

SIMULACRUM MELTDOWN #2 (DECEMBER 2000)

“[...] we had a terrific lighting storm the like of which Los Angeles has never before see...my two cats were terrified. I read to them from the bible, all about the Last Days; you know, Revelations and the Book of Daniel. They were suitably impressed.”

Time flies when you don't know what you're doing. This second issue of *Simulacrum Meltdown* is so wretchedly late that no possible excuse can be convincing. So I will not offer any here. But I do apologize to all those people who sent me material for the long delay and especially Paul Rydeen who generously gave me “Black Knight from Space” over a year ago. At the same time I would like to thank those same people for that material and encouragement.

Some news on the PKD front after more than a year. *The Gospel According to Philip K. Dick* documentary premiered in NYC on August 9th and has been picked up for distribution. A video and, I believe, a DVD are in the works and should be available reasonably soon. No new Hollywood movies. The *Imposter* release date has been changed so many times I wonder if it will ever stagger into the light. Not in 2000, that's for sure. Latest rumor says Spring 2001. Still no word on the last volume of *The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick* from Tim Underwood. Elaine Sauter and Gwen Lee's *What If Our World Is Their Heaven: The Final Conversations with Philip K. Dick* is likewise still pending now scheduled for early 2001 – though we've heard this sort thing *last* year. Nor has there been any news about Gregg Rickman's next volume of Phil's biography. But Andrew Butler's *Pocket Essential Philip K. Dick* has been published and is available at least in the UK and via Amazon UK. I haven't seen it yet but I'm anxious to read it.

The best news by far is Jason Koornick's glorious Web site at <http://www.philipkdick.com>. This is truly an amazing resource, filled with essays, interviews, news, illustrations – it's unbelievable! Go there immediately and be prepared to spend a lot of time.

Nadia Markalova has been producing a PKD zine in Russia called *The God in the Trash* – that's the English translation. She has recently issued the third issue (which makes me feel like a lazy slug) on “CineDickiama.” If you are interested in a copy you can contact her at hope@geocom.ru. No word on the fate of Greg Lee's zine, *Radio Free PKD* but hopefully that invaluable resource will emerge from cold-pac. (C'mon Greg!) Meanwhile Perry Rickman is slogging away in Japan at his PKD zine, *Razzleweave*. I've seen some preliminary material and it promises to be truly encyclopedic. And Dave Hyde has migrated to philipkdick.com to produce an electronic zine called *E Dika!* So there is a good deal of material circulating out there – or soon to circulate. And, of course, yr pal cal continues to host the premier list server at pkd@jazzflavor.com. Finally – and I do mean *finally* – this second issue of *Simulacrum Meltdown* sees the light of day. And once more we have a series of those great book plot blurbs.

There will be a third issue of *SimMelt* in 2001. I'm shooting for a June date. Please feel free to send articles, news, letters, complaints, etc. to me for inclusion. Two themes planned are “Phil & Drugs” and “Those F.B.I. Letters.” Contributions on these or any other PKD-related topics are most welcome. Contact me at

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Regards,
Patrick

The Three Stigmata held a secret that could transform the world – or end it.

Alive yet not living, they sought to pass as humans and seize man's dying world

Letters

Andre Welling

had a great evening with SM [sic!], thanks! Loved the newspaper slips, the 'face of Evil' struck me hard, the petitions... Isn't it funny that all the U.S. SF writers whoever gave me a kick are in the 'opposed' section? btw, it's uncanny that PKD saw the face in 1963 which is my birth year (the same year Welling United FC was founded in England) but that's only an example how easy to get obsessed with numbers.

John Fairchild

Patrick-- Your statements: "There is no explanation for the vanishing soda-stand. Phil didn't have one when he wrote the scene and he didn't have one when the novel was finished...It is quite simply an arresting image and that is all."

This statement could be part of a Philosophy of Art entry. The closer something gets to being truly creative, the less *back-up* it needs. Indeed, once true art gets put out there for the public, it is useless to talk about what the artist *really meant*, although for sure there are schools of thought that dispute that. It is the created thing itself that speaks for itself, and the more powerful it is the more reactions it will have in more and more people. In fact, limiting a creation by saying this is what it *really is* is a way to cripple a work of art. Ridley Scott's ex-post-facto explanation that Deckard is really a replicant is an outstanding example of this. He has lessened his own art by putting an explanation to it extraneous to the film itself.

The closer fiction come to poetry the more obvious this is. Or perhaps better said, the tighter the writing, the more this comes into play. If a poet has to explain a poem, he's hopelessly lost and can barely qualify as a poet. Words have energy and we take that energy and feed off it. The more powerful the words the more energy we get.

Maurizio Nati

I read it yesterday evening, and it was a pleasant reading. An original approach, I should say, to the man and the writer Dick. I greatly appreciated the reproductions of newspapers and the material of that kind (the original idea of PKD not being really dead reminded me the urban legends of Kennedy and Presley).

As for the Soft-drink Stand piece, I found it subtle and intriguing. I could add the result of a conversation I had yesterday with my son, not exactly a PKD addict, but a clever guy. He advanced the idea of the slips of paper being just icons which appear in absence or failure of the program. Fascinating idea, isn't it? I don't know how it may fit to the novel, where Phil never speaks of computer-built reality, but I like to play with this idea. It's phildickian at all.

The story of UTM, then, is quite a complicated one, and I'm not still sure which of the versions I read in the Italian edition (the 1994 Mondadori edition Vittorio speaks about), but at least the whole thing is now much clearer to me. I must add that these philological (should we say so?) operations are always welcome.

Paul Williams

Thank you for *Simulacrum Meltdown*, and many thanks for the dedication, which is much appreciated and makes me feel good. I didn't actually negotiate book contracts, Russell Galen did that and did it well. I do take some credit for the Vintage PKDs, I pressed Russ to pursue this...and David Hartwell also played an important role, he originally made Vintage's editor aware of and got him into Phil's work.

I found a lot of interest and of real value in this issue. I hadn't seen the NYT editorial. Wow! And great that you've made the Antagonist photo available to us PKD readers. And yes, you're right that Phil worried that some of his later troubles might have been traceable to his signing that Ramparts petition! I love the Ace Books quotes throughout, and the cover quote ("every time I try to care") is wonderful -- is it from a letter?

I read and enjoyed your TOJ exegesis. I definitely appreciate this format of gathering together relevant info and asking good questions so the reader can chew on it and pursue it wherever it takes 'em... I can confirm that it was certainly the soft drink stand page that Bbob read me to get me hooked on PKD in '67... As you say, it was for us mid-60s LSD eaters comforting evidence that someone else had seen and perceived what we were seeing...and could express it with so much zest and humor! And of course, the author of this 1958 novel had evidently seen through surface consensus reality without benefit of psychedelics... As for Phil's failure to explain the mechanism of the vanishing or the real purpose of the scraps of paper... I am happy to attribute this to his nature as a visionary artist. Like many poets and painters before him, he could arrive at the essential and recognizable image and successfully capture it and share it..."explaining" it is the next person's job, you in this case. And so your essay stands as a good expression of the universal PKD reader's experience -- he sends us on these ruminative quests, not because he knows the explanation and forgot to tell us, but because he doesn't know (only feels, intuitions) and anyway has the courage to share the questions, the confusion and anxiety (and humor). It is true of course as you say that he didn't usually see the inconsistencies in his stories as a problem. I remember visiting Phil when he'd just written and read to me the first pages of Timothy Archer... I called his attention to a temporal inconsistency having to do with when John Lennon was shot and how long it had been since Angel's husband brought home *Rubber Soul*, I gave him a hard time about how he couldn't expect to have the same freedom with such matters when he was not writing sf and couldn't change all historical or temporal facts by auctorial whim... I think Gregg Rickman in one of his interviews (the part that ended up on the tape Gregg put out, partly published in *Argosy*) records Phil joking about me telling him he's screwed up...

Thanks for the good work, Patrick, and let's have more!

[The quote from the front cover of the previous issue of *SimMelt* is from vol. 4 of *The Selected Letters* and appears on page xxiv. It is cited in the book as "found among the 1975-76 letters" and bears the curious heading "question 123" -- for submission to the I CHING, perhaps?]

Paul Rydeen

Your zine arrived today. I enjoyed reading about Time Out of Joint. It always was one of my favorites. I don't agree with your conclusion about the 1998 world, however. It's an interesting extrapolation, but it just doesn't fit. But that's OK. We all get different things out of it.

I think the book is complete as Phil wrote it. He said they accepted it as-is. It's a gnostic parable -- and it certainly was the inspiration for The Truman Show. Somebody really needs to write that angle up. They're saying The Truman Show ripped off some off-Broadway play, but it was surely Time Out of Joint. Everybody missed the gnostic parable in Truman as well. Phil would've loved it. He would have loved Dark City too.

I'm sure I read where Phil explained the slips of paper. I forget where it was. An interview, probably. Rickman, perhaps?

Check out the PTG web page. Steve Mizrach's "PKD, Cyberpunk" is now posted. You might enjoy it. My friend Robert Larson recently interviewed Paul Williams on the University of California at Irvine/Fullerton radio station. I haven't listened to the tape yet.

"If a thousand men" got the attention of the FBI as well. It's in Phil's file. The guy who used Do Androids Dream as an anti-cloning thing missed the point entirely. he obviously does not understand cloning at all. Probably another technophobe, fearing what he does not understand.

