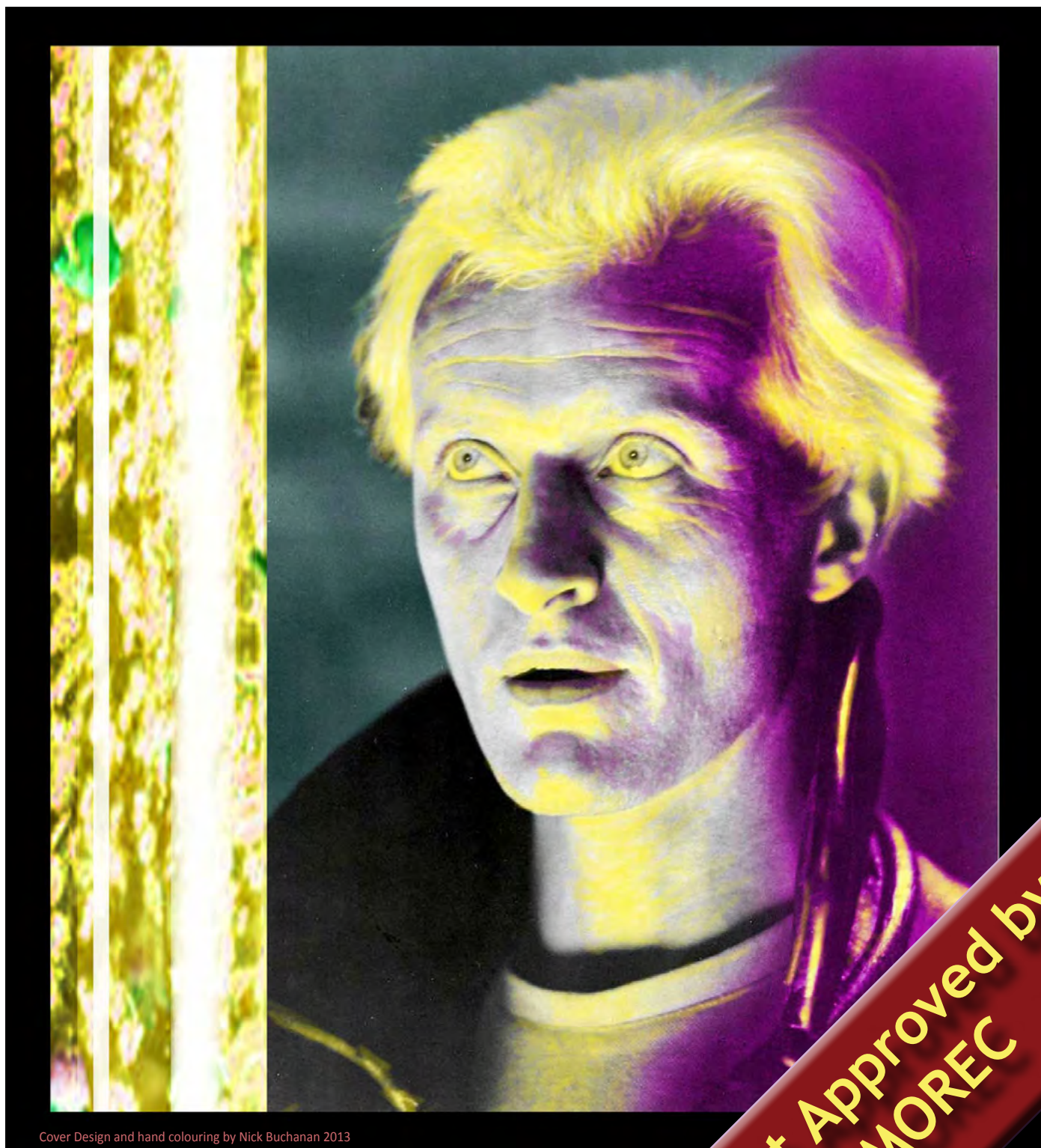


Photo of Phil © Tessa Dick, by kind permission

March 2013



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Not Approved by
MOREC

P K D

#27

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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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P K D

o t a k u #27

Editorial

by Patrick Clark

Whatever sort of world Phil K. Dick entered when he sat down to his typewriter, there was another world, a mundane place, waiting for him as soon as got out his chair. When we think about Phil I'm sure we are mostly swept up in his astonishing imagination but Phil was immersed in the real world, perhaps to a greater extent than most of us. Ex-wives, child support and alimony, the IRS, unreliable cars, trips to hospitals, dentist offices, grocery stores, trying to make a living in the science fiction business (a field that did not pay well at all), dealing with his agent, making the rent, various girlfriends, the Six O'clock news – he was utterly grounded in the here and now. And he mostly kept his head above water.

Many, perhaps too many, essays concerning PKD dwell on the mystical/religious areas of Phil's concerns or they examine a particular work in isolation from the rest of the world. Neither of these strategies is wrong, of course; most of my offerings fall in these categories. But Phil's writings have much to say about right now in the concrete world outside our window. He was deeply concerned with the manipulation of speech for political and economic ends, with totalitarian governments and especially with the surveillance society. Phil's attitude toward the cops was succinct: "The police are our friend! The hell they are!" (**LIES**: chapter 1) There are no good cops in Phil's work though there are occasionally sympathetic ones. For the most part cops are agents of oppression, the "Iron Heel" component of the ubiquitous surveillance camera. There is a chapter in **FROLIX-8** where Nick Appleton is taken to police HQ and catches a glimpse of the television monitors tracking every aspect of life.

The cop stepped through the doorway; Nick followed....and saw, in a single glimpse, the nerve-center of the police apparatus. TV screens, small, hundreds and hundreds of them, with a cop monitoring each cluster of four screens....

"That room," the rep of the Council Chairman said, "is the datasource for the PPS all over the planet. Fascinating, isn't it? All those monitoring screens...and you're seeing just a fraction of it; strictly speaking, you're seeing the Annex, established two years ago. The central nerve-complex is not visible from here, but take my word for it, it's appallingly large."

"Appallingly'?" Nick asked, wondering at the choice of words. He sensed, weakly, a sort of sym-

pathy for him on the part of the Council Chairman rep.

"Almost one million police employees are maintained at the peep-peep screens. A huge bureaucracy."

"But did it help them?" Nick asked. "Today? When they made their initial roundup?"

"Oh yes; the system works. But it's ironically funny that it ties up so many men and man-hours, when you consider that the whole original idea was that –"

A uniformed police officer appeared beside the two of them. "Get out of here and get this man to the Council Chairman." His tone was nasty. [Chapter 15]

When I first read this book in 1970, during the dark days of the Nixon Administration, that description sounded valid enough but also quite exaggerated. Were all those television monitors really possible? In fact it pretty much describes the CCTV world in which we now live.



Phil saw it coming. It is an accident of history that Phil composed his books and short stories during the Age of the National Security State: the time of Joe McCarthy, the Vietnam War, Cointelpro, SDS, Black Panthers, CIA assassinations, Chicago, Nixon and Watergate. It was a tough time to live through and everyone, perhaps especially every writer, had to deal with it all. Phil certainly did: it permeates his works. This is an aspect of Phil that seldom gets explored. So by a happy coincidence this issue has two essays, by Nick and Dave, which look precisely at some real world aspects of Phil's novels -- the weapons, the cameras, the thought police. I think Phil has much to tell us not only about the Cold War society but also about now, right here in 2013.

PKD-CCTV by Nick Buchanan

Commentary on Foreigners' (P.K.) Dick

By Frank C. Bertrand © 2013

It is certainly understandable if one gets the impression that a majority of past and current criticism and/or commentary about Philip K. Dick is of American origin. Most newspaper and magazine pieces about Phil, as tracked by *The Reader's Guide To Periodical Literature*, will be found in American publications. The steadily increasing stream of academic essays about Phil, in such well known peer-reviewed scholarly journals as *Science Fiction Film and Television*, are of American derivation. And let's not overlook the deepening pile of theses, dissertations, monographs and book length studies wafting down from the broken windows in the various dilapidated ivy-covered edifices strewn across our land like so many waifish watchtowers. These, too, are proudly made in America.

In spite of all this, however, the first two critical essays written about Philip K. Dick are British. The first PhD dissertation was written in French. And any open-minded, non-cliquish check will ascertain that foreigners have had just as much, if not more, meaningful things to say about Phil than Americans.



One such notable commentary is that by the Chilean novelist and poet Roberto Bolaño (1953-2003), who was posthumously awarded the National Book Critics Circle Award

in 2008 for his novel 2666, of which they wrote, "...what he left behind is a work so rich and dazzling that it will surely draw readers and scholars for ages." In the recently published collection, *Between Parentheses* (NY: New Directions Books, 2011), which includes most of the columns Roberto wrote for the *Las Últimas Noticias* newspaper, from May 1999 – July 2001, he writes that "Dick was a kind of Kafka steeped in LSD rage....[A] Thoreau plus the death of the American Dream." Also, "Dick is the first, literally speaking to write eloquently about virtual consciousness," and, "...despite everything, never loses his sense of humor, which means that he owes more to Twain than to Melville." (*Between Parentheses*, p. 197 in passim)



Each of these four statements are quite intriguing and worth further explication, in particular the last one about Phil's "sense of humor, which means that he owes more



to Twain than Melville." I would argue for Jonathan Swift versus Mark Twain, but Dick's use of humor, especially "black humor," is something that's been conveniently overlooked in favor of valiantly continuing to attempt to make him into a slick simulacrum of a venerable PoMo Mystic saint.

Instead one could start with something that Phil actually wrote, not what some pundit tells us he meant to write, and that is in a 9-30-64 letter: "I find sorrow in humor and humor in sorrow, and not only in sorrow but in the mighty, the seriousness of life, the great weighty matters that assail us and determine our destiny..." This is intriguingly similar to what Mark Twain wrote for the epitaph to chapter ten of *Following The Equator* (1897): "The secret source of humor itself is not joy but sorrow. There is no humor in Heaven." Add to this a dash of what Phil Dick says in a 9-30-81 interview with Gregg Rickman, that "A lot of the humor that comes later in my writing, which is successful, can be seen in an early form in *The Man Who Japed*. The guy finding the head when he goes to buy a pie in the automat. That kind of thing." And, from the same interview, sprinkle in, "They all had the same elements of humor – they were balanced, they were beautifully balanced between humor and tragedy, I think."



As for Roberto comparing Phil to Franz Kafka, that is not so new, though his characterization is certainly vivid and memorable. Unfortunately, there is no reliable evidence that Phil took LSD regularly, thus a “LSD rage” is unlikely. Brian W. Aldiss compared Kafka to Phil years ago, and the author/illustrator of the unforgettable Maus (serialized from 1980 to 1991 as an insert in the avant-garde comic Raw), Art Spiegelman, has written “what Franz Kafka was to the first half of the twentieth century, Philip K. Dick is to the second half.” The most relevant, however, is what Phil himself wrote in a 5-4-73 letter: “the middle initial in my name stands for Kindred, my mother’s maiden name. Kafka would be more apt, perhaps; maybe not; maybe Kindred is right on.”

Now, if we leave Chile and travel in a northeasterly direction for approximately 7,300 miles, we’ll reach Switzerland, wherein Markus Widmer did his Swiss Diploma Thesis at Universität Zürich in 2000. It is titled Worlds and Selves Falling



Apart: The Science Fiction of Philip K. Dick, (Norderstedt, Germany: GRIN Verlag, ISBN 978-3-638-6990705, softcover, 92 pgs., 2000), and is rather expensive. Via Amazon you can get a new copy for \$73.42, and a used one for \$89.45.

This is the first Swiss Diploma Thesis I have read and it’s actually quite interesting. There is a minimum of obfuscatory academic jargon, such as “ontological dominant” (p. 3),

“deconstruct the narrative coherence” (p. 9), or “allegorical renderings of the condition of subjects” (p. 49). And Markus

tried not to do too much at once by being judicious about the number of Philip K. Dick works he considers, seven novels and two short stories. He even includes a couple that are rarely written about, A Maze of Death and Eye in the Sky. As he aptly writes, “An essential criterion for a selection of Dick’s texts is their diverging quality.” (p. 6) In so doing, Markus notes, “...my particular interest was to show that Dick managed to be the more relevant to the contemporary moment, the crazier his science-fiction metaphysics and allegories were.” (ibid.)

Better yet, as I have written on more than one occasion, a very important statement Philip K. Dick writes in his writers’ journal, the unfortunately titled Exegesis, is “I’m a fictionalizing philosopher, not a novelist.” Markus has apparently noticed its importance as well, for he writes, “...it is not so important whether Dick has been influenced by this theory or that philosophy, but what, if any, system can be inferred from Dick’s own texts. His affinity for quoting systems similar to his own is helpful to point the critic to the right direction, but it is a fact that Dick’s philosophy is *very* idiosyncratic, indeed.” (p. 28)

If Markus (that’s him to the right) means Phil’s strong interest in, and use of, philosophy, in particular the Pre-Socratics, Kant and Spinoza, is peculiar if not eccentric, I certainly agree. Phil was, if anything, an autodidact who owned a set of the inimitable Encyclopedia of Philosophy, and he did jump about in trying to find workable philosophical answers to his two salient themes: what is reality, what is human-ness. As Markus incisively indicates, some of these philosophical issues are “...the boundary between self and world, considering questions of perception and experience as well as the opposition between inside and outside.” (p. 48) Also impressive is what he writes in part in his summation, that “The science-fiction of Philip K. Dick does not lend itself to conclusions, for if his novels and stories have one thing in common, it is their inconclusiveness.” (p 84)



Markus Widmer

Worlds and selves falling apart
- The science fiction of Philip K. Dick

Thesis (M.A.)

