

# PKD

otaku #35

Above Photo of Phil © Tessa Dick, by kind permission

February 2017



## PKD by Andu T. Soare

*Also in this issue...* News of DVD's of PKD Celebration 1991 (England), Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, David Bowie and Philip K. Dick, Telepathy and Murder, PKD Treasures lost, 2017 PKD Festival...

PKD

#35

**PKD Celebration**  
1991, England - Available!

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PKD **Otaku** is a zine made by fans for fans.

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

The PKD 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](mailto: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

by Nick Buchanan [enquiries@positive-effect.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@positive-effect.co.uk)

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# Editorial

by Patrick Clark

A new year and, arguably, a New World Order is upon us in 2017. Also a new issue of PKD Otaku. Of the three, I'm most comfortable with this new issue. That, at least, is finished and what surprises you discover in its pages will be happy ones. A lot of new voices in this 35th version, too. That pleases me very much. We need different perspectives on Phil and his works. We do not want to freeze him into amber as some 20th Century writer who was pretty savvy about his own era but has nothing to say to the 21st Century. I suggest that Phil is as relevant to our own time as he has ever been and we need 21st Century voices to explore that. The technology may have changed but the issues remain and Phil's deep questioning as to the nature of reality are especially troubling today. "Alternative facts"? How phildickian is that! "Lies, Inc." indeed.

In keeping with these new and troubling times we are going to try something new here at PKD Otaku. Our next issue will look at the political aspects of Philip K. Dick. We are calling it "The Penultimate Issue of PKD Otaku" and hats off to Frank and jami for coming up with the idea. Phil was intensely involved with the politics of his day political throughout his life. From his early years as the subject of FBI investigations in the 50s to his issues with the IRS over non-payment of taxes to protest the Vietnam War, to his articles

attacking Richard Nixon and the Watergate conspiracy Phil was enmeshed in politics. Of course, many of his books and stories are deeply political in the broad sense of the term, commenting on the issues of the day be it race relations, or abortion, or domestic surveillance or manufactured lies by government and corporate agencies. So consider this a call for papers. Especially, what can Phil tell us about the situation we now live in today.

While we were finishing up this issue of PKD Otaku we received some very sad news. Perry Kinman, friend, colleague, Philip K. Dick scholar and archivist passed away on January 26th. This is terrible, terrible news. I've known Perry for decades. He was an early supporter of this zine and contributed to the very first issue. It was rare not to see something – an essay, a poem, a comment – in most issues. He was one of a small group of people that made this zine not simply possible but worthy through now 35 issues. He will be greatly missed and deeply mourned. We will have more on Perry in the next issue.

Finally, there will be a new PKD Festival coming to Fort Morgan, Colorado on March 3rd and 4th. Dave Hyde has moved heaven and earth to put together an amazing collection of events and speakers. You will find all the details in this issue of Oatku. I urge all our readers to attend this event.



## Mes Excuses by Nick Buchanan

On the cover of PKD Otaku #33 I used a lovely photo of Phil without knowing it's source. It was one of those images which bounces around the internet - and which gets used a lot because it's a good, clear photo. After PKD Otaku #33 came out, a French guy by the name of Philippe Hupp contacted me to identify himself as the Photographer. He was very gracious about its use and even provided some fascinating background information which he said we could print (along with three jpegs - one of which is a letter from Phil).

I would like to take this opportunity to apologize to Philippe for using his photo uncredited and to thank him for allowing us to set the record straight. PKD Otaku takes a pride in crediting its sources and we are pleased to be able to rectify this previous omission.

What follows is written by Philippe Hupp; his account of the photo and of meeting Phil. As you will see, he played a significant role in bringing Phil to a wider audience - not only as a translator but also as an event organizer.

### Philippe Hupp:

I took this photo in May 1977.

I had translated Phil Dick's novel "Time out of joint" into French two years before.

At that time, I was still studying English in the city of Metz, France. I had a column in the French edition of Galaxy, I translated science fiction novels and wrote book reviews for various newspapers.

In 1976, thanks to a grant from the city hall, I launched the Metz International Science Fiction Festival. Theodore Sturgeon, Philip Jose Farmer, Robert Sheckley and Harry Harrison were the main guests, along with most French sci-fi writers. The event was so successful that various local and national administrations asked me to make it a regular thing.

In 1977, I decided to invite Philip K. Dick as guest of honor. I knew it was risky - I was at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, in 1974, when they gave a series of conferences on science fiction and Phil did not show up. Robert Sheckley replaced him. The French publishers of Phil Dick refused to support me, arguing that he wouldn't come anyway.

