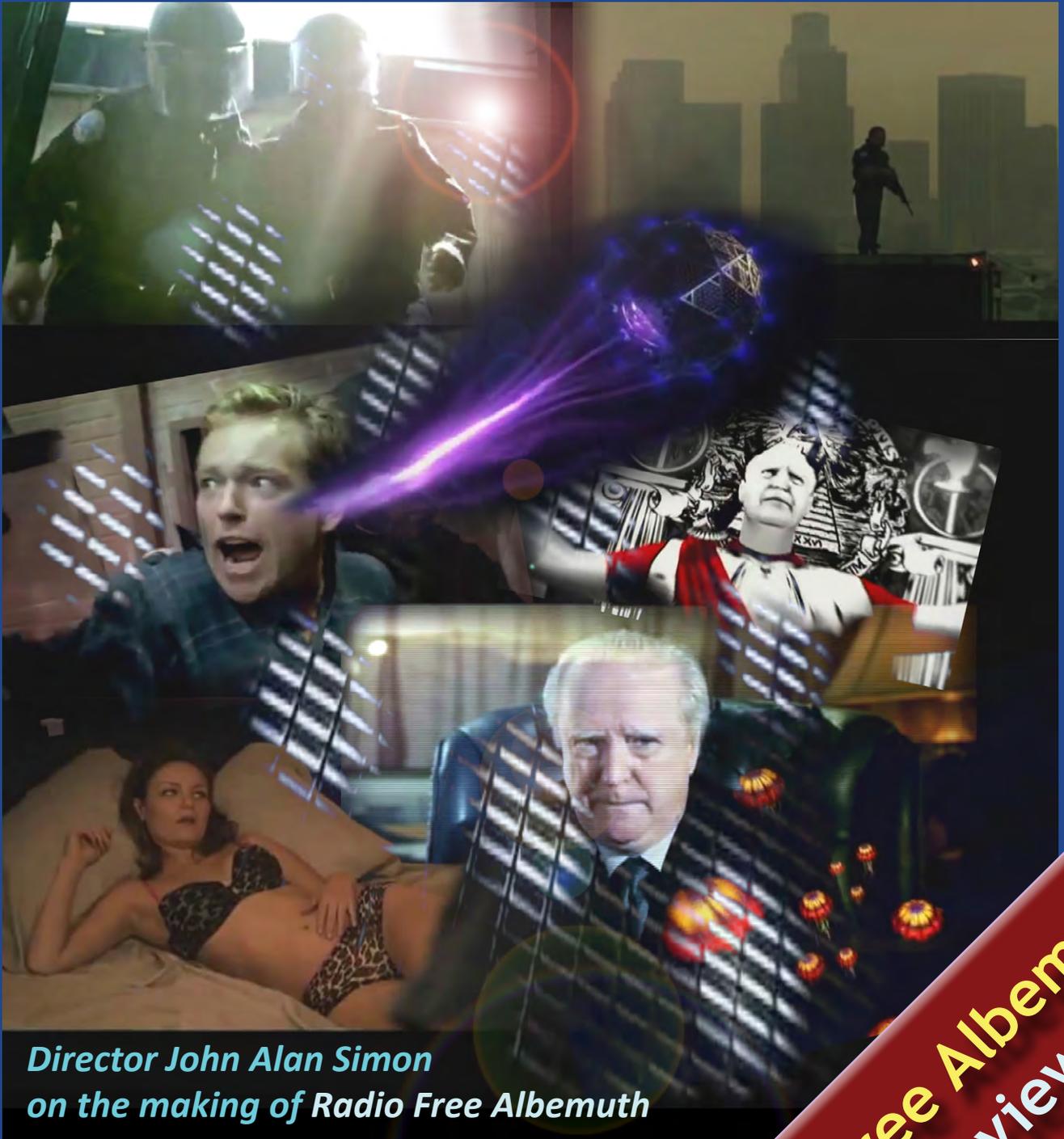


Photo of Phil © Tessa Dick, by kind permission

August 2014



*Director John Alan Simon
on the making of Radio Free Albemuth*

**Radio Free Albemuth
Film Reviewed**

P K D

#31

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Otaku is a zine made by fans for fans.

It exists to celebrate, explore and discuss the work of Philip K Dick.

The Otaku Team have enjoyed the writing and ideas of Philip K. Dick for decades, and continue to do so.

The subject of Philip K. Dick benefits from diverse perspectives, opinions, and insights.

In this zine we hope to explore the Novels, Short-Fiction, Non-fiction and ideas of Philip K Dick.

If you would like to contribute (a letter of comment, an article, essay or review) please make your submission in MS Doc, Rtf or Txt form to the Otaku Team c/o Patrick Clark via email:

pkdotaku@gmail.com

All submissions are welcome and considered, but we cannot promise that all will see print.

Thank you for maintaining the dialogue!

-- The PKD OTAKU Team

PKD Otaku Layout, Logo, Graphics and Typesetting
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Editorial

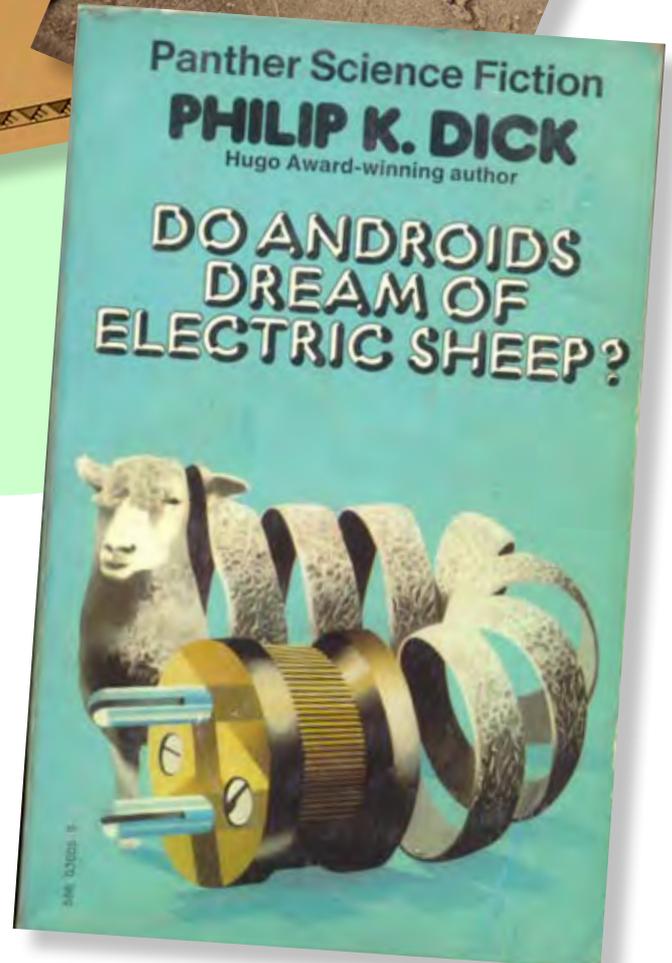
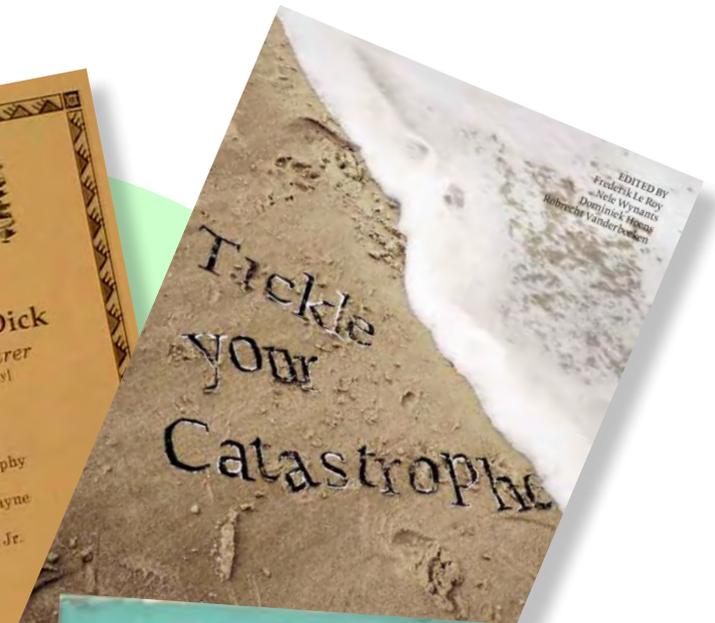
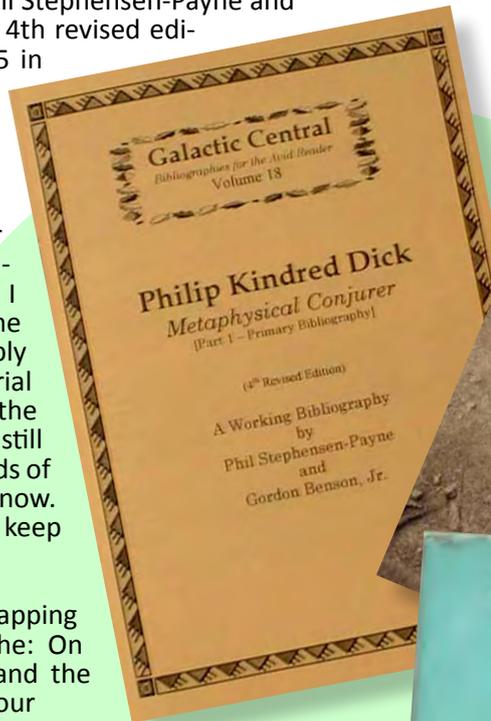
by Patrick Clark

I suppose every article and comment and letter that ever appeared in these 31 issues of PKD Otaku would need to be included in any theoretical new edition of "Philip K. Dick: A Secondary Bibliography" making me a part of the information-overload problem.

I have a copy of "Philip K. Dick: Metaphysical Conjurer, A Working Bibliography" by Phil Stephensen-Payne and Gordon Benson Jr. This is the 4th revised edition published in February 1995 in two volumes. Even in 1995 the secondary literature on Phil was getting out of hand with 472 citations. I was helping Phil Stephensen-Payne with updates back in the late 90s for a proposed 5th edition. That evidently was never published and I don't know what became of the project. Perhaps it was simply buried in the avalanche of material about PKD that has appeared in the last fifteen years and which is still coming. There must be thousands of such new articles and books by now. How in the world could anyone keep track of it all?

Consider this one: Eli Noe, 'Mapping the Present through Catastrophe: On Philip K. Dick, Science Fiction and the Critique of Ideology' in "Tickle Your Catastrophe"; Ghent, The Netherlands: Academic Press, 2011. "Tickle Your Catastrophe" is a collection of essays on architecture, performing arts, cinema and urban studies. I'm not at all sure what Noe's piece is doing here but here it is nonetheless. It's by no means a bad essay; it has some interesting things to say about Phil and DO ANDROIDS DREAM and is not too overburdened with academic jargon. I imagine it would have fit nicely into a new edition of "Metaphysical Conjurer" if one existed. Assuming, that is, that anyone came across it in the first place. I did, yes, but by accident; I was actually looking for a different essay in the same volume.

Who knows what else is out there? How many hundreds of thousands, how many millions of words have been processed in this great examination of Philip K. Dick? Not just words on paper: consider all that has appeared on the Internet as well. Terabytes? At least. No one could ever sift through it all. What are we missing? Are we missing anything? I mean, finally, how many new revelations, how many keen insights, how many fertile observations can there really be in this Sargasso of material? I don't know. I haven't the faintest idea. Maybe very few or (and this is the troubling aspect) maybe quite a lot. I'll never know. No one, I suspect, will ever know.



Director's Statement

By John Alan Simon

During the early seventies, parents and authority figures used to warn the kids that once they tried psychedelics like LSD there was no going back. The wiring of their brains would be permanently damaged and unpredictably altered.

Similar cautions should have been posted on the cover of **Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch** and **Ubik**. But I probably wouldn't have heeded those either.

Back then, reading PKD was still something of an underground experience. The lurid paperback original covers reinforced his books as prototypical guilty pleasures. But for a sci-fi reader weaned on Heinlein, Asimov, Shekley and even Van Vogt, the works of PKD suddenly opened the floodgates to something disorienting, raw and more than a little bit dangerous to notions of everyday objective reality.

Blade Runner was still a few years away and as Nick tells Phil in **Radio Free Albemuth** "your entire readership consists of druggies, misfits and freaks." That felt about right.

It was a cold-sweat experience to bump up against the shifting realities and nightmarish visions of his short stories and novels. Those who willingly and eagerly entered this sanity-challenging worm-hole time and time again felt like a select brotherhood. Roller coaster riders of literary altered consciousness.

Thirty years later, PKD has entered the mainstream of modern American literature. Magazine covers from *The New Republic* to *Wired*, hundreds of scholarly articles, and, even his own editions in the ultra-establishment *Modern American Library*. And of course, movies. Many movies. Probably more than any other science fiction writer ever. And with even more promised to come.

America keeps trying to make PKD safe and give him the good house-keeping seal of approval, but like the bizarre, transforming product **UBIK**, PKD keeps re-asserting his true subversive nature.

Like most PKD fans I always look forward with a mixture of dread and hope to each new adaptation that's announced. How is Hollywood going to mess it up this time? But that's a little unfair. All of the film adaptations so far have something to recommend them – even those that drift far from their source material - *Blade Runner*, which is a masterpiece in its own right, **Minority Report**,

Total Recall, even **Paycheck** and **Screamers** and **Impostor** – and the very entertaining and seldom seen French film *Barjo*. But none with the possible exception of **A Scanner Darkly**, have captured what feels to me like the essence of PKD's paranoid, darkly humorous, playful and above all tender view of the human condition.

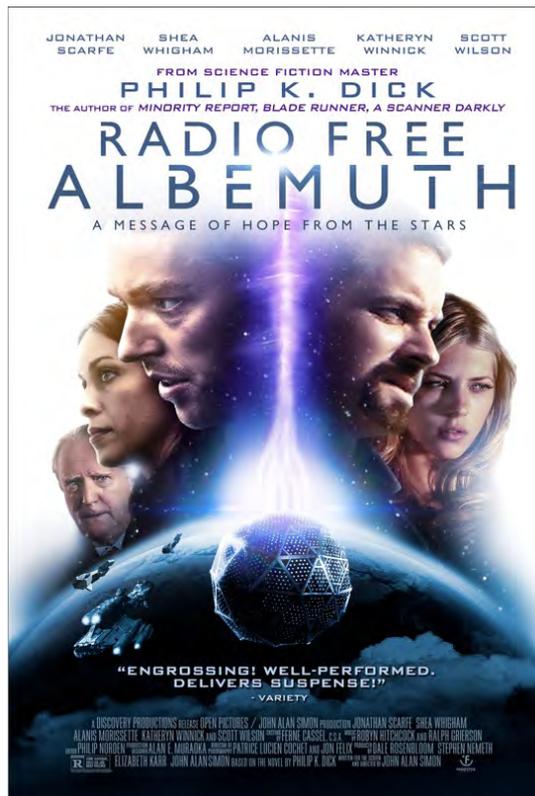
For my own personal taste, the closest to pure PKD the movies have come so far are two of Terry Gilliam's best films – *Brazil* and *12 Monkeys*. Which of course weren't even based on PKD works at all, but clearly show his influence.

In the meantime, the Hollywood development mill most often simply grinds up the central premises of PKD's stories for conventional action-adventure movies – whether explicitly based on his works or simply owing such huge

debts of influence to him as *Vanilla Sky* and *the Matrix*.

Within the confines of the science fiction pulp mill machinery, PKD was intent on trying to squeeze out something uniquely timely and disturbing and personally meaningful. And he was trying to push the limits of the form – or maybe on some level he was just plain bored with the conventions and rules of logic and science that strangled the style and substance of "normal" science fiction. Strange though it might sound, for me, the sensibility of *Sideways* or *The Squid and the Whale* come closer to PKD than most of the movies taken from his work.

So that's the goal I set for myself with this film – to try to capture PKD's singular voice and world-view intact onto the screen. The conventional wisdom may well be right. The audience for such a venture is likely a modest one – but this is the PKD movie I've wanted to see for a long time.



Among PKD's science fiction novels, **Radio Free Albemuth** uniquely lends itself to this purist approach. It also carried with it what I felt to be a special responsibility. RFA was his most autobiographical work and he placed himself as a character within its context. The central fictional aspect is that one of the most important events in PKD's real (and imaginative) life is given over to his best friend "Nick" – extraterrestrial contact with what PKD termed VALIS – for vast active living intelligent system.

For the last ten years or so of his life, PKD became obsessed with the messages he believed were coming to him from VALIS, presaging some kind of second coming and piercing what he believed to be the illusion of modernity. The Ancient Roman Empire was still alive and suppressing Christian individualism, PKD came to believe. Modern America was only the incarnation of its latest gloomy, totalitarian regime.

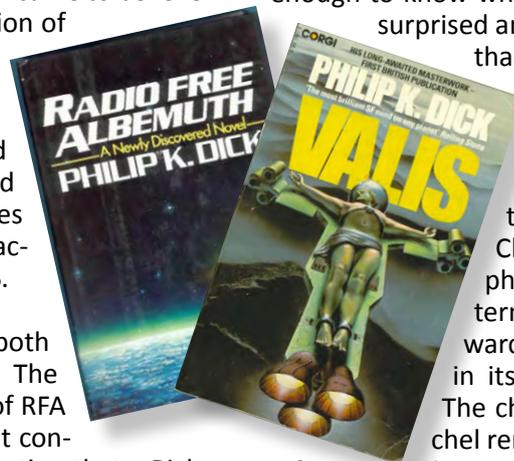
RFA was PKD's last published novel. Published posthumously (and re-titled from "**Valis-system A**") after it was found by his literary executor, RFA is sometimes regarded as a trial run for one of PKD's acknowledged literary masterworks **VALIS**.

The satellite known as VALIS appears in both novels, but the similarities end there. The world of VALIS is our own. The world of RFA is a strange alternate past reality. That concept has always fascinated me. The notion that a Richard Nixon like president might have burned the tapes and is still in office 15 years later, having clamped down on dissidents and now dedicated to the hunt for a shadowy terrorist organization. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? But Dick wasn't trying to predict the future; he was far more interested in a theme that runs throughout his work. The value of the individual against the power of the state. It's a doomed quest, of course. PKD would have it no other way. For a writer who's become a Hollywood darling, Hollywood endings are few and far between in his stories.

Producing a period film with so many speaking parts and so many locations at an ultra low budget was an ambitious undertaking. I was very fortunate that for the most part, the right people found their way to this project as both cast and crew. It was physically grueling for the most part. Six day weeks, most days more than 14 hours long. There was little time to think let alone watch dailies. Sundays were spent hunting down locations that had to be replaced due to the Malibu fires. For an admitted control freak who likes to plan everything out, it was an uncomfortable experience sometimes to arrive at a location for the first time only minutes before I had to

start shooting there.

A few years ago, when I first started thinking seriously about directing, I asked Walter Hill for some advice. I was expecting some savvy tips about camera placement, dealing with temperamental actors, tough shooting conditions. What he offered was the following. "The hardest part about directing, is directing yourself. The rest of it is pretty easy" At the time, I wasn't sure what he meant. Now I think I understand. Just a different version of the Socratic injunction to "know thyself." The toughest part about making a movie is figuring out what you want; once you know what you want, getting it isn't so terribly hard. There's lots of people around to help. Most of the time on this movie, I was fortunate enough to know what I wanted. But some times I was surprised and given something so much better than what I had initially wanted, that it didn't matter.



One of the challenges in planning the film was how exactly to treat the character of Philip K. Dick. Clearly RFA is not an autobiography in any conventional sense of the term. Most of PKD's novels tend toward a kind of sardonic noir. So did RFA in its adaptation to screenplay form. The characters of Nick and Phil and Rachel reminded me of the doomed triangle characters in Cutter Way, another story

of about sixties survivors who uncover a vast evil conspiracy beyond their ability to cope with.

The "Phil" of RFA although a science fiction writer is not the PKD of flesh and blood who inhabited our own reality. Anymore than Philip Marlow, however similar he might have been to his creator, was actually his author Raymond Chandler. "Phil" is an idealized version of the author himself. And that's to some degree that's how I chose to deal with the PKD character of the film. Too strict adherence to the facts of biography didn't seem to fit the framework of an alternate dystopian past universe. Anyway, on a more practical level, I didn't want my actor to have the burden of trying to re-create the real author. Something which a planned upcoming bio-pic of PKD may undertake in more realistic and factual fashion.