Now, there is in Markus' Swiss Diploma Thesis one potentially fatal flaw, and that is the perverse "poseur" of postmodernism. Like a majority of other scholarly works about Philip K. Dick, Markus uses postmodernism with little specific effort to first justify its validity and viability, let alone to in turn apply it to Phil's novels and stories. It seems to be yet again a given with unquestioning allegiance, as though found on a dusty rock shelf deep in a cave in France. Then, as Professor Frederick Crews, Professor Emeritus of English of the University of California, Berkeley, eloquently characterizes these purveyors of postmodernism, "...cockamamie commandos of correctitude," proceed to engage in "...the desperate, self-important, theory-infatuated scramble to reach the top of an academic anthill." (Postmodern Pooh, NY: North Point Press, 2004, pp. 66-67; the best academic study of PoMo I've come across to date! Of comparable importance and quality is Yale Professor of Philosophy Keith DeRose's long essay, "Characterizing A Fogbank," posted in October 2005 at the Certain Doubts website, available at: <http://certaindoubts.com/?p=453>) All this for a word that is a baffling combination of "post" (after) and "modo" (just now), and wasn't first used in English until 1939, in two different ways, by the theologian Bernard Iddings Bell. (From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology, Malden, MA.: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 1996, p. 2)

From Switzerland we now travel north, northwest for about 1,600 miles and end up at the hotbed of Philip K. Dick criticism, Iceland. Therein at the University of Iceland (situated in the heart of Reykjavik, the capitol of Iceland), in spring 1994, Hrafnhildur Blödal Hrafnkelsdóttir had her MA Thesis approved, titled Empathy Will Save Us – Eventually: A Reading Of Nine Novels By Philip K. Dick. (still available online at: <http://www.krumma.net/MA-thesis/ma-thesis.pdf>) The novels she includes in her 78 page study are: **VALIS, The Divine Invasion, The Transmigration of Timothy Archer, Counter-Clock World, Ubik, The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch, Do Androids Dream**

of Electric Sheep?, The Man in the High Castle, and A Scanner Darkly. Hrafnhildur also mentions three of Phil's short stories: "**Human Is,**" "**The Father-Thing,**" and "**Foster, You're Dead.**"

She uses three important literary/critical perspectives with these works: narrative technique, characterization, and theme, seeking to demonstrate that:

"...the pervading questions, occurring and recurring in novel after novel, are the questions "What is Human?" and "What is Real?". When it comes to humanity and reality there are no such concepts as correctness and incorrectness: correct human behavior does not exist; only human behavior. Whatever may be the origin of the universe, reality is only that which we experience in the daily struggle for survival." (Empathy Will Save Us, 1994, p. 69)

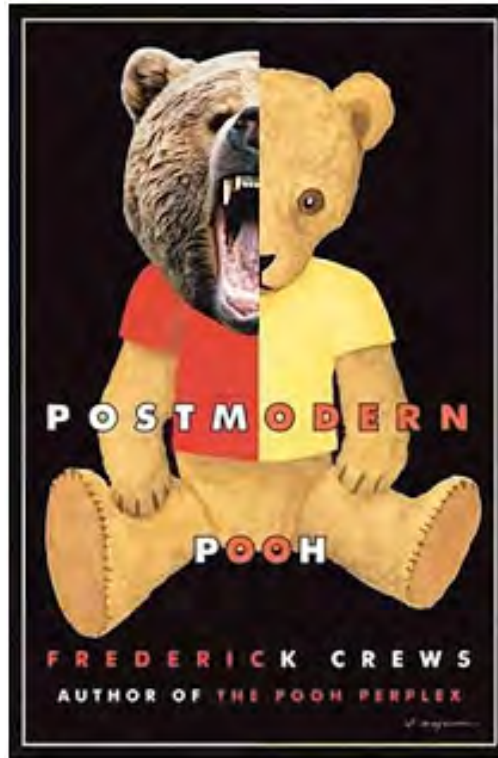
In doing so she manages apt use of Aaron Barlow's 1989 dissertation, Reality Religion and Politics in Philip K. Dick's Fiction, to support her astute critical observations. As she

writes in her "Introduction," "...I have to agree with Aaron John Barlow in saying that in the seventies, Dick reaches his climax, not only as a writer but as an original thinker whose vision knew no limits." (ibid., p. 3)

With respect to narrative technique, Hrafnhildur incisively notes Phil's use of an open-ended narrative, mix of plots and sub-plots, use of humor, and most intriguingly a Raymond Chandleresque dialogue style. She writes, "*Chandler's prose is famous for its cynical dialogue where characters who are products of the Forties, speak hard-boiled slang. Conversations are often metaphoric, always innovative and very funny.*" Then, "*Moreover, Dick – like Chandler – always lets his protagonist have the last word. The last word is often a remark understanding the plight he is in and is his way of outwitting the opposition.*" (ibid., p. 21

in passim)

What makes this even more fascinating is what Raymond



Chandler wrote in a couple of letters to Hamish Hamilton:

"The trouble with fantastic fiction as a general rule is the same trouble that afflicts Hungarian playwrights – no third act. The idea and the situation resulting from the idea are fine; but what happens then? How do you turn the corner?" (February 5, 1951)

"If you want to know what I should really like to write, it would be fantastic stories, and I don't mean science fiction. But they wouldn't make a thin worn dime. That would be just a wonderful way to become a Neglected Author." (September 22, 1954) [Raymond Chandler Speaking, Univ. of California Press, 1997]

Now, I don't know if this comparison/contrast between Philip K. Dick and Raymond Chandler has been any more clearly articulated than Hrafnhildur does here in her thesis, but it has surely become a pop-culture favorite amongst the literati. Mr. Lethem has described his first novel, *Gun With Occasional Music* (1994), as "*Philip K. Dick meets Raymond Chandler*." Then there is this characterization of a Haruki Murakami novel, "*Take one part hard-boiled detective fiction à la Raymond Chandler, throw in some Philip K. Dick, add a pinch of Kafka, a sprinkle of Borges*." Or, China Miéville's novel, *The City & The City* (2009), as "*If Philip K. Dick and Raymond Chandler's lovechild were raised by Franz Kafka*." And there is Clifford Royal Johns' new novel, *Walking Shadow* (2012), "*In a cross between Raymond Chandler and Philip K. Dick, Johns expertly explores themes of identity and morality*."

Almost as important is what she writes about Phil Dick's use of humor. Whereas Bolaño gives us the contention that Phil "*owes more to Twain than to Melville*," Hrafnhildur writes, quoting Suvin, Phil's "*...sense of humor showed itself by deadpan assertions that left listeners wondering*

whether he was joking or revealing a strange new truth." She adds that Phil "*...makes a few comments on the necessity of seeing the humor in the universe*," quoting his from his 1978 essay, "Now Wait for this Year," wherein he writes, "*Our situation, the human situation, is in the final analysis neither grim nor meaningful, but funny. What else can you call it?*" (ibid., p. 7) Later, Hrafnhildur notes, "*Dick's novels tend to outdo the most absurd and craziest fiction, and his zany humor saves them the reader from getting lost in the absurdity.*" (ibid., p. 20)



Her most prescient comment, though, is "*Dick's use of humor adds to his novels a life-like appearance: the bewildering complexity of his plots, and often far-fetched ideas, are made real – and comic. Comedy is often the best way to get a message across, for emphasizing the hilarity of the topics involved makes them stand out too clearly to be missed.*" (ibid., pp. 23-24)

And in her "Conclusion," she finally asserts, "*Although LeGuin claims Dick is not an absurdist, my view of his humor is that it lies partly in the absurdity of the contents of his text: the fun often lies in the absurd inconsistency between the narration and its subject matter.*" (ibid., p. 73)

Hrafnhildur has, in *Empathy Will Save Us*, indeed written a commendable and informative MA Thesis, though she does seek to pack an awful lot of incisive explication into only 78 pages. I would hope that if there is a book length version she adds more about Dick's use of humor and his Chandleresque dialogue style. Most noteworthy, in my opinion, however, is that she did all of this without once mentioning the word "postmodernism." Bravo, Hrafnhildur!

[© FCB, 2/13]



Portuguese States of America

by John Fairchild © 2013

Philip K. Dick had been accompanied most of his life by what he termed the AI voice, the Artificial Intelligence voice. It was a two-way conversation many times. In one instance, Phil asked the AI voice where it was. I have only, so far, found this fictionalized in **Radio Free Albemuth**, and have yet to find an **Exegesis** or **Letters** entry describing this conversation. Usually something fictionalized like this would be based on something that really happened, if I may use the term, to Phil. It appears on pp. 123-124 of the Arbor House hardback and the Vintage and Avon paperbacks. In the form of Nicholas Brady, Phil sees a print-out from a transmitter (the word satellite is not used). Phil/Nicholas asks the “entity”, who Phil/Nicholas guesses to be a very low order of operator, where he/she/it is, avoiding a pronoun altogether. The operator had previously shown a photo of a female, but it is not clear that this female is the voice, so Phil is using a non-gender-referencing sentence structure.

Phil/Nicholas is speaking verbally and the operator is communicating via teletype. Our protagonist asks the operator where it is. The operator responds “I DON’T KNOW”. (All caps in original.) The operator is asked to look around and see if it can find something in the way of writing, an address. It finds an envelope and Phil/Nicholas asks what the address on it is. It prints out “F WALLOON. PORTUGUESE STATES OF AMERICA.” (No period after the “F” in original. The spelling “Portuguese” in a later paragraph is probably a typo.)

From the text: “That made no sense to me. Portuguese States of America? An alternate universe?”

There is a theory in physics that at every moment, at every instant, there are multiple realities splitting off from, diverging from, what we experience as our shared reality. I tend to use the term trunk reality. Given this model of

physics, the reality that was talking to Phil could have split off in 1592. Phil could have been talking with someone from an alternate reality, an alternate universe, and if so, that reality came about because the British did not capture a Portuguese ship in 1592.

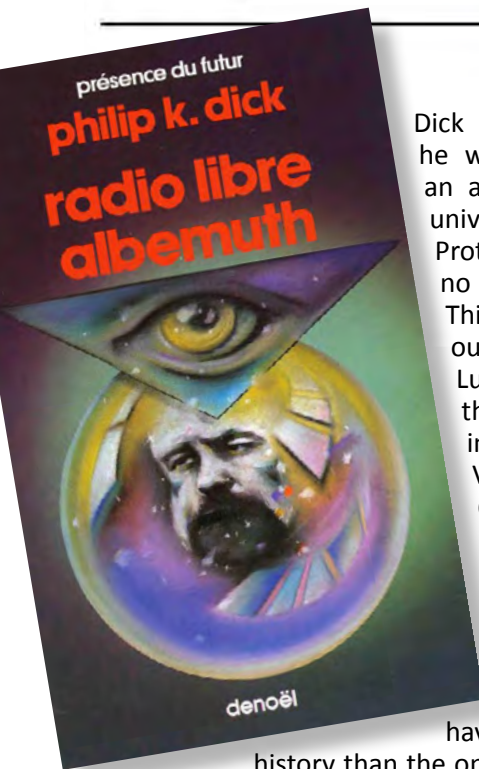
The Madre de Deus was an exceptionally large ship for its time. It was 165 feet in length and weighed 1,600 tons—900 of that was cargo. It was three times the size of England’s biggest ship. It was returning from the East Indies to Lisbon and was loaded with not merely jewels and gold and silver, but spices by the ton. As in 425 tons of pepper, 45 tons of cloves, 35 tons of cinnamon, three tons of nutmeg—you get the idea. Despite having 32 guns (cannon) plus other smaller weapons, a fleet of six British ships captured this ship intact and sailed it back to Dartmouth. It was a big loss for the Portuguese. (Although it would be tempting to have a side conversation about the wisdom of naming a 32-gun ship the Mother of God, that would be too one-sided. The intersections of Religion, Militarism and Commerce have always been an embarrassment.)

Monetized, the cargo was worth about half a million pounds sterling, or about half the value of England’s Treasury at the time. At Dartmouth, most of the cargo was taken, as in stolen, by anyone close to the ship, including local fishermen who boarded the vessel. It was finally secured by and for the Crown and the treasure shipped back to London on other ships.

The point is not that England won the ship, the point is that Portugal lost it. If Portugal had never lost this treasure, who knows what position it may have taken in the New World? It is entirely possible that North America would have looked much different, especially since Portugal was so active in Brazil. It is even possible that the residents of the North American Colonies would have spoken English while retaining Portuguese sovereignty. Somehow.

On pp. 133-135 of the above editions, the character Phil





Dick posits to Nicholas that he was receiving help from an alternate universe. This universe had had no Protestant revolution, no Reformation, no Thirty Years War. In our shared universe Luther nailed his theses to the door in 1517 and Henry VIII created the Church of England in 1534. All this would seem to weaken our alternate history except for... the Thirty Years War didn't start until 1618. We could have a different alternate history than the one Phil/PKD was positing. The importation to Portugal of the equivalent of half the English Treasury could have prevented the triggering of the Thirty Years War. Sounds do-able, right? Within these

RFA pages we find Nicholas talking of a dream of three different universes, looked at as fish tanks, some murky, some better than others. Then combine this with the title of the Metz Speech: **"If You Find This Universe Bad, You Should See Some Of The Others"**.



Perhaps the musings of the character/author Phil Dick could be partially right and partially wrong.

Somehow the Reformation could have started, yet did not light the fuse that "...set Europe back five hundred years..."

If Philip K. Dick was speaking with someone from a reality that broke off from ours and produced a Portuguese States of America, that could have happened in 1592 with the Madre de Deus.

© John Fairchild



'Fake Graffiti' by Nick Buchanan 2012

"Street German" - Philip K. Dick and His Origins

By Bruce Leichty © 2/2013

The first time I ever heard about Philip K. Dick was in an article by the late Jim Keith titled, "Philip K. Dick and the Illuminati." In this article, published in the conspiracy zine Steamshovel Press #8, Summer 1993 (originally published under the pseudonym Jim Katz), Keith makes his case for the ambitious proposition that Dick "had almost the entire Illuminist-Freemasonic mythos thrust into his forebrain...."

That was provocative enough, but my interest was also somewhat parochial. I have relatives whose surname is Dick. Dick is a common name among Mennonites and other Germans from Russia, among whom are my ancestors. Was this Philip K. Dick a descendant of Mennonites and their Anabaptist forbears, the scourge of 16th century European authorities? It occurred to me that I had once seen a 17th century edict by Bavarian authorities warning of both Mennonites and Illuminati¹, almost in the same breath.