I really enjoyed seeing the inspiration for Palmer Eldrich. It is as I imagined it. That shows how well Phil described it. I used to draw it just like that.

Thanks again for sending it.

The world lay in ruins – but there was enough left to enslave...or to destroy utterly

The Black Knight from Space

Paul Rydeen

In Disneyland of the Gods, John Keel writes of the Black Knight satellite. Never mind the almanac. You won't find it listed with Sputnik or Explorer. Black Knight is the name given to a radar blip discovered in 1960. This mystery satellite was found in a polar orbit, something neither the US nor the Soviets had accomplished. It was several times larger and several times heavier than anything capable of being launched with 1960 rockets. It shouldn't have been there, but it was. If that weren't enough, ham operators began receiving odd messages from the Black Knight. One operator decoded a series of these messages as a star map. The map centered on Epsilon Bootes as seen from the earth 13,000 years ago. Remember, stars don't move very far even after 13,000 years, and Epsilon Bootes is moving towards us. Only the neighboring stars appear different after that amount of time. Was the Black Knight an alien calling card?

Perhaps the strangest effect associated with the Black Knight is the Long Delay Echo (LDE). The effect observed is that radio or television signals sent into space bounce back seconds (or even days) later, as if recorded and retransmitted by a satellite. They didn't begin with the Black Knight, but they were part of its mystery. Keel places the earliest LDEs in the 1920s. The present author had an experience with the phenomenon in 1986.

It's not in Keel's book, but in 1974 another mystery entered earth orbit. No radar saw it. No ham operator listened to it. One man contacted it - or rather, was contacted by it. That man was science fiction author Philip K. Dick (1928-1982). Dick is probably best known to the public for writing the stories on which the movies Blade Runner (1982), Total Recall (1990), and Screamers (1996) were based. Before the movies, there were the books. That's where we'll find Dick's own encounter with a Black Knight.

Beginning in February of 1974, Dick had a series of "mystic" experiences (substitute "paranormal" or "fortean" or "psychotic" if you like). When he died eight years later, he was still unsure of their origin or their meaning. Left behind was what he called The Exegesis, an 8000-page, one-million-word continuing dialogue with himself written late, late at night. This is where we go to find the Black Knight's return.

Very little of Dick's Exegesis has been published. The Black Knight material formed the core of four novels - Radio Free Albemuth, VALIS, The Divine Invasion, and The Transmigration of Timothy Archer. They remain in print. All four read as autobiography. The pivotal element in each is Dick's own contact with the Black Knight, which he called the Vast Active Living Intelligence System, VALIS for short. In a series of visions and coincidences, VALIS revealed itself to Dick as an ancient satellite from another world. It was sent here long ago by three-eyed, crab-clawed beings from a planet orbiting Fomalhaut. They built our civilization, taught us writing and science, then returned to their own world. VALIS was left behind to prod certain individuals when civilization needed a boost. If it sounds like Von Daniken meets Scientology, read on.

Albemuth is the name Dick gave Fomalhaut in Radio Free Albemuth. I believe he derived it from the Arabic al-Behemoth, which he took to mean "whale." Fomalhaut is the fish's mouth in the constellation of Piscis Australis, the Southern Fish. In VALIS he moved its origin to Sirius, probably after reading Robert K.G. Temple's The Sirius Mystery. He also offered an alternate name for the satellite: Zebra. He called it Zebra because of its ability to mimic its surroundings. We'll discuss that in a moment, when we return to LDEs.

Dick's contact began with a vision of St. Elmo's Fire filling his apartment. It was a strange pink flame which burned but did not consume. He says his cat saw it too. It was strongest at night. Dick would lie in bed unable to sleep, watching the light show. He compared it to a rapid-fire succession of modern paintings by the likes of Klee and Kandinsky. At one point he wondered if Soviet scientists were working with the aliens on psychotronics experiments. He thought they might be beaming images at him from a Moscow Museum. His dreams during this period took on a whole new nature, so much so that he began referring to them as tutelary dreams because of their information-rich content. He experienced numerous waking visions as well.

In some of his visions, Dick saw Soviet scientists rushing around behind the scenes to keep the alien satellite functioning. Strange texts which appeared to be Russian operating manuals were held up

for him to see. The Builders, as he came to call the aliens, were sometimes seen floating in large vats of water, observing the operation. The whole complex system was apparently set up solely for his benefit!

Dick saw VALIS as a benign entity. He saw its position as teacher, sometimes protectress. (I say "protectress" rather than "protector" because VALIS reminded Dick of his twin sister Jane, who died in infancy.) He credited VALIS with taking charge of his life, recovering a lot of income due from unpaid royalties, and even re-margining his typewriter.

While listening to the radio one day, Dick heard the words of the Beatles' "Strawberry Fields Forever" change to a warning from VALIS: "Your son has an undiagnosed right inguinal hernia. The hydrocele has burst, and it has descended into the scrotal sac. He requires immediate attention, or will soon die." Dick rushed him to the hospital and found every word to be true. The doctor scheduled the operation for the same day.

Dick occasionally heard other, less positive messages from his radio at night, even when it was turned off. Admittedly, hearing voices and claiming harassment from an energy beam are symptoms of mental illness, but there seems to be something more at work here. Anybody can claim crazy, incredible things, but only Philip K. Dick produced works of art because of it. In the end, though, he may have overexposed himself to it. As he hinted in VALIS, too much of a good thing can kill you.

Dick had another vision. He saw the pink St. Elmo's fire coalesce into a door perfectly proportioned to the Golden Mean. Through the door he saw ancient Greece, or some other Mediterranean land. He later regretted never stepping through it. This brings us full circle to the subject of Long Delay Echoes. As Dick sat staring at the Y in an ICHTHYS sticker in his window one afternoon, he pondered these strange occurrences. As he did, he saw first-century Rome fade in and remain superimposed on top of 1974 California. The experience lasted through February and March. He still knew which was the vision and which was real, but when he looked away and then looked back, Rome was still there.

The message he decided VALIS was sending him is that we still live in Roman times. Nothing has changed, we still live under the rule of a cruelly corrupt empire, and the Christian apocalypse is near. VALIS predicted the downfall of a King. Nixon left office soon after. As Dick said in VALIS, "The Empire Never Ended." This catch-phrase was made known to him in one of his tutelary dreams.

If this concept of one "reality" superimposed onto another is difficult to conceptualize, let me offer a parallel from more orthodox (!) sources. Without trying to establish or deny its validity, I want to point out that the field of psychic archeology tries to do exactly what Dick had happen to him. This is akin to remote viewing with a time element involved, rather than one of space. The present author is in possession of a small number of unpublished correspondence describing others' experiences of this phenomenon. One called the satellite "Max." Dick was not the only one. Though Dick's vision of Rome faded, his tutelary dreams continued for six more years. So did the AI voice (Artificial Intelligence), a soft feminine voice he heard in times of stress and during hypnogogic reverie. This was the aspect of VALIS which reminded him of his late twin sister Jane. He claimed to have first heard it during a high school physics exam (it gave him the answers) 25 years earlier. During the VALIS days it told him, "The Head Apollo is about to return. St. Sophia is going to be born again; she was not acceptable before. The Buddha is in the park. Siddhartha sleeps (but is going to awaken). The time you have waited for has come." It's in The Exegesis. Dick quoted it in VALIS.

It all appeared to end November 17, 1980. Dick claimed to have had a theophany that day, though witnesses noticed nothing unusual. Dick suddenly comprehended God as infinite, by nature incomprehensible. In other words, the Exegesis would never solve anything because there was no answer to be had. Dick actually stopped writing for a time because of this, but was at it again before too long. It was the search that was important to him, after all. He wrote The Divine Invasion around this time, which was when the voice finally stopped.

Dick persisted in speculating the remaining year of his life, and managed to produce one more novel before the end - the posthumously-published The Transmigration of Timothy Archer. Dick suffered the first of several strokes in February 1982 and died a few days later in the hospital, on March 2. He was 53.

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It is the day after Doomsday. America has been attacked and overcome.

The Doctor Will See You Now: the Evolution of *Dr. Futurity*

The following article was originally conceived some years ago for Dave Hyde's fabulous PKD zine, *For Dickheads Only*. Each issue of *FDO* concerned itself with one of Phil's novels or short stories. Dave had just finished with *Eye in the Sky* and announced that *The Man Who Japed* would follow. I wasn't really interested in *Japed* and it takes me forever to write anything anyway so I skipped ahead and told Dave I'd have something for him concerning *Dr. Futurity*. Alas, *FDO* went into cold-pac soon after and remains there still. I continued to think about *Dr. Futurity* and finally decided to write the promised piece for this second issue of *Simulacrum Meltdown*. Perry Kinman very generously photocopied "Time Pawn" for me. This essay is dedicated to him with my great thanks.

Part One: Time Pawn

Paul Rydeen once wrote an article called "The Worst of PKD." He surveyed various opinions as to which of Phil's novels was, well, the worst. Perhaps "least successful" would be a kinder way to phrase it. Everyone has an opinion about this and the choices are all over the map: Paul picked *A Maze of Death*; Gregg Rickman said *The Crack in Space* is the worst; and Phil himself once chose *Vulcan's Hammer*. Even a poor PKD novel generally has some interesting idea or character to redeem it at least somewhat. So "worst" is relative. For me, *Dr. Futurity* is, hands down, the least successful of all the novels. And unlike other candidates for the designation it is one that seems to lack many redeeming qualities at all.