Making a movie at any budget level is hard work. Making a movie as ambitious in scope as RFA at a relatively miniscule budget demands a great deal of everyone involved. I felt my job as director was try to lead as best I could by example and to try to convey the same sense of inspiration I felt in telling this story. Nearly everyone involved

rose to the task, most especially the actors, all of whom worked for far less than their established salaries. And the producers, including myself, all of whom deferred their salaries. It was a labor of love for nearly everyone involved. And virtually everyone stepped up to the plate to help me make my first film as a director a better film that I ever imagined possible. The same love that I think motivated the best work by PKD and that he ultimately found redemptive despite the lack of commercial success and recognition in his own lifetime. Good work is its own reward. I enjoyed every minute of making this film. Even the frustrating and painful moments.

One advantage of working on a very low budget is the luxury of casting actors without the tyranny of pure economic consideration. No studio lists. No foreign sales company analysis of what star's big in Japan or Spain. Because we were working from a Philip K. Dick novel, I simply got to choose the best actors who were available and wanted to play in this particular sandbox with us. Talented and experienced actors without entourages. Actors who wouldn't gripe about minimal pay, long hours, small dressing rooms and the absence of the myriad other star perks. The casting process was enjoyable and deeply educational for me. Every actor who auditioned helped me refine my perception of the characters. The final principal cast - Jonathan Scarfe as Nick, Shea Whigham as Phil and Katheryn Winnick as Rachel were emotionally available, playful, collaborative and hard-working, all the qualities a director needs.

Early in the casting process, I met Alanis Morissette and after a few hours of stirring conversation, offered her the part of Sylvia on the spot. She simply embodied my idea of who that character might be. A combination Joan-of-Arc and mellow musician slacker. Alanis brings her positive energy to every undertaking. Radio Free Albemuth, which she considers her dramatic film debut, is almost unthinkable to me without her presence. Along with my wife/casting director/co-producer Elizabeth Karr, she was a true muse to this production. She's also a hell-of-a-girl and a lot of fun to be around. If there is a VALIS orbiting our own little world, I've no doubt Alanis would be one of the chosen.

Many people worked very hard to bring this screenplay to life. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my producing partners on the project, Dale Rosenbloom, Philip Kim, Stephen Nemeth and Elizabeth Karr. Uniquely on movies I've worked on, none of the producers took any fee out of the budget whatsoever. All gave generously of their time and care.

The movie also owes a special thanks to the Philip K. Dick Trust, particularly his daughters Laura and Isa, and their agent Russ Galen for entrusting us with such incredible material to build upon. Their leap of faith regarding our good intentions to honor the source novel, which touches so closely upon their father's life and beliefs, was matched only by their patience and generosity of spirit. Every fan of PKD, should take comfort in the knowledge that his literary legacy is in their hands. The launch of their own film and television production company, Electric Shepard, bodes particularly well for cinematic adaptations yet to come.

Virtually everyone on our crew worked at far below their normal "quote". For the most part they cheerfully tapped their inner creative resources instead of throwing money at problems. If every movie is a miracle, then RFA was particularly miraculous and even blessed, not a particularly easy thing for a life-long non-believer/skeptic to admit. The cinematographers - Patrice Cochet and Jon Felix; Editor; Philip Norden; production designer, Alan E. Muraoka; Visual Consultant, Priscilla Elliot; Sound Designer, Evan Frankfurt; Make-up: Sharon Simon; Costume Designer, Jayme Bohn; special effects artists Angstrom Group - Ergin Kuke, Yas Koyama and Klaus Seitschek - and special effects artist Shawn Hunter - all gave tirelessly to help me excavate this movie from the deep recesses of my cortex to the screen earned my everlasting appreciation.

I was given the creative freedom to make the movie I wanted to make - to channel the vision of PKD as best I could capture it. It was a rare opportunity, for which I will be forever grateful.



John Alan Simon (Director of Radio Free Albemuth)

<http://radiofreealbemuth.com/>



RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH

SYNOPSIS:

Philip K. Dick's most revealing and autobiographical novel was published after his death. Dick made himself one of the major characters in this story of an alternate past reality in which Richard F. Fremont, a Nixon-like President has managed to cling to power into a fifth term of office while hunting down a shadowy terrorist organization. Nick Brady, a record store clerk in Berkeley, begins to receive messages and visions from a mysterious and God-like source from the star system Albemuth, that he dubs VALIS – for Vast Active Living Intelligent System. When offered a high-paying music industry job, Nick, along with his wife Rachel and best friend, Philip K. Dick, a science fiction writer, move down to Los Angeles and find themselves drawn into an extraterrestrial plot to bring down Fremont's totalitarian regime with the subliminal power of music.

FILMMAKERS:

Author, Radio Free Albemuth
 Director, Writer, Producer
 Producer
 Producer
 Producer
 Cinematographers
 Casting Director
 Editor
 Production Designer
 Composers
 Costume Designer

Philip K. Dick
 John Alan Simon
 Dale Rosenbloom
 Elizabeth Karr
 Stephen Nemeth
 Patrice Lucien Cochet
 Jon Felix
 Ferne Cassel
 Philip Norden
 Alan E. Muraoka
 Robyn Hitchcock
 Ralph Grierson
 Jayme Bohn

CAST:

Jonathan Scarfe
 Shea Whigham
 Alanis Morissette
 Katheryn Winnick
 Scott Wilson
 Hanna Hall
 Frank Collison

NICK
 PHIL
 SYLVIA
 RACHEL
 PRESIDENT FREMONT
 VIVIAN KAPLAN
 LEON

ABOUT THE CAST:

Jonathan Scarfe (actor – NICK BRADY)

Jonathan Scarfe was conceived under the moon of Hamlet (his Father and Mother were acting in the play together when he was conceived), raised in New York, and now divides his time between Los Angeles and his island home off the coast of Vancouver where he lives with his wife and two children. Since turning professional at the age of sixteen he has worked on film, television and stage all over the world. He has worked on nearly forty movies and over one hundred thirty hours of episodic television including HELL ON WHEELS, PERCEPTION, RAISING THE BAR, GREY'S ANATOMY, ER, CSI: MIAMI, and NYPD BLUE. He has been nominated five times for the Canadian Emmy's and won once for his portrayal of abused NHL player Sheldon Kennedy. On Stage he has worked on Shakespeare, Stoppard, and Chekov among others. He and his wife, Suki Kaiser, wrote, produced, and directed an award winning Short Film about sexual abuse called SPEAK that is now part of the University curriculum for trauma nurses in Canada. Interesting trivia – Jonathan shares the same birthday, December 16, with Philip K. Dick and director John Alan Simon.

Shea Whigham (actor – PHILIP K. DICK)

Mr. Whigham is a series regular in the Emmy-winning HBO drama BOARDWALK EMPIRE, which has also received the SAG-AFTRA's ACTOR Award for 'Best Ensemble Cast' in a drama series. He plays Steve Buscemi's corrupt police chief brother, Elias 'Eli' Thompson. He can also be seen in the HBO series TRUE DETECTIVE.

Mr. Whigham won BEST ACTOR for his role in RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH at Sydney Fantastic Planet Film Festival.

Shea Whigham began in NY theatre as the co-founder and Artistic Director of the Rorshach Group, but quickly made a name for himself in independent films. Mr. Whigham starred in several independent films prior, but it was his stunning debut in Joel Schumacher's TIGERLAND opposite Colin Farrell that brought him to prominence. Many roles

quickly followed: 'Tip' in David Gordon Green's ALL THE REAL GIRLS (Sundance), 'Russell' in the international film OUT OF THIS WORLD directed by Saamoto Junji; WRIT-STCUTTERS (Sundance); TAKE SHELTER, directed by Jeff Nichols and most recently AMERICAN HUSTLE and SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK, directed by David O. Russell. Coming up for Mr. Whigham is Terrence Malick's film, KNIGHT OF CUPS, currently in post-production. Studio movies includes WOLF OF WALL STREET directed by Martin Scorsese; SAVAGES directed by Oliver Stone; FAST AND FURIOUS 6, directed by Justin Lin; Joel Schumacher's BAD COMPANY; THE LINCOLN LAWYER with Matthew McConaughey; MAN OF THE HOUSE with Tommy Lee Jones; LORDS OF DOGTOWN directed by Catherine Hardwicke and FIRST SNOW with Guy Pearce. When David G. Hartwell, Philip K. Dick's editor and friend saw Shea's performance as Phil in RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH at Lincoln Center Indie Night Series, he thought the resemblance was uncanny and that Shea perfectly captured the essence of Philip K. Dick in his performance. Hartwell thought that JONATHAN SCARFE also captured the essence of a young PKD in his performance of NICK, which is fitting as PKD wrote both characters as two-sides of himself in RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH, his most auto-biographical novel.

Alanis Morissette (actor – SYLVIA)

RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH is Ms. Morissette's first lead role in a feature film. It is fitting that her screen debut is portraying one of Philip K. Dick's iconic heroines, particularly as her first cameo role in a film was as God in Kevin Smith's DOGMA.

Nearly twenty years after the breakthrough debut of Jagged Little Pill, an album which earned four Grammys and spawned a dedicated worldwide fan base, Alanis Morissette remains not only an enduringly popular artist, but one whose success stems from a fierce commitment to authenticity and, to an equal extent, vulnerability. Born and raised in Ottawa, Canada, and Germany, Alanis Morissette played piano, wrote songs and discovered a love of words and dance at an early age. She continues to tour to sold out venues world-wide.

Ms. Morissette appeared in the Cole Porter biopic DE-LOVELY and performed the classic "Let's Do It (Let's Fall in Love)," also contributing the song "Wunderkind" to the soundtrack of THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE (earning a Golden Globe nomination for Best Original Song). Her songs have

also populated such films as CITY OF ANGELS, JAY AND SILENT BOB STRIKE BACK, CLERKS II, THE BREAK-UP and THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA. On screen her other acting work includes roles on Showtime's WEEDS, HBO's SEX AND THE CITY and CURB YOUR ENTHUSIASM along with a three-episode arc on FX's NIP/TUCK. On stage, Morissette starred in THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES and in the off-Broadway play THE EXONERATED as death row inmate Sunny Jacobs.

Katheryn Winnick (actor – RACHEL BRADY)

As her impressively diverse list of credits attests, the beautiful Canadian-born Katheryn Winnick has always been drawn to the unconventional, showing range and depth with every role she plays. Winnick currently stars as the fearless shield maiden, 'Lagertha', wife and warrior of a great Viking leader in the popular History Channel television series "Vikings", with Golden Globe Winner, Gabriel Byrne and Travis Fimmel.

Other films include playing Charlie Sheen's ex in "A Glimpse Inside the Mind of Charles Swan III" (co starring Bill Murray, Patricia Arquette, and Jason Schwartzman); and alongside Al Pacino, Christopher Walken, and Alan Arkin in Lakeshore Entertainment's "Stand Up Guys"; opposite Kurt Russell and Matt Dillon in the heist comedy "The Fix"; a sexy turn opposite Jake Gyllenhaal and Anne Hathaway in Ed Zwick's "Love and Other Drugs"; a fun, physically demanding role as one of the eponymous assassins in the Ashton Kutcher, Katherine Heigl action-comedy, "Killers" (in which Winnick did all her own stunts); a juicy recurring role as David Boreanaz's love interest on Fox's hit primetime TV series, "Bones"; and a subtly endearing performance in Sophie Barthes' "Cold Souls" (2009) alongside Academy Award-nominated co-stars Paul Giamatti, Emily Watson, and David Strathairn that resulted in a nod for 'Best Ensemble Cast' at that year's Independent Spirit Awards.

Winnick demonstrates talent beyond the acting realm as an accomplished martial artist. After receiving her first Black Belt at the ripe old age of thirteen, she went on to compete in the Canadian Nationals, opened a handful of highly-successful Tae Kwon Do schools in and around Toronto, and - as if all that was not enough - eventually trained to become a licensed bodyguard. She currently holds a third-degree Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do and a second-degree Black Belt in Karate.



Katheryn resides in Los Angeles.

Scott Wilson (actor – PRESIDENT FREMONT)

Wilson achieved cult status in his role as Herschel Walker in the cult phenomenon AMC television series THE WALKING DEAD. He's thoroughly enjoying the adulation of fans at Comic-Con. He has appeared in many TV series, including a 9 episode arc in CSI.

Scott Wilson's 1967 motion picture debut was nothing less than spectacular as he appeared in two of the motion picture industry's most classic films, IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT for director Norman Jewison and IN COLD BLOOD for Richard Brooks, Scott Wilson has consistently achieved the highest industry and critical response.



Wilson continues to be in demand for key roles in major motion pictures. In 1997 he co-starred with Demi Moore in Touchstone's G.I. JANE and with Vince Vaughn, Joaquin Phoenix and Janeane Garofalo in CLAY PIGEON for Gramercy (both films made by Ridley Scott's company). Earlier, he starred in Dale Rosenbloom's SHILOH, praised by critics as a family film worthy of both children and adults and in 1999 he starred in the sequel, SHILOH II, SHILOH SEASON. In 2000 he co-starred with Ryan Phillippe and Benicio Del Toro in Christopher MacQuarrie's WAY OF THE GUN.

He has also had lead and supporting roles in more than 40 other films, including THE GRISSOM GANG, LOLLY MADONNA, THE NEW CENTURIONS, THE NINTH CONFIGURATION (which brought him a Golden Globe nomination from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association and Film Festival Awards), ON THE LINE (which won him a Best Actor Award at the Cartagena Film Festival), A YEAR OF THE QUIET SUN (which won the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival), DEAD MAN WALKING, and THE GREAT GATSBY. Wilson's television movies include THE X-FILES ("Orison3"), THE JACK BULL, ELVIS AND THE COLONEL, JESSE, THE TRACKER, and THE TWILIGHT ZONE ("Quarantine").

Hanna Hall (actor – VIVIAN KAPLAN)

Hanna Hall was born and raised in a small mountain town in Colorado. At eight years of age she was discovered at an open call and cast as young Jenny in the Academy Award winning film FORREST GUMP. Hanna choose to maintain

a low profile in Colorado for much of her childhood, selecting to work only in films that really inspired her, such as Sofia Coppola's directing debut VIRGIN SUICIDES and the highly acclaimed Oprah Winfrey production of AMY AND ISABELLE. After completing High School Hanna went on to study film production at the Vancouver film school. Since returning to Hollywood she has been involved on both sides of the camera, operating camera on a number projects and starring as Sophie Bloom in the feature NEAL CASSIDY and appearing as Judith Meyers in Rob Zombie's retelling of HALLOWEEN.

Other film roles include Becky in the edgy independent film HAPPINESS RUNS with Rutger Hauer, and AMERICAN COWSLIP with Faye Dunaway and Val Kilmer. Hanna's innocent looks are a perfect counterpoint to play the diabolical, ruthless, villainous role of Vivian Kaplan in RADIO FREE

ALBEMUTH, based on the semi-autobiographical novel by Phillip K. Dick. Hanna's goal to work in all aspects of film production, and to eventually form her own production company.

Frank Collison (actor- LEON)

Coming from a theatre family, Frank's first "role" was a six month old "theatre mascot" at a tent theatre in Granville, Ohio. He trailed along with his father who performed a one man play about Abraham Lincoln. Frank trained at the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, earned his BA in theatre at San Francisco State University, helped establish a summer theatre company in the Sierra Nevadas then went on to earn an MFA in acting at UC San Diego. Appearing in over 150 productions, Frank has worked off Broadway and in regional theatres in Boston, Denver and California. His theatrical roles have ranged from "Puck" in Midsummer's Nights Dream to "Miss Havisham" in Great Expectations to "Merlin" in Camelot. In Los Angeles, Frank has acted in productions at the Bilingual Foundation of the Arts, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Los Angeles Theatre Company, The Rogue Machine and Pacific Resident Theatre where Frank is a founding member. PRT just celebrated its 26th year of award winning productions. Frank's recent theatre work includes "Elwood P. Dowd" in Harvey at The Highlands Playhouse in North Carolina.



Besides RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH, Frank's film work includes HITCHCOCK (with Anthony Hopkins), HESHER, THE VILLAGE, THE HAPPENING, THE WHOLE TEN YARDS, HOPE SPRINGS (with Colin Firth) , HIDALGO, SUSPECT ZERO, O BROTHER WHERE ART THOU?, THE MAJESTIC, MOBSTERS, THE LAST BOY SCOUT, BUDDY, ALIEN NATION, DIGGSTOWN, THE BLOB, MY SUMMER STORY and WILD AT HEART, which won the Golden Palm Award at Cannes. Frank recently wrapped filming the role of "Admiral Joseph Ironsides," a megalomaniacal pirate in the feature film, THE ADVENTURES OF MICKEY MATSON AND THE PIRATE'S CODE.

Frank is best known to television audiences as "Horace Bing", the bumbling telegraph operator, on CBS's Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman. His extensive television appearances include guest-starring roles on Criminal Minds, Monk, HBO's Carnivale and Luck, J.O.N.A.S, My Name Is Earl, NYPD Blue, Star Trek, the Next Generation , Stargate Atlantis and Good Luck Charlie. Frank has also branched off into audio book and animation narration. He is currently voicing several series regular roles for Mr. Pickles a new animated show on the Cartoon Network.

ABOUT THE FILMAKERS:

John Alan Simon (Director, Writer, Producer)

John Alan Simon is president and chief executive officer of Discovery Productions. He has been involved with the production, financing, sales, and marketing of many successful independent features including, THE WICKER MAN (starring Edward Woodward); THE HAUNTING OF JULIA (with Mia Farrow and Tom Conti); BASKET CASE and OUT OF THE BLUE (starring and directed by Dennis Hopper);

In 1994, Simon developed and produced the Roger Donaldson-directed version of THE GETAWAY, starring Alec Baldwin, Kim Basinger, and Philip Seymour Hoffman for Largo Entertainment. The picture was theatrically released nationally by Universal Pictures.

On Discovery's production schedule is the English-language film version of Jim Thompson's POP.1280 (from which Bertrand Tavernier's Academy Award nominated film, COUP DE TORCHON, was also adapted) with screenplay written by Simon. Next up for Simon as writer-director is another Thomspson adaptation, NOTHING MORE THAN MURDER.

In partnership with Rosenbloom Entertainment, Discovery has acquired film rights to three novels by renowned science-fiction writer, Philip K. Dick, whose works have formed the basis for such successful science-fiction films

as BLADE RUNNER and TOTAL RECALL, Steven Spielberg's MINORITY REPORT and Richard Linklater's A SCANNER DARKLY. Simon has written the script and developed FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID based on Philip K. Dick's novel, for Paramount Pictures in conjunction with Tom Cruise/Paula Wagner Productions and Oliver Stone's Illusion Entertainment.

Simon has served on the Board of Director of BAFTA-LA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) and chaired the Learning Events committee. He has given workshops on filmmaking and screenwriting all over the world.

Dale 'Chip' Rosenbloom (Producer)

Writer-director-producer Dale (Chip) Rosenbloom, founder and owner of Open Pictures, is one of Hollywood's most active and innovative creative talents.

Rosenbloom's documentaries include RECKLESS INDIFFERENCE, the emotionally charged, Golden Satellite Award-winning picture about the accidental homicide of the innocent teenage son of a police officer at the home of a drug dealer, produced with Oscar-nominated/ Emmy winning documentary filmmaker William Gazecki, and FIELDS OF FUEL (Sundance Audience Award 2008), a movie dealing with the urgent need for alternative energy. Utopia has produced LEARN THE GAME: THE BIG FOOTBALL GAME, the first video in a series of educational how-to-play sports films for the pre-teen set.

Other Open Pictures movies include GIRL IN THE PARK starring Sigourney Weaver, Kate Bosworth and Keri Russell, directed by Pulitzer Prize-winning David Auburn, OPEN GRAVES starring Eliza Dushku and Mike Vogel, FANDEMANIUM, starring ten passionate soccer fans from all over the world, and ALICE UPSIDE DOWN, starring Alyson Stoner, Lucas Grabeel, Penny Marshall, and Luke Perry. He was Executive Producer on THE CALL with Halle Berry.

SHILOH, the first film in the Naylor trilogy, marked Rosenbloom's auspicious directorial debut, which he adapted and produced, and which earned him accolades from many of the nation's most highly respected critics. The movie went on to win the Genesis Award for Best Feature Film, top honors at the Chicago International Children's Film Festival, and several other awards. SHILOH II/SHILOH SEASON, adapted and produced by Rosenbloom, was nominated for the Humanitas Prize. Stephen Nemeth (producer)

Stephen Nemeth formed and heads up Rhino Films, the independent film company that originated as a division of iconoclast record label Rhino Records.