I managed to get Phil's address and phone number (through Norman Spinrad, I think), wrote a letter of invitation and then called to ask if I could meet him. I thought I'd have more chances of seeing him in Metz if we could have lunch together. As a precaution, I also invited Roger Zelazny. Roger and Phil had written a novel together, "Deus Irae", and I figured Roger's presence would reassure Phil.

So I flew to the States in May 1977. I met Phil at his Santa Ana

home. He had recorded the speech he planned to give in Metz, he gave me the tape. Then we went to an Italian restaurant nearby (I'd asked him to pick the place) and we had a nice lunch, with two (!) bottles of Bardolino. Phil was in a very good mood. I explained how the festival worked, told him that we would make sure he'd have a royal treatment.



Photo © Philippe Hupp/Gamma-Rapho/Getty Images





Photo St. Joseph, Santa Ana -from [www.rcbo.org/directory/saint-joseph-church-santa-ana](http://www.rcbo.org/directory/saint-joseph-church-santa-ana)

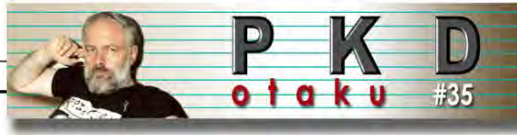
Just before lunch, I'd taken a few pictures of Phil in his apartment - the one where he holds his cat has been printed all over the world. On the way back, I took a few other photos in front of St. Joseph church. I ran out of film, so I used a cheap, space camera to take some b&w pictures, but they're slightly out of focus. Blame it on the wine...

Four months later, I was thrilled (and relieved) to pick up Phil Dick at Luxemburg airport. When we arrived in Metz, everybody looked stunned. I was probably the only one who believed he would come.

**Philippe Hupp**



Photo © Philippe Hupp (by kind permission)



March 17, 1977

Philippe HUPP  
7, rue Franchet d'Esperey  
57000 MONTIGNY LES METZ  
FRANCE

Dear Philippe Hupp:

Thank you for your letter of February 23rd, in which you give me details about the Festival which is to be held from September 19th to 25th, this year. This letter is to confirm that indeed I will attend as requested by you, on the terms which you have outlined in the above-mentioned letter.

As to the speech, I would like to do one, if I can; by that I mean, if I can come up with something worth your money and time. I may write one on a topic which interests me very much: high-order mimicry, a topic which my novel-in-progress is based on. I will of course let you know about that as soon as I am able.

You ask, in your letter, for my phone number, but since I received a call from you today it is evident that you have it. However, just in case, it is: (714) 836-6367.

My speech on high-order mimicry would study the relationship between the imaginative aspects of science fiction and the use of actual scientific theory; which is to say, a study of the contrasts and the relatedness between what we normally call reality and the reality depicted in science fiction works. If I can get the speech together I think it will be a good one.

Thank you so much for phoning me --and for inviting me to attend the Festival-- and I will look forward to meeting you possibly as soon as June, when you come here.

Cordially,

*Philip K. Dick*  
Philip K. Dick  
408 E. Civic Center Dr  
C-1  
Santa Ana  
Calif 92701  
U.S.A.

NOTE NEW ADDRESS





## The Philip K. Dick Festival Ft. Morgan, Colorado March 3rd - 4th 2017 [wide-books.com](http://wide-books.com)

Thank you, Patrick, for this opportunity to write about the soon-to-be-upon-us Philip K. Dick Festival in Fort Morgan, Colorado.

For the last 3 years, or so, my wife, Patti, and I have been visiting the town of Ft. Morgan and talking with the folks there about holding a Philip K. Dick Festival in their town. We have been well-received by the townsfolk and thanks to the Library and Museum staff and the active support of the Ft. Morgan Dept. of Economic Development, and Morgan County Tourism, we have managed to organize this festival. We hope it is the first of many PKD festivals in Ft. Morgan. I'd like to thank here the many people in Ft. Morgan who have kindly aided and supported us through the planning.