Dr. Futurity began life as a 23,200-word novella entitled "Time Pawn." It was received by the Scott Meredith Literary Agency on June 5, 1953. A sub-agent there remarked that the story was "very disappointing" though there had been "high hope for abt 1/3rd of the way." Nevertheless the tale found a publisher appearing in the Summer 1954 issue of *Thrilling Wonder Stories* with an interior illustration by Virgil Finley. *Thrilling Wonder Stories* was the lineal descendent of Hugo Gernsback's *Wonder Stories*; under this new title it published from 1936 to Winter 1955. Despite its usually garish covers (it apparently created the "BEM" motif) the magazine was home to a number of important writers. Van Vogt's *Weapon Shops of Isher* first appeared in its pages in 1949. The April 1953 issue contained Philip Jose Farmer's controversial short story "Mother." Jack Vance debuted there and Ray Bradbury was a regular contributor. "Time Pawn" shared the Summer issue with Theodore Sturgeon's "The Golden Helix" (both were billed as "novels," by the way) as well as verse by Philip Jose Farmer. Phil wrote only one other piece for the magazine, "Prize Ship," in the Winter 1954 issue. This was a prolific time for Phil. Twenty-eight of his stories appeared in 1954 including "The Golden Man," "Breakfast at Twilight," "Adjustment Team," and "The Turning Wheel."

"Time Pawn" has the unusual distinction of having never been reprinted after its initial appearance. There have never been any translations of the story, as opposed to the novel itself. When the multi-volume *Collected Short Stories of Philip K. Dick* was assembled, "Time Pawn" was not included, presumably because the editors did not wish to duplicate material available in the novels. "Cantata 140," for example, was also excluded. But "Cantata 140" is contained, word for word, as the first part of *The Crack in Space*. The situation with "Time Pawn" and *Dr. Futurity* is quite different.

The plot of "Time Pawn" is as follows. James Parsons, a doctor living in 21st Century New York, is on his way to work in his remotely controlled car one morning. The control suddenly fail and the vehicle crashes. Parsons is thrown clear and into some field of force. When he regains consciousness he finds himself outside a strange city at night. The city is unlike any he has ever seen – the spires were not his own" – and the stars are unfamiliar. He rather quickly realizes that he is in the future and he accepts this extraordinary fact without too much discomfort. He is still holding his medical case and assures himself that, no matter where he is, the civilization will need a competent physician. Indeed, he is excited by the idea and makes his way toward the city via a multi-ramped highway.

Parsons is picked up by a youth named Wade who wears strange robes and an Eagle emblem. He offers to drive Parsons into the city. Wade is no more than 20 years old. More significantly, he appears to be a full-blooded American Indian. He speaks a strange polyglot language, a bizarre combination of Latin and Anglo-Saxon but Parsons has little trouble understanding him. Indeed, Phil rather rushes over a

good number of points that might make a discerning reader raise an eyebrow. Phil had laboriously constructed this new language and clearly wanted to try it out. The chances of Parsons really being able to understand such an improbable tongue are nil and Phil quickly drops the whole matter and switches to regular English. After hearing Parsons story Wade confirms that this is indeed his future. It is 700 years after “the War” in the 21st Century and a new society has grown up, one that barely remembers Parson’s era. This society is organized into clans grouped around animal totems such as Eagle, Wolf and Bear. The population is now very young and all of full-blooded American Indian stock. Parsons is White and the people he meets are all repelled by his skin color.

Wade takes Parsons to a place in the city and introduces him to a young woman named Icara. She questions the two of them and it is here that a number of strange terms appear: “Soul Cube,” “the Fountain,” “the Lists,” and “Loris.” Other people enter the room including a young man named Kem who insists that Icara leave with him. She refuses and the two struggle. Kem shoots Icara with a terrible weapon that cuts her to pieces. This scene of graphic violence is quite shocking given Phil’s usual restraint in this matter. As she lies dying the other sends for “the Euthanor” but Parsons immediately opens his medical case and attempts to save her. Using 21st Century medical technology he is able to stabilize her. But when the crowd realizes that he is actually saving her life they react in horror and beat Parsons into unconsciousness.

Parsons regains consciousness in a new place surrounded by white robed young men and women. A hospital? But he realizes that this society has no hospitals and no doctors. They use euthanasia. Parsons is in a government center called the Fountain. The Director of the Fountain, a man named Stenog, questions him. At thirty, Stenog is the oldest person in the room. From him Parsons learns that healing is a crime in this society and that he will be sent to a prison colony on Mars as soon as his interrogation is complete. Parsons eventually learns that the average age in the future is fifteen. Society revolves around the operation of the Soul Cube – an immense “cold-pack” unit in which is stored the total reproductive future of mankind in the form of arrested zygotes. When a person dies a new zygote is allowed to begin developing. Meanwhile, at the other end of the process, a fully formed fetus, frozen until needed, emerges from the Cube and goes to the tribe that suffered the death. In this way the population of the planet is stabilized. Contribution of gametes to the Cube is regulated by the Lists – contests of physical and mental ability arranged among clan lines with the winners donating the majority of the new gametes to the Cube for future fertilization. In this way only the best and the brightest gametes are available and so the human race continuously improves. Stenog remarks that the Wolf Clan had recently triumphed in the Lists and made a major contribution to the Cube. This is the sole form of reproduction permitted. “Unauthorized zygote production” is both illegal and impossible as males are sterilized at birth. The Cube has the only source of male gametes, frozen within the Cube for later fertilization. (Phil is at great pains to avoid the terms “sperm” and “ovum” for some reason. Maybe he thought “gametes” sounded more futuristic.) To the people of the future, earlier societies use of birth control – “rassmort” (“race death,” presumably) – is an incredible perversion.

The reason medical science and the healing arts are illegal is that this society looks upon death as something to be embraced for the good of the clan. When a person dies a superior individual replaces him or her, hence the clan as a whole is strengthened. By saving Icara Parsons saddled her clan with a person who, because of her injuries, would drag them down in the Lists. Her continued existence damaged the clan’s chance to contribute their gametes to the Cube. In this society such an action is intolerable. Indeed, after swearing out a legal action against Parsons, Icara immediately had herself euthanized. The details of this brave new world allow Stenog and Parsons to discuss the whole concept of death within their different cultures, with Parsons coming out rather the worse in the debate. Stenog and his colleagues make an effort to understand Parsons and his profession as a healer but the concept is too alien to their manner of life. They bear him no ill will but he has no place in their society, has transgressed their most basic laws and so must be exiled to Mars.

Parsons is stuffed into a one-way rocket and launched into space but something goes wrong and the rocket crashes back to Earth. When he recovers (this is the third time he’s been rendered unconscious since he left home in the 21st Century) he finds himself a prisoner of the Wolf Clan and their leader, a beautiful 35-year old woman named Loris. She and her group are responsible for Parsons’ predicament. It was they who transported him into the future via a time-dredge and later caused the rocket to crash land. They had originally planned to meet him when he first arrived by time travel is an imperfect technology and so Parsons inadvertently entered the city and came to the attention of the authorities. The

reason for this elaborate conspiracy is simple: the Wolf Clan needs a doctor. They have a medical problem and want Parsons to help them.

Loris takes Parsons to a secret chamber within the Wolf Clan stronghold. The Clan has a miniature Cube. Within its cold-pack field is the body of a man, perfectly preserved. Loris explains that he is Corith, the head of the Clan and her father. He died 35 years ago but was placed in cold-pack immediately after death. The Clan lacks the expertise to resuscitate him but hopes that Parson can do so. If he succeeds, Parsons will be returned to his own era. If he fails, he dies.

Parsons is still recovering from the crash landing and so is allowed some time before attempting the operation. He has many questions. How had Corith died 35 years before? How did the Clan acquire cold-pack technology, which is a government monopoly? How did they happen to have a Cube ready at the exact moment they needed it to preserve their deceased leader? But Loris refuses to give him any answers and Parsons is reluctant to press her. He is already developing strong emotional and sexual feelings toward her. He also realizes that this whole situation is highly illegal and that the Clan is desperate. In any case, the Wolf Clan is the only group who can return him to the 21st Century. So, despite his misgivings, Parson agrees to help them.

A large number of people gather to watch Parsons work, including a very old woman of nearly 70. She is Jepthe, Loris' mother and the wife of Corith. Parsons notes a strong resemblance amongst all three and, indeed, all of the conspirators share the same general look. A *family* resemblance, Parsons realizes. But he has no time to dwell on this, nor how it happens that a 70-year old woman continues to survive in this future society, nor how a *family* resemblance can exist in the randomized reproductive system of the Cube. He plugs in the various devices necessary to restore life to his patient – a mechanical lung, a heart pump. Doctors in the 21st Century operate more like mechanics than in the manner we normally associate with physicians. (Eric Sweetscent, in *Now Wait For Last Year*, works in much the same way. In this sense even doctors resemble the typical working class protagonists of Phil's world along with squibble repairmen and tire re-groovers.) The operation is a success and Corith revives. He is taken away to recover. Parsons then sees still another old woman in the crowd and she quite the oldest one of all. She is Nixina, the *Urmutter*, nearly a century old and the progenitor of all the conspirators. Jepthe and Corith are her children and *their* children are the secret group within the Wolf Clan. They have created an actual family, albeit incestuous, in a society that neither permits nor understands the very concept of a biological family.

