mainstream efforts and less "far out there" than many of his works.

My only criticism is that it takes a while to get where it is going, but this is good, vintage PKD.

César Bustíos says

¡Qué manera de jugar con mi mente, señor Dick!

La primera parte es un poco lenta pero a la vez rarísima (típico de PKD, al parecer) desde el principio. Se pone mucho mejor en los últimos capítulos. Una novela de los inicios de Dick allá por el '59.

Ragle Gumm se gana la vida participando en un concurso del periódico llamado "*¿Dónde estará la próxima vez el hombrecito verde?*", siempre gana. Una vida normal, corriente. Luego de experimentar algunos eventos crecen sus sospechas sobre la veracidad de la realidad que lo rodea.

¡Maestro!

Theresa says

Why didn't I start reading Philip K. Dick ages ago?!?!

WHERE HAVE I BEEN ALL MY LIFE

Susan Budd says

This is my third of Dick's six 1950s novels. The other two were *The Cosmic Puppets* and *The World Jones Made*.

On the surface, *Time Out of Joint* reminds me of *The Cosmic Puppets*. Both are linear narratives, both are set in the 50s, and most importantly, both pose questions about the nature of reality, playing with the idea that things are not what they appear to be. The novels differ primarily in how they resolve their mysteries. This is where *Time Out of Joint* misses its mark. Some of the most intriguing ideas from the early part of the book just drop out of sight at the end.

What I most enjoyed in the book was the philosophical speculation about the nature of reality and the meaning of words. When Ragle initiates a conversation with his brother-in-law about philosophy, he cites George Berkeley ~ the Idealist philosopher who proposed that nothing actually exists except as ideas in the mind of God. "*How do we know that piano exists?*" says Ragle and Vic replies "*I'm sorry, but as far as I'm concerned, that's just a bunch of words*" (49).

Vic's dismissal of Berkeley's metaphysics as "*just a bunch of words*" inspires further speculation by Ragle.

"Central problem in philosophy. Relation of word to object . . . what is a word? Arbitrary sign. But we live in words. Our reality, among words not things. No such thing as a thing anyhow; a gestalt in the mind. Thingness . . . sense of substance. An illusion. Word is more real than the object it represents. Word doesn't represent reality. Word is reality. For us, anyhow. Maybe God gets to objects . Not us, though" (50).

But there are theological undertones as well.

"In the beginning, he reflected, was the word" (40).

Later Ragle repeats the words of St. John.

"'Under everything else,' Ragle said. 'The word. Maybe it's the word of God. The logos. 'In the beginning was the Word'"(170).

The religious theme in this book is not pronounced like it is in *The Cosmic Puppets*. In fact, it doesn't seem particularly relevant to the story at all, but it is clearly something that infuses Dick's writing even when it is not essential to the story. Junie calls Ragle a "*sacred spirit*" (157). Towards the end of the book, after Ragle discovers the truth, after the veil of illusion is lifted, he says: "*I'm the savior of this planet*" (202). But Ragle

is not really Messianic like Jones is in *The World Jones Made*.

The philosophical foundation of *Time Out of Joint* is the Platonic distinction between the true nature of reality and the illusion that we usually mistake for reality. Once Ragle sets out to discover the truth, it is Immanuel Kant that he cites. Kant's philosophy distinguishes between the world of our perceptions and the world as it truly is. "*The Ding an sich, as Kant said*" (170).

All this escalation of philosophical intensity leads to big expectations, but when the truth comes out, it's anticlimactic. It's a good enough idea in and of itself, but it only barely ties in with the philosophical speculation that precedes it. The slips of paper, for example, make little sense other than to heighten the mystery. They suggest something metaphysical that just isn't there. Also, a practical matter ~ wouldn't it have been easier to just build a soft-drink stand than to brainwash people into seeing one?

But this novel has its strengths as well and the greatest strength is the character of Ragle Gumm. In the setting of 1950s suburbia, Ragle lives with his sister and brother-in-law, making his living by participating in a daily newspaper contest which he always wins due to his remarkable ability to perceive patterns and solve puzzles, an ability akin to the precognition featured in other Dick novels. As the mystery gradually unfolds, Ragle questions his sanity.