As I write this it is late January. We've got a lot done. Our event schedule is almost full. We have two days of events including a PKD-inspired Art Show in the Museum, with artists from around the world contributing. For this show we have some great awards: first prize is a 1st edition of *THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE* from Putnams – kindly donated by **Perry Kinman**, and the second prize is a complete presentation

set of Wide Books editions on Philip K. Dick, from Henri Wintz and me at Wide Books. Third prize is one of the Ultimate Collector's Edition of *BLADE RUNNER* with 5 DVDs and including all the goodies inside, and we thank Tami Ream for that. The fans present at the festival will vote for their favorite images and we'll announce the winners on Saturday night when we have our big bash with magician Floyd Jones and musician **Michael Garfield**. I'd also like to thank here **Laura Entwisle** for her unstinting support, we fans have much to thank Laura for with this festival. See <http://wide-books.com/call-to-artists.html> and <http://wide-books.com/art-show-prizes.html>

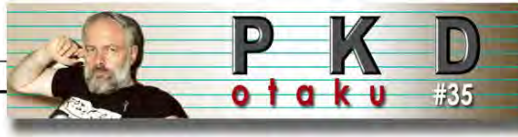
We are also very pleased to announce that **John Simon** and **Elizabeth Karr** will come to the festival and show

their movie of *RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH* at the Cover Cinema in Ft. Morgan. John and Elizabeth will also talk about RFA after the showing and help us with our one-and-only panel on "Philip K. Dick and Fake Reality" – a lot to talk about there! John may also tell us about progress with his new script for a movie of *FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID*.

**William Sarill** will also sit on our panel plus give a talk on "A MAZE OF DEATH: A. J. Speckowsky's *How I Rose From The Dead In My Spare Time and So Can You*". William was a friend of Phil's back in the 1970s and 80s and helped with the plotting of *A MAZE OF*

*DEATH*. I first met William at the PKD Festival organized by David Gill in San Francisco in 2012 and then, in Fullerton in 2016 I was impressed by his lecture on 'orthogonal time.' Certainly looking forward to seeing him again – and, in-





deed, all the fans coming to Ft. Morgan.

I'd like to say something about our magician, **Floyd Jones**. My friend Magic Todd discovered him in an obscure pool hall in Ogalalah, Nebraska. I met him in another pool hall in Longmont, Colorado last year where his wizardry at making things appear and disappear was, well, magical! I knew then that I wanted him to entertain us at the festival. To find out that his name is actually Floyd Jones, well, you could have knocked me down with a feather!

Michael Garfield is a musician I find hard to classify. I will not! I saw him briefly in 2009 at a giant Halloween party in Denver. If I remember rightly he was doing a psychedelic live-action painting to the music there. Just amazing. I asked him his name – about the extent of our conversation in all the noise – Michael Garfield, he said, and I remembered it. Later we invited him to the 2010 festival in Nederland – Black Hawk, Colorado but he was already booked elsewhere. I think we are really lucky to have Michael at our fest. Since 2010 his musical life has blossomed and he's traveling all over the world playing his music. For us PKD fans he'll be puttering up to Ft. Morgan from Austin, Texas in his old Subaru filled with guitars and foot pedals. For this first PKD festival in Ft. Morgan I somehow know he is the perfect choice. He's also a Philip K. Dick fan, of course.

Another thing we're planning is a small Fan Expo. Here fans will be able to trade books, zines, PKD stuff and make small sales. Wide Books will have a table and we've got lots of scarce PKD editions for the collectors.

And as this is the 35th anniversary of Philip K. Dick's passing (and coincidentally the 35th edition of PKD OTAKU) we will have a twilight vigil at Phil and Jane's grave on Thursday March 2nd (the actual date he died). This we will do again a bit more organized on Friday evening. Bring your PKD trinkets!

There's more to write about but we have the event schedule posted over on <http://www.wide-books.com/philip-k-dick-festival-2017-program.html> and other info there too. So I won't go on forever here. Links are below.

If you intend to come to the festival then I urge you to register for Saturday evenings dinner and entertainment at the Country Steak Out Restaurant & Bar, in Ft. Morgan. Cost is \$25 including your food. The capacity there is 250 people so be sure to register soon or you might be out

in the parking lot. The registration is only so that Alvina knows how much food to have ready. The Country Steak Out is the largest place in Ft. Morgan and they are experienced in hosting events and gatherings large and small. The food is good, its a nice place. Please register how many you will be here:

[pkdfestivalfm@gmail.com](mailto:pkdfestivalfm@gmail.com)

If you will fly in to DIA let us know your arrival/departure times ([pink-beam@hotmail.com](mailto:pink-beam@hotmail.com)) and we'll arrange a rendezvous and collect you from the airport. If you are driving in then Festival HQ is at the Library/Museum on Main Street, Ft. Morgan. The festival hotels are right next to each other just off I-76 exit: the Hampton Inn and the Super 8. Watch Wide Books website for updates: <http://www.wide-books.com/philip-k-dick-festival-2017.html>

So... All y'all PKD fans come on down! The people of Fort Morgan welcome us, its the middle of winter on the Colorado prairie, there's nothing else going on for 100 miles all around. We have some great entertainment and many fans knowledgeable of lots of things about Philip K. Dick's life, his stories and the movies based on them. Let's show the people of Ft. Morgan that the fans of Philip K. Dick are happy to have a festival in their town and by our numbers encourage them to establish Ft. Morgan as a place where this great writer will be celebrated into the future!