Dazed by these revelations, Parsons visits his patient and explains the details of his resuscitation. Corith shouts out “You damn fool! I died *once* to get away. Wasn't that enough?” Then the whole story tumbles out. Nixina and Jepthe are plotting to spawn a new race by carefully manipulating the Soul Cube. They are mutants, as is Corith, and have isolated the Wolf Clan mutant gametes from those of the other tribes, forming zygotes only within their own Clan's genetic material so that the strain breed true. Once they have reached sufficient numbers they will overthrow the government and destroy the Soul Cube. The mutant Wolf Clan alone will be permitted to reproduce and so will inherit the Earth. But they still have to use the official Soul Cube to breed; their own Cube failed in its reproductive function but could be used to preserve Corith. Corith and Jepthe bred nearly 80 children, some of whom are still in the Soul Cube waiting to be released. When Corith realized the nature of this insane conspiracy he killed himself rather than go on. Corith is crucial to the plot because he had not been sterilized; Nixina was able to spirit him away from the Fountain as a child before the operation. Corith is the only fertile male on Earth and when he committed suicide the plot was stuck in its track. But Corith was preserved in cold-pack and could be revived. For more than 30 years the conspiracy has been on hold as the Wolf Clan sought a way to bring Corith back to life. Finally they kidnapped Parsons from the past to perform the necessary procedure. Now Nixina and Jepthe plan to mate Corith with Loris and continue their breeding program. Corith begs Parsons to escape and alert the Government.

Unfortunately a guard overhears them talking and calls for reinforcements. They are about to shoot Parsons when Corith pulls the heart pump from his chest and begins bleeding to death. Horrified the guards rush to help him and in the confusion Parsons escapes from the stronghold. The Clan pursues him but he manages to kill four of the guards. There is not much violence in “Time Pawn” but what there is quite savage. For a doctor, Parson is quite a ruthless and efficient killer. He escapes finally by hijacking a car driven by a young couple (he does this by threatening to kill the girl unless her boyfriend does follows his orders, by the way) and manages to reach Stenog in the city.

Stenog is not quite sure what to believe but orders the Cube to be ready for a possible attack. A Cube

official tells him that Loris is in the facility. Stenog and Parsons rush to the Cube and discover Loris calmly destroying a tape file. She admits to Stenog the details of the Wolf Clans' plot. It's moot now. Corith died when he tore out the pump and there is no way to save him a second time. Without his fertility and with the government now alerted the conspiracy cannot continue. There are still a number of mutant Wolf Clan zygotes in the Cube which will emerge from time to time over the next 40 centuries. Perhaps they will begin the conspiracy again. There is no way to identify them from the normal zygotes; the file she burned was the only record.

And with that, "Time Pawn" draws to a close. The Wolf Clan are rounded up and exiled to Mars. Parsons is to be sent back to his own time. On the way to the time-dredge Stenog and Parsons discuss the ramifications of the mutant zygotes still in the Cube. Will Earth have to exile any unusually talented humans who emerge from the Cube to be on the safe side? But that undermines the whole point of the Lists and the Fountain. Stenog wonders if humanity will have to go back to normal reproduction, "unify reproduction and sexual intercourse into one act" again. Parsons doesn't care. He's returning home to his wife. Stenog shudders. "A *wife*. Well, almost any kind of society can exist. Almost any system of morals." Parson smiles and says, "Just about any. I guess you have to take the broad view of it."

While certainly enjoyable as a sci-fi action story with some kinky (for 1953) subtexts, "Time Pawn" has more than a few logical lapses. For example, if all males are sterilized at birth, why do they participate in the Lists? They have no gametes to contribute to the Cube. By sterilizing males at birth the future undermines its own agenda to improve humanity; only half the human race, the females, can contribute. The supply of male gametes in the Cube freezes male contribution to evolutionary progress to the time when the supply was first preserved. Stenog need have no fear of mutant revolutionaries climbing out of the Cube to overthrow his civilization. Any Wolf Clan zygotes that emerge will be, first, sterilized at birth if male, then distributed to whatever Clan has suffered a recent death. Without a group of conspirators operating within the Fountain the Clan will not be able to isolate these zygotes and monopolize them for their own breeding purposes. In the normal course of events, Wolf Clan genetic material will be contributed to the Cube via the Lists and their heritage either strengthen the total human gene pool or be diluted though fertilization with normal gametes. In no sense do they pose a threat to the future of humanity or the society of the Cube. And why would the future be horrified by the use of artificial birth control in the 20th and 21st Centuries? The Cube itself is a gigantic birth control system and about as "artificial" as one can imagine. It would make much more sense if they were deeply repulsed by the concept of natural impregnation and natural childbirth – things that do not *ever* happen in the 28th Century.

Beyond these issues, the story as a whole is something of a disappointment. Characterization is weak. Most of the people in the story are mere cardboard. Parsons has a bit more depth but he must be the most unlikable protagonist Phil ever conceived. The pacing is off; events are too hurried and there is too much jumping around. And there is too much "pulp fiction action" and the violence is fairly gratuitous. The whole American Indian idea doesn't make sense nor *why* so unlikely a society as the Cube evolve from what must have been a genocidal world-wide war (the Caucasian race is extinct). But perhaps we need not be too critical. This is a short story written for the pulps and likely written in a hurry. And perhaps, too, with the intent to be rather shocking speaking, as it does, of sex, birth control, euthanasia, eugenics, and incest -- not, we may imagine, typical fare for SF readers in Eisenhower's America.

"Time Pawn" is perhaps more significant as being by far Phil's longest science fiction story to date. At 23,200 words it easily out-distances his other lengthy tales in the same period: "Paycheck" (13,000 words; received at Meredith 7/31/52), "Second Variety" (16,000 words; received 10/3/52) and – just barely -- "Vulcan's Hammer" (22,800 words; received 4/16/54*). Quite possibly Phil was gearing up to write a full-length novel in 1953 and teaching himself the technique, testing the best way to create a more sustained work than he had heretofore ever attempted. 23,200 words would be about 60 pages in an Ace paperback – only about half of a novel length. He's not there yet but he is learning the craft. The plot itself went about as far as it could go with the ideas it had and there is certainly nothing to indicate Phil had any intention of doing anything more with this sprawling novelette. But strangely enough, within a few years "Time Pawn" would return to become an actual novel.

The second part of "the Doctor Will See You Now" will appear in Simulacrum Meltdown #3.

* Paul Williams dates “Vulcan’s Hammer” as being received by Meredith as of “4/16/54 – or possibly 4/16/53” but it’s hard to see how Phil could have managed the earlier date. Between January and May, 1953, Meredith received *nineteen* short stories in addition to “Time Pawn.” Plus an additional fourteen by the end of December and the manuscript for what became *The Cosmic Puppets*. (On the other hand the manuscript for *Quizmaster Take All* (a.k.a. *Solar Lottery*, Phil’s full-length novel) arrived on 3/23/54 and if the latter date is indeed correct, he pounded out “Vulcan’s Hammer” in little more than three weeks.

A CURIOUS ESSAY FROM FRANCE

What follows is a bit of creative translation. Gilles Goulet sent me the “postface” -- “afterword” we’d say in the States -- to the French translation of *Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said* entitled *Le Prisme du Neant* published by Le Masque in 1975. Gilles ran it through Alta Vista’s translation service for me. I cleaned up the syntax somewhat and had Gilles double check it. It’s hard to say how faithful it is to Serge De Beketch’s original piece. Think of it as a fair approximation at best. In the course of the essay, De Beketch quotes generously from an interview Phil did with *Vertex* magazine. I’ve left the translations intact of those quotations as Alta Vista rendered them but included footnotes with what Phil actually said in the course of that interview. It should give readers an idea of the level of accuracy of the mechanical translating at work here.

“Afterword”

"The greatest author of the years 1963-1965 is, without question, Philip K Dick. In 1964, he published successively two new major works: *The Simulacra* and *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*. At that time, Dick wrote under the influence of amphetamines and hallucinogens and in the beginning wrote well. He is no longer the same way today where, after a last remarkable novel, *Ubik*, drugs apparently began their destroying effects."

These sentences, drawn from *Histoire de la science-fiction, 1911-1971* by Jacques Sadoul, more or less summarize the opinion generally shared by the readers and the specialists of S.F. in connection with Philip K. Dick who was, and perhaps remains, the more original, the more surprising and the most captivating contemporary writer of his generation.

In a few years, indeed, Dick published, in addition to the titles referred to above, works like. *The Penultimate Truth* and *Clans of the Alphane Moon* which, while of second stature, are none the less strong works. In 1962, Dick won a Hugo Award (the highest prize in science fiction, named in homage of Hugo Gernsback, one of the precursors of SF in the U.S.A.). This distinction crowned his novel, *The Man in the High Castle*, which SF lovers recognize as (along with *Ubik*) the best of Dick’s works.

At this time, when the Hugo Award placed him at the side of the greatest SF authors such as Van Vogt, Asimov, Heinlein, Anderson, etc, Dick had only been publishing for ten years.