"I must be crazy, he said to himself.

I'm the man who's supposed to have fought in a war. I'm forty-six years old, supposedly an adult.

Yes, he thought. And I'm a man who lies around the house scrounging a living by filling out Where Will the Little Green Man Be Next? Puzzles in a newspaper contest. While other adults have jobs, wives, homes of their own.

I'm a retarded—psychotic. Hallucinations. Yes, he thought. Insane. Infantile and lunatic. What am I doing, sitting here? Daydreams, at best. Fantasies about rocket ships shooting by overhead, armies and conspiracies. Paranoia.

A paranoid psychosis. Imagining that I'm the center of a vast effort by millions of men and women, involving billions of dollars and infinite work ... a universe revolving around me. Every molecule acting with me in mind. An outward radiation of importance ... to the stars. Ragle Gumm the object of the whole cosmic process, from the inception to final entropy. All matter and spirit, in order to wheel about me" (105-106).

Considering Dick's own struggle with mental illness, this is a theme in his work that interests me. But there's more than insanity going on here. Ragle may suspect that he is hallucinating, that he is paranoid, but he also questions his life choices. He questions his status as an adult. While other men work, he drinks beer, does puzzles, and canoodles with the neighbor's wife. He describes his occupation as "*scrounging a living.*" He calls himself "*infantile.*"

I wonder if this aspect of Ragle's self-criticism is based on Dick himself. Either way, Ragle is a character that appealed to me right from the start. Perhaps it's because of his self-doubt. Perhaps it's because he feels like he isn't living an adult life, even though he's doing the best that he can. Perhaps it's because he sees himself as infantile and insane even as he imagines himself to be the center of the universe. His delusions of grandeur coexist with his inferiority complex. But whatever the reason, I felt a connection with him.

Ettore1207 says

Una storia di fantascienza scritta alla fine degli anni '50 e che si legge con piacere ancora oggi, a distanza di 60 anni, deve avere delle doti. Il libro parte in sordina narrando le vicende di una famiglia americana un po' scombinata. La prima parte è abbastanza piatta, poi, a piccole dosi, si costruisce un incubo che si fa via via più angosciante. La realtà si fa irreali, e ingannevole diventa la percezione del mondo e di se stessi. Finale splendido.

Carminesays

Omino Verde cercasi

"Cos'è questo posto che non ricordo?"

L'opera di Dick - Weir con il suo "Truman Show" ringrazia sentitamente - sonda con innegabile efficacia l'effimera percezione sensoriale della realtà circostante, da tutti considerata inalienabile e incorruttibile. Dick dipinge con disarmante lucidità la società americana anni '50, succube dei timori della guerra fredda nonché vittima inconsapevole di un mondo depositario del "pensiero prestabilito" - falsi ricordi, mezze verità, microversi fallaci - che gettano non pochi dubbi circa il libero arbitrio e l'effettiva libertà dell'individuo inserito in un contesto sociale.

Come quasi ogni romanzo dell'autore, l'originalità del tema supera di gran lunga la prosa, a tratti grezza e poco raffinata.

Maria Dobos says

1959. Într-un mic ora? din America, Ragle Gumm î?i câ?tig? existen?a g?sind solu?iile unui concurs publicat zi de zi în ziarul *Gazette*. Locuind cu familia surorii lui, via?a lui Ragle urmeaz? acela?i tipar cotidian, timpul lui împ?r?indu-se între întâlirile cu familia Black ?i concursul care i-a adus notorietatea. Încet, încet, senza?ia unor lucruri care nu au existat vreodat? începe s?-i macine con?tiin?a, destr?mându-i realitatea ?i f?cându-l s?-?i pun? la îndoial? propriile percep?ii, gânduri ?i amintiri. A?adar, este lumea lui real? sau doar o am?gire?

M? tot întreb dac? Orson Scott Card ?i-a g?sit vreun strop de inspira?ie pentru *Jocul lui Ender* în cartea asta... Cu toate c? nu a fost chiar ceea ce m? a?teptam, stilul lui Philip K. Dick a fost chiar pl?cut, nici pe departe atât de confuz ca în *Ubik* sau în *Invazia divin?*, dar p?strându-?i în acela?i timp doza de irealitate.