Nemeth is a producer on C.O.G. and the THE SESSIONS. For Rhino, Nemeth produced FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS (Universal Pictures), WHY DO FOOLS FALL IN LOVE (Warner Bros.), SHRIEK IF YOU KNOW WHAT I DID LAST FRIDAY THE 13TH (Lion's Gate), and WHAT WE DO IS SECRET, about the life of The Germs' front man and the birth of LA's punk rock scene in the late '70s. Additionally, he served as Executive Producer on IVANS XTC (Artistic License) and the feature doc PICK UP THE MIC, a look at the burgeoning subculture of gay and lesbians in the hip hop scene which premiered at the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival.

Documentaries produced or exec-produced by Nemeth include FIELDS OF FUEL (Sundance Audience Award 2008), FLOW: FOR LOVE OF WATER, DOGTOWN AND Z-BOYS (winner of the 2001 Sundance Film Festival Audience Award and the Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary; Sony Classics) and 9000 NEEDLES.

Elizabeth Karr (Producer)

Elizabeth brings a well-rounded background to producing as an actor, casting director, coach and theatre producer. Working SAG, AFTRA & AEA member for over 20 years in TV film and theatre. She has performed numerous roles on stage in New York/LA/regionally and been a Master Theatre Teaching Artist on the Los Angeles Music Center roster and LA's Best, as well as a private acting/audition coach. Elizabeth Karr's TV appearances include HOUSE, ER, VERONICA MARS, SLEEPER CELL, WEST WING.

Elizabeth's first foray into producing was in theatre – numerous critically-acclaimed plays in LA and New York, including A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE and IDEAL HUSBAND AS VICTORIAN NOIR, directed by John Alan Simon and UNCLE VANYA, directed by Bruce Katzman. She is a Founding producer of Classical Theatre Lab/West Hollywood's annual FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARKS and secured its annual permanent financing.

RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH is Elizabeth's first feature film as a producer. It was a privilege and a responsibility to work alongside John Alan Simon adapting a Philip K Dick novel to the the screen, that has been embraced by PKD's impassioned, scholarly fan base. For television, Elizabeth

produced a Disney Channel pilot, WEBGIRL, aka VIRTUALLY CASEY, based on her treatment, optioned by Suzanne De Passe Entertainment. Elizabeth has produced, cast and directed several short films and PSA's for AFI, Directors Workshop for Women and Women In Film.

Elizabeth is a leader in the Los Angeles Theatre community: Director/Producer/Founder of Cedarburg Productions. Company member/Producer of Pacific Resident Theatre: former Company member and Board member of Classical Theatre Lab for fourteen years, Chairman of the Board for four. LA Theatre Ovation Award voter for ten years. A big believer in arts education, Elizabeth leaves time to work with kids as a

Professional Theatre Teaching artist with LA's Best After School Arts Program (ASAP).

Elizabeth is partnering again with RFA Writer/Director John Alan Simon to produce NOTHING MORE THAN MURDER, adaptation of Jim Thomspon's classic Noir novel. <http://elizabethkarr.com/>

"I could not have asked for a better mentor or role model on my first feature film than John Alan Simon. His work ethic matches his substantial talent. He met challenges – and there were many on a film of this scale on an indie budget – head on." - Elizabeth Karr

Patrice Lucien Cochet (Director of Photography with Jon Felix)

Patrice Lucien Cochet was born in Paris, France. He is an AFI graduate and three times Sundance award-winning Cinematographer.

In addition to RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH, he has shot over 20 features. BETTER LUCK TOMORROW (with John Cho and Sung Kang), THE END OF LOVE (with Amanda Seyfried and Michael Cera) and THE GOOD LIFE (with Zoey Deschanel, Bill Paxton and Chris Klein) were in dramatic competition at Sundance Film Festival. EXPLICIT ILLS, with Rosario Dawson and Paul Dano, won a special jury award for Best Cinematography at SXSW. He also shoots scripted TV shows, Reality shows and commercials. He teaches at

"I could not have asked for a better mentor or role model on my first feature film than John Alan Simon."

Sundance Director's Lab and Columbia College to assist directors in finding their personal visual approach to story telling. Patrice is a local hire in Atlanta and Los Angeles.

Jon Felix (Director of Photography with Patrice Lucien Cochet)

Jon Felix was born in the UK and started his career, of over 35 years, as a film editor at the BBC. Later he went on to edit TV spots for commercials production companies. During this time Jon also started shooting and as a Director of Photography, Jon has now shot 8 feature length films, many TV shows, dozens of documentaries, and hundreds of commercials. In addition to more than 25 awards at festivals around the world, his work includes two films nominated for British Academy awards (BAFTA's). In 2002, Jon started working in the US (whilst maintaining a London office).

He is an acknowledged expert in the field of digital cinematography, workflows and post-production, regularly contributes to professional publications, and is frequently invited to present seminars on digital cinematography and post-production. Jon is currently shooting the feature film: THE TIMES OF BERNARD O. BERNARD.

Robyn Hitchcock (Composer)

Robyn Hitchcock is one of England's most enduring contemporary singer/songwriters and live performers. Hitchcock started his recording career with the Soft Boys, a punk-era band specializing in melodic pop merged with comedic lyrics. With a voice varying between John Lennon and Syd Barrett's, Robyn's true influences lie more in English folk-rock.

Hitchcock's solo debut, 1981's Black Snake Diamond Role was followed by the psychedelia of Groovy Decay in 1982 and the all-acoustic I Often Dream of Trains in 1984. However it wasn't until the 1996 release of Moss Elixir that Hitchcock returned to form and fully embraced his folk roots. From 1998 to 2009 Robyn released the soundtrack to the Jonathan Demme directed concert film Storefront Hitchcock, Robyn Sings, Luxor, Spooked, a Japanese compilation called Obliteration Pie, and Olé! Tarantula and Goodnight

Oslo with the Venus 3, his new band featuring Peter Buck, Scott McCaughey, and Bill Rieflin.

Recent years have seen Robyn involved with a number of film projects. The 2007 documentary Robyn Hitchcock: Sex, Food, Death and Insects used a fly on the wall approach to track Robyn's recording and touring process with his new band the Venus 3 while I Often Dream of Trains in New York captured a live concert performance of one of his seminal albums. Hitchcock also spent time scoring a number of films including Sebastian Gutierrez's Women in Trouble and Elektra Luxx and John Alan Simon's Radio Free Albemuth based on the Philip K. Dick novel of the same name.

Robyn celebrated the release of Propellor Time in 2010, his most recent album with the Venus 3. He is currently touring around the world. <http://www.robynchitcock.com/>



Ralph Grierson (Composer)

Versatile is the best word to describe Ralph Grierson. His talent, as a composer and instrumentalist, from piano to harpsichord to advanced computer synthesis, impressed and delighted audiences for years. His ability to compose and perform classical music, jazz, rock & roll and contemporary avant-garde electronic music put him at the musical forefront.

Born near Vancouver, British Columbia, Grierson began studying music at the age of five. While attending USC on a scholarship, he studied with John Crown and Ingolf Dahl and received both a bachelor's and a master's of music. Grierson has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, worked with conductors, composers and musicians like Michael Tilson

Thomas, Pierre Boulez, Lukas Foss, Aaron Copland, Steve Reich, and Morton Subotnick; performed at Carnegie Recital Hall (NY), The Kitchen (NY), Monday Evening Concerts (LA), and at the Ojai Festival. He can be seen in Disney's Fantasia 2000 of which Los Angeles Times music critic Mark Swed said "...I can't think of a soloist that I would rather hear play Rhapsody in Blue."

Grierson's compositions reflect his involvement with a

myriad of musical styles. Whether songs, piano music, or for film, his work is the summation of a truly multi-talented, versatile artist.

In addition to RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH, he has scored HABITAT, TO FIND MY SON, HYSTERIA, RED EARTH WHITE EARTH and various other projects. He has delved extensively into experimental electronic music, a forty-five minute/four movement video performance entitled SOMETIMES... NOT ALWAYS was performed live at the L.A. Theater Center.

In 2008, he collaborated with Amia Dane on HAVE MERCY, an album of original music that ranged from jazz to folk to pop.



In addition, Ralph has had a brilliant career as a first call studio musician with thousands of hours of studio session work to his credit. (film list at <http://musicandhealth.com/RGRecording.html>)

"It was a pleasure to write the score for John Simon's adaptation of one of my favorite authors, Philip K. Dick."
"John Alan Simon's passion for the movie and for Philip K. Dick was contagious and inspiring. I learned a great deal about the collaborative process during the times we spent together and John was extremely supportive." - Ralph G.

Ferne Cassel (Casting Director)

Ferne Cassel is an independent casting director whose credits include more than 50 films. She began her career working on such films as DIE HARD 1 and 2, COMING TO AMERICA, ANOTHER 48 HRS, RED HEAT, ROAD HOUSE and DICK TRACY.

In 1990 she established her own company, Ferne Cassel Casting, and went on to cast a wide range of films; comedies include NATIONAL LAMPOON'S LOADED WEAPON, MAJOR LEAGUE 2, DOWN PERISCOPE, LOVE STINKS, KISSING A FOOL and ACE VENTURA; WHEN NATURE CALLS. Her many action films include LIVE WIRE, PREDATOR 2, BODY SNATCHERS, RICOCHET, DEMOLITION MAN and most recently, TAKEN starring Liam Neesom.

Besides RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH, Ferne has been involved in several independent features as well as live theater

productions. Her keen eye for emerging talent is evident in much of her work. She has also cast numerous award winning shorts and TV projects for HBO, Comedy Central, Showtime TNT, and Lifetime.

In 2004 Ferne was the recipient of the Artios Award presented by CSA (Casting Society of America) for Outstanding Achievement in Casting for MONSTER, in which Charlize Theron received an Academy Award.

Alan E. Muraoka (Production Designer)

Alan E. Muraoka has worked as a production designer and art director for film and television, corporate communication as well as a theatrical set designer for over 30 years. He has been honored with 2 Emmy nomi-

nations and 3 Art Directors' Guild Award nominations. In addition to RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH, Production Design credits include DIRTY GIRL by director Abe Sylvia starring June Temple, Milla Jovovich, Mary Steenburgen and William H. Macy; BAADASSSSS!, WEAPONS and EDMOND. Alan's art direction credits include LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE, ACE VENTURA – PET DETECTIVE, THE SPECIALIST, WASHINGTON SQUARE and LIBERTY HEIGHTS. Television series include NYPD BLUE and THE COMPANY. Upcoming films include THERE'S ALWAYS WOODSTOCK with Allison Miller, Jason Ritter and Katey Sagal, and SEX, DEATH AND BOWLING, with Selma Blair, Drea de Matteo and Adrian Grenier.

Alan began his career as an assistant set designer in New York for Broadway productions and the New York City Ballet. Alan now splits his time between Los Angeles and New York City, production designing for film and television while continuing to work as a theatrical scenic designer. Theatrical projects include Ned Rorem's opera OUR TOWN for Central City Opera, Philip Glass' opera FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER for Chicago Opera Theater, the critically acclaimed production for Long Beach Opera of Ricky Ian Gordon's ORPHEUS AND EURIDICE, staged in an Olympic swimming pool. Also WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOLF?, TRYING and VINCENT IN BRIXTON at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego. In addition to designing, Alan has mentored young filmmakers and designers having guest spoken at Yale University, Marlboro College and University of Southern California.

(PKD OTAKU - Reviews on p.34-37)

Hercule Poirot

in

THE CASE OF THE CRAZY WRITER

by Dave Hyde © October 2013

(with apologies to Agatha Christie and thanks to Patrick Clark)

I tapped quietly on my friend's door, expecting no reply. I'd heard he was deceased while I was in Buenos Aires attending my ranch and I'd been unable to contact him before arriving in London. But, I thought, I shall go immediately to his apartment on Jermyn Street, if alive he would surely be there.

I listened at the door and tapped again a little louder. I heard some scraping within and then the sliding of massive bolts and rattling of heavy locks. The door inched open and I looked down to see the egg-shaped head with its wisp of hair and the massive, suspiciously black mustache of my friend. I smiled, "Hello, Poirot! Surprised to see me?"

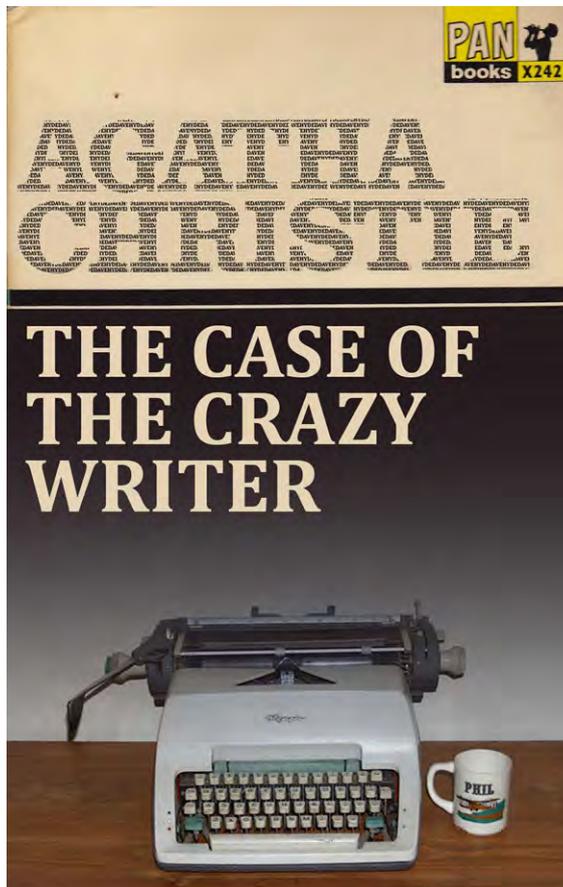
His eyebrows shot up "Mon ami, Hastings!" He flung the door open and embraced me in a hearty hug – or what passes for hearty in a man of such antiquity, for Poirot is no longer young, no longer a spring chicken, as he himself would say. Indeed, he looked old but, then again, he'd always looked old even when he was young. It was good to see him again and I stepped eagerly into his room with its suffocating electrically-heated air. Poirot bustled about, preparing a toast of blackberry syrup to cheer the occasion. I sat in a squarish leather armchair on one side of his radiator which sat in the disused fireplace, and he sat in a similar chair on the other side. He beamed at me, "Hastings! What brings you to London? You are here to see me, no? Je suis tres contentement! It is good to see you. It is quiet here. My memoirs they progress but slowly, I admit, there is so much to remember..."

"Ahem, you are right, Poirot, I am here to see you – and not strictly for the pleasure of visiting an old friend. I have a case for you, or rather, a question that must be answered for much depends on it."

Poirot cocked an eyebrow and his faded green eyes twinkled, "A case, another case for the end of my memoirs, why not? What is the substance of this case?"

I took a deep breath, "On my travels in America I met a man of no repute who told me a story of another man of great repute. This other man was a writer, long dead now, by the name of Philip K. Dick -"

"Of course! I have heard of him!" Exclaimed Poirot to my great astonishment. I peered at him closely. He nodded. "Mais oui! L'autor Americain! Blade Runner, I have seen the movie! But, you know, Hastings, there were some illogicalities in that movie. It cannot compare to the book!"



"Er, yes, I suppose, but its more a case of apples and oranges, isn't it? Two different media? But that's the man. You surprise me, Poirot, in that you have read one of Dick's novels."

"Pah! I keep up with it all, Hastings, with the help of the mod cons of postmodern living." He waved at the VHS setup on its stand below the TV in the corner. "Your interest, I suppose, has something to do with his last will? His five wives? Sadly I am too familiar with such cases these days; my friend Chief Inspector Japp never calls me on official business. The police these days, they know it all even before a crime is committed, they have no need of Hercule Poirot!"

"No, it's not his will, it's his reputation. He is a great and famous writer but some people think him a madman while others accuse him of being a saint. The argument rages, especially in America."

"Ah, America." Poirot sighed.

"Always the deciders, never knowing to leave things well enough alone." He nodded sagely. "What has he done, this Philip K. Dick?"

"He's dead now, of course, but he wrote a book, a novel called **VALIS** which has, to put it crudely, got the whole world in a tizzy. From Rome to Budapest to San Francisco and Mexico City – indeed, even as far as Buenos Aires, there is argument raging amongst the intelligentsia as to the truth of the events portrayed in this novel.

"Go on. How seems the novel to you?"

"Well, its not so easy to describe but, simply, its about a man – the writer, Philip Dick, who, somehow is someone else but still himself, if you see what I mean..."

Agatha Christie Graphic with Phil's Typewriter and Mug by Nick Buchanan

Poirot laughed. "Hastings, your effort at description leaves much to be desired. Fortunately, I, Hercule Poirot, who sits before you, I have read this VALIS!"

"What! You continue to surprise me, my friend, but it should make matters easier. You know, then, of the strange mystical events and revelatory dreams within the novel which Dick in his extracurricular activities portrayed as true events? Which his followers have now conflated to the level of metaphysical fact?"

"Yes, I can see how such a view would arise... But what of me, what can I do?"

"You can find the truth!" I blurted out. "If anyone in this world can its you."

"The truth of what, my friend, its a novel, it is all fiction."

"Yes, but—"

"Come, Hastings, my forte is crime not fiction. What care I of literary arguments, they come and go. Let those who shout the loudest decide the truth, that's how it is in America, n'est pas?" He stared at me frankly.

"I don't know, but see, I, too, have an interest in the answer to this question. Maybe if we look at it as if it were a crime..."

"Oui, oui!" Poirot leaned forward excitedly, "a crime! The crime of murder in the First Degree! I can see it now, Claude Rains in the part of The Professor with the marvelous Clara Bow as amanuensis inspiring him to great heights of critical perspicuity!"

I looked at him coldly. "Its been done. I'm thinking more along the lines of using your expertise, your 'order and method' to delve into the case and get to the bottom of it."

He settled back. "How shall we progress?"

"As you always say: we should start at the beginning."

"Yes... Who is this Philip K. Dick? And whereby lies your interest, Hastings?"

"Well, I admit it, I, too, have fallen under the spell of this fascinating writer. I need to know for my own sanity. You must read more of his work, Poirot, you would be alarmed!"

"Indubitably, my friend, but alarmed is a state I wish to avoid. I have little on my plate these days so why should I not help out our friends in America? Let us begin."

In the next few weeks I scurried about according to Poirot's directions, visiting the fanatics of Philip K. Dick within the vicinity of London and the Home Counties and

even venturing as far as a small town near Liverpool in search of answers to our questions. I balked, however, at flying to America, fearing I might not survive another trip to the benighted Republic. Fortunately, current methods of communication make such a trip unnecessary and I employed all means I could find as I conversed and inquired electronically of scholars and fans their knowledge and opinions of Dick's most infamous novel. In the end

I prepared a brief and once again visited Poirot's claustrophobic abode on Jermyn Street.

He greeted me pleasantly. "Ah! Hastings! How goes the inquiry?" And ushered me in.

I frowned, "OK, I guess, there's a lot of information to collect and collate. A lot of deep undercurrents to beware. I fear I cannot see

the forest for the trees."

"Naturally, Hastings, naturally; you were always more of a details man than one able to see the big picture. It is your good fortune that you have such a friend as I to sort it all out."

"Well, be that as it may, I have found the answers to many of your questions. You stress the psychology of the case; what sort of man was Philip K. Dick? We've both read the main biographies, those of Sutin and Rickman, there is also much available on the internet and at least two of his ex-wives have written books. It seems PKD, as he is known worldwide, was a strange bird, a rara avis, as you might say."

Poirot nodded. "A rara avis indeed. But continue, Hastings, as a child how was he?"

"He was sickly by most accounts. Psychological problems, too. He saw a string of psychologists throughout his life, starting early. Lots of prescription pills. His mother bought into that pre-War zeitgeist where they all gave obeisance to doctors and medicine and new ideas of psychology. It's all claptrap now, of course."

"And he went to special schools, did he not?"

"Yes. He had difficulties settling into school until he and his mother moved to Berkeley, California. It was there that he began writing."

"Ah, yes, the early stories and poems for la femme formidable Aunt Flo at the Berkeley Gazette!"

"You've done your homework, I see, Poirot."