So began my research. That research led me with growing appreciation through virtually the entire Dick corpus, including all of his fascinating letters, and not forgetting the biographical works of Sutin, Anne Dick, Tessa Dick and Gregg Rickman--and even the autobiography of J. Edgar Dick, Philip K. Dick's father. I visited the PKD archives at Cal State Fullerton and the grave of PKD in Colorado. In the process, I found a fascinating intellectual and spiritual "uncle" of sorts, who--regardless of his origins--was trying to make sense out of some of the same things that I was trying to make sense out of, although I wasn't going about it in quite the same way. But if anything, the mystery about Dick and his personal history only deepened for me.

I was startled by the intensity of Lawrence Sutin's emphatic denial that Dick had German ancestry. Yet there were clues here and there that not everything was as it appeared.

What I ultimately concluded was that at least some of Dick's paternal roots can indeed be traced back to Germany or continental Europe--rather than to Scotland or Ireland alone, as Dick himself led others to believe. I propose that Dick spent a critical part of his early childhood among German-speaking relatives who might have

had a formative influence on him, irrespective of whether these relatives and their possible Mennonitish links were then "lost" to him. Herein I also ask the not-necessarily-unrelated question whether these paternal connections led to the abuse of Philip Dick of which Rickman has hypothesized in his book, **To The High Castle** (hereinafter referred to as Rickman, TTHC).

Whether PKD knew of his own Germanic roots, or whether he remained duped throughout his life, remains a mystery. The answer may be tied up in the degree to which PKD was himself willfully duplicitous, and if so, why. Based on PKD's own writings, and his avowed multiple communications with the FBI (Rickman, TTHC; and

multiple items in his Selected Letters) as well as his personal and psychological history, I have even considered whether PKD--or one of his personalities (?)--was a witting agent of some supranational intelligence agency, and perhaps not the one that he either wrote to (FBI) or the one he acknowledged (VALIS).

The name "Dick," as PKD recognized in writing about his alter ego Horselover Fat, has a meaning in German: "Thick" or "Fat." (The Greek Phillippos is sometimes translated "fond of horses.") As a youngster Dick apparently used the pen name "van Dyke" (Rickman TTHC), the anglicization of the Dutch/German "von Dyck." The identification by PKD of his surname as "Scotch" (Rickman:



Philip K. Dick - 5 months old

PKD In His Own Words) therefore seems counterintuitive.

Dick's father, Joseph Edgar Dick, is acknowledged by Rickman (TTHC) as enigmatic in his own right. J. Edgar Dick reports a long American lineage including Irish ancestry (but no "Scottish" ancestry) in his autobiography (Rickman, TTHC). But in my research I discovered that J. Edgar Dick's mother had the surname Mack, a name found among Pennsylvania Germans associated with Mennonites and their Anabaptists progenitors. Alexander Mack was the first prominent leader of the Church of the Brethren, an Anabaptist denomination in Pennsylvania that later produced Martin Brumbaugh, an expert in pedagogy and a scholar of the Church of the Brethren who also became governor of Pennsylvania in 1915. Brumbaugh was a Freemason. Dicks identifying themselves as Scotch-Irish and Dicks claiming Germanic heritage lived almost side by side near Indiana, Pennsylvania, from whence J. Edgar came.

J. Edgar Dick (b. 1899) apparently grew up in a churchgoing home (Rickman, TTHC). When he was a young man, Germans were not universally popular in America. Edgar Dick may well have had an interest in denying any Germanic roots when he joined his country's military efforts against the Germans in World War I. If he came from an ostensibly pacifistic tradition such as that of the Mennonites or Brethren or Quakers, he may have had all the more reason to put distance between himself and his roots.2

The place to which Edgar Dick's father William moved during Edgar's childhood--Fort Morgan, Colorado--is known as a settlement of Germans from Russia, and its museum featured them when I visited PKD's burial place a decade ago. What was the socio-ethnic-political atmosphere in which Edgar was raised? Were there any community pressures facing William when he moved his family from Pennsylvania to Colorado, or thereafter? I only scratched the surface of J. Edgar Dick's lineage. The fact that PKD was buried in German-dominated cattle-ranching and cattle-butcher country, though not far from the Wyoming location of the fictional "Man in the High Castle," stands in seeming contradiction to a life which ended with no discernible strong links to family.

Might J. Edgar Dick have had motives for creating a new identity for himself? J. Edgar was educated at Georgetown University, a training ground for intelligence

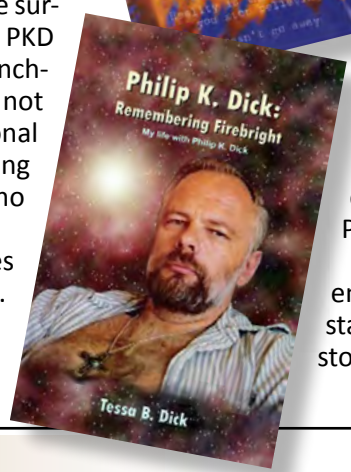
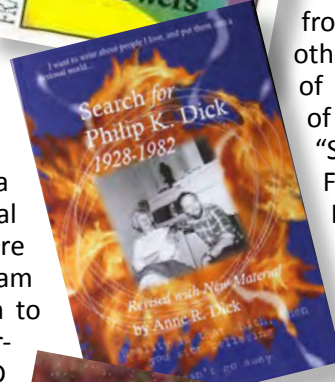
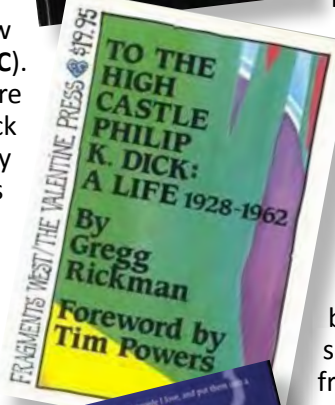
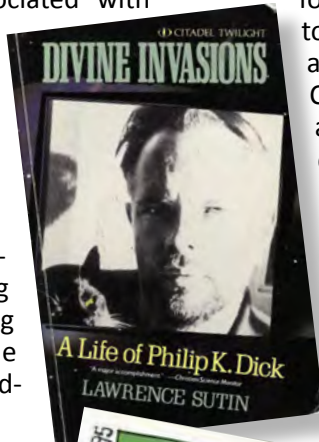
agents, and his first employment was with the federal government. Dick apparently served in government-related or quasi-governmental positions for the rest of his life, with access to the kind of information on which political power brokers rely.

Ultimately the elder Dick became a person of apparent behind-the-scenes influence in the State of California. In primitive cultures, one main indicator of wealth has been cattle. For most of his adult life J. Edgar Dick was the lobbyist for the California Cattlemen's Association: not just a cattleman, therefore, but a kind of chief of cattlemen. He effected a kindly but distancing attitude (Rickman, TTHC) but presumably was eminently comfortable in the political shark's tank of Sacramento. Rickman (TTHC) reports that Edgar was at his "club" in Chicago when Philip was born. Is it unreasonable to speculate that J. Edgar, like many well-connected men of his generation, was a member of a Masonic or other fraternal lodge?

There has always been some cross-fertilization between the world of "associations" and the intelligence community. Coincidentally, I first learned that there was an "association of associations" in the nation's capital when I met a German Mennonite WWII veteran who worked there as a lobbyist (to me he exuded CIA). Even if J. Edgar Dick's lineage as recounted by him is substantially accurate, it is plausible that the Scotch-Irish Dicks originated from the same seed as the Mennonite and other German Dicks and Dycks. Historians of the esoteric have speculated that some of those who were to become known as "Scotch-Irish," and specifically Scottish Rite Freemasons, were the descendants of the Knights Templar who fled to the British Isles after persecution on the continent.

Just the other week on the Craig Ferguson Show (CBS), actor Tim Allen (whose real name is Tim Allen Dick) joked that he had always been told that he was from Germany but found out after making a pilgrimage there that he was really from Scotland. Hello? Is there an echo in here? I add hastily that I am not aware of any familial relationship between Tim and Philip.

Without any direct evidence of the influence "Ted" Dick had on his son, the circumstantial evidence, including one of PKD's short stories, "The Father-Thing," is beguiling. For



about the first five years of his life, Philip was in the company of his father; and already by the age of six Philip was diagnosed as “hysterical” (**Rickman, TTHC**). What happens in a boy’s mind that he later joins the two disparate words “father” and “thing?”

Of course, it is not always the case that a working father is involved in or even knows what is going on in the life of his young child. Still, might PKD have been exposed to systematic or “ritual” abuse either as an infant or in his first two years, while still in the father’s home? We enter the world of speculation here, but might Philip and/or his twin sister Jane have been subjected to some sort of sacrifice ritual while they were still newborns in Chicago? The unsettling death of PKD’s infant sister Jane, which affected PKD throughout his life, is marked by apparent discrepancies as to whether and how she suffered burns that contributed to her death (**Rickman, TTHC**).

Philip was in Colorado briefly between the start of his life in Chicago and his move to northern California. It seems likely that there was some contact with Edgar’s side of the family during at least this period, while Dorothy lived in Fort Morgan (**Rickman, TTHC**). Were there ongoing contacts not memorialized in writing?

Philip’s childhood seems to have been associated with more than the usual amount of direction or experimentation. Familial objectives must have figured strongly into the enrollment of Philip into a longitudinal study in a “laboratory” nursery school (**Rickman, TTHC**). The Bruce Tatlock School, where PKD attended kindergarten, was where he believed he received some type of Communist indoctrination (**Rickman, TTHC**). Edgar Dick shared with Rickman a memory of Philip in nursery school (**TTHC**).

If PKD was indeed suffering from what has been called multiple personality disorder or dissociative identity disorder, it is reasonable to assume that this had taken root by the time he had reached the age of five. Based on Dorothy’s diary, there are even signs of him acting out in

his first year (**Rickman, TTHC**). We move again from fact to the realm of inference and speculation. Given that so little is known about these early years, it seems at least plausible that the putative abuse of Philip occurred at the hands of either his father or the father’s relatives, but that this may have been obscured in PKD’s memory or have become unpalatable for him to acknowledge or consider for other reasons. Give the estranged relationship he had with both parents, who can rule out the possibility that both parents, and/or some relative(s) of either parent, were involved in cultic activity?

J. Edgar Dick probably had personal reason to be psychologically hardened if not scarred based on his WWI experiences, but might there be even more to the story? In their out-of-print book Cult and Ritual Abuse: Its History, Anthropology, and Recent Discovery in Contemporary America (Praeger 1995), James Randall Noblitt and Pamela Sue Perskin, note reports of disturbing links between Freemasonry and ritual child abuse (pp. 100-01). The writer is also familiar with one published allegation of Satanic ritual abuse in a rural midwestern community where the abusers included some of the victim’s Mennonite relatives, and allegations of similar conduct with Masonic links have been made by a few Mennonite ministers (personal survey conducted by author).

The use of religious affiliation as a kind of protective cover by occultists or persecuted peoples, not to mention intelligence agents, is a subject all of its own--as is the subject of men doing bad things while deeming themselves cognoscenti.

In one of Dick’s childhood writings there is a reference to an occult work which Dick received from an uncle, identity unknown. Of course, Dorothy was interested in the occult later in her life (**Rickman, TTHC**) and may have always been. Golems, homunculi and succubi all inhabit the Phildickian world, standing in contrast to Dick’s perhaps desperate resort to Episcopalianism in mid-life. PKD experienced at least some churchgoing as a youngster (**Rickman, TTHC**), and one wonders based on his pre-



Philip K Dick - 1 year old (with Father, J. Edgar Dick)

cocious behavior (**Rickman, TTHC**) and later interests how extensive this was. We know that during his childhood he attended a Quaker school and in his final years also seems to have identified with Quakers, which is consistent with roots in a pacifistic German community. His early stories have strong antiwar motifs and his writing thereafter continued to be informed by a pacifist ideology.

One of the most intriguing pieces of evidence for Germanic roots is found in a letter PKD wrote to Claudia Krenz Bush, dated May 9, 1974. In it Dick allowed how,

"[O]ne time years ago, I woke up one night and saw a figure standing by my bed and I recognized it as me. My wife suddenly woke up too and began screaming. I trying to soothe her kept saying over and over, "Ich bin's," which the next day I looked up in my German dictionary. It is the idiom for "It is I," but I didn't know that. Later on, up to now even, in fact more and more, under abrupt duress, I can only speak in German, and it isn't the formal polite German I learned in high school, but rather a low or PlattDeutsch, very low class and vernacular, a sort of street German, and accurate -- with precision, but no class." (emphasis added) (letter at Cal State Fullerton PKD collection).

"PlattDeutsch," of course, is the "low German" still used to this day by certain Mennonites and other Germans who emigrated to America from Russia or Prussia, and has resemblances to the dialect known as "Pennsylvania Dutch" (and Yiddish, for that matter). Most Americans don't even know the word, but Dick did.

Unless one subscribes to the theory that a supra-historical source, i.e. a vast active living intelligent system, bestowed this tongue on Dick--and of course Dick may have subscribed to exactly that theory--it would seem that the most plausible explanation for this outburst by Dick

is that he was reverting to a language still residual in his subconscious. If he had indeed been an abuse victim at the hands of German speakers, of course, the most stressful and repressed event(s) in his young life would have been those times that he was subjected to abuse.

Might J. Edgar Dick or occultists have thrust (to use Jim Keith's concept) upon PKD a secret history or entrusted a mission to him or "programmed" Philip in some way, a la "The Manchurian Candidate," while he was yet a child or youngster? Might such events have prompted a more-than-usual interest by PKD in things German? Whatever the case, PKD developed a love and fascination for the German language, German literature and German music which seems unusually intense for a "Scottish" lad in Berkeley, and his most

famous novel tackles an alternative post-WWII universe.