It is in 1952, indeed, that the name of Philip K Dick appeared for the first time. An appearance which, moreover, passed unnoticed. Dick was part of a plethora of young writers who hesitate between the message and livelihood. He will stick to the livelihood for two years, multiplying the small stereotyped short-stories which he writes almost weekly. Suddenly, in 1954, appeared " The Father-thing " which is the first significant literary event of the life of Dick.

In a surprising bare and strong style, the author tells the horrible history of a child who discovers that an extraterrestrial creature has replaced his father by adopting his appearance. The child prevents the alien from visiting the same fate on his mother by burning her " father thing ".

The people who easily perceive the refiguration of one of Dick’s main obsessions are amateurs of “Freudianism of the bazaar,” helped by the myth of the father: that power is only pretense. One can control only through lies and the governed citizens are always fooled.

This dispute with social hierarchies, this negation of their ethical justification, is a permanent feature in Dick’s work.

The Man in the High-Castle tells men's discovery that the world in which they live is only appearance and that in fact the universe of the books is reality. *The Simulacra* describes America whose leader is actually an electronic fake commanded by a private lobby. *The 3 Stigmata of P.E.* presents a strange creature, half-man, half-machine, about whom the reader is unsure if it is a human, an extraterrestrial or a simple illusion. As for *Ubik*, it is for the novel as well as for the entity which gave him its name, a kind

of exacerbation of this principle of uncertainty.

With *Flow My Tears, the Police Man Said* appeared a second "obsession" of Dick. At least, it gives more importance to an issue already touched upon in other novels: the interrogation on the nature of identity. On the thin network of threads, links and information which makes a man himself and not another and that he is aware of the difference.

And here, one finds that aspect of Dick evoked by Sadoul: that of drug-addict. Who better than a drug-addict could express the nightmare of this permanent dilution of the personality; the anguish of this infernal race after a unceasingly dissolving "ego?" The plot of *Flow My Tears* is exemplary in this respect. A world-famous television talk show host wakes up one day in a sordid hotel room, without papers, and discovers that he has become unknown to his contemporaries. His agent, his friends, even his mistress do not recognize him though he is physically the same.

The conclusion of the novel, its "explanation," is typical of the creations and ways of thinking of a user of hallucinogens. Thus how could one escape the obvious assumption that Dick is himself a convinced addict, an inveterate doper?

However, and it is an additional proof of his talent, Dick has never, from his own admission, drawn his inspiration from his experiments with drugs (which seem extremely limited in any case). In a recently published interview by the American magazine *Vertex*, he declares: " My novel *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, which is a kind of terribly missed trip, had been written before I have never seen any little piece of LSD I had simply read the description of some of its effects. Thus, since this novel which seems the most influenced by the drug was written before I had never taken any, I think that I could have written the other ones without a true experience." [1]

And Dick adds: "First of all, know that it is impossible to write anything under the influence of acid. I tried it once and it was of Latin. All the results were in Latin and Sanskrit, and the market is very limited for this kind of things." [2] Then, as though deciding to diminish once and for all this reputation, he continues: " I have not often taken drugs. I am always surprised by reading on this subject things like: 'He takes drugs to find true reality behind the illusion.' All what I found are places from which I was in a real hurry to shove off. Places where there is no more reality. Only more horror." [3]

No doubt such an interview will cause some surprises among amateurs of science fiction. The "radical", the "tripper" Dick yields the place to a balanced writer, whose sense of humor is not his least quality, and who does not fear to make statements in small connection with the image which one generally hawks of him. As this one " I formally condemn those who push others to take drugs. Like Senator Julian Bond said: "Kill the dealers if it is needed. If one of them tries to involve your child, knock him off! There is no worse slavery." [4]

Philip K Dick as a defender of morals, hygiene and youth -- the science fiction conceals quite good surprises.

Serge DE BEKETCH

[Quotes are from Arthur Byron Cover, "Vertex Interviews Philip K. Dick," *Vertex*; Feb. 1974: pp. 34-37, 96-98.]

[1] "Take my novel *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, which deals with a tremendous bad acid trip, so to speak. I wrote that before I had ever seen LSD. I wrote that just from reading a description of the discovery of it and the kind of effect it had. So if that, which is my major novel of a hallucinogenic kind, came without my ever having taken LSD, then I would say even my work following LSD which had hallucinations in it could easily have been written without taking acid."

[2] "First of all, you can't write anything when you're on acid. I did one page once while on an acid trip, but it was in Latin. Whole damn thing was Latin and a little tiny bit in Sanskrit, and there's not much market for that."

[3] "Not that much. I wasn't getting up in the morning and dropping acid. I'm amazed when I read the things I used to say about it on the blurbs of my books. I wrote this myself: 'He has been experimenting with hallucinogenic drugs to find the unchanging reality beneath our delusions.' And now I say, 'Good Christ!' All I ever found out about acid was that I was where I wanted to get out of fast. It didn't seem more real than anything else; it just seemed more awful."

[4] "I would never condemn an addict, but on the other hand I would condemn anyone who addicted someone. Like Julian Bond said -- remember Congressman Bond -- kill the pusher man, if you have to. If he is going to make your

children into a junkie, shoot him. Now that's an extreme view, see? Like a lot of people would lump the users and dealers together. But I realize that the user is a victim. You cannot be more of a victim than the user of heroin. There is no slavery like it."

FROM THE TIMESCOOP

"The Art of the Nightmare." "Many moon has passed since white man [i.e., Poul Anderson] review my book *Man in the High Castle*..." So begins Phil's essay "Naziism and *The High Castle*" published in the fanzine *Niekas* no. 9 (Sept. 1964). Phil was referring to Anderson's article "The Art of the Nightmare." Here is Anderson's review which appeared in *Niekas* no. 7 (Jan.[?] 1964): pp. 12-14. Incidentally, "Nazziism and *The High Castle*" itself provoked a discussion after its appearance: "Philip K. Dick and the Germans" in *Niekas* no. 10 (dec. 1964).

Some Blues for Horselover Fat. William Gibson, the "father of cyberpunk" (sorry, couldn't resist saying it) wrote this short testimonial for the Seattle fanzine *Wing Window* in 1982. [But see "The Whole Dick Catalog" elsewhere in this issue.]

"Three Sci-Fi Authors View the Future." This essay appeared in the January 17, 1974 issue of *Scholastic Voice*.

The "Roog" Interview. This short Q & A was published in Russell Hill, *Reflections of the Future: Laboratory Manual*; 1983: pp. 57-58. This would be the "teacher's manual" for a science fiction textbook evidently.

The Art of Nightmare by Poul Anderson

Offhand, it seems a little hard to understand why there is such a continuing preoccupation with Nazism. Hitler is as dead as Attila, and considerably more discredited. One is not surprised that Jews and Slavs remember so compulsively, after the special horrors for which they were singled out. Yet, if I am not mistaken, their tendency is to think of the Nazi crimes as German crimes, a thing for which the German people can never be forgiven. I can empathize with that attitude, but it doesn't really make sense to me that the stock of Bach and Goethe should be racially corrupt -- at least, any more corrupt than the rest of us. Nazism itself was the monster, and could have arisen elsewhere.

But as for the persistence of the memory, why does it still haunt the nations that merely had to fight a war to suppress it? We were quick enough to pardon Japanese atrocities.

And they were, in many instances, nearly as great. For that matter, Stalin probably caused more human misery and degradation than Hitler; if his methods were a trifle less blatant, he had more years in which to apply them. And Communism remains an active menace. What is the peculiar fascination of the corpses stacked at Buchenwald?

Perhaps it is due precisely to the fact that Goethe's people were the murderers. If only subconsciously, we expected cruelty to come out of Russia and the Orient. When the ultimate cruelty arose in our heartland, we saw that nobody is safe, nobody is sane.

And the insanity of Nazism is another reason why we can never forget. Historically, the thing was an aberrant offshoot of Communism. But however alien and fanatical, Communism is always in touch with reality. Stalin's personality was not Hitler's. The difference between the movements is roughly like that between Torquemada and a homicidal maniac. Though I feel that even a nuclear war would not be too high a price to prevent a world victory of Communism, the Soviet Union under Khrushchev does show that some leeway, some hope for the distant future, would remain in the latter event. But if the Nazis had taken over --

Fiction has produced several speculations about that. Among the most interesting is *Swastika Night* by Murray Constantine, first published in England in 1937. It depicts Europe centuries after Hitler conquered the West, a Europe in which he is worshipped as the Only Man, the Son of God the Thunderer.

“Who was, not begotten, not born of woman, but Exploded!”

All male Germans, save the ruling caste of Knights, are known as Nazis; the men of favored nationalities, like the English, are Hitlerians; the rest are scum. The Jews have long been exterminated, but a few Christians survive as a similarly despised and persecuted class, their religion as altered and debased by generations of mass illiteracy as is everything else. Hardly superior in rank to them are women -- non-Christian women, that is -- barracked, shaven-headed, soulless, slaves of their husbands, to whom their sole function is childbearing. A man's only real sexual satisfaction is in pederasty.

Against this background the novel tells a curious, moving story of the relationship between the simple Nazi Herman, his intelligent English friend Alfred, and the old Knight whose family has secretly preserved through the centuries a few writings and photographs from Hitler's own time, which hint at the truths behind the myths.