Aprile says

Time out of joint – tempo fuor di sesto, fuor di squadra

Il titolo precedente era Tempo fuori luogo. Fanucci editore riporta il titolo italiano all'originale versione tratta da una citazione dall'Amleto di Shakespeare. Sesto è l'antico nome del compasso che, permettendo di tracciare cerchi perfetti rimanda al significato di misura esatta, di ordine regolare. Essendo qui il tempo fuor di sesto, si intende dire che qualcosa, il tempo stesso, non gira più con la dovuta regolarità o precisione.

Splendida la prima parte del romanzo, quella in cui i personaggi sentono che qualcosa stride, che non vi è esatta corrispondenza tra ciò che vivono e ciò che la loro 'memoria abitudinaria' trasmette.

Sollevò la mano cercando a tentoni la cordicella della luce. Margo lo chiamò a voce alta: "Fa' in fretta, caro"... "D'accordo" borbottò, cercando ancora la cordicella... Ancora non aveva trovato la cordicella della luce che penzolava nel buio del bagno. Nausea e irritazione crebbero e cominciò a dimenarsi nell'oscurità, sollevando entrambe le braccia, a mani unite con i pollici tesi che si toccavano; fece ruotare le mani in un ampio cerchio. Sbatté la testa contro l'angolo dell'armadietto e imprecò... Poi all'improvviso si rese conto che non c'era nessuna cordicella. C'era un interruttore a parete... Perché ricordavo una cordicella? Si chiese. Una cordicella precisa, che pende fino a un punto preciso, in una posizione precisa. Non brancolavo a caso, come farei in un bagno sconosciuto. Cercavo una cordicella che avevo tirato tante volte. Abbastanza da innescare una reazione automatica nel mio sistema nervoso involontario. "A voi non è mai successo?" disse sedendosi al tavolo.

E' proprio questo che colpisce, forse più della spiegazione successiva, della creazione di un mondo artificiale, della guerra civile, della guerra nucleare. Mi colpisce e mi fa pensare lo straniamento che può provare l'uomo quando non è in grado di riallacciarsi all'autenticità del proprio passato, cosa che gli permetterebbe di acquistare consapevolezza di sé e gli conferirebbe il pieno diritto di esistere attribuendosi un senso e una identità. Quando questo meccanismo viene meno, qui per motivi legati al 'racconto fantascientifico', ma in altri casi per motivi reali – per esempio malattie neurologiche –, e viene meno la capacità di raccontarsi perché la memoria è diventata inaffidabile, lo straniamento e il terrore percepito e la nausea devono essere impossibili da affrontare.

Ho letto Tempo fuor di sesto vent'anni dopo il futuro immaginato da Philip Dick, e il libro ancora tiene. Emozionante, commoventi anche le relazioni tra i personaggi di quel mondo ricreato, in alcuni casi profonde anche se fuor di sesto.

Dan Schwent says

While the rest of the world toils at their jobs, Ragle Gumm stays at home, his sole source of income a daily newspaper contest called "Where will the little green man appear next?" When odd things start happening, Ragle thinks he may be having a nervous breakdown. Is he or is it something much more sinister?

Of course it is something more sinister. This is a Philip K. Dick novel.

A Dickhead at work has been after me for years to read this. After mindbending reads like The Great Forgetting, Dark Matter, and The Mirage, the road I was on was leading to Dick anyway so I gave this a shot.

First off, the things I didn't care for: The prose was really bland and the pace was a little slow for a 250 page book with huge type. As for the rest of it, I liked it quite a bit. I wish the Goodreads summary and the back cover blurb hadn't spoiled the big twist, though.

(view spoiler)

While I didn't think it was awesome, I did enjoy Time out of Joint. It's a literary ancestor to books like The

Great Forgetting and Pines. Three out of five stars.