Dick reveals the extent of his erudition in Germanic esoterica when he traces the title of that award-winning novel, "**The Man In the High Castle**," to a stronghold of the Bohemian Thirty Years War: "*I wished to make a cryptic reference to the wars of liberation engaged in by the Czech and Dutch Protestants against the Catholic powers....[The] heroic act by Mr. Tagomi resonates with the heroic acts on the part of the Elector Palatine Frederick V.*" (**Rickman, TTHC**).

Why did PKD wish to make a "cryptic" reference to these wars of rebellious Protestants?

Hawthorne Abendsen, a protagonist found in "High Castle," may have been modeled in part on one of Dick's own science fiction mentors, A. E. Van Vogt. Rickman

documents that the "suit Abendsen wears is Van Vogt's" (**TTHC**). Van Vogt was born to "Dutch" parents in a farm home near Winnipeg, Manitoba, a city with the highest concentration of Mennonites in the world. (As an aside, one can find via web search a controversial tractate ti-



Philip K. Dick - 6 years old

Why did PKD wish to make a "cryptic" reference to these wars of rebellious Protestants?

tled "The Men's Club," decrying the pervasive influence of elite sodomites on American society, penned by one "Hawthorne Abendsen," connection or paean to Van Vogt and PKD unknown.)

In the fragments of a sequel to the "**Man In the High Castle**," never completed, Dick used the singular phrase, "Die Stille Im Lande." That German phrase, usually translated "the quiet in the land," has been historically applied most often to strict Mennonites and Amish, supposedly to refer to their quiet public demeanor. Like the term PlattDeutsch, is not widely known. Although there is no exact translation its meaning may also be partly captured by the translations, "The Covert in the Land" or "The Hidden In the Land." The image that comes to me is of the hunted yet potent "stillness" of the Von Trapp family hiding in the convent graveyard prior to escaping Austria. (The Sound of Music is not a story about Mennonites, but it is the first movie that many film-shunning Mennonites ever thought acceptable to see.)

The influence of Mennonites and their brethren on early American ideology and politics is not well-known, but there are facts which suggest a role greater than acknowledged in standard historiography, a subject that is also beyond the scope of this essay. Prominent among the original European settlers of pre-revolutionary Pennsylvania were a mix of Quakers and Mennonites; Dutch Mennonites were among the earliest settlers of New Amsterdam, later to become New York; Mennonites were affluent merchants and shipbuilders in the Golden Age of Holland, which produced the powerful Dutch East India Company which in turn influenced the British East India Company. Reputedly, the nickname for the CIA, the "Company," derives from the latter. A number of Mennonites were active in early North German and Dutch secret

societies and some had direct communications with early American revolutionaries.

While "Baptists" are often credited with the American invention of the separation of church and state, English Baptists may themselves have derived from Dutch Mennonites; and certainly in a historical sense, Anabaptist-Mennonites were among the earliest to champion the idea of institutionalized freedom of conscience. The political ideology of "Communism" has likewise been traced by certain enemies of the free church to the communitarian Anabaptist-Mennonites.

Juxtapose this information with the fact that some writers have written of America as one vast Masonic social experiment, and some other curious and even less-known connections between Masonic and Mennonite history, and the reputed involvement of individuals in both groups in drug trafficking (query: when is a farmer also a pharmer?), and one has even more food for thought when considering the complex life of Philip K. Dick.

The creator of Horselover Fat seems to have been totally without genealogical interest, which is anomalous for a man as intelligent and self-aware as he was. Can this be explained by a desire to guard secrets, or by an aversion to his own history--and are the two interrelated?

In one of his now well-known early stories, "**Imposter**," Dick wrote about a man who had been programmed with a particular mission, oblivious to his own programming. Was Philip K. Dick himself the subject or instrument of a complicated and troubling social experiment, and a deep-rooted Germanic one at that?

Bruce Leichty, a lawyer, lives in Escondido, CA.



COMPETITION

Win a half-life times supply of UBIK

Since PKD Otaku #23, each issue has featured quotes from one PKD book (which run in tiny print at each page's footer). So from #23 to this issue, a total of **five PKD books** have been referenced. Can you name them?
Answers can be emailed to: pkdotaku@gmail.com



A review from a British Newspaper Circa 1988

As they pass someone else's front yard Rachael Emmanuel, three months married and pregnant at 17, breaks off the head of a dahlia to give to a man more than 10 years her senior, a man who is not her husband, though Rachael has been trying to persuade him he should be.

"Put it back," he tells her.

"It won't go back," she says.

The Broken Bubble is a novel about consequences. It is about things that get broken: the ones that can be put back together and the ones that can't, and the laborious and painful process of learning the difference, which is growing up. "We don't know anything," says Rachael. "Nobody ever taught us anything we can use." Her husband Art is out looking for signs, but all the signs tell him is to smoke L & M Filters, to trade in his car at Looney Luke's. Rachael and Art are living in San Francisco in 1958, which is when *The Broken Bubble* was written, though it remained unpublished until last year.

Philip K Dick died, unexpectedly, in 1982, on the brink of greater esteem and commercial success than he ever knew. *Blade Runner*, Ridley Scott's film version of one of his novels, was about to make his name famous, and the reissue of the novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, demonstrated that Dick's work was more substantial than his reputation. His death only compounded the effect. His books are now continually reprinted, both in America and in Europe, where he has always been more highly regarded.

It had been known for some years before his death that, as well as 34 science fiction novels and scores of SF short stories (a five-volume collection is also coming out from Gol-

In the midnight hour

THE BROKEN BUBBLE
by Philip K Dick
Gollancz £12.95 pp246
Colin Greenland

lancz), Dick had written at least 11 novels set firmly in the mundane world, all between 1951-1960. Some of them had been commissioned by publishers. All of them had been rejected, several times over, and finally returned by Dick's agent as unsaleable.

Looking at the ones that have emerged since, it is hard to see why. Perhaps *Mary and the Giant*, which preceded *The Broken Bubble*, was too frank in its depiction of a young woman struggling to distinguish her own needs from other people's assumptions. Yet Dick responded to its rejection by becoming not less ambitious but more. It was brave (quixotic, Dick himself said later) to attempt a sympathetic study of teenage sexuality in a state that enforced an 11 o'clock curfew for minors; to express the force of feelings publicly feared and privately inarticulate. As Rachael says: "When we were in school we had a lot of words, but they weren't words you can see."

The Broken Bubble is not only about teenagers. Its protagonist is Jim Briskin, a disc jockey suspended for refusing to sully his classical music programme with an averagely crass

commercial for Looney Luke's Car Lot. In the ensuing upset it is Jim's confusion between desire and principle that drags him, his colleague and ex-wife Patricia Gray, and the Emmanuels, two of his disappointed fans, into this drama of drunken fantasies and naked encounters, blood and broken glass, failed impulses in bleak motel rooms.

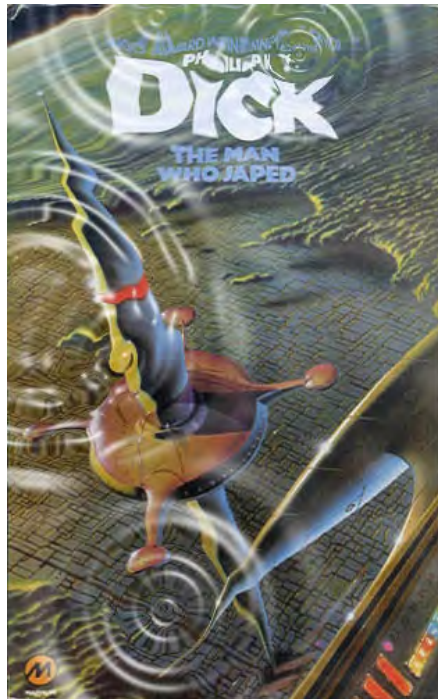
Their society is as insecure as its inhabitants. Everything is provisional. In Dick's ramshackle world, as in Thomas Pynchon's, the great menace is entropy, the tumult of inconsequence, lives frittered away in misapprehensions and false starts. The dialogue tosses restlessly with unanswered questions. Patricia keeps changing her mind; Art veers, stuttering, between prudery and aggression; Jim takes to the midnight streets in pursuit of constancy, but the police have towed away his car. Rachael, despite the dahlia, is the only one of them with any sense of emotional balance. Her sole fault is righteous expectation that the world will be rational.

In all this surging waywardness Dick, provocatively rather than sensibly, keeps finding room for extras: the entire text of an amateur science fiction story, tenderly inept, by Art's friend Ferde; a sinister Polish conspirator called Grimmelman, owner of a remote-controlled Nazi staff car and a lift full of mysterious data; and the bubble itself, centrepiece of a breathtakingly demeaning performance by buxom entertainer Thisbe Holt. Tidiness was never one of Dick's virtues, though none of these incidentals is as extraneous as it looks. But for the emotional electricity of the unstated, and the subtlety of his play with the most unstable material, he has few equals.

The Man Who Japed: Humour, Empathy, & Subversion.

By Nick Buchanan © 2013

Re-reading a Philip K. Dick novel is always a strange experience. It is never quite as one remembered it. The last time I read **The Man who Japed**, was over thirty years ago. Perhaps, as Heraclitus (whom Phil was fond of quoting) said, *'you can't step twice into the same river.'* Of course I have changed and that river has flowed some too; (sings) *It jus' keeps rollin' along.* Not only are there whole scenes that I don't recall, but the flavour and essence of the piece seems somehow altered. It feels like a different book. *It is* different. And of course, so am I. The pull cord is now a light switch... *'those aren't your memories...'*



Often the tag of 'paranoid' is used to describe Phil's writing - indeed his whole outlook. But whilst this can be a useful handle, it is ultimately lazy and goes nowhere near a proper description of his many complex

forebodings which include; a fear of creeping fascism, a loathing of the loss of the individual, a dread of invasive surveillance, a suspicion that evil is real and predatory, an intuition that reality itself is somehow fake, and a deep sense of existential isolation. All of which occur in Dick's very early novel **The Man Who Japed** (written in 1955, published in 1956).

Humour and its relation to subversion

Whilst the book's title is an odd one, it is more apt and fitting than many imagine (and it was coined by Phil, not his publisher). The word 'Jape' is not used much these days - we are perhaps more familiar with joke, jest, prank, etc. It is particularly significant with this novel perhaps because those who *Jape* pose the most serious threat to any regimented society. The novels' world is one where everyone is forced to serve the values of an all pervading ideology

known as 'Moral Reclamation' (Morec). Automatic Surveillance devices (called 'Juveniles') made of metal and 18" tall, tag and record anyone behaving suspiciously. They *'surrender their tapes to committee representatives'* (p.11). People are nervous in case they have done anything wrong. Every morning, 'checks' are performed by block wardens appointed for each housing unit.

Any one willing to perform a Jape against such serious authority would undermine Morec's propaganda machine. Humour has been used throughout history to topple governments and challenge totalitarian regimes (through satire, cartoon, pastiche etc.) Indeed in the brilliant British TV series 'The Prisoner' (1967/8) which features a similarly restricted society, the protagonist (opposing the regime) states that *'Humour is the very essence of a democratic society.'* (Season 1, Episode 4)

To explore why this is so, it is worth analysing some of the mechanisms of humour itself. For many years, I taught 'Ideas generation' to Graphic Design students; specific techniques to provoke thought in new directions, in generating alternatives, in nurturing flexible perceptual skills. I was often struck by the similarities between wit and creativity. Arthur Koestler explored the mysteries of their relationship in his brilliant book 'The Act of Creation.' In both wit and creativity, new material is forged and often old forms are challenged. I would like to suggest that every Joke is (in essence) an expectation which has somehow been thwarted. Consider the following:

There was a poetic young man
Whose verses just wouldn't scan
When asked about this
He said nothing's amiss

I just try to get as much into the last line as I possibly can.

New material has been forged and old forms have been challenged. Once we read the first line we recognize (rhythmically) that this is a limerick. The first three words are common to most limericks. So our brains - brilliant at pattern recognition - retrieve the 'program for limerick.' By which I mean its form - a rhythm scheme of 8-8-5-5-8. Of course we don't experience this as a set of numbers, but we do anticipate the musicality of this well known form. We foresee its overall shape, anticipating its every line. When the last line exceeds the anticipated form by some ten syllables, our expectation is thwarted and it becomes



witty (we may laugh, smile, or even just note its comedic structure). The important thing is that we recognize *it is not what we expected*. It has broken the limerick form. Had the joke line occurred in line two, it simply wouldn't have worked because the limerick form would have been challenged prematurely. The freedom of the surprise only exists when the form is first clearly established. As with good writing, one needs to properly build the expectation before thwarting it. The great poet Robert Frost said *'Freedom without form is like playing tennis with the net down.'*

It is often said that fiction deals with *conflict*. This is largely true; something arises which needs to be overcome, a goal longed for meets obstacles, something needs fixing, etc. For this to work properly we need to understand the initial goal, the scene needs to be set against which the conflict can work. Amateur writers are sometimes scant in the set-up of the goal preferring to rush the conflict. But there needs to be an expectation if it is ever to be thwarted.

I have always maintained that Phil is a very good writer – far better in fact than many would claim. He is particularly good at building a 'set-up' which will be overthrown later by some hidden payoff.

Even visual comedy is based on this *'thwarted expectation'* premise. For example the old silent film standard of someone falling on a banana skin. When someone is walking in an ordinary fashion, it is inconspicuous and there is nothing particular to notice. Unconsciously we expect the person to continue walking in a similar fashion. When, instead, this prosaic routine is transformed dramatically into one where their legs fly in the air and they fall backwards, it evokes a laugh or smile. The sudden detour away from the 'script' proves refreshing and surprising. An expectation has been thwarted. Such a release is found even with very small children in the game of 'Peek-a-boo.'