If you know a little about the actualities of Nazism, you will see that Constantine's extrapolation is hardly an exaggeration. To be sure, there are logical flaws. One may well doubt that a victorious Germany would have retained that character of hysteria and nescience long enough for a complete dark age to set in; every other important society has undergone internal evolution, if only in the direction of peaceful stasis. I certainly don't believe that a male-female relationship such as is depicted here could last indefinitely. It would be too unstable; if nothing else, women so animalized and unattractive would produce too much male impotence for a nation which still has an Asiatic rival to survive. Nor do I believe that women would for some mystical reason, finally begin to stop bearing girl children. Nevertheless, this book is more than just a propaganda tract. It deals with approximately three-dimensional people, neither black nor white, who simply want to make the best of the culture into which they were born, and who, like us, cannot hope for more than small uncertain triumphs. It is much superior to Sarbon's highly touted The Sound of His Horn.

Still, it is not as good as Philip K. Dick's The Man in the High Castle. This may be the ultimate story of the world in which the Axis won. Unlike the other two, it is not projected into the future, but takes place right now, in that alternate timeline where the lunatic's bullet did not miss Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933 and, as a consequence, the United States defense effort was too little and too late. Now the Germans have Europe, Africa, and the eastern part of America; the Japanese have Asia, the Pacific, and western America; between the two zones of occupation lies a feeble Rocky Mountain Federation, nominally independent, actually a buffer state under both thumbs.

The story, or rather the several loosely interwoven stories are laid in California and the Rockies. We meet just a few Germans, and hear only indirectly of what they have been doing: of their gruesomely clean sweep in Africa, for instance, or their intricate maneuvers against Japan. This mutes the horror, even when we see how the Japanese covertly hate and fear them, but adds to the realism. How many Russians have you met?

Like Constantine, Dick is not interested in putting marionettes through the motions of pulp heroism, but in examining how people act in situations as complex and poorly understood as those of life itself. His Japanese are not rapacious tyrants; they are men like touching little Mr. Tagomi, trying to get along in a world they never made. Nor are his Americans gallant freedom fighters; they are shopkeepers, artisans, minor intellectuals, also trying to do no more than get along. The many faceted interplay between the individuals of the two cultures, tensions, strained politeness, mutual fascination, is beautifully handled. The Germans themselves are shown to have a relatively sane faction desperately intriguing against the nihilistic schemes of the really far-out Nazis.

Well, there is one figure who might be called heroic: Hawthorne, the author of the banned and widely read novel The Grasshopper Lies Heavy, which treats of a world in which the Allies won the war. The quotations from this book are among Dick's most dazzling tours de force. Hawthorne's extrapolations are sometimes right, in terms of our own history -- and sometimes so widely wrong! Just by themselves they form a nearly complete commentary on the potentialities and the limitations of science fiction.

Yet Hawthorne's sole act of physical derring-do has been to dismantle the defenses of his home and take his chances on Nazi assassins. And it must be on purpose that Dick only introduces us to him briefly, in the last chapter. He is a symbol, and Dick is writing about ordinary people.

Perhaps they are too ordinary, too sympathetic. In the light of what actually happened elsewhere, I have trouble believing that a Japanese occupation of American soil would go quite so smoothly, that personal friendships could develop quite so soon. Having known a number of Japanese, I can readily accept Mr. Tagomi as a decent person. But would not to much tyranny, murder, rape, plundering,

enslavement, and starvation separate him from us? The average Philipino still has small use for Japanese... any Japanese.

There are some annoying minor flaws in the book. For instance, it's possible that a Swede could be named Baynes; his father might have immigrated from England or something. But is it possible that a German posing as a Swede would call himself Bayne? One could pick some other nits.

However, I don't want to. I am only praising with faint damns. Philip K. Dick has written here an outstanding work of disciplined imagination: one which, besides having high narrative interest, casts some light on the madness buried in us all.

[Note: "Murray Constantine" was the pseudonym for Katharine Burdekin (1896-1963), a British writer and feminist. *Swastika Night* was reprinted a few years ago under her real name. There is a fascinating article by Lucy Sussex, "The Anxiety of Influence," in *Science Fiction Eye* no. 15 (Fall 1997), which envisions a meeting between Burdekin and Phil in 1961, while he was writing *The Man in the High Castle*. Check it out.]

...WITH A STRANGE DEVICE

column by William Gibson

Some Blues for Horselover Fat: Some dozen years ago I sat on the grimy hardwood floor in a room that had once been the library of an elegant Toronto townhouse, the walls coated with uneven layers of art students' white latex, a single bulb dangling from the center of an enormous plaster rosette intended to support a chandelier, and watched pale tendrils sprout from my dirty bare feet and take root in the cracks between the floorboards. That night my private picture show was being orchestrated by a substance that put Trumbull's best efforts to shame; I'd eaten an eighth of a minute tab of a chemical the street knew as STP, variously alleged to be either an escaped Dow bid for Barefoot In The Head wars or a methedrine molecule dolled up with assorted baroque tails by a legendary California chemist.... None of the eight people who sampled it that night ever felt the least desire to go back for a second taste; I only mention it now to make a point. After that, we always referred to the night we did the PKD and spent the next 48 hours looking for the way home to Base Reality.

Now the writer we renamed the stuff after is dead, it's been years since I've tripped on anything I'd have considered psychedelic in those days, and lately the late night news has been going from bad to weird.... I'm going to miss Mr. Dick, a man I never met.

Remarkable the number of Phil Dick's fans who have no desire to read any other sf. It always impressed me. "Well, no, I don't read that stuff.... But do you know this guy Dick?" How did they get on to him? Word of mouth.... He was the only product of the American genre sf scene you could give to hardened Burroughs and Pynchon fanatics without wincing a little. Because, at his best, he was truly Dread, the poplit equivalent of certain moments in rock when an improvised guitar line comes scything out at you like a snapped cable and cuts the mind-body dichotomy eight ways from Sunday.... Reading him, sometimes, I'd get this image: man typing at a kitchen table maybe, stoked on dex and twenty cups of coffee, typing fast; just making it all up, and somehow behind it all his admirable desire to drive us all, if only for a few seconds at a time, straight of our wretched minds.

So it's '82 already and I turned 34 today in a world more peculiar in its particulars than anything I could've dreamed up a decade ago. President Ronald Reagan. (Well, Ballard tried to warn us, he did....) Real bad Craziiness is loosed again, my dears; the spook juice is flowing from the bunkers under McLean, that old CIA ectoplasm snaking down Nicaragua way to congeal in rancid jizzy clumps along another border.... Every species of Ugly Shit coughs and shuffles in the wings....

Times like these, a good hit of PKD shakes the scales from the tired eyes. Only we can't get any more, now.

--Vancouver, March 17, 1982

“Three Sci-Fi Authors View the Future”

[The PKD bibliography compiled by Daniel J H Levack lists “Three Sci-Fi Authors View the Future” as a non-fiction piece appearing in *Voice*. The citation is repeated in the Phil Stephensen-Payne and Gordon Benson, Jr. updated bibliography, *Philip Kindred Dick Metaphysical Conjurerer*. Recently, Frank Bertrand listed the piece as one of the out-of-print “interviews” that he is attempting to locate. Bertrand classifies it as an interview because that’s what Phil calls it. In a letter to Ursula K. Le Guin dated February 2, 1974 Phil writes, “Also, I was interviewed by *Voice*, a magazine used in school.” There are a couple of things wrong with all of this. The article does exist but it is neither a nonfiction article by Phil nor an interview. Also, the title of the publication is wrong, or rather it is incomplete.

“Three Sci-Fi Authors View the Future” appeared in the January 17, 1974 issue of *Scholastic Voice*, a national publication for high school students. My wife, Esther, remembers reading this magazine in her high school days in Kansas City. The three “sci-fi” authors are Phil, Kurt Vonnegut and Michael Crichton. The short essays are not interviews in the sense of written questions and answers but are instead general overviews of the writers’ books with pull quotes plugged into the narrative. Someone at *Scholastic Voice* – there is no byline given – must have called them up or submitted questions in some manner then incorporated the results into the essays. The section on Phil is quite short, little more than a column length.]

PHILIP K. DICK

“*This is an illusion. Make good use of your time, buddy boy.*”

The colonists on Mars write notes like this to themselves before they take the drug Can-D. Once the drug takes over, they’ll enter the good-time world of the Perky Pat miniaturized layouts. The notes will remind them that illusions don’t last. When the drug wears off, they will find themselves huddled in hovels on barren Mars.

This is only one of the many worlds created by Philip K. Dick. Can-D and the unwilling Mars colonists exist in his book *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldrich*. Like all Mr. Dick’s science fiction books, this one has a plot resembling a Chinese puzzle, with boxes hidden inside boxes. You never quite get to the bottom of his stories, but you’re likely to keep trying even if it means reading them again and again.

Here are some other startling ideas Mr. Dick has written about:

- Germany and Japan win World War II, and occupy the U.S. But some Americans find a tool that may help them fight back – the I Ching (Book of Changes)! (*The Man in the High Castle*)
- Radioactive dust has turned the earth into a wasteland. Almost all living animals are extinct, and most humans have emigrated to other planets. But bounty hunter Rick Deccard stays on Earth to destroy enough criminal androids (man-made humans) to earn the price of the greatest luxury of all – a live animal. (*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*)

“Of all its roles, science fiction acts best as a guide by which people can cope with their *present* environment,” says Philip Dick. “It should sharpen our concern and our ability to handle current problems. Science fiction has lost its escapist aspect. It now is deeply rooted in the reality of today, which is always passing into tomorrow. And it’s tomorrow we have to control if we are to survive.”