"What else? I have also by means of this modern marvel talked to experts in America." He picked up an iPhone and waved it at me. "Look at this, Hastings, by use of this toy I can locate precisely where I am in the world!"

I scowled at him, "Poirot, you're right here!"

"Which his followers have now conflated to the level of metaphysical fact"

“Yes, but, what if I were somewhere else!?”

I sighed, “then you would know where you are, I suppose. Look, cellphones are wonderful devices, I agree, but, personally, I prefer good, old-fashioned letter-writing. Best way to get to know a man.”

“That’s because you are the fuddy-duddy, as they say, Hastings!”

“Am not!”

Poirot laughed, “I kid you only. Would you like some of this Kamchatkan peach brandy, it’s a good pickmeup?”

“Yes, please. To continue: Dick became interested in science fiction as a youth and began writing it professionally in the early Fifties. By 1954 he was a published science fiction novelist.” I peered at my notes. “His first novel was **SOLAR LOTTERY**, derivative, the authorities say, of the work of A.E. Van Vogt. He went on to write many novels over the next thirty years as well as over a hundred short stories. Apparently he was addicted to methamphetamines which spurred his creativity. He died at age fifty-two in 1982.”

“So young.” Poirot

“What a loss to the world... A great writer often produces his best work late in life.” He glanced at his memoirs lying idle on the end table. “What of these extraordinary experiences he claims began in 1974?”

s i g h e d .

“That’s the crux of the matter and even though Dick wrote and discussed the events with many people and even kept an obsessive journal until he died there is yet still some uncertainty as to what actually happened. The journal runs to some million type-written and hand-written words. A selection of some ten percent of the whole was published as Dick’s ‘Exegesis’ in 2011. By all accounts it is a difficult book to read.”

“What do the ex-wives have to say?”

“Crikey, Poirot! Its all too much to sort out. No one believes anything anymore. By now the speculation is so large that the truth is hopelessly buried.”

“Well, that is why we are here. Let us recap. Philip K. Dick was a troubled child with psychological problems. He was under continual medical care. He was addicted to drugs and had strange visions, he wrote obsessively. Definitely the profile of a murderer, but where is the body? Who has been killed?” He thought for a minute his eyes greenly gleaming. “Yes...where is the body... Hastings! I

have a little idea. What sort of writer was Dick? We’ve both read several of his novels and stories by now,” he indicated a pile of books stacked neatly but dangerously close to his electric heater, “and have our opinions; what say you?”

I stared into Poirot’s eager eyes, he winked. Startled I began to babble. “He was like Charles Dickens, a revolutionary. He changed the world, is still changing the world. We live in a Phildickian world these days, Poirot.”

“Yes, of course, but you misunderstand my question. What was his ambition?”

“It was the same as every other writer: to be famous and acknowledged worldwide as a great writer, to join the pantheon of the greats, to be up there with Shakespeare and Moliere and, er, John Grisham... Jeez, Poirot, I’m no literatician, I don’t know all these writers; I’m a military man, after all. I just know he didn’t want to be stuck in the ‘science fiction ghetto’ - you know, just a genre writer disdained by the literati. He wanted to be a great writer in all categories.”

“Very good! And this is what he has become, is it not?”

I shook my head, “Yes, it is true. Dick is now a famous writer who transcends all genres.”

Poirot cocked his head, “but it didn’t start out that way, did it? Recall that sad day in 1963 when that packet of rejected stories was returned to him by his agent? Remember his befuddlement at the reception of his novel **WE CAN BUILD YOU**; the fact that it took ten years to publish? All those mainstream novels rejected by the publishers of the day? What effect did all this rejection have on his psyche? Not to mention the affect of five wives.”

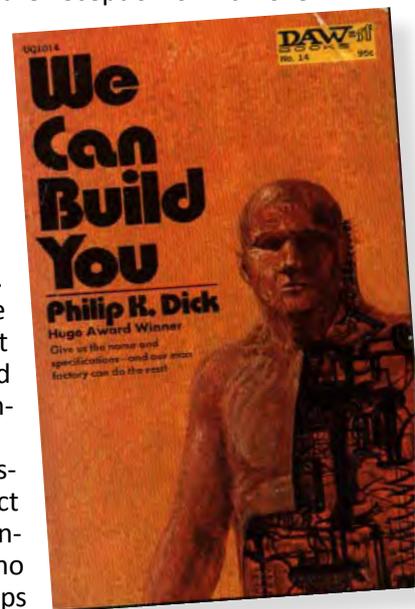
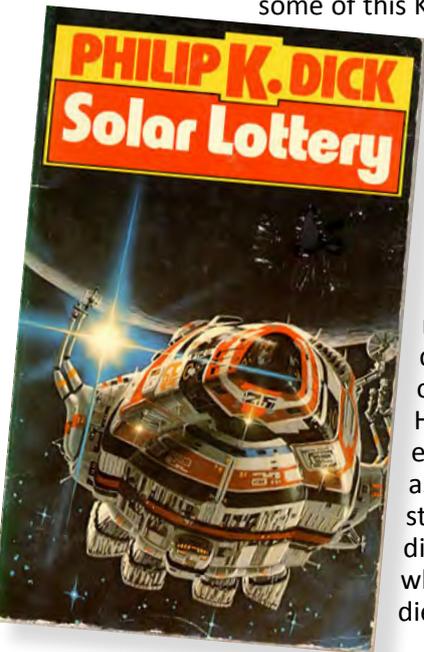
I threw up my hands. “I don’t know; he wrote more science fiction, I suppose. Just wrote and wrote to live and gave up on his dream of mainstream acceptance.”

“Unlikely, Hastings. Assuming his protagonists reflect some of his character we can infer that he’s the sort of man who muddles through, who keeps on going, his shoulder hunched against impossible odds and alien circumstances. He would not give up... Hastings, you must go to America!”

“What! I’m not going to America!”

“Well, I can’t go! I’m too frail.”

I glanced about desperately and my eyes fell on his cellphone. “I don’t have to go to America! We can use



your cellphone to do anything we could by a visit. It's all international now, doesn't cost an arm and a leg."

"Hrmp! I suppose you're right. What we have to do is contact this one expert in America who goes by the curious name of Lord Running Clam – you will be familiar with it from reading Dick's novel **CLANS OF THE ALPHANE MOON**. This creature – it purports to be a slime mold from Ganymede – finds itself in an unlikely position at the heart of the debate. A telephone interview would work but I thought you would like to meet this strange being in the flesh, as it were?"

"Are you kidding me? A Ganymedean slime mold in America!? Those things have only just been discovered! How did one get to America?"

"A good question, Hastings, and one, despite your levity, we will not address now. This slime mold is obviously a human being with an adopted persona. Really, Hastings, you can be truly dense at times!"

I got up and paced around the cramped apartment. "OK. What does this Lord Running Clam know?"

"Like everyone else he knows nothing. But his writings in such publications as these PKD OTAKUs –" he pointed to another stack of papers even closer to the fire – "at least show an inquiring mind, although, of course, he's an idiot in most regards... I must think... Hastings, please find this Ganymedean character - via telephone if you must – and tender it my compliments. Ask it this question: What did Philip K. Dick mean when he said VALIS was a picaresque novel?"

Once again I was off to do Poirot's bidding, like some Border collie herding sheep! I had no idea how to contact this Lord Running Clam. Somewhere in America is all I knew. However, Poirot had given me a few of his PKD OTAKU pamphlets to read and I decided I could find the alien creature by contacting the editor, one Patrick Clark in St. Paul, Minnesota, USA. This I did, only to find that my cephalopodan quarry little communicated with the world and was hiding out in a 'compound' in the Rocky Mountains in Colorado! It was unavailable to callers or even inquirers. Possibly it was sick.

I reported my lack of success to Poirot on my next visit. He shook his head sadly, "Obviously this Gany-

medean slime mold is of no use at all... No matter, we shall rely on ourselves."

He lit up one of his tiny cigarettes and the fragrant scent of Turkish tobacco filled the little room.

"Really, Poirot! You need to get out more!"

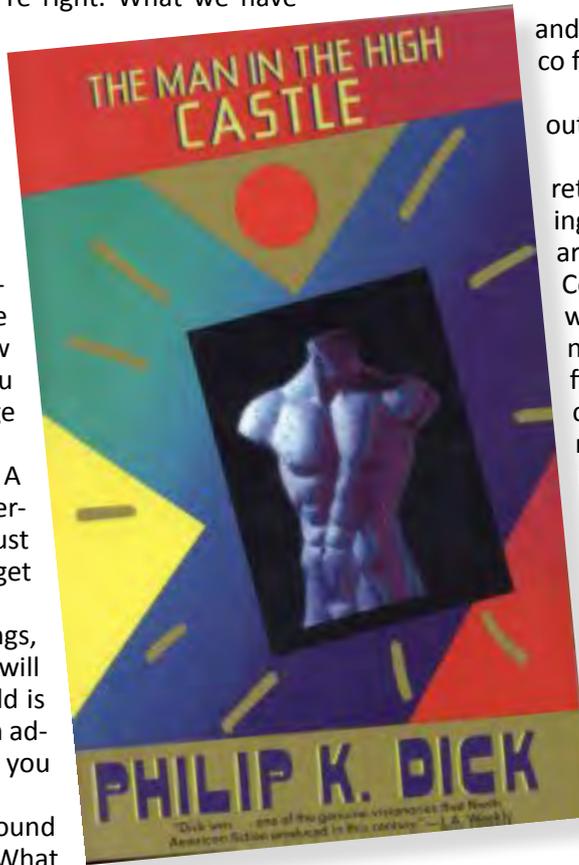
He started, "What? Oh, the cigarette? I no longer care. I've been thinking – the little grey cells, you know, they are not idle – it all hinges on **VALIS**. Consider this: Philip K. Dick's ambition was to become a famous mainstream novelist. This is evident from the very first and is reinforced throughout his career as he wrote and tried to sell mainstream novel after mainstream novel, all of which were rejected by the publishers of the day... He felt trapped in the science fiction ghetto and all attempts to escape failed. He grew bitter, morose! Almost gave up writing altogether... His early masterpiece, **THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE**, he only wrote because he didn't want to work at his wife's jewelry-making business..." He puffed on his cigarette. "That this novel won the prestigious Hugo Award is significant..."

Not only did Dick see its worth, so did the world; the readers of science fiction. He thought he'd found a new way to write that melded science fiction with mainstream fiction but he failed! Oh, Hastings, imagine the devastating effect on his mind, already partly unhinged by psychiatry and drugs!"

I shrugged; "I can imagine worse. But wasn't **THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE** the point at which Dick decided to put all his literary ability into his science fiction writing and not reserve it for his failing mainstream novels?"

"That is correct. But it didn't last long. He had to revert to a more primitive concept of his writing after the failure of **WE CAN BUILD YOU**, as he himself said. I'm reminded of those early days when he was writing for the Berkeley Gazette, all those stories for Aunt Flo. Remember the response in his diary to her criticism of his satirical story? He said 'Fooled her completely on this one – knew I would, she doesn't know a satire from a hole in the ground'. He had a history of squabbles with his editors, too... And in 1974, the very year of his extraordinary epiphany he quarreled with his agent of twenty years. He said some painful things..."

I jumped in. "Perhaps that is when it all came together and overwhelmed him, sent him round the bend?"



I knew some critics thought Philip K. Dick was mad and VALIS was their proof, but I was not sure.

"No. You are close, mon ami, but no cigar. He was always the way he was, it just took him a while to understand the full nature of his main problem and how to handle it."

"What problem is that?"

"Why, Hastings, the one we've been discussing all along! Have you been listening at all? We're talking about how he became a famous writer. Please pay attention."

"Are you saying he saw this as a problem in 1974?"

"Again, no. The earliest evidence he fully realized this as a problem was in 1972, possibly 1970, when he worked on the book he himself called a masterpiece: **A SCANNER DARKLY**. What is it about **A SCANNER DARKLY** that catches our attention today?"

"Hmm. Is it the drugs? The oppressive police surveillance? The savage indictment of capitalist society?"

"Hastings are you purposely being obtuse!? What has happened with **A SCANNER DARKLY** is that now it is seen as practically a mainstream novel. But in the 1970s it was science fiction. Do you see?"

I did not. "You mean it has become mainstream fiction?" I queried.

"Precisement! I shall abuse you no more. But answer me this, how does a book that is science fiction when published in 1977 become mainstream in 2013?"

"Technology? That has to be a part of it."

"Oui. A large part of it. Time and technology caught up with the novel in a way that the novel is now terrifyingly real." He glanced out the window as if expecting something to drop in from the sky. "But what of this: did the novel catch up with reality or did reality catch up with **A SCANNER DARKLY**? Or are they the same thing? But I digress... The main reason that this book has become reality is because the definition of mainstream fiction has changed. Quite simply, Dick changed it himself single-handedly with, first, **THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE** and then **A SCANNER DARKLY** and, finally, **VALIS**. Another masterpiece is **THE TRANSMIGRATION OF TIMOTHY ARCHER**, of course – a reversion to the



old definition just so that Philip K. Dick could demonstrate that all along if he had wanted to he could write a mainstream masterpiece. D'you see, Hastings?" His eyes shone like a cat's.

Caught in his spell I could only nod, it seemed to make sense. But it led to a frightening conclusion...

Poirot continued "The question is what about **FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID**? It was written about

the same time as **A SCANNER DARKLY**. Did this cumber-somely titled novel play a part in this scheme...?

"Aha! It's a scheme is it!? That's too much to accept. There is no way Philip K. Dick contrived the redefinition of Literature just so he could find fame; and posthumous fame at that! And not even fortune. I don't know, Poirot, are you just making all this up?"

"Moi!? I didn't make it all up. Philip K. Dick made it all up. I merely relate to you where the application of our mind's eye leads us. You cannot deny that in his correspondence and Exegesis he expends great effort incorporating many, if not all, of his early novels and some short stories into his extended exegesis? This is not just the ten percent published or the hundreds of thousands of words remaining in the vault but his letters, interviews, conversations, everything he did post-1974 is all about subtly and cleverly propagating the truth of his pink beam experiences and dreams."

"But... But..."

"But me no buts, Hastings! Dick gave us a clue when he said **VALIS** was a picaresque novel. What characterizes picaresque fiction is its presentation of the rogue, the outsider, usually poor and oppressed, who takes up a glorious but hopeless battle against the powers that be. Here we have PKD himself as the picador of science fiction pricking the powerful bull of Literature and in the end defeating it. He never thought he would win." He fell silent.

"So that's it, then, all these visions, these weird events, the years of speculation, the novels themselves, it was all from the wild imagination of one man who desired fame?"

"Look around you, mon ami, all these woofers and tweeters with their computers and cellphones. Are



they not on display when they snap these selfish photographs and chirp their lunch to their friends, their audience? They do not write their lives in a novel, they write them with these gadgets and boob tubes for all the world to see. They understand instinctively what Dick has wrought. He was their picaro, their picador. Words on paper pages are no longer enough, or even necessary, the creator of today uses many means to gain the attention of the world."

I was still not convinced. "There's got to be more to it than that. That's much too simple an explanation..."

"Did you think of it? Obviously not. But we are not yet done, we have only explored part of the

case. Murder has been committed, certainment, the murder of modern literature, albeit its corpse still stinks up the landscape... We have the murder and the motive and have glanced at the means. But!" Poirot held up a finger. "But! We must establish the competency of the criminal before we can haul him to court and hang him. We have laws in this country, Hastings, and Justice will be served!"

I could think of another issue besides Dick's sanity and broached it bluntly to Poirot. "What if Dick was right? What if some Vast Active Living Intelligence System from the stars or living in plasmatic form in the Earth's upper atmosphere did contact him?"

"That it is all true? That this odd duck of a writer in California was chosen by alien beings and informed of ... of what? Certainly that is something that must be considered before we can close the case. But tell me, my dear Hastings, what is more likely: that a man, a professional science fiction writer, exaggerates some unusual events and vivid dreams in his life into a story and writes it into a book, or that this same man was visited by Christian saints and triggered into life by alien signals? Still, we cannot dismiss it out of hand. We have so far made a case for an obsession within Dick - not

uncommon in artists - that drove him in ultimate effect to fundamentally change the nature of literature. That this case includes some fantastic elements like a prescience that is usually only known in hindsight makes it hard to accept. For now we are done, Hastings. Let others make the argument for religion or madness. Only when they are done will we be able to close this case of the crazy writer"

"Righto, Poirot. Let's have another glass of that brandy and call it a night."

"PKD was himself the rogue, the picaro of science fiction taking on the literary establishment and, in the end, winning."

NOTES and BITS LEFT OUT

To PKD picaresque meant picaresque in the world beyond the novel. The

real world. VALIS is an episode in a picaresque novel that, by writing it Dick intended something much larger than was ever thought of by Petronius or Chaucer. With **VALIS** Dick says: I now move fiction from the printed page - or the cinema screen - to concurrency with the now. My life, all our lives, are fiction. You display them as best you can with the tools at hand.

Look again at **VALIS**. There it is laid out before us from the start to the end. The opening definition of **VALIS** from

a fake then-future Russian dictionary dated to a year that is now in the past, to the novel itself and the curiously segmented Tractates Cryptica Scriptura at the end. This is not some naive novel; there is nothing innocent about it. Supposedly

Dick was writing away one night in his journal and he dropped everything and wrote the novel in two weeks. Yet he always said that many years went by while his mind sorted out the plot before he set pen to paper. The two weeks would be for the composition and typing of the drafts. It was important for Dick to include his earlier writing into his later. Not only to bolster his post 1974 ideas but also to form the foundation of his insights into the nature of time that that were incipient in his work and only



fully – or more fully – developed in **VALIS**. Hastings what do you think of Dick’s notion of orthogonal time?”

“Me!?! Well, uh,

PKD was himself the rogue, the picaro of science fiction taking on the literary establishment and, in the end, winning.

ASD was contrived to become mainstream!?

The picaresque novel (Spanish: “picaresca,” from “pícaro,” for “rogue” or “rascal”) is a popular sub-genre of prose fiction which might sometimes be satirical and depicts, in realistic and often humorous detail, the adventures of a roguish hero of low social class who lives by his wits in a corrupt society. This style of novel originated in sixteenth-century Spain and flourished throughout Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It continues to influence modern literature.

According to the traditional view of Thrall and Hibbard (first published in 1936), which has been questioned by scholars interested in how genre functions, rather than how it looks on the surface, seven qualities distinguish the picaresque novel or narrative form, all or some of which may be employed for effect by the author.

(1) A picaresque narrative is usually written in first person as an autobiographical account.

(2) The main character is often of low character or social class. He or she gets by with wit and rarely deigns to hold a job.

(3) There is no plot. The story is told in a series of loosely connected adventures or episodes.

(4) There is little if any character development in the main character. Once a picaro, always a picaro. His or her circumstances may change but rarely result in a change of heart.

(5) The picaro’s story is told with a plainness of language or realism.

(6) Satire might sometimes be a prominent element.

(7) The behavior of a picaresque hero or heroine stops just short of criminality. Carefree or immoral rascality positions the picaresque hero as a sympathetic outsider, untouched by the false rules of society

It could’ve all started very early, Hastings...

That **THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE** won the Hugo Award for Best Science Fiction Novel in 1962 gave him new hope. He saw a new way of writing that would meld his mainstream aspirations with science fiction and fantasy.

Hastings, I want you to take another look at Sutin’s biography, the first chapter. Let me know what you think.

FMTTPS is About a famous man who no one knew

Patrick’s notes: [Two observations on that original draft: You quote a long section from one of Phil’s letters, which you identify simply as “The BGSU Papers.” Alas, the Estate pulled all that material back so they no longer reside at Bowling Green State University. If you still use the text in a new version the proper citation now would be “PKD to Philip Jose Farmer: November 14, 1968; reprinted in Radio Free PKD #7 (August 1998).

You also speak of Phil giving up on attempting another ‘mainstream’ novel after 1962 until 1972 and **A SCANNER DARKLY** (and that is debatable). I was struck by that. In 1972 **A SCANNER DARKLY** was a science fiction novel but in 2013 **SCANNER** is

undeniably ‘mainstream’ given that it so thoroughly depicts the actual world in which we now all reside. The world has simply caught up with Phil’s vision.

In “I Made It All Up” you put **SCANNER** as an “attempted mainstream” novel, which I took to mean there was enough science fiction elements in the book to legitimately describe it and publish it as SF. My point to you was that in 1973-75 when Phil was writing the surveillance technology he describes is clearly “futuristic.” Today it is probably on sale at Radio Shack. In a particularly scary way the PKD world has become simple reality.