In **The Man Who Japed** there are storm-troopers known as *'Cohorts'* who serve Morec to maintain the status quo and neu-

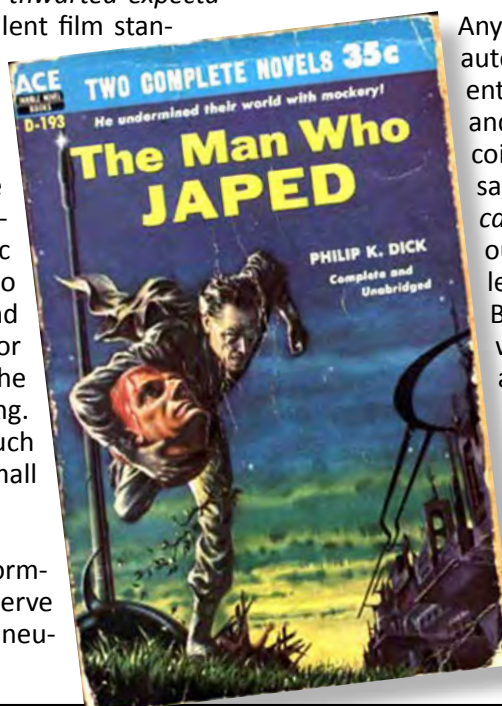
tralize anyone who dares to threaten it (by neglect or action). Phil's description of these Cohorts gives us their two main attributes:

"The Cohorts made Allen uncomfortable; they were humourless, as devout as machines" (p.19)

"Humour is by far the most significant activity of the human brain"

When discussing the android mind, fans of Dick's work often notice their characteristic lack of empathy (a quality Phil pointed out often). Clearly their machine-like nature is disturbing. However in Dick's work this quality is usually supplemented with an absolute lack of humour - and this is important. To reverse

the quote from the Prisoner earlier, we could suggest that – *'A lack of humour is the very essence of a totalitarian society.'* Totalitarianism is always po-faced. Those without humour cannot see both sides, they are necessarily inflexible, intolerant, unable to consider alternatives, incapable of real growth and development. Those without humour cannot innovate, their thinking is vertical only. They may be good at digging holes, but they tend to dig the same hole deeper rather than look for new places to dig. They are unable to think laterally. Lateral thinking involves looking at the situation from a new perspective, sometimes it may mean introducing new material, whereas logical (vertical) thinking can only deduce from existing material.



Any society which lacks humour will automatically be compliant and obedient. Perhaps this is why the inventor and consultant Edward De Bono (who coined the term Lateral Thinking) once said: *"Humour is by far the most significant activity of the human brain."* Without such a faculty, we could never challenge existing patterns. Elsewhere, De Bono has said that the time to worry is when robots (or computers) develop a sense of humour. Phil suspected the same (see his earlier quote about the *'cohorts'*).

In **The Man who Japed**, Allen Purcell performs covert acts of vandalism on the statue of Major Streiter (founder of Morec) which has stood for 124 years and which represents

the robust and omnipotent system. First he daubs it with red paint, then, he returns on another occasion to remove its head (hiding it in a cupboard in his apartment). Both times he suffers from a kind of amnesia and only realises what he has done later.

When Allen Purcell defaces the Statue, it is quickly covered up by the authorities. The jape must not be seen by others. The opposition that such japes signify cannot be countenanced by the state. It must cease to exist. A joke is always a serious threat to the robot mind. Humour is subversive by nature. It is spontaneous and playful - both 'enemies of the state' in a strict and controlled society.

Allen Purcell himself is an anomaly in this totalitarian society, and the other characters recognize this:

'You do have something in your mind nobody else has. But it's not precognition.

'What is it?'

Gretchen said; 'You have a sense of humour'...

'Maybe so,' Allen said finally.

'And a sense of humour doesn't fit in with Morec.'
(p.113)

In 1965, Milan Kundera wrote a fine novel, 'The Joke,' in which a Czech student, Ludvik, sends a postcard to one of the women in his class. As a Joke, he writes - *"Optimism is the opium of the people! The healthy atmosphere stinks! Long live Trotsky!"* He is expelled from College and sent to

spend the next few years of his life labouring in mines as a punishment. Most folks in the west would simply regard this as another example of the Eastern block's inability to deal with challenges to its orthodoxy. But before we make ourselves altogether cosy, perhaps we could reflect on the orthodoxy's we might not be allowed to challenge...

Problems will always arise when the state's is antithetical to those of the individual. In **The Man Who Japed**, Allen Purcell secures a job as Director of Telemedia whose values (as propagandists) are at odds with his own. A friend of his (Gretchen) counsels him to reconsider - and in so doing she provides us with a great pen portrait of a totalitarian society:

"But I want this job."

"Yes, your ethics are very high.

But they're not the ethics of this society. The block meetings—you loathe them. The faceless accusers. The juveniles—the busybody prying. This senseless struggle for leases. The anxiety. The tension and strain; look at Myron Mavis. And the overtones of guilt and suspicion. Everything becomes—tainted. The fear of contamination; fear of committing an indecent act. Sex is morbid; people hounded for natural acts. This whole structure is like a giant torture chamber, with everybody staring at one another, trying to find fault, trying to break one another down. Witchhunts and star chambers. Dread and censorship, Mr. Bluenose banning books. Children kept from hearing evil. Morec was invented by sick minds, and it creates more sick minds." (p.114).

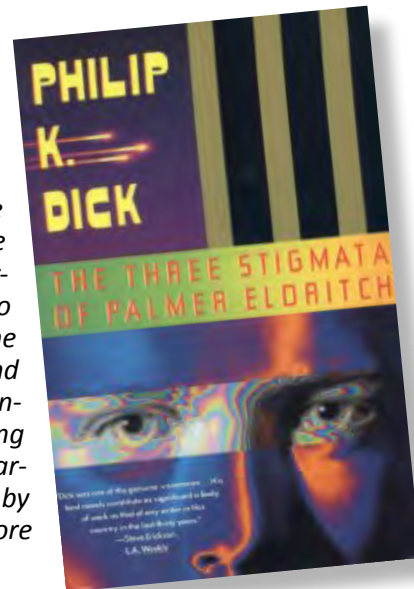
Which brings us to the relationship between...

The Private versus the Shared world

Throughout his career, Dick was interested in the pre-socratic idea of the individual world (*ideos kosmos*) - and its fragile relationship to the shared world (*koinos kosmos*). The *ideos kosmos* represents the world which you experience inside your own mind and body as a unique individual. The *koinos kosmos* represents the world at large which is a consensus world, a contractually agreed collective. Dick's passion for the sovereignty of the individual and what it means to be human led him to explore areas where the private world of the *ideos kosmos* is trespassed and violated (both by others' *ideos kosmos*, and by the *koinos kosmos*).

In many of Dick's novels there is a menace caused by the *ideos kosmos* of a single character invading the *ideos kosmos* of the other characters; Manfred, the autistic boy in **Martian Time Slip** reduces everyone's experience of clas-

sical music into just scratchy noises. Meaningful texts (like newspapers) become mere nonsense ('gubble, gubble'). Palmer Eldritch, in **The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch**, achieves his invasion of others' *ideos kosmos* through the use of Chew-Z; a drug which not only subjugates them to his will, but also which imprisons them forever in a world of his making. The genuine nightmare is that you can't get out. There is no escape.



Dick had a fascination with the dynamics of fascism and all forms of totalitarianism. An interest which continued throughout the whole of his career, and was evidenced in novels as early as **The Man Who Japed**, and as late as **Radio Free Albemuth**. It should be stressed that his interest was not an unhealthy one. It is obvious from his work that Dick was fiercely protective of the individual and he frequently shows the monstrous effects of cold inhumanity.

"The greatest menace of the twentieth century is the totalitarian state." (Philip K Dick. Interview with **Charles Platt** - 'Who writes Science Fiction?' p.166)

One of the characteristics of the fascist state is that it seeks to remove the *ideos kosmos* altogether. Only the state counts, only the 'official' *koinos kosmos* is deemed to have value. Consequently it must devour up all examples of individuality. In the novel Allen Purcell broadcasts an idea that Major Streiter and his followers actually eat their enemies. He knows this is not literally true (he hopes to 'smear' his opponent) - but he does assert that it is metaphorically true:

'Morec had gobbled greedily at the human soul.' (p.155)

In some ways, the *ideos kosmos* is beyond the reach of the state and therefore the state is continually trying to find ways to control it.

It could be argued that the last refuge against a totalitarian state is a healthy *ideos kosmos*. Allen Purcell (as his alter ego, John Coates) knew this:

'John Coates was now in his own world, and it was the antithesis of Morec.' (p.91)

In a 1975 letter to Malcolm Edwards (A British SF reviewer) Phil suggested that the media of totalitarian states are involved in creating the private world of each citizen by manipulating their perceptions and governing what they are allowed to know:

"What comes to my mind in this regard would be when a tyrannical state so manages the news and so manipulates the ideas and thoughts of its citizens, shutting out facts from their purview entirely, that together they collec-

tively share a sort of ersatz koinos kosmos which is nothing more than the Approved Idios Kosmos manufactured synthetically by the state. It could fail to incorporate into it certain vital elements, without which however many people share it and ratify it, it still fails to partake of reality—in the sense that an authentic koinos kosmos should. Multiple incorrectness, however frequently ratified, does not create accuracy, does it not?" - **Philip K. Dick, Letter to Malcolm Edwards, January 29, 1975**

Thus, the ideal for the state is a populace whose *ideos kosmos* has been completely shaped to the ideals of the state - without any individual ever suspecting there has been any coercion or influence. The *ideos koinos* is replaced rather than removed. An enslaved populace is far more compliant if they still believe they are free.

The ideal for the state is a populace whose ideos kosmos has been shaped to the ideals of the state -

The possibility of this is chilling. It could only happen if a large part of the earth's media were controlled by relatively few people; as it is today.

Dick is talking about fake news, about a media which withholds facts and fabricates broadcasts to suit the purposes of corporations and multinationals or the state. Such an edited version of reality would become the approved shared world. A fake version of

world events, an ersatz *koinos kosmos* which unquestioning individuals accept to the point that it becomes part of their private world experience (*ideos kosmos*). But **The Man Who Japed** is a fiction right? It couldn't ever happen like that!

On 7th July 2005, here in the UK, we awoke to the news that four Islamic suicide bombers had detonated bombs in four London locations. Three were in underground train stations and one on a double decker Bus. Fifty six people died and over 700 were injured. When the official narrative of events was released, we learned that the four met at Luton Train station then got the Train to London's King's Cross station, where they split to reach their different target destinations. The bombs were detonated from 8:50am onwards.

The official CCTV image shows them arriving together at Luton Train Station. One of the bombers (in a white cap) is in front of and behind a barrier at the same time. Look

at the lower horizontal rail; and part of the top metal barrier actually goes through his head. The figure on the extreme right has his left foot missing. The image has been heavily (and poorly) 'Photoshopped.' Perhaps a composite of four separate images?

Maybe it's just a poor quality image, maybe the poor resolution has created these anomalies?

The Metropolitan Police held a press conference a few days after the event. They announced that the bombers arrived together at Luton and caught the **07:40am** train to get to London, then on to their various desitations (underground trains and a bus) to commit the atrocities starting at 8:50am. They assured us that the bombers were tracked at every stage of their journey by CCTV.

However there was just one problem. *The 07:40 train from Luton to King's Cross was cancelled that day.* Computer records of the train timetables were kindly made available by Marie Bernes at Customer Relations at King's Cross, and by Chris Hudson, Communications Manager of Thameslink Rail, at Luton station.

Here is the actual Luton to King's Cross timetable for the morning of July 7th 2005:

Thameslink Trains Luton to King's Cross, 7-8 am on July 7, 2005				
Booked Departure	Actual departure	Due in at King's X	Actual Arrival King's X	Delay (minutes)
07.16	07.21	07.48	08.19	31
07.20	07.20	08.08	08.15	7
07.24	07.25	08.00	08.23	23
07.30	07.42	08.04	08.39	35
07.40	Cancelled	Cancelled	Cancelled	Cancelled
07.48	07.56	08.20	08.42	22

The next available train (07:48) would have them arriving at King's Cross after the target underground trains had already left.

Perhaps they got an earlier train (despite their being tracked all the way on CCTV)? Perhaps they got the previous train (07:30) or even the one earlier than that at 07:24? The CCTV photo is time stamped 07:21:54secs;

which would give them just three minutes (it ran 1min late) from when the photo was taken to buy their tickets, find the right platform and board the train.



The 07:24 departed at 07:25 (actual) and due to delays, it did not arrive in King's Cross until 08:23 (a 58min journey). It takes seven minutes to then walk from King's Cross mainline station through the long underground tube walkway (which includes a barrier) to reach the main King's Cross Thameslink underground station. Add to that the fact that it was rush hour and they had on cumbersome back packs.

*The official story from Government officials and the Metropolitan Police is that the four bombers **caught the 07:40 train from Luton** despite the fact that it was cancelled and did not run that day.* Now if that isn't the start of a Phil Dick novel, it's perhaps the middle of a Lewis Carroll one.

Although Police claim to have CCTV footage of them arriving at King's Cross station, *no footage has ever been released.*

There are many more anomalies concerning the Morec version of events on July 7th of 2005, but let's look instead at an event three years later in which there really was a Man Who Japed...

In 2008 an ordinary British Citizen, John Hill, sent a DVD about the anomalies of the official story (of the UK 7/7 Bombings) to a court house near London. Three people were being tried there for crimes they could not have committed. John sent them his DVD to ensure that there wouldn't be a miscarriage of justice.

Immediately, his home was raided and *he* was arrested on a charge of "*attempting to pervert the course of justice*". He was extradited to England (from Ireland) by 'counter-terrorist' police and held in an English prison. Once there, his name was deleted from the prison computer and potential visitors were told he wasn't there. Due to public pressure, the prison later admitted that they did indeed have him in custody. During his incarceration, the prison service kept making 'mistakes' and 'forgetting' to take John to his own court hearings (he was only notified of two out of a total of seven). He spent four months in prison.