Thanks very much and I look forward to seeing you all at the Fest, March 2nd – 4th.

Suggested searches (any questions please email Lord RC [pink-beam@hotmail.com](mailto:pink-beam@hotmail.com)) :

Fort Morgan Colorado  
Library Fort Morgan Colorado  
Museum Fort Morgan Colorado  
Riverside cemetery Fort Morgan Colorado  
Map Fort Morgan Colorado  
Hampton Inn Fort Morgan Colorado  
Super 8 Fort Morgan Colorado  
Country Steak Out Fort Morgan Colorado  
Cover Cinema Fort Morgan Colorado  
Cable's Restaurant Fort Morgan Colorado

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## Twenty-Five Years Ago a Little Bit of Magic Happened

By Jeff Merrifield

We had all taken part in Robert McKee's story structure seminars, me and a number of friends. We had taken part at the insistence of Ken Campbell, an irrepressible and highly innovative man of the theatre. We formed a writer's collective, which we called The McKee Group, and met most Thursday evenings in our various homes in and around London. Ken was in it, of course, and actor John Joyce, who had been part of Campbellian theatrical capers for many years. There was playwright John Constable, actors Suzie Crawley, James Richmond and Janet Fielding, who as Tegan Jovanka had been the companion of the Fifth Doctor Who. There was Claudia Boulton, aka Claudia Egypt, who had a distinguished theatrical pedigree, and theatrical producer Irving Rappaport. Oh, and me. That was the core of the group, but occasionally guests would come along who had also 'done McKee'. We had vibrant, productive sessions and for many of us, new work was inspired.

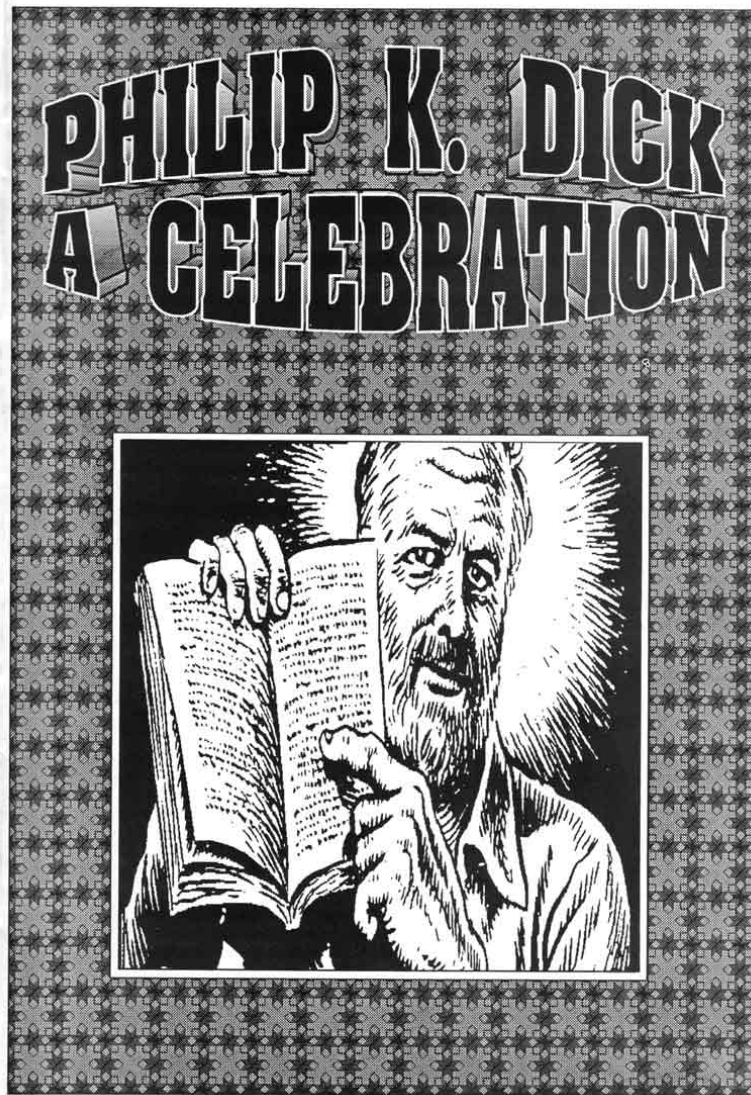
I wrote a play about the death of Marilyn Monroe, Slatzer's Bouquet, and inspired by Ken's astounding approach to research, I went off to Los Angeles and made contact with a number of people with knowledge and experience of her demise, including Private Eye Milo Speriglio, who had