Apatt says

*“Finished with my woman 'cause she couldn't help me with my mind
people think I'm insane because I am frowning all the time
All day long I think of things but nothing seems to satisfy
Think I'll lose my mind if I don't find something to pacify*

Can you help me occupy my brain?”

Cheers, Ozzy! That is Black Sabbath's Paranoid, of course. Fits the bill for me!

I have a copy of *Time Out of Joint* languishing in my house for over ten years. I have no idea where it came from, I am pretty sure I never bought it. Is that weird? No, I guess not. I could tell you how I suddenly decided to read it after having ignored it for ten years, but that would be a spectacularly uninteresting anecdote so I will leave that out.

Normally I try to avoid reading a book's synopsis before reading it (more fun that way) but on this occasion, after reading 40 or so pages of *Time Out of Joint* I really had no idea where dear old PKD is going with this one. If this wasn't a PKD I would have dumped it by then but Dick is always worth persevering with.

For synopsis fans, *Time Out of Joint* is ostensibly set in 1959 (the year of this book's first publication), it is the story of Ragle Gumm, a man who makes a living from the cash prizes from a “Where Will The Little Green Man Be Next?” competition in a local gazette that he always win. His name is always shown in a special box on the gazette's competition winners page as nobody else I even come close. Gumm is not a happy man, though (PKD's protagonists never are), he always has a feeling that something is “off” about his world. Matters come to a head one day when a soft-drink stand disappears right in front of his eyes, to be replaced by a bit of paper with “SOFT-DRINK STAND” printed on it. OK... Soon Gumm starts to feel like he is, for some reason, the center of the universe, but not in a good way.

Many reviews of *Time Out of Joint* mention that the book's plot is similar to *The Truman Show*, a 1998 film (Jim Carrey's best, IMO) which this book predates of course. Certainly there is a strong element of that. Gumm live in an artificially constructed suburban town in an artificial 1959. A more recent book that is thematically similar to *Time Out of Joint* is Alastair Reynolds' clever noir crime/space opera mashup novel *Century Rain* where the protagonist also believes he lives in 1959.*

Time Out of Joint is a clever, mind-bending and thought provoking book. Dick's favorite theme of questioning the nature of our reality is wonderfully put to use here; as is his customary stilted dialogue. I like the book but, unfortunately, the execution leaves a little to be desired. PKD is not yet at the height of his powers at this time and the narrative and expositions can be a bit of a mess, there are also some superfluous scenes which I feel he should have left out, as they dragged on the narrative's pacing unnecessarily.

I would still recommend it though, better than a poke in the eye any day!

4 3.5 stars.

* A coincidence? Doubtful. That Reynolds may have been inspired by PKD is not hard to imagine, what SF author never read anything by Dick? *Time Out of Joint* also predates Heinlein's better known classic *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress* which—surprisingly—shares some similarities with this book.

Interesting/Fun quotes

“He never went down to the crosswalk; he always crossed in the middle of the block, directly to the café, even if he had to wait at the curb minute after minute. A point of honor was involved, an element of manliness.”

“It's clear to us that you believe what you say. But don't you see what you're doing? Because you believe everyone's against you, you force everyone to be against you.”

“Central problem in philosophy. Relation of word to object ... what is a word? Arbitrary sign. But we live in words. Our reality, among words not things. No such thing as a thing anyhow; a gestalt in the mind. Thingness ... sense of substance. An illusion. Word is more real than the object it represents.”

I have no idea what that last quote means, LOL!

Ana says

I *really* liked this. In typical Dick fashion, for the first 60 or 70 pages you have no idea what direction the story is going in. You get a few hints, but they don't amount to much, maybe like repetition of some terms or incongruencies in dialogue. And then, out of nowhere, you turn the page and BAM, there's the real plot, and there's the line you're supposed to follow. Apart from one moment in the book where I really felt like the dialogue/situation was forced in order to give the story the momentum it needed, this was a highly enjoyable read for a SF fan like myself. I'm glad I didn't even read the description of the book on here, because it gives everything away. Reading it *tabula rasa* made it much more enjoyable than if I would've known what it is about.