The film he sent to the court house was one he put together himself. It is still freely available. He uses the name Maud'Dib (after the protagonist in Frank Herbert's Dune who harnesses the power of 'The Voice'). You can view it for free here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqEzk1ktrkM>

His 'Jape' was in daring to send a film of the truth to an establishment committed to mistruth. We are looking here at some strange examples of official News. We are not engaging in conjecture or heresay. I have no interest in conspiracy theories, just a healthy interest in the truth. Sometimes the official News just doesn't make sense.

Are we partaking in a genuine reality - or just a fake *Koinos kosmos* giving each of us an "Approved *Idios Kosmos* manufactured synthetically by the state?" (PKD to Malcolm Edwards 1975)

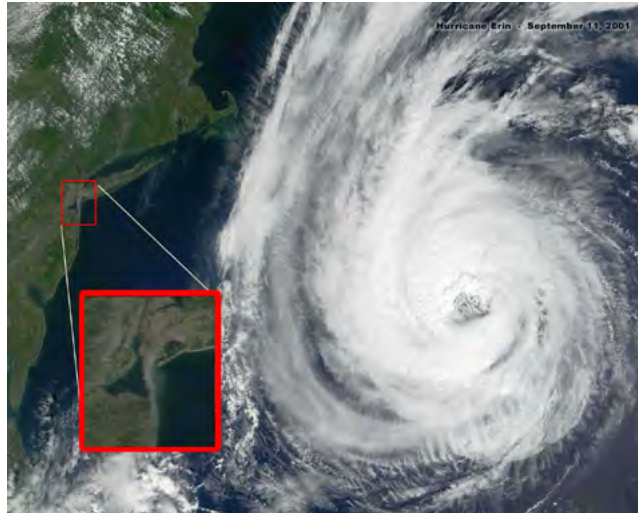
Although **The Man Who Japed** is a very early formative novel, Dick shows that even in 1955 he knew exactly where the leverage would be in that age old conflict between state control and liberty.

In **The Man Who Japed**, Morec want a populace who love Morec and who mindlessly follow its ideals. In Orwell's 1984 (*spoiler alert*) the final victory of the state is when Winston Smith is said to 'love' Big Brother - not just comply with or follow, but 'love.' It is tragic and chilling. Winston is at that point, as lost as those who have taken Palmer Eldritch's Chew-Z (albeit by a different route).

Remember Dick's point to Malcolm Edwards (about the manipulated presentation of News) : 'It could fail to incorporate into it certain vital elements, without which however many people share it and ratify it, it still fails to partake of reality.' Could we be starved of reality by the state through News and other media? What might they omit to tell us?

Let's create a scenario and consider its implications. Imagine if they failed to tell us of the approach of a hurricane. Now imagine that the hurricane is bigger than hurricane Katrina which took nearly 2,000 lives. Now imagine that it is headed straight to New York! That would make the news! Would you be surprised to know that so far, we

haven't been imagining anything - that in fact **it did happen and it didn't make the News**. On September 1st 2001 Hurricane Erin developed over the Atlantic. It was tracked



easily by satellite and turned out to be the longest-lived hurricane of the 2001 season. It was closest to New York on September 11th. Despite its power and the fact that it was tracked for ten days by satellite and heading for New York, *it didn't appear on any News broadcast or any weather report. Not one.* Is that normal?

Of course, on 9/11, news channels were naturally pre-occupied with a subject more dreadful than the weather - but what about on the ten

days leading up - and on the morning just before the events? Nothing. Complete blackout. I have no idea why this was so, but I do know that it would be highly unlikely for every News channel and meteorologist in the USA not to notice 2001's longest-lived hurricane - one bigger than Katrina and heading for New York.

When we contemplate that our *ideos kosmos* might be state manufactured (an edited version of a reality which we are not privy to) it is natural to experience a degree of cognitive dissonance. Thereafter it is a choice between courage or cowardice; between integrity or self-deception. The truth cannot be unseen. It may be uncomfortable, upsetting, or even terrifying, but it is not so easily ignored. Perhaps this is why, in **The Man Who Japed**, Allen Purcell refuses the comfortable option of escape and instead decides to face Morec head on.

Douglas A. Mackey in his book 'Philip K. Dick' said these wise words about Allen Purcell in **The Man Who Japed**: "His victory lies in breaking out from being a passive receiver of Morec's reality structure and becoming the active shaper of his own reality. Like the artificial paradise of Other World, even Morec will disappear if it is not believed in."

I have no antidote for Eldritch's Chew-Z but I know that it helps to understand that it is *his world* you are in, *not your own* - that's a start at least.

© Nick Buchanan



Satellite photo of Hurricane Erin showing its proximity to New York - Sept 11 2001 (with small rectangular inset of NY region)

Chew-Z graphic - Nick Buchanan

The Weapon Shops Of Philip K. Dick

by Lord Running Clam © 2013

In **PKD OTAKU #26** (Nov 2012) I wrote a defense of Philip K. Dick's novel **THE UNTELEPORTED MAN** (Berkley 1983). This month I was going to write the publication history of the novel but I am missing a couple of critical editions in my PKD collection, so, instead, I shall write about something my re-reading of **THE UNTELEPORTED MAN** has inspired in me. This is the weapons PKD uses in his stories. Surprisingly, this is a subject I've seen little, in fact, nothing written about that I can recall.

In what follows I refer to the 1983 Berkley edition of **THE UNTELEPORTED MAN** with the gaps in the text. This edition was the main one available to readers in the United States between 1983 and 2004 when the Vintage edition of **LIES, INC.** was published. I realise there are major differences in content between these two editions and other recent editions of **LIES, INC.** Even though Patrick Clark and others, notably Aaron Barlow in his book **HOW MUCH DOES CHAOS SCARE YOU?** (Lulu 2005), have studied the differences in the various editions of **THE UNTELEPORTED MAN / LIES, INC.**, there can be no definitive edition of this novel. As I said in my previous essay, **THE UNTELEPORTED MAN** is a unique reading experience for everyone. I have read this book through all of its forms up to the 1984 Gollancz edition of **LIES, INC.** and I have the missing pages from the Berkley edition printed out and stuffed in my copy of this book. And my awareness of the changes in the various editions colored my recent reading of the novel. I can safely say it will be a long time before anyone decides on the actual auctorial intended text and it may well be we end up, as Barlow suggests, with two novels rather than an awkward hybrid.

My reading copy of **SOLAR LOTTERY** is the one from Ace Books in 1975. Also see **HOW MUCH DOES CHAOS SCARE YOU?** Politics, Religion and Philosophy in the Fiction of Philip K. Dick (<http://www.lulu.com/us/en/shop/aaron-barlow/how-much-does-chaos-scare-you->



From Predator drones to Cephalotropic darts

Once you stop to think about it the weapons of PKD is likely to be a vast subject and one which I cannot jam everything I can find into one essay here, so... this, then, is the first in a series exploring The Weapon Shops Of Philip K. Dick. I chose this name in homage to A. E. Van Vogt's story **THE WEAPON SHOPS OF ISHER** (Analog 1941). I will start by taking off from my essay Time and Unteleportation in **PKD OTAKU #26**.

Weapons, as we all know, are the things that mankind makes the best. This is seen in **THE UNTELEPORTED MAN** where the nature of the war between the UN and Trails of Hoffman Limited (which can be interpreted as a war between Earth and the alien Mazdasts of Fomalhaut IX) reaches such esoteric levels as never before seen in science fiction. It's not spaceships and laser beams and light sabers, as is commonly found in today's science fiction, but LSD darts and time-warping tins of prophylactics! Today our advanced military weapons are ultra-sophisticated and designed for tactical roles in an overall strategy of constant surveillance of every country, every thing, every person, so that total security of our American way of life is ensured. We live, whether we think so or not, in a police state. Fortunately for Americans, we are at the top of the military heap and our weapons are more advanced than any other country in the world. But they're not as advanced as those invented by Philip K. Dick.

Consider this: Al Qaida terrorists in Afghanistan and Pakistan and similar places are being monitored constantly, when they can be found at all, and when placed under surveillance they can easily be killed by one of our Predator drones operated from an air base in Turkey – or even Washington D.C. – at a cost of only several tens-of-millions of dollars for the Predator and its support network. One terrorist at a time is the strategy employed at great cost to counter terrorism in this modern age. So, then, one multimillion dollar Predator drone missile and one dead terrorist. Such would be the ideal case but in practice these air-to-ground missiles destroy an area and

whatever is inside its target circle is destroyed too, that means lots of collateral damage – bystanders are destroyed along with the terrorist and his associates. This is a crude way to combat terrorism and expensive both monetarily and politically. These weapons, despite their seeming sophistication, are crude for the use to which they are put. The truth is probably that they are being misused and the Predators were not originally designed to attack individual terrorists, their forte being aerial surveillance.

In **THE UNTELEPORTED MAN** Philip K. Dick twice uses similar devices to our Predators but his designs (not yet capable of being manufactured) are more sophisticated and are designed to attack individuals. Instead of a multimillion dollar drone operated by a network of military specialists, PKD's first use of a similar device in this novel is when Al Dosker, the **LIES, Inc.** pilot, casually attempts to take a cigarillo from the pack in his pocket. This pack is immediately seized by Theodoric Ferry's henchmen and it is no surprise when the fourth cigarillo proves to contain a 'homeostatic, cephalotropic' dart attuned to Theodoric Ferry's brainwaves.

The second mini-Predator-like device takes its development one step further: a "detonation-foil" tropic to the UN tacticians, Dr. Lupov and Jaime Weiss. This is obviously a much larger device that THL sent through the telpor and which must then traverse some amount of space to strike its targets. But, basically, they are the same weapon. I'm sure that our advanced weapons designers in the military-industrial complex are working towards some such similar lethal device, as it fits their strategy and is attractive for budgetary and humanitarian reasons.

The UN Advanced-Weapons Archive

A common idea in PKD's plots is that aliens are invading Earth in unusual ways: supplanting human beings, brainwashing the population, messing with time and teleportation. Earth, when it even realizes that something is happening, must fight these invasions in usual and unusual ways. In **THE UNTELEPORTED MAN** we face an invasion by aliens who possess human beings, establish a one-way teleportation system to a distant planet and start shipping human beings off to this world and an un-

known fate! How do we fight such a horrific situation? In **THE UNTELEPORTED MAN** Earth employs the tactical devices of the UN Advanced-weapons Archives. These are a time-warping device, the book *The True and Complete Economic and Political History of Newcolonizedland*, the Variation 3 of the time-warping device known as Good Ole Charley Falks, plus the tactical use of homeotropic darts. The alien's – in this story called the Mazdasts – prime

weapons are hallucinatory programming and LSD darts. This is more fully developed in my earlier essay. But these are not the only weapons in this novel.

In **THE UNTELEPORTED MAN** Dick uses the arsenal of ancient and modern weapons including explosive devices, laser guns, and the knife with which Rachmael ben Applebaum kills the THL soldier on Newcolonizedland. But it is the fantastic weapons that command our interest because, who knows, maybe the

aliens will invade one day if they haven't already. Maybe we can blow them out of space with our explosive weapons or maybe we can't, and if we can't then we're like the rabbit in the movie *Snatch*.

In an early scene in **THE UNTELEPORTED MAN**, the **Lies, Inc.** pilot, Al Dosker, confronts Theodoric Ferry and his THL henchmen armed with a holstered sidearm. The henchmen are armed with laser rifles. When Rachmael goes to shake Ferry's hand Dosker warns him away, *"If you shake with him, Rachmael, he'll deposit a virus contamination that'll produce liver toxicity within your system inside an hour."* (p27) A disgruntled Ferry pulls off his membrane thin poison glove and remarks, *"we could have squirted feral airborne bacteria around by now"*. (p27) Dosker then reaches for a cigarillo only to have the pack dismantled by Ferry's hard-eyed henchmen who find a cigarillo in which is hidden a homeostatic cephalotropic dart tuned to Ferry's brainwave. Then the violence in the air manifests in the sudden turning inside out of Ferry's two henchmen *"their neurological, musculature systems give out; he saw them, both men penetrated entirely, so that each became, horrifying him, flopping, quivering, malfunctioning – more than malfunctioning: each unit of their bodies fought with all other portions, so that the two heaps on the floor became warring sub-syndromes within themselves, as muscle strained against muscle, visceral*

apparatus against diaphragmatic strength, auricular and ventricular fibrillation; both men, unable to breathe, deprived even of blood circulation, staring, fighting within their bodies which were no longer true bodies..." (p30)

Noting Rachmael's horror, Dosker laconically states: "*Cholinesterase-destroying gas,*" and plunges a tube into Rachmael's neck filled with atropine, the antidote to the notorious FMC Corporation's nerve gas.

Shorn of the armed support of his men, Ferry – not affected by the gas – stands around emanating a philosophical attitude to his defeat until Dosker, wondering why the nerve gas didn't affect him, pulls Ferry's arm off to reveal that he is a simulacrum of the real Theodoric Ferry.

Let us count the weapons in this short chapter 3. Not mentioned yet are the space-grappling device that allowed Ferry to snare Dosker's flapple, nor the explosive device normally attached to an ensnaring spaceship, nor Dosker's collection of bug chasers – minned audio and video detectors, nor the vacuum-cleaner-like device used by Ferry's men to sweep for unknown information, nor the dead-man's throttle that in the end brings their aid. What the hell, let's bullet-point them in order of introduction.

- The creditor-jet balloon – a THL spy device
- Dosker's sidearm
- Dosker's bug chasers – minned detectors of audio and video surveillance devices
- THL's spaceship grappling device
- THL's device to cut off Dosker's ability to communicate beyond the flapple
- Dosker's dead-man's throttle
- A THL missile that could've been used to blow the flapple to pieces before being grappled
- A detonating device on the hatch of the THL ship that could've blown up the insides of the flapple
- Lasers held by Ferry's henchmen
- THL's vacuum-cleaner-like detector of unknown type
- Ferry's poisonous glove
- Unused feral airborne bacteria squirting device in the THL ship
- Dosker's pack of cigarillos with hidden homeotropic dart
- Sharp-bladed pocket knife of one of Ferry's men

- The flapple's Cholinesterase-destroying gas
- The atropine antidote
- Brute force when Dosker pulls Ferry's arm off
- The simulacrum of Ferry which is itself a weapon's delivery system

- The chart of the location of the Omphalos tossed to Dosker by Ferry at the start of the scene but which Dosker declines to touch at the end.