Bruce Sterling recently described the situation this way: “Securicams are cops without the cops; killer drones are the army without the army; the NSA is the secret police without the secret police.” So **SCANNER** has evolved from science fiction to “mainstream” with the simple passage of time. Also, in reference to the quoted portion of Phil’s letter to Philip Jose Farmer see also pages 157-158 in Gregg Rickman’s “In His Own Words.”

We have to determine if **VALIS** is true or, rather, did the pink-beam events really happen? We cannot take PKD at face value – nor can we trust later statements from



the people in Dick's life at the time; arguments from authority are invalid is a logical statement. The answer lies in Phil's life and work. A lot of people put a lot of faith in Philip K. Dick; see **VALIS** as a Christian theophany, or a gnostic one, they want to believe it is true. But we must first answer the question, what if it is just fiction?

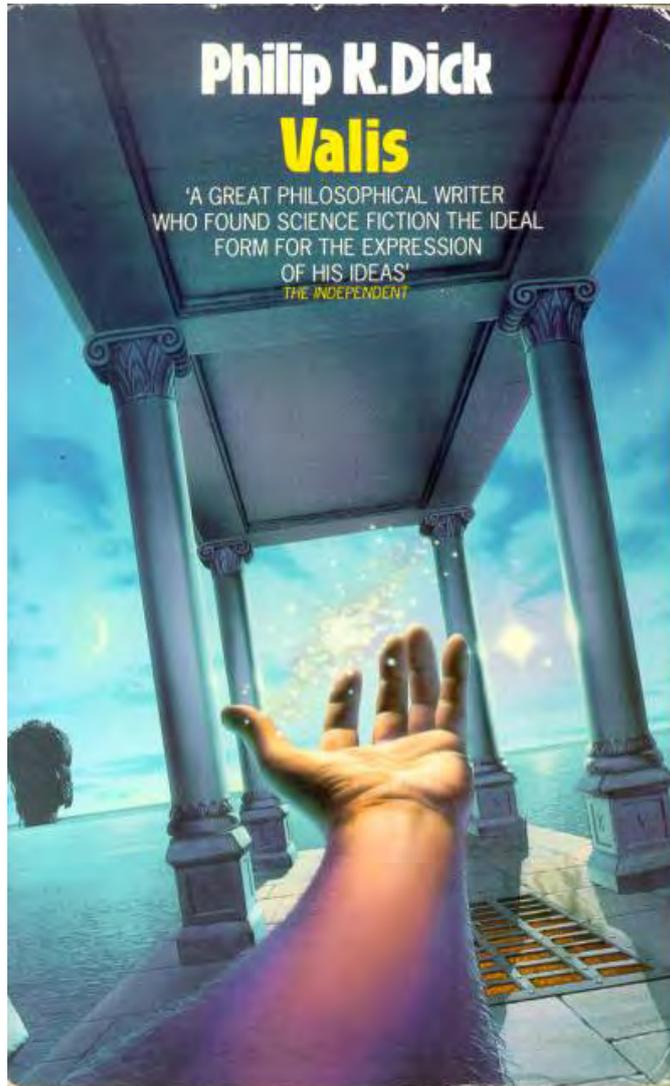
Looking at things this way then PKD wrote many great novels but his masterpieces are **THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE**, **A SCANNER DARKLY**, **VALIS**, and **THE TRANSMIGRATION OF TIMOTHY ARCHER**. It has to do with the motive we're getting at. These are his major crimes.

TIMOTHY ARCHER was enabled by its predecessors. It is a mainstream masterpiece that would stand in isolation as such and could only have been written after PKD changed the rules. This he did with the other three novels. **THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE** showed PKD a new way of writing which, as I've already noted, led to the failure of **WE CAN BUILD YOU** to create a new definition of 'mainstream' – and a decade of great science fiction novels. With **A SCANNER DARKLY** he presents a story just barely removed from his life. It is science fiction, no doubt, but at the same time it is a portrait of life on the streets of California in the early 1970s. It is very close to mainstream, very close.

By the time PKD wrote **VALIS** he'd been writing stories for thirty-some years. He knew what he wrote was good in any literary category. His festering resentments at the editors and publishers of mainstream fiction had worked themselves out in his head and he saw that the only way for him to have his desired mainstream acceptance was for him to change the rules, change what was meant by the term 'novel'. He prepared the ground carefully; he knew exactly what to do. Blur the lines between storytelling and fiction, take some weird events in his life

and base a novel on them, carefully exaggerate the events among the people he knew would propagate them, then – and perhaps this is where his madness lies – act as if these events were of supreme importance by obsessing over them endlessly in his Exegesis.

With **VALIS** Philip K. Dick turned reality itself into a science fiction novel. He turned the literary world on its head.



I guess all that rejection pissed him off... So much so that he destroyed the accepted nature of things and particularly the categories that had divided literature for over a hundred years. And because he was pissed off he wrote **THE TRANSMIGRATION OF TIMOTHY ARCHER** just to show them that he could've done it all along.

But is it true? Is **VALIS** storytelling or fiction? It is neither, **VALIS** is reality. Emmanuelle Carrere agrees with me:

"In straddling the line between autobiography and fiction, Dick's novels and stories provide the best window onto a man who, in a far more radical way than any of his contemporaries, effectively abolished the difference between life and literature." – Emmanuel Carrere in the Preface to **I AM ALIVE AND YOU ARE DEAD: A Journey into the Mind of Philip K. Dick**, page xv.

Poirot awoke from his reverie, the green light faded from his eyes. He looked blankly at me, "PKD is guilty of murder, the psychology of the murderer fits the crime, the death of mainstream literature can be laid at his feet."



Enhanced Femur Illustration by Perry Kinman

Reaching for Hank Snow

he reached down
through the dashboard
the molecules in his hand
sliding among
those of plastic and metal
and found
the loose wires of the old 8 track player
and deftly twisted them
together again
and the music of Hank Snow
soared once again
on the wings of a snow white dove
clear and strong

she reached in
through her skull
the molecules in her hand
sliding among
those of bone and flesh
and found
the loose axons of the old neurons
and deftly pushed them
together again
and the memory of Hank Snow
soared once again
on the wings of a snow white dove
clear and strong

By Perry Kinman

On my travel to Taiwan this summer I went to the biggest bookstore I could find in the downtown section of Taipei and found some Chinese PKD!!!! I suppose it's an exclusive as I went through all the covers at the official site, and the bibliographies and found no mention of any books from China or its claimed areas. The one novel is A Scanner Darkly. The other two are compilations: Paycheck, and The Golden Man, both tie-ins to movies. Here's the vital information on Scanner:

A Scanner Darkly - Shingi Saomeow - Scheming Scanner
Philip K. Dick - Feilipu Dike (The characters for his name seem to have no special meaning other than phonetic)
Translated by - Chun Ifun (a female name)
Publisher - (I'm not sure)
Publishing Date - Oct 2005
ISBN 986-81126-9-9

English note in the back - "A SCANNER DARKLY, Copyright: 1977 By Philip K. Dick, Published by agreement with the author c/o Baror International, Inc. through the Chinese Connection Agency, a division of The Yao Enterprises, LLC. Complex Chinese Translation copyright 2005 by THE CHINESE INKWELL LTD. " (as is, misspelling included) (On another page another spelling is 'Philip K. Disk.' Spelling on title page is correct, however.)

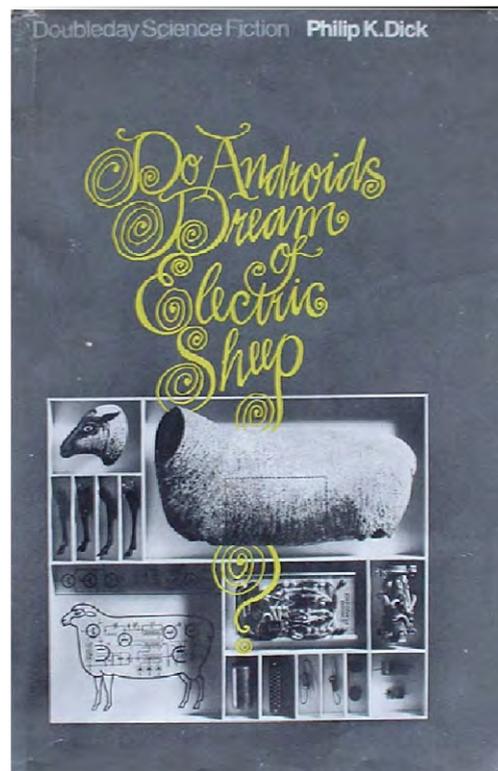
Including cover scans of the three books, plus spines. The publishers 'afro guy' logo is neat!

- Perry Kinman

Late Night Thoughts About Question Marks, While Listening To The 1966 Hit Song “96 Tears” By Question Mark And The Mysterians, Somewhat Loud, Over Headphones

By Frank C. Bertrand

Now that I’m a reluctant great-grandfather and retired Middle School Teacher’s Aide (High School Teacher and Adjunct Professor before that), I’m loving the hell out of puttering about at my own pace. This includes perusing the highways, byways, back-alleys, dingy paths and subterranean caverns of the ubiquitous Internet looking for, hopefully, intriguing, thoughtful, well-written



items about Philip K. Dick. And once in a while I actually find such a rare nugget, a good example being John Lentz’s “reader’s diary” series of blog writings about Phil Dick’s writers journal, at: pkdexegesis.blogspot.com. But the one I really like is Evan Lampe’s cogent and literate “Nether Kings Nor Americans” blog series about

Phil Dick, which starts at: tashqueedagg.wordpress.com/2013/03/08/Philip-k-dick-introduction/.

I have also, however, taken note of an increasing trend of giving the title of Dick’s 1968 novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* **without** the question mark, that is, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*. Such sloppy copy-editing and proof-reading is getting to be, unfortunately, more common for a lot of blog postings in our

quick-and-convenient, ambivalent, dumbing-down, **very quiescent** American society. It’s enough to give one late night-marish thoughts about why all the self-appointed, self-anointed PKD scholars, academics, pundits and hangers-on aren’t minding the store better. I mean, didn’t the British philosopher Lord Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) once famously remark, “Many people would die sooner than think – in fact they do?”



In this instance it makes an important, salient difference if the title is interrogatory or declarative. (**hint:** when written without the question mark, it doesn’t even make grammatical sense!!)

Philip K. Dick meant for the title to ask a question, within which are embedded additional questions: Do androids dream? If they do, would they dream of “electric” sheep versus live, natural sheep? One also wonders if the novel itself actually answers its interrogatory title.

Do androids dream of electric sheep? Well, do they? How? Why?

Furthermore, why would androids need to sleep, let alone dream? If they dream, why not of other androids, perhaps centerfold ones, instead of electric sheep? Might



they dream of a Cylon, Borg or Terminator? (Wouldn’t you just love to see the Borg 7 of 9 mud-wrestle with the model Caprica 6 Cylon?! I doubt they would be reading a 2009 work from the San Francisco publisher RE/Search, titled: *Do Androids Sleep With Electronic Sheep?: Critical Perspectives On Sexuality And Pornography In Science And Science Fiction*.) In so doing, would they be a right or left-brained android with a bicameral mind? This latter question could be important, for Phil Dick, in his seminal 1976 essay, “Man, Android, and Machine,” after mentioning the work of Charles Tart, Robert E. Ornstein and Joseph E. Bogen, writes:

“What is involved here is that one brain receives exactly the same input as the other, through the various sense channels, but processes the information differently; each brain works its own unique way (the left is like a digital computer; the right much like an analog computer, working by comparing patterns). Processing the identical in-

formation, each may arrive at a totally different result whereupon since our personality is constructed in our left brain, if the right brain finds something vital that we to its left brain remain unaware of, it must communicate during sleep, during the dream, hence the Dreamer who communicates to us so urgently in the night is located neurologically, evidently, in our right brain, which is the not-I.” [The Shifting Realities of Philip K. Dick, Vintage Books, 1995, pp. 220-221]

Professor Ornstein, in particular, has written: “On this right-left duality, we have scientific evidence only for dreaming, and it is not too strong. In a report on three cases, Humphrey and Zangwill have found that damage to the right parietal lobe of the brain seems to interfere with dreaming. Bogen notes that his split-brain patients tend to report the absence of dreams after the operation, perhaps because of the disconnection of the verbal output from the right hemisphere.” [The Psychology of Consciousness, W.H. Freeman & Co, 1972, p. 64]

In the second paragraph of chapter sixteen, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, we find:

“Do androids dream? Rick asked himself. Evidently; that’s why they occasionally kill their employers and flee here. A better life, without servitude. Like Luba Luft; singing Don Giovanni and Le Nozze instead of toiling across the face of a barren rock-strewn field. On a fundamentally uninhabitable colony world.” [Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, NY: Ballantine Books, 1996, p. 184]

Even more telling is what Deckard thinks about his electric sheep. “It doesn’t know I exist. Like the androids, it had no ability to appreciate the existence of another. He had never thought of this before, the similarity between an electronic animal and an andy.” (Do Androids Dream, p. 42)

Evidently.

Clearly, obviously, on the basis of available evidence, that is, dreaming of “a better life, without servitude....instead of toiling across the face of a barren rock-strewn field.” And for Deckard his available evidence is watching Luba Luft, a Nexus 6 android, sing opera in rehearsal “in the enormous whale-belly of steel and stone”

(ch. 9, p. 97) of The Old War Memorial Opera House. In fact, Deckard “...found himself surprised at the quality of her voice; it rated with that of the best, even that of notables in his collection of historic tapes.” (Do Androids Dream, p. 99). Then, “Perhaps the better she functions,

the better a singer she is, the more I am needed.” (ibid.) Note, he refers to Luba Luft as “her” and “she,” not “it.”

Another revealing aspect of this better life without servitude is expressed by Pris Stratton, a Nexus 6 android, in chapter thirteen. Of her time in a settlement near New New York on Mars, she says:

“I got various drugs from Roy – I needed them at first because – well, anyhow, it’s an awful place.... all Mars is lonely. Much worse than this... “The androids,” she said, “are lonely too... “We came back,” Pris said, “because nobody should have to live there....It’s so old. You feel it in the stones, the terrible old age.” (p. 150)

Potential evidence can also be gleaned from what Pris tells J.R. Isidore in chapter fourteen:

“It’s a dream,” Pris said. “Induced by drugs that Roy gave me.”

“P-pardon?”

“You really think that bounty hunters exist?”

“Mr. Baty said they killed your friends.”

“Roy Baty is as crazy as I am,” Pris said. “Our trip was between a mental hospital on the East Coast and here. We’re all schizophrenic, with defective emotional lives – flattening of affect, it’s called. And we have group hallucinations.”

“I didn’t think it was true,” he said, full of relief. [p. 161]

That phrase, group hallucinations, is reinforced by what Rick Deckard learns from Roy Baty’s “poop sheet” in chapter sixteen, “...this android stole, and experimented with various mind-fusing drugs, claiming when caught that it hoped to promote in androids a group experience similar to that of Mercerism....” [p. 185]

Even though Pris is jesting with J.R., knows he is a “chickhead” (someone who “had failed to pass the minimum mental functions test” (p. 19), and no doubt naïve and gullible, suggesting to him the notion that bounty



hunters really exist and are chasing her and her friends is “a dream,” nonetheless goes on to pointedly tell him: “But you see,” Pris said, “if you’re not human, then it’s all different.” (p. 161)

If it’s all different, do androids have drug-induced artificial dreams?

There is a third use of the word “dream” to be found in the 2000, 5th impression, British edition of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, published by Millennium, an imprint of Orion Books Ltd., that I haven’t seen elsewhere. It’s in a dedication:

To Maren Augusta Bergrund
August 10, 1923 – June 14, 1967

And still I dream he treads the lawn,
Walking ghostly in the dew
Pierced by my glad singing through.

These three lines of poetry are by the Irish poet William Butler Yeats (1865-1939; winner of the 1923 Nobel Prize for Literature), from near the end of his poem “The Song of the Happy Shepherd.” The last seven lines are:

And still I dream he treads the lawn,
Walking ghostly in the dew,
Pierced by my glad singing through,
My songs of old earth’s dreamy youth:
But ah! She dreams not now; dream thou!
For fair are poppies on the brow:
Dream, dream, for this is also sooth.
[reprinted from *Crossways*, 1889]

This is a poem that Philip K. Dick quotes from more than once in his extant letters, the earliest being a 6-7-64 one to fellow writer James Blish (*Selected Letters*, Vol. 1, p. 81). And two letters to Maren can be found in *Selected Letters*, Vol. 1, dated 12-10-64 and one 2-17-66.

Also relevant is that Phil Dick mentions the Swiss psychiatrist Dr. Carl Gustav Jung in his extant letters, interviews and essays far more often than Dr. Sigmund Freud. Specifically, in a 1977 interview with Richard A. Lupoff, Phil states:

Lupoff: Were you reading Jung then?

Dick: Yes. Yes, definitely. He was a major influence on me.

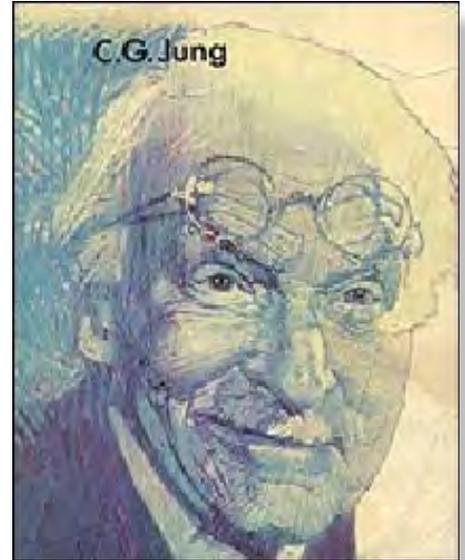
Lupoff: Can you recall specific works?

Dick: Psychological Types would be one. I read all the Jung that was in print in English at that time, but not very much was in print in English.”

[“A Conversation with Philip K. Dick,” *Science Fiction Eye*, August, 1987, p. 47]

Regards dreams, Jung has written: “...dreams have a particular significance, even though they often arise from an emotional upset in which the habitual com-

plexes are also indicted.” [*Man and his Symbols*, NY: Dell Publishing, 1964, p. 11] That is, dreams can compensate (counterbalance, counteract) for a lopsided conscious attitude (emotional upset), a harmful mistake or harmful cognitive-behavioral failure, with the compensation meant to correct or stop it. As Jung states it: “When I attempted to express this behavior in a formula, the concept of compensation seemed to me the only adequate one, for it alone is capable of summing up all the various ways in which a dream behaves.” [“On The Nature Of Dreams,” in *Dreams*, Princeton Univ. Press, 1974, p. 73; emphasis in original].



Knowing of Phil Dick’s interest in Jung’s work, should we be asking: Do androids have compensatory dreams (a “better life”) to counteract a life of servitude they are meant for on a colony world?

One needs to remember that the Nexus 6 android once was:

“...a weapon of war, the Synthetic Freedom Fighter, had been modified; able to function on an alien world, the humanoid robot – strictly speaking, the organic android – had become the mobile donkey engine of the colonization program.” [*Do Androids Dream*, p. 16]

Even more stark, blunt and reminiscent of the African slaves brought to the US as part of the Triangular Trade, is this colonization advertisement for the Nexus 6:

“Either as body servant or tireless field hands, the custom-tailored humanoid-robot – designed specifically for your unique needs for you and you alone – given to you on your arrival absolutely free, equipped fully, as specified by you before your departure from Earth...” [ch. 2, p. 17]

Not to mention having been manufactured in an automated factory on Mars, using zygote-bath DNS factors, with a “brain unit” capable of selecting within a field of two trillion constituents, or ten million separate neural pathways, given implanted memories and a finite four year life span.