Dagio_maya says

Please to meet you Mr Dick

1959- In una qualunque cittadina di una qualunque provincia americana, Ragle Gumm vive con la sorella Margot, il cognato Victor ed il nipotino Sammy.

All'apparenza una vita tranquilla: il lavoro, le visite del vicinato, le faccende domestiche...

Ma questa è un'epoca su cui aleggia lo spauracchio fobico della bomba H e la certezza di un'imminente invasione russa.

A 46 anni Ragle non ha quello che comunemente può essere definito un vero lavoro.

La sua attività, infatti, consiste nel risolvere i quiz pubblicati da un quotidiano. Iniziato come semplice gioco è ormai diventata un'occupazione a tempo pieno che frutta denaro ed anche fama essendo oramai un affermato vincitore seriale.

Qualcosa, tuttavia, non va; non è solo l'insoddisfazione professionale.

Ragle si sente turbato, disturbato e a ciò contribuiscono piccoli episodi insoliti che mettono in dubbio che

tutto si svolga secondo natura.

*"Sì, c'è qualcosa di storto — disse Ragle.
— Voglio dire, non in te o in me o in qualcun altro. Dico in generale.
— «Il tempo» — disse Ragle — «è fuori luogo»."*

Una storia appallottolata come il filo di una matassa e che sbrigliandosi va a costruire un'originale trama fantastica.

“Tempo fuori luogo” è un'ucronia che sicuramente ha dato più di uno spunto alla narrativa di genere che ne è seguita benché non colpisca certo con una brillante cifra stilistica.

Leggi e non puoi fare a meno di pensare a “The Truman show” piuttosto che “Ritorno al futuro”.

E se oggi alcune paranoiche proiezioni in quel futuro-che per noi è passato- immaginato quasi sessant'anni fa, fanno sorridere, e al tempo stesso interessante fermarsi a pensare che esperienza di lettura possa essere stata per l'ignaro lettore degli anni '60.

Ma qui mi fermo. Non entro nel merito. Il libro va letto.

Ho rotto il ghiaccio: please to meet you Mr Dick!!

amaya says

We were at the library today for some hours, and I was milling about looking for books on my 'To-Read' list; in the absence of 'The Man in the High Castle', I decided to give this one a go - and I wasn't disappointed.

Though it started a bit slowly, it picked up soon enough and then just whizzed by. It didn't take me long to finish, and it was difficult to put down.

It's difficult to summarise without giving too much away, so I'll try to keep things basic - because even the description on the book itself, to me, ruined some of the surprise (though did manage to keep some things hidden).

Ragle Gumm lives with his sister, brother-in-law, and their son Sammy. The year is, for all intents and purposes, 1959, and they lead a simple life: Margo, a home mum who dabbles in a little civic activism; Victor, her husband and local grocer; Ragle, an apparent lay-about who, in actuality, spends his days earning income by completing newspaper puzzles; Sammy, school-aged and ever intrigued by technology.

Their immediate neighbours are the Blacks, Bill - tidy, invasive, and neurotic - and his wife, Junie - a provocative, wistful, and shallow woman who fancies herself eternally sixteen.

Only a few other characters round out the novel, but that's about all that's needed. Ragle, with his daily warm beer and propensity toward pattern-seeking, gradually suspects that things aren't as they seem in their little picturesque town. At times, his struggle recalls the more modern 'The Truman Show', and it's a curious thing to try and discern what's real and what's illusory.

Is Ragle simply hallucinating, sinking under the weight of his own paranoia, his mind drifting ever closer to

the gravitational pull of insanity?

Is he caught in a dystopian nightmare, finally seeing over the well's edge only to find himself again at the bottom with only a whisper of recollection?

Or is it something else entirely that we can't begin to imagine?

Take a couple hours out of your day to find out; it's worth it.

Stian says

What a strange book.

I wonder if this is where the creators of 'The Truman Show' got their inspiration. A really kooky story about an ordinary guy who thinks he's living in the 1950s and just doing ordinary stuff in an ordinary little town. But is he? Well, it's Philip K. Dick. Of course he isn't. It's all some really weird crap and nothing really makes any god damn sense -- at least not until the ending, but even that is just crazy stuff.