Now let's add them up... a total of nineteen weapons, counter-weapons and detectors mentioned in the ten pages of chapter 3 of **THE UNTELEPORTED MAN**. I'm thinking this might be some sort of record in all literature.

THE UNTELEPORTED MAN may be the most complicated of PKD's stories weapons-wise and I refer the reader to my article 'Time and Unteleportation' in **PKD OTAKU 26** already mentioned for more exploration of the weapons found in **THE UNTELEPORTED MAN**. I imagine I will return to this novel later after I've explored PKD's earlier stories. In fact, I know I will; and I can't wait to get to **THE ZAP GUN**. But I'll go back to the beginning and **SOLAR LOTTERY** even though it is tempting to get lost inside the world of **LIES, INC** and end up like one of the weevils forever snapped from reality.

Telepaths and Thumb Guns

Philip K. Dick's first science fiction novel was **SOLAR LOTTERY** (Ace 1955) and the problem here is not the weapon itself but its delivery system. The main problem in **SOLAR LOTTERY** is that we have a ruler protected by a corps of telepathic soldiers and a way must be devised to assassinate him. How can a legally-sanctioned assassin approach – only one at a time allowed – when his every move is known and the telepaths can sense him coming a mile away? This is a plot that may have been suggested by Dick's reading of Alfred Bester's **THE DEMOLISHED MAN** serialized in *Galaxy* in 1952 and printed in 1953. It won the Hugo Award for Best Novel of 1953, right before PKD began **SOLAR LOTTERY** in 1954.



Dick himself has acknowledged this connection to Bester.

In Bester's novel a telepathic police force has eliminated murder from society, but a man wishes to kill another. How he does it and how he covers it up are the two things on which the story hinges. In wep-tech terms these correspond to the weapon and its camouflage. I won't go deeper into *THE DEMOLISHED MAN* nor divulge the plot; this is a science fiction classic we all should read and I won't spoil it for the reader who has yet to enjoy the story. But, these two problems of weapon and concealment are what PKD deals with in **SOLAR LOTTERY**.

The weapon used in the assassination attempt on Leon Cartwright – the Prestonite fanatic twitched by The Bottle to Director of the nine-planet Federation – is as crude as necessary to get the job done: a thumb gun installed in the hand of the assassin, Keith Pellig. This thumb gun burns gaping holes through anything in Pellig's way and, no doubt, would burn Cartwright to ash in similar fashion – if Pellig can reach him. The concealment of the weapon lies in its delivery system: Keith Pellig. Even though he has the appearance of a non-descript man Pellig is actually a robot camouflaged as a man.

The defenses arrayed against this assassin reduce to almost total reliance on the Telepathic Corps, the institutionalized protector of the Federation Director, which, secure in its mind-reading powers, initially is unconcerned with any assassin. However, they are bamboozled when Pellig comes in range and are helpless to stop his advance. This is because, being a robot, Pellig is operated by a group of special technicians who are switched into control of the robot at random. This fast switching of minds confuses the Telepathic Corps and renders them useless.

What does this plot show us about PKD's thinking in 1954 about weapons technology? The thumb gun is as basic as it gets: an emitter of a powerful burning energy beam. It could be a snub-nosed .44 revolver. Just get it in range to do its killing thing. Weapon dismissed. It's not the weapon that does the killing, it's the person, or in this case, robot, pressing the trigger mechanism.

The assassin, Pellig, is controlled by the outgoing Federation Director, Reese Verrick, and his corps of technicians. He is designed for the specific purpose of defeating the Telepathic Corps. In essence Pellig is the weapon. Is this a characteristic of weapons in general? Is the spear designed to defeat the shield? Or the tank to defeat the machine gun? And this is where I wish I'd went to West Point when I wasn't offered the opportunity as surely this is the sort of thing they would study there. What comes

first, the weapon or the defense? I suppose they arise mutually although advances in weapons technology suggest a time lag between offense and an upgraded defense although the reverse is also true. The air war in Europe in 1914-18 is one example of this with rapid counter-balancing progress in flight technology and aerial tactics.

PKD's idea of switching control of Pellig among a group of technicians with the purpose of killing one man is similar to our modern Predator drones with their control rooms full of technicians.

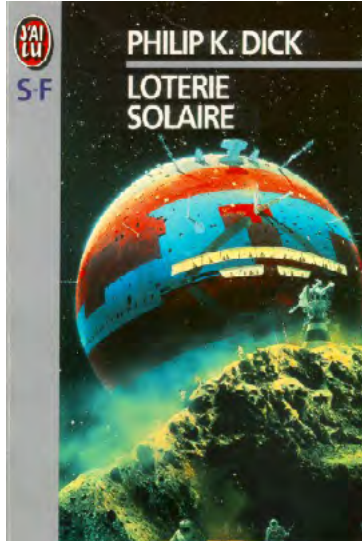
In our military drones we have the problem of weapons concealment and delivery conquered, our drones are high in the sky, our missiles unstoppable. What we have difficulty with is finding the target.

Where a faction cannot match force with force the first defence is to run away, and if you can't run then you can hide. Instead of fortresses loaded with boiling oil and rocks to repel invaders any technologically weak aggressor is nowadays dispersed

like the French Underground in World War 2. This renders the dominant power's advantage inefficient: a tank sent to rout a nest of Molotov cocktail wielding partisans, or a \$10,000,000 drone operation to eliminate a terrorist leader. Soon the superior side's forces are spread thin and the cost to maintain them becomes prohibitive.

There are two offensive replies available when faced with a dispersed enemy. The second is the one our nation has adopted against Al Qaida, the inefficient one of drones targeting individuals. The first is that used by Adolf Hitler in World War 2: reprisals, blanket area destruction, total brutality. Its amazing how resistance crumbles when you round up a whole town and shoot everyone in it or bomb a city to ashes and rubble just because a few dared to oppose you. The ultimate superiority of these strategies, the one over the other, has yet to be decided but I think our modern targeted approach will be the best once we can reduce the costs of the hardware. After all, Hitler lost and even his most brutal action, the destruction of Warsaw, failed when the survivors of that valiant city rose from the smoke and rubble and threw off their oppressors.

Today war is different than it used to be even as recently as World War 2. The definition of war itself has changed. It used to mean total national commitment to defeating the enemy by all and every means available. Today, it is something less than that, today, it is, well, we don't want to hurt anyone because then we'll look bad on TV. We cannot bomb Kabul or Islamabad out of existence because we just don't want to. And at this point we've reached the nut of civilization's problem: finding an op-



erating philosophy so we can all get along. Its one thing to not want to destroy your neighbors over global differences, even though you could, its another to realise that the very nature of a society is destructive in itself in ways that engender violent opposition.

Which all seems to be a long way from a glance at the weapons of PKD, but it helps to identify the core problem. In **SOLAR LOTTERY** the nature of the society is one of a technological class ruling over a world or, rather, inter-planetary system, of unclassified masses of 'unks'. These unks are kept quiescent by superstitions and lucky charms all employed to give them hope of winning fabulous prizes in the system-wide lottery. The top prize is the Directorship of the Federation itself. Hence our story. This is a political system very similar to that which obtained in 1954 United States of America and, once could say, obtains in spades today. It is no wonder that the publication of **SOLAR LOTTERY** aroused the attention of critics of the American political system with its blatant inequalities and destructive greed. In his review of the novel Tom Disch brought up this 'Marxist bent' criticism of **SOLAR LOTTERY** and PKD took pains to refute it, saying he was against any authoritarian political system and not just capitalism; he didn't like Soviet centralized statism either. (See my **PINK BEAM** book for more on this)

I've developed all this to show that PKD knew that violence – the necessity for violence – means that there is a flaw in the relations between states and flaws in the states themselves. Keith Pellig is the ultimate expression of a political strategy of targeting individuals for elimination. His sole purpose is to kill the ruler of the state. The thumb gun is obviously a device quickly tossed off but PKD's criticism of capitalism is not something we can discard so easily.

But I won't go there. In this day and age weapons are of supreme importance, their design and development is an industry that consumes a large chunk of the commonweal. For whatever political reason we need them. So then I think of Warsaw, the people like rats in their holes, grimly surviving, clutching their poor weapons yet rising to defeat the oppressors, and I think of missiles from the sky killing my family and neighbors and I realise we've already lost. We've lost this war against terrorism because our strategy has a fatal flaw: the line between 'individual targets' and 'saturation bombing' is a fine one. The temptation is always there to kill one's enemies en masse if you have the weapons to do so. It is inefficient to the point of crippling to take out an enemy one person at a time, especially when there are tens if not hundreds of millions of them. An assumption that the 'terrorists' are only a hard core of a few thousand

individuals or cells scattered about the poorer parts of the world is necessary for the logical adoption of an individual targeting strategy. If this assumption is false then any strategy relying on it will ultimately fail. And surely it is a fact in this time period that we have many more individual enemies than we can target with Predator drones or dashing Navy SEAL raids. It is, then, only a matter of time before this strategy is discarded in favor of another. The choice will then be between saturation bombing or even more effort put into the individual targeting approach. Of course, fundamental societal change leading to peace is off the table.

It doesn't take more than a few minutes watching TV or trying to board an airplane to know which way Western society is going. And this is where Philip K. Dick comes in again. His homeostatic, cephalotropic dart is a sophisticated weapon of the future. We're not there yet but unless we change our ways these will soon be deployed to a neighborhood near you. So keep your eye on those mini police drones skulking over your house and expect a \$9.95 explosive dart with your name on it to fly into your eyeball at any time. But, of course, there is a defense against that too: mirror shades! And that kiddies is why cyberpunks always wear this style of sunglasses.

Hmmm. I've gone rather farther afield than I intended with this first visit to the Weapon Shops of Philip K. Dick. In the futures of **SOLAR LOTTERY** and **THE UN-**

TELEPORTED MAN, two undeservedly under-appreciated Dick novels, weapons and their adjuncts and derivatives are invented as necessary. They are devised for a particular foe whether the ruler of the nine-planet Federation or alien Mazdasts disguised as agents of Trails of Hoffman, Ltd. Other PKD stories and novels – and I hope to explore some of these in future issues of **PKD OTAKU** – have equally as sophisticated weapons designs. I see PKD's deadly inventions as templates for military success against any foe – human or alien. I'm searching for the underlying principles of weapons dynamism, the theories required

for successful deployment, the subtle interplay of attack and counter-attack. Anything can be a weapon, from a fist to a bomb to a Ganymedeian Mind Mirror. Anyone can design a better club (just stick a rusty nail through the blunt end) but what is needed to combat an alien satellite when our nuclear missiles bounce off? This is the stuff of science fiction and Philip K. Dick was a science fiction writer, one of the best, his ideas on futuristic weaponry are worth consideration because you never know. What if...?

– By Lord Running Clam, shot for defeatism after the Denver Debacle of 2047



SPOTLIGHT: SCI-FI



PHILIP K. DICK
WAS A
FRIEND
OF MINE

BY WILLIAM SARILL

28 10.05.12 THEPHOENIX.COM

I'm at a conference at San Francisco State all weekend and I'm surrounded by Dickheads. One hundred and thirty of them, to be precise — a sellout crowd.

These are not your garden-variety Dickheads. They're a serious, scholarly bunch of fans, writers, filmmakers, doctoral candidates, university professors, all passionately dedicated to the life and works of Philip K. Dick. PKD, of course, is the legendary science-fiction writer usually designated as a cult author.

13 PKD on p 32

Few illustrators are skilled at this level of collage, however Jeff has produced a well balanced composition with a tremendous colour sense (of copper hues and malachite). The image sits on its own plinth of an Olympia typewriter with the name Dick in bold American Type-writer font (which itself contains further text from Philip K Dick's novels). In short, this illustration was a far cry from the lazy approach of stock-image short cuts and irrelevant imagery. This was someone treating Phil (and his work) seriously. Someone who knew his craft. Someone *working*.



I tracked Jeff down and asked him a few questions, wanting to know more about him and his work. I kept everything brief because Jeff is a busy man. I thought you might like to know a little more about the guy who did that stunning illustration for the Boston Phoenix:

Nick: What was your brief for the Boston Phoenix Illustration of PKD?

Jeff: Art Director Kevin Banks approached me "looking for a sort of 1960's Noir bookjacket look - with some psychedelic flair." For the article "Philip K. Dick was a Friend of Mine" by William Sarill.

Nick: What media do you usually work in?

Jeff: I'm a collage artist and pixel pusher who does everything in Photoshop.

Galactic Photoshop Healer

A brief Interview with Jeff Drew

By Nick Buchanan

The October 5 2012 edition of the Boston Phoenix magazine featured a fascinating article by William Sarill concerning his friendship with Philip K. Dick and the September 2012 PKD Festival in California. William writes well. The article sat under a stunning illustration by Jeff Drew, which referenced Ace's Cosmic Puppets cover, Total Recall' multi-levelled head disguise, The Glimmung, UBIK, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep, and goodness knows what else.

A brief glance at Jeff's website confirmed my hunch that this guy's work was worth checking out. Indeed my visit to his website was instantly rewarded because I was treated to a larger (and fuller) version of the article illustration (which Jeff has kindly allowed us to reproduce in Otaku - see the page after next).



Nick: How long would an illustration like this take?

Jeff: It takes me a couple of days. Tight deadlines usually don't let me work longer than that anyway, which is probably a good thing.

Nick: Are you a fan of Philip K Dick's work?

Jeff: Totally, although I must admit, until this assignment I didn't know *how much* he was responsible for creating.

Nick: Which books are your favourites?

Jeff: It's hard to beat "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" for the title alone.

Nick: Where can people buy prints / examples of your work?

Jeff: I've recently set up a shop at www.society6.com/jeffdrewpictures where, it just so happens, you can purchase this image as a poster, t-shirt, pillow, phone skin and more!

Nick: Which Artists and Illustrators have influenced you the most?