“This seems superior to the “electronic simulacrum” Phil Dick writes about four years before in his novel *We Can Build You* (written in 1962; published 1972). All we learn about them is they have a “ruling monad that

serves the simulacrum as a brain," have a battery good for six months, and include a "homeostatic system" such that if "cut off from its environment; it provides its own responses." As the main protagonist, Louis Rosen, narrates: "Simulacra are the synthetic humans which I always thought of as robots; they're used for Lunar exploration, sent up from time to time from the Cape." (*We Can Build You*, Vintage Books, 1994, p. 7)

One might want to compare both with Lieutenant Commander Data, a Soong-type android, built with an upper limit storage capacity of 800 quadrillion bits and a total linear computational speed rated at 60 trillion operations per second. [*Star Trek The Next Generation*, season six, episode nine, "The Measure Of A Man"]

At least the Nexus 6 are an "organic android," which implies having the characteristic of an organism and developing in the manner of a living plant or animal. And having memories, even implanted ones, gives them, according to British philosopher John Locke (1632-1704), "consciousness," in that for someone's consciousness to extend backwards in time to a previous action is for them to remember, have a memory, of it. As Locke states it:

"...as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past Action or Thought, so far reaches the Identity of the Person; it's the same self now it was then; and 'tis by the same self with this present one that now reflects on it, that that Action was done." (emphasis in original;

The Cambridge Companion to Locke's "Essay Concerning Human Understanding," Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007, p. 215)

This makes sense in that Phil Dick, in his writer's journal, notes: "...(ANDROIDS DREAM treats memory-identity theme)." (*In Pursuit of VALIS*, ed. Lawrence Sutin, Underwood-Miller, 1991, p. 167) In addition he writes: "studying false inner identity & lost memories of true self," (p. 165), "buried memories...lost identity," (p. 166), "...fake memories & identity," (p. 176), "...memories & identity..." (p. 177), "fake memory...true identity." (p.182), and "...true memory & hence true identity" (p. 186).



We also find in Phil Dick's April, 1966 short story, "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale," the protagonist, Douglas Quail, is given an "extra-factual memory implant" [*The Collected Stories of Philip K. Dick*, Vol. 2, p. 37], with the Rekal manager, McClane, telling Doug, "You're not accepting second-best. The actual memory, with all its vagueness, omissions and ellipses, not to say distortions – that's second-best." (p. 38)

Even as early as Dick's sixth published story, "Mr. Spaceship" (January 1953), Dale Winter, second in charge of Operation Head, says, "...he [Professor Thomas] had made sure that he would retain consciousness and memory before he even agreed to the operation." [*Collected Stories*, vol. 1, p. 102]

Are memory, consciousness and identity, however, enough to answer our initial/guiding question: Do Androids Dream?

Lt. Commander Data does. While investigating an alien artifact he is given a plasma shock that overloads his positronic net. As a consequence, a series of previously unused circuits are prematurely activated, giving Data the ability to dream. In conversation with Dr. Julian Bashir (from Deep Space Nine), Data explains:

Data: "The images I saw while I was shut down were generated by a series of previously dormant circuits in my net. I believe Dr. Soong incorporated those circuits into my base programming, intending to activate them once I'd reached a certain level of development."

Bashir: "Now that those circuits are active, what are you going to do with them?"

Data: "I plan to shut down my cognitive functions for a brief period each day. I hope to generate new internal visions."

Bashir: "It sounds to me like you're talking about dreaming."

Data: "An accurate analysis."

[*Star Trek The Next Generation*, season 6, episode 16, "Birthright, Pt. 1"]

And the Nexus 6 androids do, as Rick Deckard's accurate analysis indicates. But what they dream of is open to question. [FCB © 5/14]





Journey Planet 16: The Philip K. Dick Issue

by JPC

There are a number of things in this world for which there is an insufficient supply. There is, for example, not enough free beer. There is not enough cheap gasoline. And there are not nearly enough Philip K. Dick zines. So it is with great pleasure that I draw your attention to *Journey Planet* number 16.

Journey Planet is an old fashion SF fanzine written by and for fans typically revolving around a grand theme. Different people assume editorial duties depending upon the issue. For number sixteen, Peter Young manned the controls with the aid of James Bacon and Christopher J Garcia and produced a fascinating collection of PKD-related articles. There are essays, book reviews, a retrospective of Chris Moore's evocative artwork, letters, and personal stories. There is Tim Powers, Ted White, Bruce Gillespie – and Philip K. Dick himself. You'll learn what Phil did after surviving his 1982 stroke (oh, I gotta

tell you: he finished *The Owl in Daylight*, edited *The Last Dangerous Visions* and hosted a syndicated television program). You'll get the scoop on *A. Lincoln Simulacrum*. You'll catch the connection between PKD and *Twin Peaks* and find out about collecting *Blade Runner* memorabilia. This is a rich, rich collection of material.

This special issue was published in 2013 and it is not to my credit that I didn't alert you to its existence in the previous *PKD Otaku*. *Mea culpa!* Happily, all of *Journey Planet* can be found as PDF files at the zine's home: <http://journey-planet.weebly.com> You really must go and take a look.

By the way, *Journey Planet* #12 is a special *Blade Runner* issue with some good pieces on Phil as well as a fascinating look at the film. In fact, every issue of this zine is worth your careful attention and I highly recommend checking them out.

Who Owns the Future?: Philip K. Dick in a Malthusian World

By Evan Lampe

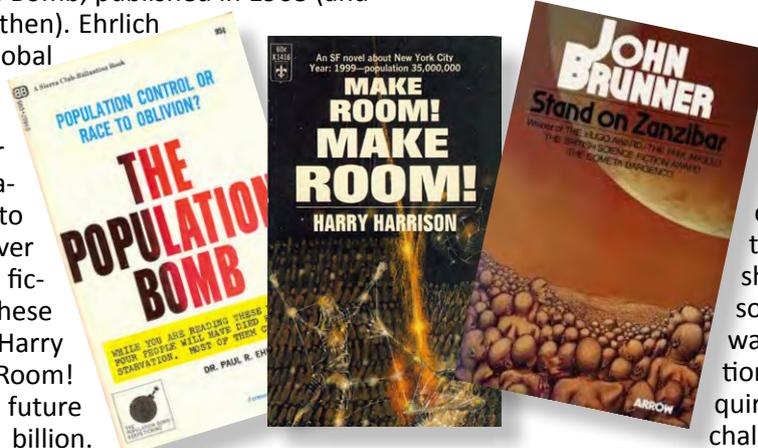
During Philip K. Dick's lifetime, the world population exploded from a little more than 2 billion to almost 5 billion, most of this growth occurred in the formally colonized world. At the same time, thinkers and writers began to express concerns over population growth, seeing each additional person as an added burden to a planet of limited resources. The most well-known warning was Paul R. Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*, published in 1968 (and consistently in print since then). Ehrlich

warned that without a global program of population control, not only would economic growth suffer but the planet's population would be driven to starvation and conflict over limited resources. Science fiction writers picked up these warnings as well. In 1966, Harry Harrison published *Make Room! Make Room!*, imagining a future overcrowded world of 7 billion.

Without a sustainable population people were driven to cannibalism. John Brunner's *Stand on Zanzibar* was similarly dystopian about population, arguing that unrestrained population growth would lead to required social planning and eugenics. One dramatic result of these fears was the "one-child" policy in the People's Republic of China. Social movements encouraging the limit to family size in developing countries have been active, some even pursued through the United Nations. The organization Population Connection (originally called Zero Population Growth) was established the same year as Ehrlich's book, with a goal of encouraging zero population growth for the planet. Their activities include teaching children about the dangers of population growth through the public education system. Philip K. Dick is notable for his humanism in the face of calls for structured reduction in human population.

In many ways, the post-World War II era was a return to Malthusian thinking. Thomas Malthus was an early nineteenth century philosopher (often seen as an early economist) who looked on the population explosion in early industrial Britain with horror. He believed that growing population would lead to a strain on resources, social

conflict, and—worst of all—social disruption threatening the ruling class. He argued that higher wages for working people would only encourage reproduction and that the capitalist class and the state should limit wages and relief to discipline the poor into more restrained family sizes. As Mike David argued in *Late Victorian Holocausts*, Malthusian thought became policy in the British Empire as a result of famines (actually caused by disruptions to Asian and African societies caused by colonialism). One thing that contemporary advocates of population control share with their nineteenth century predecessors is that they target the poor. This is not necessarily out of class prejudice, but out of an appreciation that there is where the population growth is most extreme. Where they seem to go wrong is that resource consumption is still largely confined to the rich nations.



This essay will argue that Dick's concerns about the Malthusian logic of his day went beyond his concerns about the humanity of abortion, revealed most tellingly in one of his final short stories, "The Pre-Persons". His anti-Malthusianism was grounded in an appreciation that historical change requires a pressure from below challenging the stagnation of a

bureaucratic gerontocracy. This challenge came more directly from the youth. At the same time, the most visible victims of the gerontocracy are the youth. In two novels, *Dr. Futurity* and *The Crack in Space*, the major outlines of Dick's perspective on Thomas Malthus (or at least Malthusian logic) are laid out.

The key to understanding Dick's perspective to history comes quite early in his career. The short story, "Stability" was not published in his lifetime, but introduces what he saw as the danger to humanism: the bureaucratic assault on individual agency and creativity. In the story, we are presented in a future where a controlling technocracy has decided that development in any area is undesirable. New inventions are banned, population is restricted, and new ideas are quashed. This system is destabilized by the invention of a time machine, the use of which creates just another banal stable society more reflective of late capitalist automation, where machines control the destiny of humanity. When the anthropologist David Graeber asked the question: why have all of the technological promises of 1950s and 1960s science fiction—such as the flying car—failed to emerge in by the early twenty-first century, his answer was the tyranny of bureaucracy. Bu-

reocracy, in his mind, must stifle progress and innovation by creating an environment where innovation is impossible. Our institutional cultures are actively hostile to creative research. Graeber wrote: "There was a time when academia was society's refuge for the eccentric, brilliant, and impractical. No longer. It is now the domain of professional self-marketers. As a result, in one of the most bizarre fits of social self-destructiveness in history, we seem to have decided we have no place for our eccentric, brilliant, and impractical citizens. Most languish in their mothers' basements, at best making the occasional, acute intervention on the Internet."¹ With the story "Stability," Dick adds to this argument by pointing out how time-consuming and tedious it is to maintain stability. It requires the perfect and precise action of every person - no one falling behind and no one imagining a different future. "Stability is like a gyroscope. It is difficult to turn from its course, but once started it can hardly be stopped. . . . Stability must be maintained, at any cost."² Dick forces us to ask, like Graeber does, what is the regimen of power that prevents the creation of the technologies that will reduce or eliminate work, expand human freedom, or help us transcend the limitations of our body, culture, or upbringing. In other words, how is it possible that the technological route to human freedom can be so readily imagined (as it was for decades) yet be so impossible to grasp. In short, the enemy of human progress is bureaucratic manipulation of individual and collective imagination.

The Crack in Space provides a more elaborate dissection of this theme, placing it in the midst of a Malthusian crisis where social power is monopolized by a small elite of elders. The opening page of **The Crack in Space** provides a snapshot of what an economy that no longer need people means for the working poor. Dick introduces us to a "young couple, black-haired, dark-skinned, probably Mexican or Puerto Rican," in a bureaucratic office.³ They are in line to become "bibs," placed in cryogenic suspension. Unable to find work in an "overpopulated" world (in fact, it is the economy, heavily mechanized, bureaucratic and controlled by a plutocracy that is overpopulated) they have no choice but to become bibs until such a time that work opens up or settlement off planet is possible. Millions have taken this choice rather than face a life without work, income, or housing. Most of those who are forced into this option are non-whites. To make ends meet, the couple is on the



Thomas Malthus (1776-1834)

government dole, but that would be lost to them as soon as their illegal pregnancy is noticed. Abortions are routine and no longer the stuff of scandal. Population control is the state ideology. Even Jim Briskin, the candidate for president, had sought out advice for an abortion with a negative impact on his career.

We know that one of the reasons that there is no work for younger people in the post-scarcity economy described in **The Crack in Space** is that much of the work is done by automated machines. For example, only the wealthy can enjoy human-prepared food. Most people get their food from "automatic food-processing systems."⁴ The economy is full, not the planet. Even sex workers have faced a tight labor market due to technological innovations. Body modification has made it possible for prostitutes to extend their careers into old age.

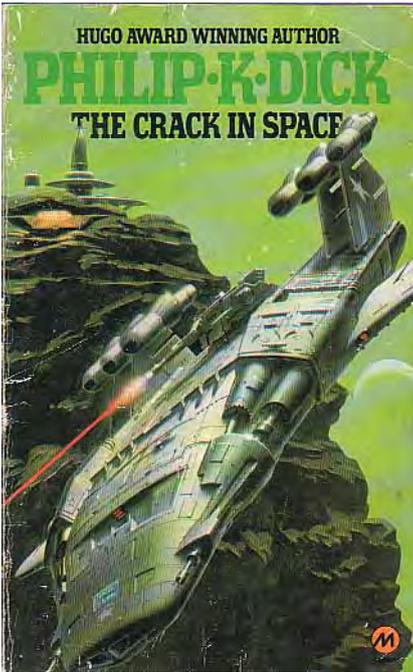
Not only is the economy flooded, it is a gerontocracy. It is only the young who get forced into indefinite cryogenic suspension, while the elders live extended lives thanks to life-extending technologies. Herb Lackmore, the bureaucrat serving these young examples of what I will call "human kipple," doubted that they would even get out due to the domination of the old in the economy. "[H]e had been around a long time; he was ninety-five years old, a jerry. In his time he had put to sleep thousands of people, almost all of them, like this couple, young. And—dark."⁵ In the face of this daily, unrelenting horror, Lackmore can take comfort in his own security and the celebrity scandals he reads about in the newspapers. One of the most famous physicians on Earth, Dr. Sands, mastered the technology to "preserve" people through the replacement of organs. This has also made him a celebrity and made his bitter divorce front page news. One result of this widespread use of life extending technology is the inability to know, at first glance, anyone's true age. An example of this is the prostitute Thisbe Olt. "Archly, she raised her green-painted, shining eyebrows. Her narrow, harlequin-like face glinted with countless dots of pure light embedded within her skin; it gave her eerie, nimbus-like countenance the appearance of constantly-renewed beauty. And she had renewed herself, over a number of decades."⁶ The true youth are more easily identified by their skin color and underemployment.

There is a class dimension to this gerontocracy. While the

"human kipple"

harlequin-like face glinted with countless dots of pure light embedded within her skin; it gave her eerie, nimbus-like countenance

government had unnaturally kept the prices of artificial organs for transplantation (used mostly to prolong life) down, the elite and the physicians want a free market for these organs ensuring that prices will rise and that only the wealthy will have access. Most frightening is that the potentially endless domination of the “jerrys” over the institutions of the world. Technology has ensured this.



In the description of company head, Dick wrote: “For seventy years Leon Turpin had ruled the great industrial syndrome which comprised the enterprise Terran Development. A Jerry, Turpin was now one hundred and two years old and still vigorous mentally, although physically frail.”⁷

Today, the major reason for Malthusian fears are different from those of the early nineteenth century. Thomas Malthus feared a

growing population of poor people, threatening the stability of class society, encouraging revolution and social disruption. These days, Malthusian arguments are reframed in terms of resource use, environmental stability, and “overconsumption.” We have good reasons for believing that Dick was not concerned that too many humans would cause ecological devastation. Do *Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* shows how even a small population can exist in a degraded environment. War, not humanity, was the cause of ecological collapse. His earlier story “Autofac” suggests the main outline of his environmentalism. Automation, resource overuse, and production without concern for human need are the reason our environments degrade.

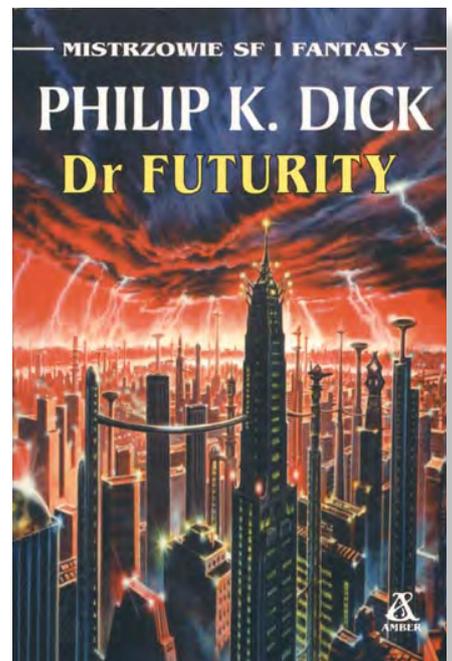
Surprisingly, we find Dick’s most coherent contribution to debates over population in his less appreciated works, such as *The Crack in Space*. *Dr. Futurity* is even more directed addressing the legacy of Malthus and even early twentieth century eugenics. *Dr. Futurity* is one of Dick’s earliest attempts to come to terms with neo-Malthusian thought. The novel tells the story of a physician sent forward in time four hundred years, by a band of people who express an affinity for Native American life.

They are engaged in a continual time-traveling war, hoping to prevent the European conquest of North America. (We can imagine the murder of Cook and Magellan during their explorations to be victories in these efforts). In response, the established power of the future protects or in some cases takes on the persona of these early modern conquerors. The physician, Dr. Jim Parsons, eventually plays a critical role in these activities before returning to his own time.

Jim Parsons arrives in the future and is optimistic that he will find a place in the new world. He can quickly acquire languages and everyone needs doctors. The youthfulness of the society is striking to Parsons. He meets some residents, members of a tribe. After a girl is injured, Parsons saves her life to the horror of everyone present. For this crime he is arrested and exiled to Mars. Before this, the rules of the new world are made clear to him, including the elaborate, centralized reproduction policy which is capable of maintaining a static global population. On his way to exile, Parsons is captured by a group of resisters who engage his skills to save the life of an elder shot with an arrow. This leads to a complicated story of time travel—really a temporal war like that explored in Fritz Leiber’s *Big Time*.

The bulk of *Dr. Futurity* is set four hundred years later in a world that has either come to terms with both Malthus and Charles Darwin. Eugenics is not an unpredictable future for us, particularly in a Malthusian era, where films like *Idiocracy* gain cult status despite delivering an extremely classist messages that if the most educated people do not have enough children the average IQ of the nation will decline.

What we find in this novel is a policy of eugenics combined with a death cult. The gametes of the most successful (sometimes determined by success in tribal conflicts) are stored in a giant cube. All births come from this cube. All men are sterilized in their youth. The population is static so these



gametes are not transformed into embryos until someone dies. Fortunately, this a common occurrence. There are no physicians and suicide is encouraged by the culture. Most people seek out death willingly. Instead of doctors, people employ professional euthanors when ill or injured. The result is that the average age of people hovers around 15. Society advances, in part because of the increasing intelligence of the population made possible by the aggressive eugenics policies. Some people resist this death cult and hope to change it by preventing the European conquest of the Americas. Whites were eliminated at some point in the future, leaving everyone a mixture of the other races. That these survivors establish a strict eugenics policy is striking, given the racist, pre-civil rights world that Dick was born into. Virginia's eugenics policies, made legal in the 1920s under the Buck v. Bell decision were not overturned until 1974. Interracial marriage was not made legal across the USA until 1967.

Now, while the biological sciences are certainly very mature in the world of **Dr. Futurity**, it seems that the setting is politically unstable with people broken up into tribes and full universal suffrage abandoned. Tribal victories allow groups to project themselves into the future by supplying DNA for the creation of future children, creating a perfect social Darwinian environment where the strong really do survive to reproduce and the line of the weak are ended. It even seems to justify the quick resolution of life as the only purpose of life.

In order to prevent accidental pregnancies, all men are sterilized when they reach maturity. This provides the added benefit of allowing a sexually permission culture, that immediately reminds us of travel accounts to Pacific islands. After being settled into the new society, Dr. Parsons is introduced to a young (of course) woman Amy, who he is invited to sleep with. The suggestion initially horrified Parson, coming from a more sexually repressed era, but is saved from having to conform to the local customs when it his host recalls that he was not sterilized. In some ways, the future described in **Dr. Futurity** is the ideal world of television where everyone is young, beautiful, and intelligent and life is filled with exciting youthful conflicts and danger around every corner.

On first glance, this seems to work for Parsons. In one early scene, Parsons learns that musical ability (a youthful trait often squandered by education and the need for a job) has revived. In response to being asked to play a

harpicord, Parsons contemplates the banality of his own culture. "Too bad I can't play. . . We had TV, in our period. Learning to play a musical instrument had just about vanished as either a social or a cultural experience."⁸ Music for him had only come from recordings—old decrepit relics of past joyful performances.

In the novel, Dick takes the concept of planned obsolescence and applied it to people. We are close to this point now. The skills one is educated in will have little impact on the job market in the future. Older workers need to seek re-education (a form of professional rebirth) simply to remain useful to society. The life cycle of many professionals is not much longer than that of a new computer or gadget. Age and long life are in themselves a potential crime against progress. How many

younger academics look on their older colleagues as simply dead wood, getting in the way of their professional progress? We see this phenomenon in almost every area of life, from technology, to fashion, to television series, and to philosophical trends. We are surrounded by the corpses of obsolete things and the worst thing that can happen to any of us is that we get identified with the last model. Those that are left behind are subject to scorn or put forth as a warning.