Many of Philip Dick’s stories have a haunting sadness. The characters often seem trapped and hopeless. Dick says this reflects his own view. “I do feel our destiny is tragic in the long run. But we have the power to respond to this condition with dignity and courage. It helps to have a sense of humor, so that you can learn to see the madness in the universe as well as in us, and to realize that the universe is trapped exactly as we are. The mind is a universe, too, and that’s why science fiction must deal now with inner space.”

What about mankind’s future? “I think eventually we’ll have to emigrate to other planets for survival – but that’s at least 50 years away. Until we can do that, I think we’ll gradually go back to the kind of existence our ancestors had 100 years ago, to save energy. It could be a better existence than we have

now.”

Scholastic Voice January 17, 1974: pp. 8-9

THE “ROOG” INTERVIEW

First Student: Can you explain what “Roog” is all about?

Philip K. Dick: All right. Put yourself in the world of a dog. Let’s say you just brought the dog home. He’s never seen a garbage man; he’s never seen a garbage pail. You put him in the yard. What would happen?

First Student: He’d try to guard the garbage pail.

Dick: Right. Because he thinks that what you are doing every day when you take out the garbage is that you’re storing the garbage in a very strong container where nobody will get it. You take it out to this metal container, put the garbage in, and carefully put a lid on it. Even a lid that can hardly be opened. You go into the house. Everyday you do the same thing. After a few days, you’ve got a whole can full of this stuff. He can smell it. Every day it smells better. After a few days he begins to think, “How can I get some of that?” Then, when it’s just ripe, full, and ready to be eaten, these guys show up and take it. And the dog is freaked out. He says, “*What* is going on? This one is ready and it gets ripped off.” OK. Then, after a while he realizes why he’s there – that it’s his job to keep these guys from ripping off all this valuable stuff. And it’s no garbage to him. It’s a depository for the most precious possession that the people have – because to him its food, which is his most precious possession – the thing *he* would guard. It’s like his dish. If some other dog starts for his dish, he jumps that dog. So the dog, he thinks about jumping the garbage men. But he wouldn’t see them as men at all – he’d see them as creatures – vague creatures that come in the dawn, different from the people of the house.

So, what this is, is what I would think it might be like to a dog. It’s sort of world a dog would create; an elaboration in his mind – *if* he can do that. So finally you have this, elaborated over a period of years, because in the story he’s been doing this for a long time. And, as it mentions, he’s getting worse all the time. He barks more. Then, the fantasy element is this” that eventually they’re going to get rid of the dog; he barks too much. What’s going to happen next? Well, from *his* standpoint, if he could think it out, that’s the end – not only will the creatures get the food from the garbage pail, they’ll get his family. Ultimately they’ll get the people.

Second Student: How about the part where the Roogs are up on the fence?

Dick: Now that’s why this is actually a fantasy more than just a viewpoint tale. Because that, of course, doesn’t really happen in real life. Garbagemen don’t jeer at the dogs. AT least I don’t *think* so.

Second Student: They might. Maybe we don’t hear it.

Dick: (pointing to dog sleeping at his feet) Ask the dog. Maybe he knows something we don’t know. This is an elaboration of a fantasy area – a kind of psychological fantasy area. He says, “hey! You there, man. You with the funny looking fur. What’s your racket? What are you doing?” And you don’t know whatever really annoys the dog. In other words, it’s like the dog’s dreams of his own world – his *own* dream of his *own* world – his own *nightmare* of his world. We can’t even feel his world, and we *certainly* can’t feel his nightmare of his world. And this is the nightmare of his world.

This is the first story that I wrote in 1951. I read it over this morning – I hadn’t read it for a long time – and I realized just how much into the dream of that world I went. For example, at the end when the Roogs look up toward the house at the people inside – it’s obvious – it’s obvious what’s going to happen. (*Reading from the story*) “Then slowly, silently, the Roogs looked up, up the side of the house, along the stucco, to the window with the brown shade pulled tightly down,” which, of course is the bedroom where the people sleep, and *that’s* when he *really* yelps. And, of course, the “ROOG!” is – he’s trying to tell

them what's there. It's the same as a bark. To him it's a word – it's the name of what's there. And *that's* when it's over for him. (*Reading again*) “He came toward the Roogs, dancing with fury...” And then, later on, the dog settles down, “His mouth still open and from the depths of him an unhappy terrible moan issued forth, a wail of misery and despair.” He knew he'd failed. He knew that eventually he'd be gone. Eventually they'd come for the people. It's just a question of time. And the Roogs knew it, too. They know it in his nightmare. He feels them knowing it. They say it. It's really him saying it for them. (*Reading again*) “Don't be impatient, one of the Roogs says, (*the dog is thinking*). Our truck is full enough as it is. Let's leave something for next week.”

Third Student: What did you mean by the description of the Roogs – giving them wobbly heads and legs? What does this mean to the dog?

Dick: It's the thing that would be most awful to him. Well, it's the thing that would be the most awful to me. In other words, you write something like this – you forget who you are as a writer. The first thing is, you *are* that dog – you're the freaked out dog. Then you're hallucinating the stuff. So *that* to me, is the way I would do it if I were the dog. Of course, you really don't know – maybe dogs don't think any at all, right? So maybe there wouldn't be any of this. In a sense – in a literal, strict, *rational* sense, there isn't any Roog, there isn't any person with wobbly legs. But in a sort of psychological, dream-like, non-symbolic sense – this has nothing to do with symbolism or metaphysics – that would be how I would conceive the most horrible creature, the way its described. And if *you* did it, it might appear different. You might see it differently. Whatever would strike you. A painful, ominous sense, which you really don't understand, that coming back, again and again, till finally you knew it was going to get you.

Fourth Student: How did you come about the name of the Roog?

Dick: I was just trying to think of something in letters that would approximate a dog's bark, without giving it away as a dog's bark. Like, I couldn't really have it say “bow-wow.”

Fifth Student: I heard it as a German Shepherd. Because people say to me that a dog goes “woof,” but I can never hear the “f.” And it just sounded more like “roog” to me.

Dick: Yeah, that's right. That, to me, is really as close as I could get, anyway. And I knew I wasn't going to write the story until I could write down what a dog would say. I mean, do you know a dog who says, “bow-wow”? Who ever heard a dog say, “Hi, master. Bow-wow!” Or anything like that! “meow, Cock-a doodle-doo,” or whatever they say. So “roog” is good enough – because when you read it, you're not supposed to realize when the dog says “roog” in the story that *that* is the dog's bark. It's a word. And *then* you realize that it is a dog's bark. It's a dog word.

From an interview arranged by Loren Cavit, Redwood High School, Larkspur, California [circa 1971]

Published in Russell Hill, *Reflections of the Future; an Elective Course in Science Fiction and Fact: Laboratory Manual*. Ginn and Company, 1983: pp. 57-58.

the whole Dick catalog – compiled by Jerry Denny

1985 Philip K. Dick Award Winner William Gibson talks about Philip K. Dick

1. An Interview With Larry McCaffery for *Mississippi Review* Vol 16, Numbers 2 &3. (web version) August 1986

LM: Philip K. Dick was always writing about people like Virek who have so many "reality options," so many different reproductions and illusions, that it starts to get difficult to know which reality is more real- the one in their heads or the one that seems to exist outside. That's a powerful notion.

WG: It is powerful, which is why it's such a temptation to keep pushing it once you've got a concept like cyberspace that creates an instant rationale. I probably was a little heavy handed about this in *Count Zero*, with Bobby's mother, who's hooked on the soaps and lives in them, but that was hard to resist. Everybody asks me about Dick being an influence, but I hadn't read much Dick before I started writing. I'd already gotten my Dick from Pynchon. I've always imagined an alternate world where Pynchon sold his early stories to F and SF and became an alternate Dick.

2. *_SF Eye_ issue 1 Winter 1987.*

“I never got into Phil Dick. Somehow I missed him, coming up. I don't remember reading any of his novels when I was a kid. I may have read some of his short stories. But by the time I realized who he was, I had already read Pynchon. Pynchon will do for you what Dick does, but it's like free-basing. I never needed Dick.”

3. *An Interview with William Gibson and Tom Maddox by Darren Wershler-Henry* (source: *_Virus 23_ #0 [Fall 1989], 28-36*)

WG: (back to the list) Alfred Bester, yeah. Bester I'll go for. [William Burroughs'] *Naked Lunch*, yes. Philip K. Dick, though, had almost no influence.

TM: Right, you've really never much really read...

WG: I never really read Dick because I read Pynchon. You don't need Dick if you've read Pynchon. I mean Dick was the guy who couldn't quite do it.

TM: Ah, I think that's different, but you haven't read Dick, Bill (laughs).

WG: That's true. I read a little Dick, but I didn't like it.

