

*A micro-ebook reformatted from*

**Symbiosis: a Journal of Anglo-American Literary Relations**

*Volume 6.2*

John Goodridge

**The electric shepherd and the marvellous  
boy: literary evocations of Thomas  
Chatterton's 'suicide' in Philip K. Dick's  
'A Scanner Darkly' and elsewhere.**

<http://www.humanities-ebooks.co.uk>

FOR GUIDANCE ON USE OF THIS EBOOK PLEASE SCROLL TO PAGE 2

# PUBLICATION DATA

© Symbiosis 2002, 2007 all rights reserved

The Author has asserted his right to be identified as the author of this Work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published in SYMBIOSIS, 6.2, October 2002, pp.115–32

2nd electronic edition published in 2007 by Humanities-Ebooks LLP

<http://www.humanities-ebooks.co.uk>

Tirril Hall, Tirril, Penrith CA10 2JE

Essays published in Symbiosis are subsequently digitized for the benefit of the author (80%) and the Journal (20%)

## READING OPTIONS

To use the toolbar this Ebook should be read in default view.

To navigate use the hyperlinked 'Bookmarks' or thumbnails at the left of the screen.

To search, click on the binocular symbol in the toolbar.

Use <CTRL+L> to enlarge the page to full screen.

## LICENCE AND PERMISSIONS

This ebook is licensed for reading on a particular computer.

The original purchaser may license the same work for a second computer by applying to [support@humanities-ebooks.co.uk](mailto:support@humanities-ebooks.co.uk) with proof of purchase.

It is permissible to print a watermarked copy of the book for your own use.

ISSN: 1362-7902

A cumulative index of Symbiosis essays and reviews is online at

<http://www.symbiosisonline.org.uk>

John Goodridge

## The electric shepherd and the marvellous boy: literary evocations of Thomas Chatterton's 'suicide' in Philip K. Dick's *A Scanner Darkly* and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

I think the thing about suicide is that something happens to your sense of time and space. Space closes in on you [...] and so does time, very ominously. You are living in an extended now, which seems as if it will never end. It's like an LSD trip in which linear time has stopped unrolling. [...] A person who has never entered a suicidal period simply has no idea what it's like—the congealing, cooling world where no birds sing ... people receding, their voices dimming, heard less and less frequently. The shock of loss, the pain of shock, and the awful self-doubt. I think there is an actual evil voice within which whispers, 'Do it.'

—Philip K. Dick<sup>2</sup>

Hark! how he groans! see! see! he foams! he gasps!  
And his convulsive Hand the pois'nous Phial grasps.

—Edward Rushton, *Neglected Genius* (1787)<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. The 'electric shepherd' is Bruce Gillespie's term for Philip K. Dick, in the title of his book *Philip K. Dick: Electric Shepherd* (Melbourne, Australia: Norstrilia Press, 1975), alluding to Dick's classic novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968). 'The marvellous boy' is Wordsworth's term for Chatterton, in 'Resolution and Independence' (pub. 1807). I follow Dick's critics and biographers in using the neologism 'Phildickian' to evoke the unique flavour of his writings. Versions of this essay were given as seminar papers at Newcastle and Nottingham Trent University, and at Tim Webb's 'Romantic Bristol' conference (Bristol, 1998). I am grateful to Bill Christmas for information about 'Trader Joe's', and to Nick Groom, Catherine Byron and Alison Ramsden for their many helpful suggestions.
  2. Letter to James R. Bass, 10 November 1977. *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick*,