So far so good. By abolishing the old, this society has created a world of eternal play and creative reconstruction. But on closer look, we find that this is only a surface perception. The reality is stagnation. Dick would go at Malthusianism in two related ways. **Dr. Futurity** is a rare example of Dick imagining the enforced cult of the youth. With the exception of some stories, it is the only novel in which the world is controlled by the young. Far more commonly, Dick's turned Malthusian thought into a war of the old against the young. Whether it is through life-extending technologies that allow elders to extend their control over intuitions or economies for decades or even centuries, enforced abortions, or massive populations of under-employed youth the real threat is not that the old will be scorned and eliminated through a cult of early death. More likely, based on the conditions we see in our world, is that it is the young who will be left behind, glorified only in magazines and film, but holding no real power to recreate the future in their image.

At a second glance, however, these two perspectives are not so very different. In both Malthusian settings, Dick expresses horror at the realities of population control, eu-

*“Academia...
now the domain
of professional
self marketers”*

genics, and death. In **Dr. Futurity**, there is not a visible population of elders controlling the system, the victims remain the youth, who have been convinced that a glorious, dramatic, or otherwise premature death is the most someone can hope for. This is the fate for many youth left behind in Dick's other tales. The common theme is that there seems to be no clear place for the young in this world. **Dr. Futurity** softens this blow only slightly by giving those youth at least a chance to procreate, if they are strong enough and show their worth.



The rebels seeking to destroy the ruling cult of death suggest that despite its apparent success of retaining youthful vigor and progress, the society is in other ways stagnant, much like in a gerontocracy. The progress is only superficial, as in the growing population of genetically-engineered beautiful people. The rebels blame the cult of death as the reason. One says: "We've made our point, but we've achieved a calcified society that spends its time meditating about death, it has no plans, no direction. No desire for growth. Our nagging sense of inferiority has betrayed us; it's made us expend our energies in recovering our pride, in proving our ancient enemies false. Like the Egyptian society—death and life so interwoven that the world has become a cemetery, and the people nothing more than custodians living among the bones of the dead. They are virtually the pre-dead, in their own minds. So their great heritage has been frittered away."⁹ In this sense, Dick is suggesting that the youthful cult of death is not so different from the gerontocracy, the essential difference being that one oversees a dead unchanging system while the other glorifies death so that the life here and now is purposeless. Social Darwinian progress may take place, but social revolution is unlikely.

At the heart of the novel's complicated time travelling plot, is an effort to change the present by changing the past through preventing the conquest of America by the European colonialists. As the world of the novel glorifies and empowers youth in a social Darwinian, neo-Malthusian struggle to see who is fit to see their genes projected into the future, the rebels against that system try to stop the rise of the European global civilization they deemed responsible for the spread of those ideas. So, if European civilization is associated with youth, perhaps it is the "new" world that is affiliated with old ways and tradition.

At one moment the horror of the stagnation provided by the Malthusian, Social-Darwinian death cult is made clear

to Parsons. He asks one of the rebels if the man he was sent forward in time to save is her husband or lover. She replies negatively to both questions, adding "Although we have lovers, of course. Quite a few. Sexual activity continues, independent of reproduction."¹⁰ As she says this she looks expressionlessly at nothing in particular. It is at this point that Dick makes his case for a projectural world, defined by the simple act of raising children. Dick's belief in the virtue of raising children does not emerge from any type of moral conservatism, although it sometimes seems like that from time to time. As his other works show, Dick believed that it is from the creativity of youth that the future is made.

While Dick had clear moral concerns about abortion, he also had political fears about a system that abolished reproduction and innovation. While **Dr. Futurity** considered a society that imagined life beyond 30 as odious, the totalitarian and cynical culture of "**The Pre-Persons**" imagined that the target of systematic pruning would be the children quite directly. Perhaps by making children desire death in the novel, he found a more efficient means to the same goal. The legal foundation for this system is the arbitrary line of algebraic knowledge (usually acquired around age 12). At twelve, people are deemed to have a soul and are allowed to live, but prior to his, children without the proper papers can be sent to a County Facility until they are claimed by their biological parents or adopted. Most, it seems, are aborted after a month. The story is awash in euphemisms about the murder of these children, including "destroyed" or "put to sleep." Clearly, Dick was disturbed by the then-recent passage of legalization of abortion with the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision. He confessed to having been criticized heavily for the story's barely hidden anti-abortion argument.¹¹

The story goes beyond abortion, however, and challenges several aspects of the Malthusian perspective. The abortion policy in the story is clearly weighed against the working classes. It is most likely the poor who cannot afford to register their child as desired (the 36-W Form costs \$90 and not registering a desired child can cost \$500 in fines). It also, clearly targets the young. By the 1960s and the 1970s, Dick seemed to realize that whatever celebration of youthfulness was reflected in **Dr. Futurity** was insignificant compared to the real power held by the old. As one character, challenging the law by declaring himself soulless because he does not know algebra, states: "There is . . . in the land, a hatred by the old for the youth, a hatred

and a fear.”¹² The ageism runs throughout the story, suggested most deeply in the use of dehumanizing language to describe the “unwanted” children. While it was the adults who ruined the environment forcing a Malthusian crisis, it is the children who are singled out for punishment. “You know the world is running out of everything, energy and apple juice and bread; we’ve got to keep the population down, and the embolisms from the Pill make it impossible.”¹³ To make the entire experience more palatable, it is modeled on another unjust system that had been internalized as necessary and normal, the collection and killing of stray animals. Young, unattached (legally and bureaucratically) children are deemed “strays.” At several points the County Facility is openly described as a “pound.” The trucks that carry the children to the County Facilities remind others of animal control vehicles. “You know they even take dogs too? And cats; you can see the truth for that only about once a month. The pound truck it’s called. Otherwise it’s the game; they put them in a big chamber and suck the air out of their lungs and they die. They’d do that even to animals! Little animals.”¹⁴ In this story, Dick suggests that the Malthusian logic extends to a hatred of anything that grows, the ultimate in institutional ageism. And while individuals want children (there is a clear shortage of children reflected by the wealthy searching for children to adopt) and there is a shortage of young people, the institution, committed to zero population growth, labors on, no matter how horrible its deeds. An understanding of Dick’s anti-Malthusian thinking must come to terms not just with the anti-abortion argument of “The Pre-Persons.” In truth, he was making a broader argument about the value of human beings in a post-scarcity world ruled by a gerontocracy (**The Crack in Space**) or in a world in which historical and cultural change has artificially been put to an end (**Dr. Futurity**). It is not clear how

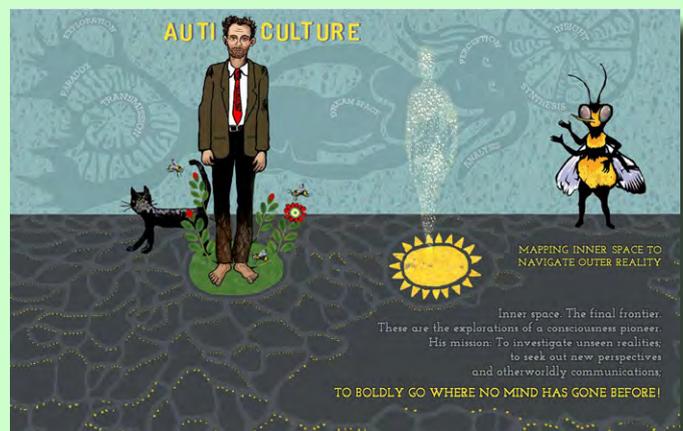
Philip K. Dick would have responded to the environmental crisis that we face today, but it seems that his response to it would have been to reimagine human beings relationship to the planet and each other instead of pursuing “sustainability,” as a code for saving the society we have by artificially reducing the next generation of humanity. Creativity must come from below, meaning we should not ignore or exclude the young father and mother we meet in the opening pages of **The Crack in Space**. Placing these people into the cryogenic fridge of unemployment, slums, prisons, or non-existence will only entrench the power of the elders who created the horrible world we live in.

Notes:

1. David Graeber, “Of Flying Cars and the Declining Rate of Profit” *The Baffler* No. 19. http://www.thebaffler.com/past/of_flying_cars.
2. “Stability”, p. 8--9.
3. Philip K. Dick, *The Crack in Space* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005; reprint 1966), 5.
4. Dick, *The Crack in Space*, 32.
5. Dick, *The Crack in Space*, 6.
6. Dick, *The Crack in Space*, 25.
7. Dick, *The Crack in Space*, 79.
8. Philip K. Dick, *Dr. Futurity in Three Early Novels* (London: Gollancz, 2000), 186
9. *Ibid.*, 208.
10. *Ibid.*, 209.
11. Dick’s comments on these attacks can be found in *The Collected Short Stories of Philip K. Dick, Volume 5*, p. 393.
12. “The Pre-Persons,” *The Collected Stories of Philip K. Dick, Volume 5*, 290.
13. *Ibid.*, 284—285
14. *Ibid.*, 279

Apology:

In the previous issue (#30) Jasun Horsley wrote an interesting piece “How Am I Not Myself? Philip K. Dick, *The Autism Connection*.” We promised Jasun that we would include a link to his website and we forgot. So here it is. <http://auticulture.com> If you are reading this electronically then the link is active (just hover your mouse over it until it becomes a pointing hand then click on it).



FILM REVIEWS

The big PKD news this season is the release, in numerous formats and venues, of John Alan Simon film "Radio Free Albemuth." We have a couple of reports on film here, the first from Tessa Dick.

Long journey from book to film: Radio Free Albemuth

by Tessa Dick

Philip K. Dick's late works, including **VALIS** and **Radio Free Albemuth**, received little notice when they were first published in the early 1980s. Instead, his early works found their way to Hollywood, beginning with the action thriller *Bladerunner* and the unintentional comedy *Total Recall*. Explosions, car chases and shoot-outs have been added to minor masterpieces such as *Next* and *Minority Report*, while the underrated low-budget *Screamers* and *A Scanner Darkly* have been forgotten by most. Another potentially great story, *Paycheck*, was killed by lackluster performances and careless direction.

The latest novel to Hollywood effort, *Radio Free Albemuth*, comes from the blood, sweat and tears of independent producer John Alan Simons. The film itself feels effortless, which no doubt is due to mountains of effort put into it by those who crafted it. The story begins slowly, as the characters discuss the meaning of the strange visions that Nick Brady (played by Jonathan Scarfe) experiences. His friend Phil (Philip K. Dick, played by Shea Whigham) encourages Brady's journey into mystical experience, despite the protests of Brady's wife Rachel (played by Kathryn Winnick).

The mainstream media reviewers complain that the movie drags and is "too intellectual" (or philosophical or literary), but they are wrong. If you want car chases and explosions, I recommend that you see *Transformers* or the latest cookie-cutter action flick starring the aging Tom Cruise. Many reviewers dislike the voice-over narration, but the same sorts of people raved about that device when it was used in *The Maltese Falcon*.

The story unfolds at a leisurely pace, but it does not drag. Nick is drawn by mystical visions to uproot his comfortable

life in Berkeley, California, and make his way to the hectic halls of a Los Angeles recording studio. He lets others believe that his success in selecting hit songs and successful artists comes from market research, but the true source is his visions. A collective entity called VALIS instructs and protects him, while the society around him falls apart.

President Fremont (played by Scott Wilson), who was modeled on Richard Nixon, methodically eliminates every Constitutional protection, transforming the United States into a fascist dictatorship, in order to suppress a terrorist group known as Aramchek. His televised speeches talk about restoring order and stopping terrorism, a contemporary theme in our world.

At the most basic level, this movie is about our world today, not some imaginary dystopia of science fiction.

Alanis Morissette adds a touch of class, as well as beauty, in her role as the timid siren Sylvia Sadassa. She leads Nick deeper into the true meaning of his visions and awakens

him politically, while Rachel begins to suspect that her husband is having an affair. These characters are loosely based on real people, but they possess qualities unique to the world of fiction. Even Phil, who represents the author who wrote the book, only superficially resembles Philip K. Dick. Every actor, down to the smallest bit part, has made the role his or her own, rounded and real.

The performances are stellar, the story is important, and the ending is worth the price of admission. I will not give you any spoilers, but I will tell you that you will weep over the fate of the characters that you have come to know and love while watching *Radio Free Albemuth*.



Tessa B. Dick, the fifth wife of Philip K. Dick earned a BA degree in Communications and an MA degree in English Literature from Chapman University. She taught English for 12 years and has been selling and publishing her stories, poems, articles, photographs and novels since 1969.

She has a lively Blog which can be found at <http://tessadick.blogspot.co.uk>

She also has a regular radio show "Ancient of Days" on Mondays at 3 p.m. Pacific, 6 p.m. Eastern, on <http://www.freedomizerradio.com>

FILM REVIEWS

Next up another review and commentary from regular contributor jami morgan.

Better than the Book? ej “jami” Morgan’s take on RFA...

Finally, I can report that I have watched the movie **Radio Free Albemuth!** I know many of you, especially the Cali contingent, participated in special screenings, including one at (or near) the 2nd U.S. PhilipKDick fest of 2012. More recently writer/Director John Alan Simon’s “final cut” (2014) played in select US cities. He also extended a generous invitation to the PKD Facebook group for a few members to join him at the Writer’s Guild screening in Beverly Hills. Hopefully some Dickheads attended.

I watched from the comfort of my home, and exchanged emails and tweets “real time” with fellow Phil fan Ted Hand while streaming RFA via Amazon.com (on my Vizio/TV device.) I watched twice one day and a third time a few days later, since Amazon offers a 7-day rental (for five bucks. Comcast wanted \$6.99 for 24-hour on-demand viewing. There are other options, but as of this writing, it’s not yet streaming on Netflix, nor is a DVD available.) I mention all this because I had no idea the movie was available for streaming until Ted posted comments about it on Fbook in mid-July. I’ve been out of the PKD loop for a few months (trying to stay focused on other projects), but as usual that giant Eye-in-the-Sky that is constantly watching, shooting pink beams, and its Adjustment Team, keeps dragging me back down the VALIS rabbit hole—in this case the RFA hole. ;-> (evil smiley, but no offense John!)

Cue applause! Yes, I applaud loudly for John Alan Simon’s awesome achievement. The back story surrounding the making of **Radio Free Albemuth**, the movie, is an equally interesting and entertaining aspect. Very Phildickian, mirroring PKD’s own struggles to get his writing recognized and circulated in the mainstream world of literature. So I hope this film continues to be “discovered” and appreciated for staying faithful to Phil’s vision. Hopefully it will, given Simon’s innovative distribution plans. He’s using social media to the max, including something called YEKRA (<http://www.yekra.com/radio-free-albemuth>) where

YOU, dear viewer, can earn some bucks by helping promote RFA. Check that out! The big-screen tour continues. Check locations and other ways of watching: www.Radio-FreeAlbemuth.com I’m fortunate that it will play in Santa Fe, New Mexico, August 29. I intend to be there, VALIS willing ;) I can honestly say I’ve enjoyed it more with each viewing. Here’s why...



The visual effects are just as many of us have imagined, particularly the pink beam. Phil’s prolific psychedelic art vision was great fun, and there are more of his mysterious, mystical 2-3-74 experiences. The effects are a notable accomplishment considering the “small budget” nature of this production. It was Simon’s choice to keep the indie-flick flavor, he says. You’ll learn more about his choices and his thinking on other aspects of

the production process in this two part interview he provided to Tessa Dick for her podcast: Here is Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzBxXIXJtk0#t=174> This link is a Youtube montage of RFA video clips over Director Simon’s audio discussion of the movie. Both parts were edited by a friend of Tessa’s known online as “VEEKJimmyjimmjams.” Here’s Part 2 with more of director Simon’s interview: http://youtu.be/tmQ7EBteVM8?list=PLbjVRkKmb9_Qb7MI2NCeisWqrV2SXPW2S

Clearly this is more of an analysis than a movie review. For one thing, as a writer, I’ve always had a disdain for critics who complain but never create. That said, there was one thing in the movie that bugged me, and I’ll address it later. As I told Ted and John, and have posted previously, my real angst with RFA has always been about the posthumous release of the novel. I’ll elaborate a bit more on that, too, along with opposing views. But first, let me share more thoughts about the movie. I’m writing my observations “clean”, not tainted by the other reviews. Then I’ll read and comment on what others said back during the early “preview daze” as well as the current buzz.

The movie trailer has always provided plenty of enticement and promise for the audio and visual quality to come. As I said, I was not disappointed. The “200 CGI shots” John mentions in the audio links really are “special” effects. Also, I loved Simon’s treatment of opening with Phil, the character, secretly writing his account—a book for future generations—about the “conspiracy.” That, and making the characters younger, really improved

the story, IMHO.

As for the actors, to invoke Teddy again, he called Shea Whigham as Philip K. Dick “a casting coup.” Agreed! Not being a fan or viewer of HBO’s *Boardwalk Empire* I did not know of Shea as Eli on that series, but many of you might. For the first few minutes I wasn’t sure I would like him as Phil. But the more I watched the more I could see how perfect he was as a younger, slimmer Phil. We all have mental images of those who populate the stories we read. I certainly had a different idea of Nicholas Brady, who made such an impact on me that I named the protagonist in my novel after him (Niki Perceval whose surname speaks for itself ;)) Not that I thought Nick was a fool, but as Phil’s alter ego they were both on a never-ending Grail quest. So, it took me awhile to warm up to this younger, yuppie-like couple of Nick (Jonathan Scarfe) and Rachel (Katheryn Winnick, of the History Channel’s *Vikings* series.) Writer/Director Simon also explains in one of the interview links why he changed the group dynamic so that these three become a trio of hip friends.



Alanis Morissette’s role in the film always intrigued me. Who knew she could act? I forgot that she played God in *Dogma*. Here she is Sylvia Sadassa. I can’t say more, without revealing too much, but you can hear Simon explain how he recruited Alanis and the other actors. Morissette does play and sing too, at least in one atmospheric scene. Music is important to this movie and to Simon. There should be a soundtrack available, but it’s not the RFA MP3 by Stu Hamm that my Amazon search turned up. Simon points out that one is from 1988, and unrelated to his movie. This music is by Robyn Hitchcock, with scoring by Ralph Grierson.

I was definitely suspending my disbelief (that willing suspension all writers hope for), mesmerized by the fab effects of Phil, I mean Nick Brady, wandering around in a psychedelic sixties scene—very much like the temple dreams of my Niki in **A Kindred Spirit**—when someone said VAY-lis. I was slammed back to reality.

John and I have since emailed about this, but I felt distracted every time one of the characters referred to the

ancient satellite as VAY-lis, rather than the soft “a” sound of VAL (like Kilmer or a girl’s nickname for Valerie.) “It was an artistic decision,” Simon says (he must be soooo tired of that phrase), “The book takes its inspiration from James Joyce and with his love of puns, how is ‘veil us’ not the more interesting way to pronounce an acronym for an entity that steeps mankind in mystery and uncertainty—a central tenet of gnostic philosophy. In fact the word ‘veil’ comes up many times in the Exegesis and PKD letters.” But John, VALIS isn’t trying to “veil us” its purpose was to enlighten us, right? And the first word of the acronym, “vast”, implies the soft “a” sound. Apparently other Phil fans weren’t bothered, or at least didn’t voice this issue earlier while Simon was still editing the film. For the record, Phil did pronounce VALIS with the

soft “a” (you can hear him on tape or Youtube clips.) All the fans I’ve conversed with use the “vast” sound, and just recently I listened to the audio version of RFA again and the narrator says VAL-is. Just sayin’. So once I got past that peccadillo, and accustomed to the actors, I decided I like the movie better than the book.

What? I hear some Dickheads gasping in horror, a few choking. I’m half kidding, but half serious. After all, I am the one with all the angst about publishing the RFA manuscript “as is” or “as was”, meaning the state it was in when Phil handed it off to Tim Powers “for safe keeping.” Tessa reconfirmed to us recently that after the famous home “break-in”, Phil handed off a few unpublished works to Powers to protect and preserve. Phil, however, went on to write VALIS in 1977-78, which he claimed

worked better with key elements of RFA incorporated as a movie called “VALIS” within his novel. Thus, the title for the revised novel became VALIS.