done much work on the case. John Constable wrote a play called The Fit Up, about a heavy group of drug dealers, and became engrossed with PKD's A Scanner Darkly. Ken Campbell embarked on what was to become probably the most successful series of one-man-shows in theatre history. As he did them, he presented pilot versions to our group. The first, Confessions of a Furtive Nudist, was directed by Gillian Brown and she was so chuffed at what

they had achieved she bought him a deluxe double book edition of VALIS, in a beautiful slipcase with a volume by Kim Stanley Robinson, An Afterword to Philip K Dick's Valis. The sheer magnificence of these volumes turned most of us on to Valis and we were on a PKD trip. Tales of the monumental Exegesis were reaching us and the whole Dickian myths were in abundance. No doubt about it, we were now a bunch of Dick-heads.

After one McKee group meeting, in 1991, John Joyce and I were left at the end of the group session, together with the five bottles of wine that didn't get drunk. John had been working on an acting version of Dick's famous Metz Speech and had just successfully performed

it. We chatted about that and about John Dowie, a friend of ours, a comedian who had tired of being funny and who was working on writing plays, including one about Philip K Dick, which he had called Take Them To The Garden. After the first bottle of wine, we'd decided to do a night when John performed his Metz Speech and Dowie his Garden piece. "Open another bottle, John."

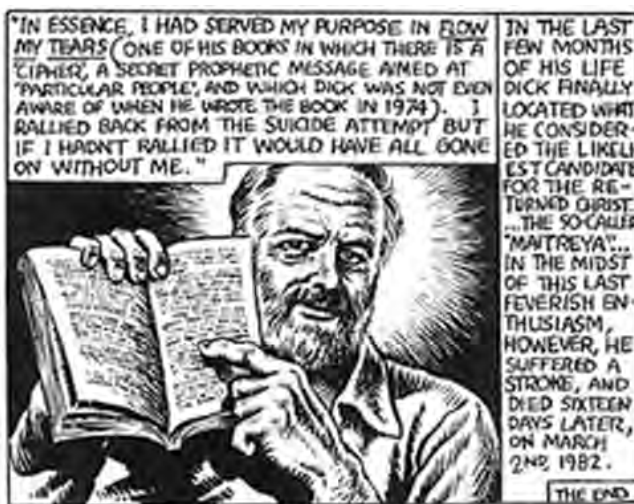


After three more bottles, the idea had become: Metz, Garden, John would work on a second piece about 'What is Human?', invite Paul Williams to take part, and he just happened to be in the country, think about other guest speakers, Dickian films, artists to paint a huge mural. It was beginning to sound like a damned fine weekend. "Let's have the last bottle to celebrate, Jeff." And that, dear friends is exactly (more or less) how the Philip K Dick Celebration came into being. Within three days we were sitting on the grassy slopes of Hampstead Heath, with Paul Williams and PKD Society UK organisers, Keith Bowden and Valerie Buckle. Ideas flowed, the idea buzzed, and we all got very excited.

Over the ensuing weeks, Malcolm Edwards was Science Fiction Editor at Grafton Books and as well as taking part he got Lawrence Sutin, author of *Divine Invasions* and *In Pursuit of Valis*, to come over, paid for by his publisher. Ken Campbell readily accepted the role of master of ceremonies, John Constable would explain his passion for *A Scanner Darkly*, Brian Aldiss offered to write a piece especially for the celebration, to be called *Kindred Blood* in *Kensington Gore*. John Joyce and I were on *Cloud Nine*. Gregg Rickman rang me and asked why the other two Dick biographers were appearing and he wasn't. I explained that Paul Williams was already in this part of the world on Bob Dylan convention business and Lawrence Sutin was coming courtesy of his publisher. We didn't have any budget, though we had funds to pay for accommodation. But, by and large, this was a thing for fans, by fans. He'd come anyway, he said. So we had the three major Dickian biographers at the same celebration event.