4. *_Journal Wired_ Summer/Fall 1990, Gregory Daurer [conducted November 1988]*

“When I was a kid reading science fiction in a one-horse town in rural Virginia, I discovered science fiction, and it was my sole source of subversive ideas. There was no where else to get them. It was so far below the notice of the authorities or my parents that it was totally free. So I could walk around, thirteen years old, and Philip K. Dick was addressing me from his amphetamine fog in California. “

“I think Dick was a marvelous writer, but he was totally bughouse. I think the guy was crazy and had been for a long time. I'm sure he was a wonderful man to hang around with, and he was a remarkable writer, but I tend to back Kim Stanley Robinson's hypothesis that Dick's VALIS experience – when the pink beam of light came down and hit him, and he started receiving information – was the first stroke in the series that finally killed him.”

5. *_The Selected Letters Of Philip K. Dick 1974_ (1991): Introduction by William Gibson, 24 September 1990.*

When I first encountered the country you are about to enter, it consisted of a pristine stack of unbound proof pages housed in a special sort of cardboard box native to the workshops of serious small press publishers. But these letters formed part of a whole that was anything but tidy; they constitute a harrowing literary journey One Which Can never entirely be separated from the corpus of Philip K. Dick's fiction. They are, to borrow a phrase from J. G. Ballard, terminal documents, demanding our full and immediate attention; I regret the decision to publish them in anything less than their terrible human entirety.

I never met Philip K. Dick, but I know that he inspired loyalty and affectation in many who knew him. At the start of my own writing career, Vancouver's science fiction community still swayed slightly in the wind of PKD's recent passage. He had arrived as guest of honor at the local Convention, and had

delighted the locals by unexpectedly jumping ship and taking up residence. Fans who were privy to this Vancouver Period subsequently spoke of him, hut fondly, as one might of some profound Fortean singularity, the human equivalent of torrent of frogs. And though no two versions of the sighting ever seemed to quite match up, it could be agreed that the luminous object had definitely vanished over the southern horizon.

Now we are left with his fiction, and with these letters, the majority of which were typeset from the carbons he scrupulously preserved. To those who protest that he might have objected to the publication of much of this material, I Can only point to that extended act of literary preservation. The letters exist: they were not written on water. And they allow us insight: however strange, however sad, however embarrassing.

Their cumulative effect, I think, is one of nightmare.

But if they frequently resonate, as they certainly do for me, with paranoia and an underlying sense of dark momentum, so then does our age. Much of the postmodern esthetic is prefigured in Dick's best working his sleepless deconstructions of generic science fiction's shopworn tropes, in his lively sense of pastiche, and in a certain abiding tone of exhaustion in the face of a most imperfect present and an ominous onrushing futurity.

Yet the turbulence that rises beneath the surface of this collection, this de facto testament, is also exactly and heartbreakingly personal, the product of one single soul's passage through savagely lonely country, in the latter half of our increasingly strange century.

Illuminating and embarrassing, brilliant and pathetic, the letters of Philip K. Dick are the real thing.

6. An Interview with Mr. William Gibson by Aanta Boreale [1993] _I-Zone_ [e-zine] May-June 1996

Q: This make me think of another writer Mr. Philip K. Dick who wrote a story "The Man In The High Castle" about what history might have turned out to be if the Axis had won WW2.

G: I read the story years ago, Mr. Dick was never any big personal favorite of mine, and I suspect that I got what most get from Philip K. Dick is that distilled paranoia that is found in most in his writing. Dick wrote, I don't know how many books and short stories that evolved along the same storyline, and they give me the impression that they are sections of the same log. And he wrote these things endlessly and never quite got it into one masterpiece.

7. Virtually Real Interview, _Telegraph Magazine_ (1996)

"I've also read Dick's collected letters which were deeply dismaying and indeed a very off-putting thing to do. I had to do it, because I agreed to write an intro to the first volume. And it seemed there was a great deal very, very overt psychopathology going on...I mean he was a few bricks shy of a load. A brilliant guy, but....

"Well his whole life was a state of nervous breakdown. And he fueled it with a lot of prescription speed and tranquilizers and other that, for they upped his output. I don't think it did much for his clarity of perception."

8. Online Chat at the Sc-fi Channel website: December 29 1999.

Moderator: Did you want to comment on the Phil Dick influences?

Joblard (Gibson): PKD: precious little, honestly. I think I got my PKD-like moves from Pynchon, mainly.

9. William Gibson online chat at Books Unlimited: Friday March 24, 2000.

Tom26: How much of your success as an author do you think you owe to Philip K. Dick, if any?

WG: He was not an influence. On me, anyway.

A mind-assaulting adventure in an unknown world

More from France

Yves Potin sent this to me, though he says he originally got it from Gilles. It appeared in the “quasi-underground publication” *Fluide Glacial* no. 18 (Dec. 1977). It is a report on Phil’s appearance in the conference at Metz where he gave his famous lecture, “If You Find this World Bad, You Should See Some of the Others.” Not very flattering, I’m afraid. Yves says it “really reflects the most common perception we have of Phil in France, alas.”

Translation:

Patrick,

This blurb actually is hard to translate. Part of the problem may be the slang but there are also plays on words, e.g. “Sfcon” may mean a conference but “con,” freely translated, also means “idiot,” or more properly, “an asshole.” Anyway...

“I SAW PH. K DICK WITH MY EYES.

Honesty obliges me to say that he also saw me with his eyes, and that, well, let’s leave it at that. Told us some very good things in private into a tape recorder. Two days later he slipped some stupidities into his presentation. Had become mystical in the meantime, contaminated by the air of the city and the obsessive presence of this rather dirty cathedral that is the sole landmark from a distance. Became a mystic, saint Dick. Mystic and a mystical idiot. Are in a boat. The same. Mystic falls into the water. Stays an idiot. Dick is nonetheless the best that America has to offer. What must the rest be like. All flea-bitten already. “Mythed” [this could be a play on words; “mite” mean “flea-bitten” or “full of fleas,” while “mythe,” a made-up word, is pronounced the same but probably means “full of myth.”] And “mythe” gives a president as is well known. Idiot-like. Too bad.”

Best,
Tom

[One further note, Roger Zelazny relates that after Phil’s speech, several people in the audience went to him and asked if he could explain Phil’s remarks. One of them told Zelazny, “I rode back to the hotel in a taxi, and Monsieur Dick gave me the power to remit sins and to kill fleas.” *PKDS Newsletter* ; no. 16 (Jan. 1988): pg. 3.]

The time is 1982, the story a unique blend of genius and madness, of men and machines gone berserk in the world they created.

David Cronenberg on PKD.

The following is from an interview between Richard Porton and the filmmaker David Cronenberg which appeared in *Cineaste* magazine. Cronenberg has been discussing his recent movie, *eXistenZ*.

Cineaste: There also seem to be real echoes of Philip K. Dick in *eXistenZ*.

Cronenberg: Absolutely. I have a little homage to Dick in the film. When they're in the motel and there's a close-up of Jude Law reaching for a potato chip, in the background you'll see a bag with the words "Perky Pats." Perky Pats is from Dick's *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldridge*; that's my acknowledge of Dick. I don't know if he's an influence. I actually read Dick quite late in life. At one point I was involved in *Total Recall* and wrote a lot of drafts – none of which ended up being used for the movie.

Cineaste: Of course, that film completely distorted Dick's story, "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale."

Cronenberg: Completely. I wanted to do something else entirely. So there are elements of Phil Dick in *eXistenZ* – whether this was an influence, whether we both came together, or whether he crystallized certain things that interested me, I don't know. His best work is terrific, his worst is really awful. He wrote so fast and he wrote so much.

Cineaste: He's not a stylist like Nabokov.

Cronenberg: Or Burroughs either – there's no comparison. I've never been really able to accept the notion that, since science fiction writers' ideas are great, you have to forgive them the bad writing. I've never been able to get past the bad writing, but with Phil Dick I sort of can, because for one thing, it's not always bad. He was capable of some wonderful writing. It's not ideas in the abstract, it's much more tangible – some of his characters are wonderful. One of his constant themes, of course, was different levels of reality and who was controlling which level of reality and who was actually creating it.

Cineaste: His obsession with addiction and the schizophrenic blurring of reality and fantasy surfaces in *eXistenZ*.

Cronenberg: Yeah, but there's not much of the drug element in *eXistenZ*. This is one of the things that I very quickly subtracted from the film to avoid the standard virtual-reality movie. I have to confess that I was thinking, more than I usually like to do, of what people would expect. People may have thought that they were coming to see a typical sci-fi movie about game playing and different levels of reality. When I write, I try to be very naïve and divest myself of worrying about expectation and who's doing what film. But I had to with this film, especially since I ended up making it three years later than I thought I would -- I thought I would make it before *Crash*. One of the things that you would expect would be the *Blade Runner* city, which has become it's own movie reality – every sci-fi movie has a *Blade Runner* city. I decided not to have computer screens, not even TV sets. One of the other things I eliminated, but haven't thought about much until now, is the addiction theme, because that's also a cliché of VR movies.

A soul-shocking experience beyond death and infinity

Alien satellites circle the Earth – and man's only hope is a med cartoonist!

PKD Bibliography Updates.

Phil Stephenson-Payne's *Philip K. Dick: Metaphysical Conjurer* is the most complete bibliography of primary and secondary material on PKD available. I use it all the time and, again I urge everyone to buy a copy. Since the most recent edition was published new writings continue to appear. Here then is an addendum to *Metaphysical Conjurer* of English-language material through the end of 1999.

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