That’s not just me talking—Mark Hurst, the Bantam editor (and “staunch Phil Dick advocate” according to PKD biographer Lawrence Sutin, pgs. 241 and 244, in his DI bio) asked for revisions of the then work-in-progress called Valisystem A. Instead, Phil opted for an entirely new approach “that would grapple with 2-3-74 more completely.” Paul Williams writes the same thing in the back matter of **Only Apparently Real**. But, hashing this again in 2014 is a moot point because as time passes and memories fade,

“I like the movie better than the book”

or become embellished for some, we cannot know for sure what Phil intended.

I was going to cite one of the “Claudia” letters from 1975 (from his *Exegesis*), but any Dickhead worth one’s salt knows that even Phil—especially Phil—used to tell a different version of reality to each friend or lover. Even his thoughts and journal writing changed daily. So, we will never really know if Phil wanted RFA published as he left it. Money probably would have been a huge deciding factor had he received an offer in his lifetime. And that’s really the only point that should be clarified for posterity: RFA was not published in Philip K. Dick’s lifetime. It was not his final novel, as some cite in reviews. The VALIS “trilogy” is *VALIS*, *Divine Invasion*, and Phil’s final novel *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* (his edits and manuscript work of TToTA completed May, 1981, and published just after Phil’s death in 1982.) *RFA* was published posthumously in 1985 by Arbor House. That much is factual.



It seems truly prophetic for *Radio Free Albemuth* to emerge as a movie thirty years later. If the novel *VALIS* ever becomes a movie, or one of these new streaming serials (as we’re hearing about *The Man in the High Castle*), then all we can hope for is that Mother Goose’s mysterious manifestations will be as artistically stylized on the screen as Simon has done for these effects, and that “Eric Lampton” and Brent Mini’s “Synchronicity Music” will be as well rendered as RFA’s riffs. (Wouldn’t it be a hoot to have Eric Clapton actually show up?) After all, [“Mother Goose is Eric Lampton,” Kevin said. “He wrote the screenplay for *VALIS* and he stars in it.”] (Direct quote in brackets from Phil speaking in *VALIS*.) Now that really is convoluted!

At this point, I did check online to see what others had posted about the movie. Half of the complaining movie critics don’t realize that the “convoluted” or “difficult” aspects of the plot were from the novel. Phil’s stuff is mind-boggling, just the way we like it, but for many viewers they just won’t get that. Take this comment on Amazon that represents a generic movie goer, rather than a Phil fan: “*Radio Free Albemuth* tries to creatively and intellectually tackle too many scientific, pseudo-scientific, and spiritual theories and ideas, from the profound weight of which, it collapses upon itself like a bloated, gaseous neutron star.”

BAH! I say. That is exactly what people who read early drafts of my novel said; that I was tackling too many topics, trying to incorporate too many diverse concepts and

theories. But, I was playing off *VALIS* and doing exactly what Phil did— tackling everything—but, it’s also why we love his writing and continue to re-read it fifty years later, when other authors are long forgotten! That is why a screen writer, now director, like John Alan Simon stayed true to Phil’s vision, even if it meant sacrificing the simplistic “summer block buster” and the big bucks that could have come with it.

So, Teddy is right. We owe allegiance to Simon. He didn’t sell out. He made the movie Phil fans have always said they want, so get out there and support this creative, authentic effort and of course, “**Join the Conspiracy!**”

Oh, one last important tidbit from John Simon. Early in his comments for Tessa’s podcast, he says RFA chose him. I know *exactly* what he means. I always said I had no intention of writing a novel, but something about *VALIS* affected me so deeply, that I jumped up in the middle of the night claiming I must write my own version of it! Such audacity and it only took fourteen years ;) I kept hearing in my head, “the story must be told.” Simon expresses the same sentiment. He *had* to write, produce and direct this movie. Glad you did, John!

Jami posted shorter reviews of “RFA for IMDB and Amazon.com. Here are the links: IMDB: <http://imdb.com/title/tt1129396/reviews-23> and a short one on Amazon (that Tessa and Ted Hand have commented on) <http://www.amazon.com/review/R19KTRVUDXBYSK> .

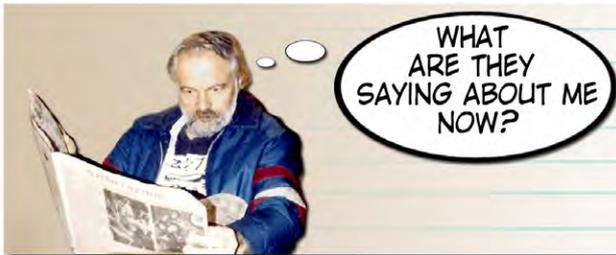
She also entered a FAQ on IMDB about the novel itself at: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1129396/faq?ref_=tt_faq_1#2.1.1

As for your humble editor here, I still haven’t seen the movie. I’m hoping it will appear soon a local theater here in the city. I like my movies on the large screen and a couple of film festivals are coming around soon. But if that doesn’t happen I’ll catch it on disk. Netflix claims it will be available through them in October.

From Albuquerque, Otaku contributor ej “jami” Morgan is the author of the novel *A Kindred Spirit* which fictionalizes PKD’s continuing quest— in the afterlife—for what’s really real. You can find jami’s books and blog at:

www.AKSbook.com .





Notes & Comments

Crowdsourcing “PKD and Esotericism” Research

So here’s a quick note updating y’all on my work. The book is coming along, but slowly. I’m reminded of something Dave Gill quoted Tim Powers as saying that everybody thinks they can just write a book about Phil Dick in a weekend. I’m about satisfied with my main lines of argument, that Phil’s esoteric studies are worth looking at from the emerging new academic “Western Esotericism” approach, and that he wasn’t just crazy or on drugs. The chapters are based on various projects like my Alchemy + Plotinus/Neoplatonism papers for PKD and Esotericism conferences. The talks and a couple interviews are on my blog, listen and watch for details.

I’m finding out more and more about Dick’s esoteric sources, like that he read Frances Yates, but I’d like to know a lot more so I’m asking the community for help. If there’s some piece of evidence about something that Dick read, I want to hear about it. It’s obvious that he was influenced by the Jungian concept of alchemy, so I want to know more about his readings in Jung and any times he may have mentioned alchemy. Do these ideas show up anywhere in the stories and novels, explicitly or implicitly? Jung obviously gets mentioned a lot, but I imagine there’s some evidence to develop a richer picture of the background of Dick’s concept of spiritual/Jungian alchemy, however subtle. So I’d like to hear your ideas about how Dick is dealing with Jung and Plato/Plotinus in his stories. Also, I’d like to hear more about what’s confusing or difficult for readers in the Exegesis. I want to make my book a useful introduction to Dick’s esoteric interests, so I’d like to know what PKD fans want in such a book. So any input in terms of what you’d like to read more about would be most welcome. Please drop by my blog and leave a comment or email me. It’s pkdreligion.blogspot.com or ted.hand@gmail.com

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In addition to taking on duties at “Planet Future”, Peter Young also edits a terrific fanzine titled “Big Sky”. Issues

3 and 4 are massive works reviewing the first and second series of SF MASTERWORKS published by Gollancz. Both fanzines are big beasts: #3 is 240 pages (9Mb) and #4 is 191 pages (6Mb), and they are ideally read on an e-reader such as an iPad though I had no trouble at all simply reading them off of my PC. The third issue has many reviews of PKD’s novels amongst a veritable Hall of Fame of nearly 250 science fiction novels. These are well worth your attention. Issues are available for free download as PDFs from <http://efanzines.com/bigsky/index.htm>

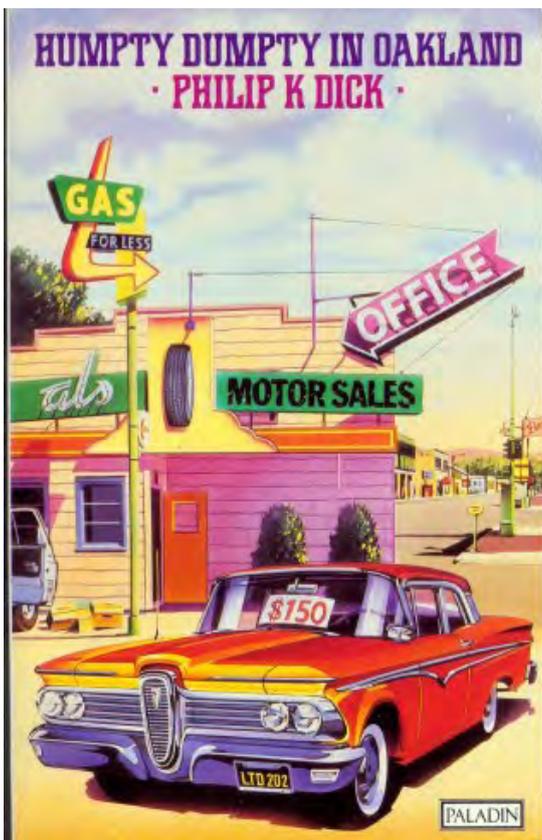
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“Stop Comparing the NSA to 1984 (and Start Comparing It to Philip K. Dick)” – headline from *Atlantic Magazine online* (April 9, 2014)

*

While Heinlein rarely allowed his doubts about the knowability of the future effects of technology to derail his certitudes about the politics of daily life, Dick carved out his distinctive niche among sci-fi authors precisely by bodysurfing the new waves of socio-technical innovation as they crashed into the politics of daily life in California. Dick’s short stories from the 1950s register in a direct way the prevailing geopolitical concerns of his time: the war of ideologically opposed factions; the threat of autonomously escalating military conflict, often culminating in

complete nuclear annihilation of the Earth’s surface; time travel as a means of confirming, preventing, and sometimes triggering apocalypse; and Mars colonization. But after a great burst of short story production in the early 1950s, Dick returned to many of these materials in a cooler and more metaphysical mode. He focused not just on the threat of cataclysmic violence but on the way the disintegration of modern civilization’s fantasy about itself possesses its own form of productive power. The whiff of atomic panic and red scares that wafted through the stories of so many of his peers remains in Dick’s work, but he places new emphasis on the ideological and material infrastructure that invisibly determines the imaginative horizons of his characters—hence the stories of suburbia that emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s in his non-



science-fiction work and the relentless attention to colonization in his major sci-fi novels of the 1960s. – Michael Ziser, “Speculative Infrastructures” in *Boom Winter* 2013

*

Cronenberg-heads probably already know that the director was considered to direct *Total Recall*, but may not realize that he was also in talks at one point about an adaptation of *Ubik*, a futuristic novel about parapsychology, technology, and the afterlife (the project is still in development, but without Cronenberg’s involvement). “For various reasons, it fell apart,” the filmmaker explains. “I had meetings with Philip Dick’s daughters; that’s the closest degree of separation I’ve had from him, and it was exciting to me, really. But I think when it comes to the crunch, it’s hard to find a producer who will really do *The Stigmata*, for example. It’s still pretty disturbing, I think. There are about a hundred movies that could be made from Dick’s stuff, but I think people are afraid of it still, which is a testament to the power that his work has.”

– [Vancouver] *Straight* interview

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“For Dick all art is political. Don’t forget that.” – Robert Bolaño

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When Phillip K. Dick died in 1982 of a series of strokes brought on by years of overwork and amphetamine abuse, he was seen within the science fiction genre as a cult author of idiosyncratic works treating themes of synthetic selfhood and near-future dystopia, an intriguing if essentially second-rank talent. At the time, he was more popular in France and Japan, which have always had a taste for America’s pop culture detritus, than he was in his native country. Thirty years later, Dick — known to his most avid fans simply by his initials “PKD” — has developed a reputation as, among other things: a baleful chronicler of Bay Area working-class angst, thanks to a series of previously unpublished realist works written during the 1950s and early 1960s, such as **Humpty Dumpty in Oakland**; a post-modernist *avant la lettre*, due to his delirious explorations of deliquescent mindscapes in novels like **Eye in the Sky** and **Martian Time-Slip**, which Vintage began reprinting in imposing trade paperback editions in 1991; a godfather of cyberpunk via Ridley Scott’s film *Blade Runner*, adapted from Dick’s 1968 novel **Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?**; and a kind of Gnostic magus gifted with quasidevine revelations that came to inform his final novels, beginning with *VALIS* in 1981. – Rob Latham

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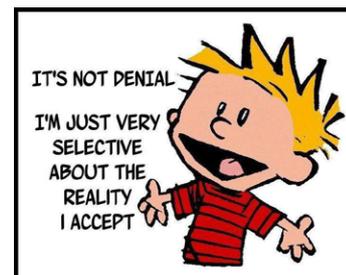
Bad Phil! No CAN-D for you!

“Yet there is a conservative dimension to the narrative resolution in *Androids* in which Dick affirms the superiority of humans over other forms of life in their capacity for empathy, and Deckard’s white, male, and professional subjectivity is valorized over other participants in the story. Moreover, Deckard returns to his wife and accepts the conventions of heterosexual marriage, consumerism, and bourgeois normality, as Deckard comes to accept his former life and returns to his normal routine. Thus, the boundaries that the novel so powerfully deconstructed are resurrected and conservative values and identities are ultimately affirmed.” -- Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, “The Apocalyptic Vision of Philip K. Dick”

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K.W. Jeter interview. *Locus* July 2014

“When I met Phil Dick I was totally in awe of him. He still is the one writer I admire more than any other. Meeting him.... It’s like if you’re some kid living in the Roman Empire in some crappy village, and someone says, ‘You want to meet Jesus Christ?’ When college punks like me and Tim Powers and Jim Blaylock met Phil Dick, we were like, ‘Oh, my God, Phil Dick.’ But then I got to know him for a few years, and it had this weird parallax effect where one eye was seeing the writer I admired most in the world, and the other was seeing an interesting guy I knew. He was a lot of fun to be with when he wasn’t doing some crazy psychological thing. He could be an absolutely charming person as a friend. At the same time he had a lot of pain in his life, and issues. What was fortunate was that his last circle of friends was the Orange County crowd, Jim and Viki Blaylock, Tim and Serena Powers, Steve Malk and his sister Dana, and everybody around there. We admired him and enjoyed his company, and we became protective of him, and did whatever we could to get him through rough patches. I think that last circle of friends he had in Orange County was the best group of people he could have wound up with in his last few years. His death felt like a tragedy then, but because he died when he was 52 and we’re in our sixties now looking back, we think about not just the many more books he could have written, but all the fun and recognition and enthusiasm for his stuff he missed. If nothing else, though, he went out at the top.”





Letters to the Editor

Dear Patrick,

Curious and intriguing that you chose to print the lyrics to *The World/Inferno Friendship Society* song, “Canonize Philip K. Dick, OK?” in **PKD Otaku**. No. 30, December, 2013, p. 31. This song was first released in March, 2011 as part of the album titled *The Anarchy and the Ecstasy*, by a group that started circa 1997 in Brooklyn, New York. Their music revolves around irresponsibility, revolutionary figures, eras in modern history and worship of the Great Pumpkin, in a musical style combining parts of punk, cabaret, soul, rock and ska. There have been some forty members in the group over the years, but about 7-10 perform at any one time, led by their lead singer Jack Terricloth.

“Canonize Philip K. Dick, OK?” is, however, exactly the song I imagine Joe Fernwright would be quietly listening to in his work cubicle in Galactic Pot-Healer. Of particular note is the fourth stanza:

“Use your imagination
Lean to keep secrets too
You don’t change the world by sitting in your office
Sitting in your office is changing you.”

This aptly describes the panic building in Joe Fernwright’s life, Phil Dick’s idea of panic being what Jack Terricloth apparently had in mind. In an April, 2011 interview with Rich at PUNKNEWS.org, Jack says, in reply to the question: “The new LP has a song called “Canonize Philip K. Dick, OK?” Why canonize this science fiction writer, instead of say, J.G. Ballard or Robert Heinlein?”:

“I think Philip K. Dick is the most punk rock. I don’t like JG Ballard- he’s too nihilistic. Philip K. Dick is so good. He gets in your head and you start thinking like him, and then you get paranoid. I can’t read him anymore, I just get too paranoid.

“The song is about panic, and I’m thinking like Philip K. Dick and that is not a good idea... Do you know the story about him and his therapist? He was convinced that he was being investigated by the government, and the therapist convinces them he is not, but then he was actually was being investigated by the government. It made him crazy... and when we’re crazy, panic is what we do. Panic is good. Panic keeps you on the edge. It keeps your brain popping. It’s not comfortable and that’s the

world in which we live.

World/Inferno really only operates at absolute panic capacity. We’re not a mellow band. With 13 people, we are sort of like the White House- everything happened now or yesterday and everyone is yelling at everyone else.”

Music critic, Scott Branson, at PopMatters.com, commented about this song, on June 27, 2011, that:

“The line-crossing that World/Inferno Friendship Society constantly risks happens emblematically at the end of “Canonize Philip K. Dick, Ok”, a stand-out track that suddenly gets overblown. The nicely timed lyric that is a badge of WIFS politics, “Can’t change the system from within / it ends up changing you,” becomes an operatic refrain that wipes out memory of the narrative song structure that preceded it. One might say the anarchy gives in to the ecstasy too much; the message becomes too important. This is a perennial problem for political bands—and this album is very political lyrically. Sometimes it just seems wrong to mix radical politics with easily accessible music.”

I don’t think Phil Dick would agree with that last sentence. In fact, he hints in his extant letters and interviews at being involved with anti-Vietnam radical politics during the 60s and 70s. But for him it becomes mixed with his stories and novels which contain a lot more political commentary/criticism and satire than he’s given credit for. I also don’t think he would want to be canonized, though one meaning of that word is to treat as illustrious, preeminent or sacred. And Phil has certainly become illustrious and preeminent. Sacred will never happen.

Yours in kipple,

Frank C. Bertrand
Sunday, May 25, 2014



About Philip K. Dick

compiled by Frank Bertrand

Gregg Rickman –

“I found that he would color things, and to a degree was mythmaker and fabulist. But his fables, his spoken as well as his written ones, express better how he really saw things than a rote recitation of “fact” ever could. No one put this better than Phil’s second wife Kleo Mini: “Philip constructed what he considered to be the best way to present a point. Sometimes that applied to everyday circumstances too.”” [*To The High Castle Philip K. Dick: A Life 1928-1962*, Fragments West/The Valentine Press, 1989, p. vii – dated March 1988]

Lawrence Sutin –

“First off, Phil – who will, of course, be quoted more often and lengthily than anyone else as the events of his life – was very fond of elaboration, extrapolation, reinterpretation, and outright putting people on. This is agreed upon by all who knew him. Now Phil placed a fierce value upon truth in both his writings and his personal relations. But he never was one to resist the fascination of a new, brilliant, complex theory of 2-3-74, or of anything else, and his capacity for generating such theories was limitless. In addition, being gracious and gregarious (when he was not in the throes of extreme depression and despair), Phil loved to tell stories and write letters that pleased – or matched the preconceptions of – the person addressed.” [*Divine Invasions A Life Of Philip K. Dick*, NY: Harmony Books, 1989, pp. 7-8]

Tim Powers –

“Phil used to describe a mode of speech he called “shuckin’ and jivin’” – meaning telling the other person whatever it might be most effective for that person to hear. You see a lot of that in these letters. And of course he’s not able now to explain or footnote or put these things into whatever contexts there may have been.” [*The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1975-1976*, volume four, Underwood-Miller, 1992, p. vii]

Thomas M. Disch –

“Dick is a professional entertainer of beliefs – and what else is a con-man. He wants to turn anything he imagines into a system. And there’s his delight in making people believe – he loved to make you believe. That made for great novels, but when he overdid it could become delusions of reference. The urge to translate every imagined thing into a belief or suspended disbelief, is a bit of a jump. Yet it was probably Dick’s ability to sew those things together that was his main strength as a novelist.” [*The Dreams Our Stuff Is Made Of: How Science Fiction Conquered The World*, NY: The Free Press, 1998, pp. 153-154]

Anne R. Dick –

“Phil was a psychic shape shifter. He was also a great actor. He would have been a great spy. He changed his personality with every woman he related to. He changed it every time he changed his life situation. He changed it every time he was interviewed. He was a powerful influence, with his great verbal ability, his modest-sounding words, and his ability to read people. He played with all our lives as well as his own, turned us into fictional beings, and melded us into universes of his own creation.” [*Search For Philip K. Dick 1928-1982 revised with new material*, Point Reyes Cypress Press, 2009, p. 243]





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The Man in the High Castle



Philip K. Dick