Jeff: My Grandmother, who is an artist as well, gets a lot of credit. She kept a pencil in my hand and thoughts in my head. She had a great collection of art books, and Norman Rockwell was always my favorite to look at. We studied his work together often.

Nick: What would be your five favourite books (any, not just PKD)?

Jeff: "The Fan Man" by William Kotzwinkle

"Geek Love" by Katherine Dunn

"The Toy Collector" by James Gunn

"Budding Prospects" by T.C. Boyle

"Rule of the Bone" by Russell Banks

Nick: And what would be your five favourite films?

Jeff: This is always a hard list to make, but....

The Wizard of Oz

The Big Lebowski

Pulp Fiction

The Royal Tennenbaums

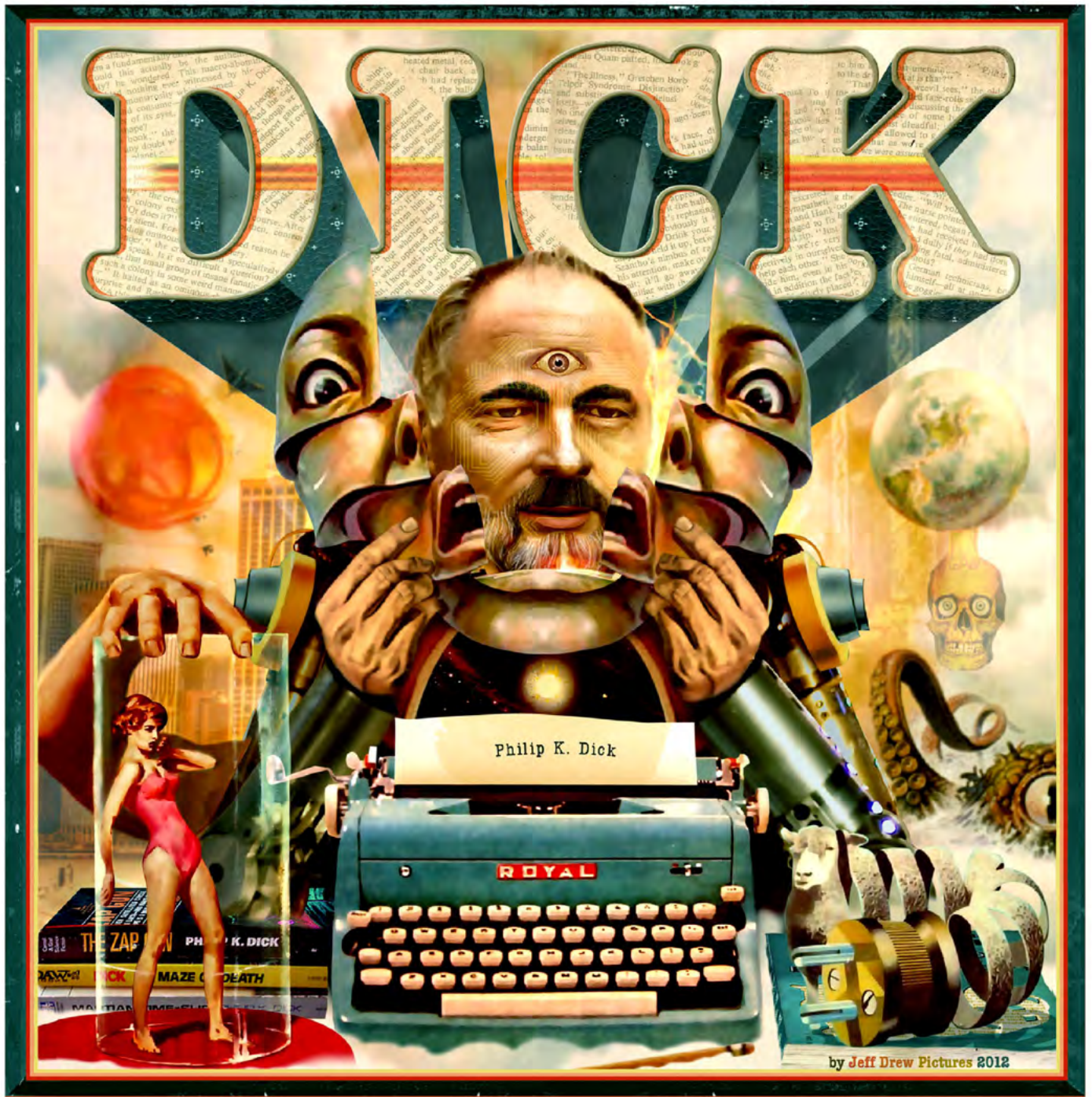
The Goonies

Nick: What advice would you give to anyone starting out in the field of illustration?

Jeff: Keep at it. It can be a hard field to break into even when you're talented. Don't let your ego get in the way and just be cool, man.

Nick: Thank you Jeff.

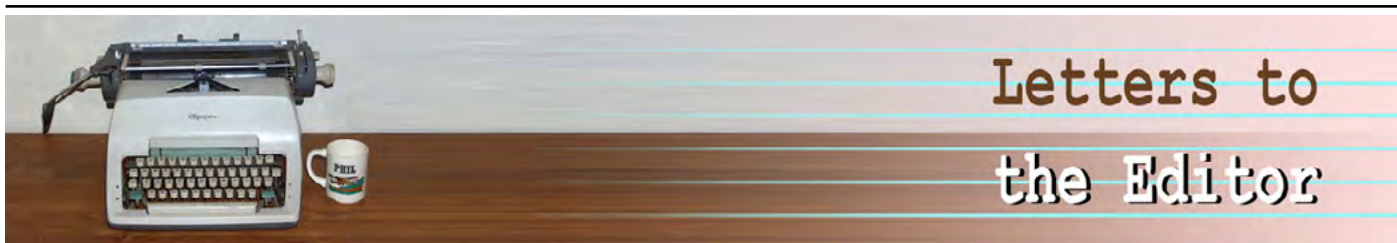




Jeff Drew

Website: <http://www.jeffdrewpictures.com/>

Store: http://society6.com/jeffdrewpictures/Portrait-of-Philip-K-Dick_Print



The Fashionable Canon

Just finished the OTAKU 25 as the new one arrives.

So not to forget the kudos to Nick Buchanan for his great apology: defence of 'Cosmic Puppets'. (which was in Otaku #23)

That 'Canon' isn't truly worth discussing. Lit crit guys earnestly investing in border control here (not having 'lesser' novels invade the discourse) are not worth their salt, they also probably count citations to compute their impact factor. That 'Best of' thing is only worthwhile as a game (of remembrance and wit) among consenting otakus. Like asking about the best five movies of Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Let 'Querelle' be his 'Ubik.' Or the five best Alan Moore characters.

This brings me to Nick's nice discussion of fantasy versus SF, as a concept occluding our prose perception. And a factor that might have helped obscuring the fine novel in his focus. Followed by Phil's insight that fantasy is that's what general opinion deems impossible and SF that which it regards as possible given the right circumstances. (like commuting to work from other planets ;)

If that is the case then stuff that was SF might become fantasy and vice versa, as time goes by - and that opinion

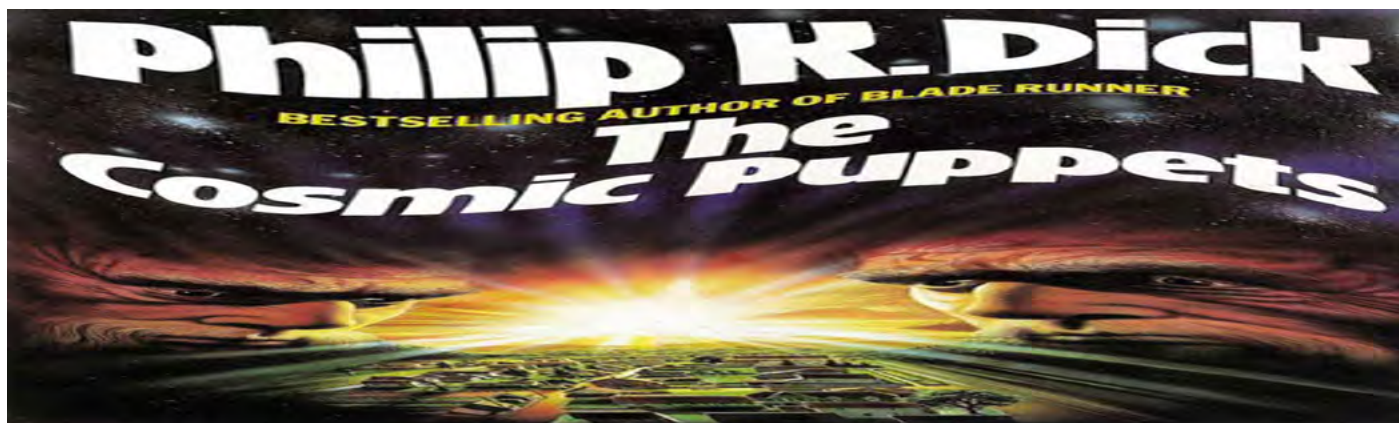


changes. It struck me that all the stuff with paranormal mutants in them was surely SF in the 50s and 60s but by now we are all fairly certain that nobody's gonna get super powers when bitten by a radioactive bed bug or that you don't get big and strong and green when the MRI scanner you're in runs amok. You just die or get sick (you might even become green, or purple). So mind-reading dome-heads and flying mutants in suits are fantasy now. Same should be true of funny suits in general. All SF novels and movies of the 50s up to the seventies taught us that humans will wear crazy colored tights or togas or bulk appendages in the even foreseeable future. Now we know that in another thirty years they will probably still wear jeans and sneakers and T-Shirts. Or suit and tie. So funny looking clothing for people of the 21st Century is now fantasy, too.

By the way, if they film **UBIK**, it's only **UBIK** to me when it has funny looking garments faithfully adapted.

Speaking of movies: 'Total Recall', the remake, made the Schwarzenegger/Verhoeven piece look like a work of genius.

Andre Welling



P K D

otaku #27



"The Phil Dick option: What if all your email friends are sock puppets? What is it that they're trying to make you do?" – Rudy Rucker

http://www.isfdb.org/wiki/index.php/fanzine:Simulacrum_Meltdown

JGB/LSD

"I suppose I'm a medium-to-heavy drinker, but I haven't taken any drugs since one terrifying LSD trip in 1967. A nightmarish mistake. It opened a vent of hell that took years to close and left me wary even of aspirin. Visually it was just like my 1965 novel, *The Crystal World*, which some people think was inspired by my LSD trip. It convinced me that a powerful and obsessive enough imagination can reach, unaided, the very deepest layers of the mind. (I take it that beyond LSD there lies nothing.) Imagination is the shortest route between any two conceivable points, and more than equal to any physical rearrangement of the brain's functions." – J.G. Ballard interview with Thomas Frick, 1984

[Interesting that both Ballard and Phil found their LSD experiences to be of an infernal nature. "A Vent to hell?" Maybe a vent to Phil's hell world. Ballard reviewed **Martian Time Slip** for the New Statesman remarking that "the novel is full of incident, fusing terror and comedy in a unique way. More than any other SF writer, Dick is able to convey the sense of everyday reality as totally threatening." Did Phil ever talk about Ballard?]



PKD Otaku indexed! Filed and Monitored.

Peter Young has indexed PKD Otaku and Simulacrum Meltdown. You can access them at the following sites:

PKD Otaku

<http://www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/seriesgrid.cgi?32922>

http://www.isfdb.org/wiki/index.php/Fanzine:PKD_Otaku

Simulacrum Meltdown

<http://www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/seriesgrid.cgi?33084>

"Really, Harry, I think I hate sf... I have tried to avoid this conclusion, but I wouldn't care if the whole operation sank, apart from you, Blish, Ballard, Dick and who else really?" -- Brian Aldiss to Harry Harrison: 23 September 1967

The last word on the matter of PKD and LSD.

Date: 10 Apr 96 03:54:46 EDT

From: "Paul S. Williams"

To: pkd list

Subject: delusions & trips

I appreciate the recent discussion about Phil and LSD. I would say that my first strong attraction to his novels had a lot to do with how they resonated with the LSD experiences I'd recently had, and my "head" outlook on the world. But in response to Christopher P's original gambit, I have to say that I don't think there is any reason to believe Phil actually took acid more than three or four times. I base this on my personal knowledge of him at the time, the fact that he did write openly in letters occasionally about his acid experiences, comments he made to me and many others. Basically his trips were so scary he couldn't bring himself to do

it very often. It was remarked upon by many of us at the time (1967, 1968), including Phil, that some of his most LSD-like novels were written BEFORE he ever had any psychedelic experience. So I'm afraid judging how much he tripped by saying he had to have in order to have written "about" that sort of perception, is probably quite off the mark. Interesting discussion, though. But I do have to object to anyone, Gregg Rickman or CLP or any of us, trying to write biography by use of deductive logic. It's not the appropriate technique. However, as a veteran of a huge number of strong acid trips, I am certainly sympathetic to the resonance Christopher and others feel between some of Phil's writing and those experiences.

I would further add that CLP's phrase "I say he used LSD a lot more than he let on" suggests to me a slight

Paul Williams in 1983 - image source unknown (apologies for lack of credit)

misunderstanding of Phil's character. He was not precisely secretive, and didn't tend to lie about things like this. He could be evasive and difficult, sure, but his tendency was more to talk surprisingly openly to strangers, than to have big secrets carefully kept from friends and the world.

No big deal. Just some comments for what it's worth. Yeah, Phil's "fear" and love of LSD can be felt in his books, but it is almost certain it can be felt as well in certain novels written before he ever took the stuff. (He intuited the

experience before he had it chemically, maybe via a touch of schizophrenia or who knows what.) I haven't got the time or all the right references nearby to give a full chronology at the moment, but some thoughts off the top of my head, grist for the mill.

PS: if you do trip alone, be careful about reading PKD novels while you do....

*

ADVERTISING FEATURE



Chew-Z graphic by Nick Buchanan (with a huge help from Mr. Wriggley)