Next on board was Philip Strick, the esteemed author of *Science Fiction Movies* and a regular contributor to *Sight and Sound* magazine. He would talk about Dick's influence on cinema with extracts from relevant films. I set about writing a piece based on the words of the women in PKDs life and acquire the services of a wonderful actress, Xanthe Gresham, to perform it at the Celebration. Paul Williams got us Sachiko, a singer much encouraged by Dick, from

Glen Ellen in California. Author Geoff Ryman had adapted *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* for the stage back in 1984 and would present it here, with an all-star cast, as a rehearsed reading. A celebrated chartered psychologist, Dr Ernesto Spinelli, was currently working on a television documentary (that eventually became *A Day in the Afterlife*) and would deliver a new paper he was working on about PKD. And a star-filled galaxy of writers, critics, and Science Fiction buffs, Brian Stableford, Jack Cohen, Maxim Jacobowski, George Stone, Gerry Newman and John Clute, would participate in panel discussions of Dick's work.



When Paul Williams sent me a copy of the famous Robert Crumb comic of the Philip Dick 'pink light experience', we used it as the basis for a glossy programme, which has since, I am led to believe, become something of a collector's item.

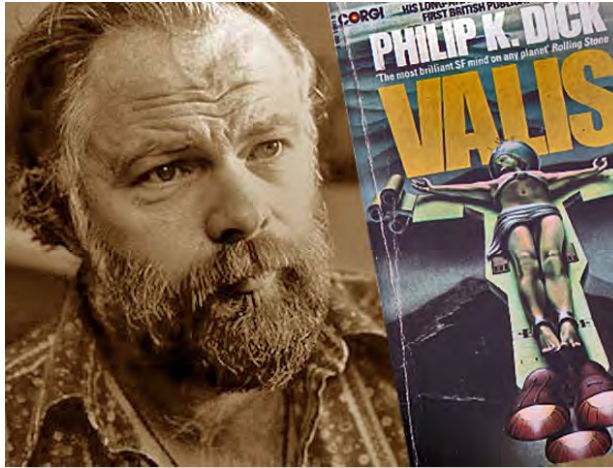
So, the event happened. We had a couple of hundred folks from many different countries attending. It was a fast-moving, highly charged two days in Epping Forest College. One of the major discussion themes was the quality of PKD's work before 1974 and his famous epiphany, or those he wrote after that date, after *Valis*. There were passionate advocates for both points of view, though it did seem to me that the after-*Valis* people got the upper hand.

Twenty-five years after the event, why are we talking about it now? Well, I've moved home several times since then and much of my collected paraphernalia is still in boxes. In just as synchronous way as the five bottle of wine development of the idea. I was clearing away some boxes to make room in the attic, when I came across a box of videotapes that had somehow got recorded at the event. There was no real attempt to make a good quality recording of the event, but a couple of people had sat with cameras on tripods and captured the proceedings. Intrigued, after a quarter of a century, I took the box down and started to view them. And do you know, they were really quite fascinating. So, I decided to see if we could



maybe knock them into shape and bring out a 25th Anniversary edition.

I contacted as many people as I could who had taken part, after all this time, and all the ones I managed to contact said, yes, get them out. I started digitising the videotapes around October time, round about 25 years after they were made. Luckily, they were shot with domestic home cameras, but were on Super VHS, slightly better quality than ordinary VHS, and they had stood up against time rather well. After months of struggling with picture, and particularly with the poor quality of the sound, we have managed to enhance the original recordings and make decent quality DVDs. They are not super-duper quality, as you would expect from stuff shot today, but good enough to capture the atmosphere of the 1991 event and reveal the excellent content that weekend encapsulated.

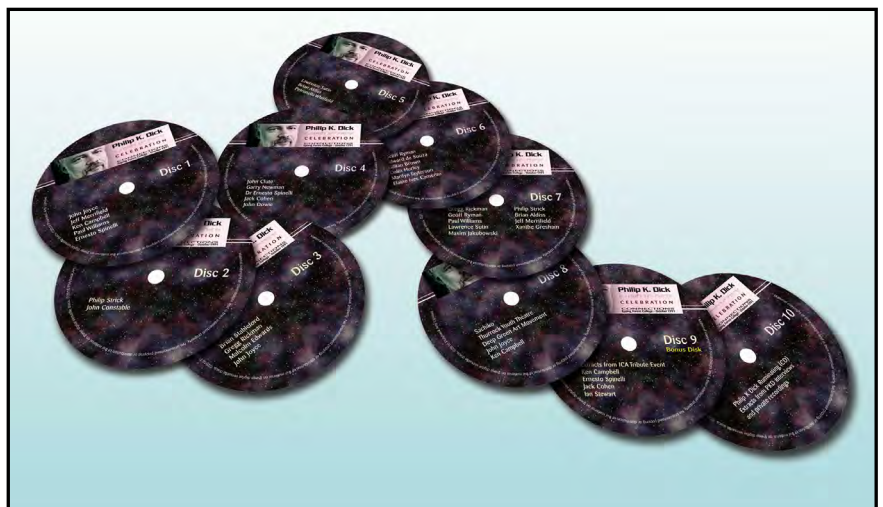


Editing the tapes of the weekend PKD Celebration has been something of a salutary experience. In the time that has passed since, we have lost several key people. First, the film critic and lecturer Philip Strick, who died in 2007, aged 67, and we had all been inspired by his gentle personality and dry wit. In 2008, Ken Campbell died. He was there one minute, the next he was gone, leaving a gaping void in many of our lives. John Joyce followed barely a year later and I lost another good friend. Just four short years after the Dick Celebration, Paul Williams was involved in a bicycle accident, which left him with severe brain trauma. This developed into dementia and for eighteen years he gradually declined, passing away in 2013. A

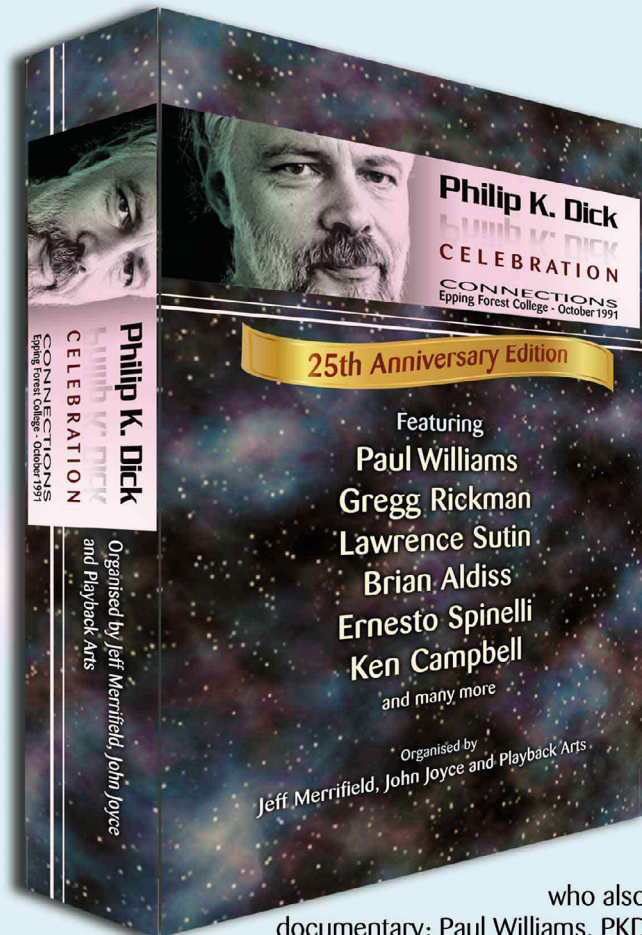
truly great man, much missed, and the guardian angel of our PKD event. Working on these tapes brought all these great people back to me and I have dedicated the Box Set to each and all of them.

I came away from that PKD Celebration weekend with as many of Dick's books as I could carry and a passion for observing Dickian influences in movies I have watched since that time. Ken Campbell took the idea of enantiodromia, as explored by Dick in the Exegesis, and before that by Heraclitus and by Carl Gustav Jung, and he created a form of method acting, The Enantiodromic Approach to Drama, a 'nice little earner' he said, where actors looked at their faces on both sides of a mirror. You know, where you look in the corner of a shop window and you see the images of half of you reflected. You can raise one leg and you raise both, it appears. If you put a mirror up at right-angles in the middle of the face, you get the same half of your face reflected. Thus, you have two faces in the one. Ken called one of his 'Elsie, the timid housewife' and the other half was 'The Spanking Squire'. You set these two facial characters against each other and you are into Enantiodromic Acting. His next one-man show was called Pigsport (another Dickian concept) and it performed to rave reviews at the Royal National Theatre and elsewhere.

Boxed set? you ask. Well yes, the tapes of 1991 have been turned into the 25th Anniversary Edition of the Philip K Dick Celebration. They are released as a nine-DVD box set with added bonus CD. The package also includes a miniaturised facsimile of the original celebration programme. And where can one buy this set of recordings of such a memorable event? Where can one partake of this little bit of magic? They can be bought on line from one site only: [www.playbackarts.co.uk](http://www.playbackarts.co.uk)



## The 25th Anniversary Edition of recordings made of The 1991 Philip K Dick Celebration in Essex UK



Nine DVDs of sessions from the event and a bonus CD. Also includes a miniaturised facsimile of the event programme. Those featured at the event included Ernesto Spinelli, who delivered an authoritative paper and who also worked on the *A Day in the Afterlife* documentary; Paul Williams, PKD's biographer and Literary Executive;

Philip Strick, major authority on Science Fiction films; two other Dick biographers, Gregg Rickman and Lawrence Sutin, who was at that time in the early stages of editing Dick's *Exegesis*; Brian Aldiss, prominent Science Fiction author, who wrote a special piece for the festival entitled *Kindred Blood in Kensington Gore*; actors John Joyce, who delivered his version of Dick's Metz Speech, and John Constable who took us through *A Scanner Darkly* in an almost autobiographical way; John Dowie performing his own play *Take Them to the Garden*; Geoff Ryman and a company of actors taking us through a rehearsed reading of *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* adaptation; and Ken Campbell, who was a superb master of ceremonies.

Not the best quality one might expect today, videoed just to keep a record on domestic equipment, but digitised and cleaned up to a reasonable technical standard. However, the content is of an impeccable standard, a record of a unique and vibrant weekend, with lots of relevant discussion, including a superb session where people spoke for or against the before 1974 books or the after ones. This was Valis brought to life.

This unique set can **only** be obtained from [www.playbackarts.co.uk](http://www.playbackarts.co.uk) at the very special price of just £20.99 (\$25) + postage (UK and worldwide rates)  
Full details and payment methods on the website.



## Re-reading Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

by A.O. West

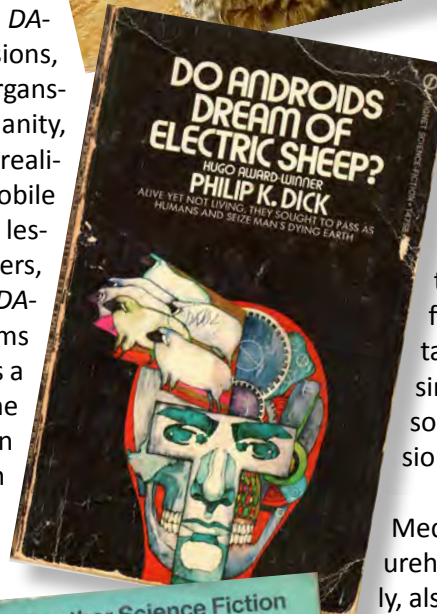
Technology, media, social/political commentary, and the “man-thing” relationship are all common themes of Philip K. Dick’s classic science fiction novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (*DADOES*). Connecting these threads are the philosophical questions: what is human and what is real. In *DADOES*, Dick points readers to recognize the ease of accepting the use of artificial (technology) and (augmented) reality without thought of consequence. Media and technology - and their representations in *DADOES*, including empathy boxes, televisions, radios, androids, and Penfield Mood Organ - act as agents of peril by controlling humanity, isolating individuals, and creating false realities. Re-reading this novel in today’s mobile web-driven world, it is easy to see the lessons Dick points out to us, his future readers, about how we can apply the moral of *DADOES* to our mobile social media platforms and the devices we “live” on, for PKD was a man ahead of his time, living through the cold war and ever-expanding reliance on technology that continues into our own future.

While Dick never held an iPhone or Android device, with their sleek allure and instant satisfaction that fits in the comfort of a hand, he did envision in *DADOES* what he called an empathy box. This powerful piece of tech had the power to connect people with the palms of their hands, allowing them to reach out into cyberspace in search of something more than their own lives held. Dick called what they found at the cyber-end of the empathy box a religion (Mercerism), and today, his vision has become reality. Almost three quarters of American adults use social media regularly according to the

research group Pew, while only a quarter of Americans are regular church-goers. Just like in *DADOES* when Iran turns away from Deckard in their living room to connect with others via the empathy box, people turn away from their loved ones routinely in preference of a pseudo-human connection out there in the ether on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snap Chat or one of a plethora of other platforms.

The media and technology of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* create a disconnect between people, leaving them in a false narcissistic reality. Alf Seegart, in a 2011 piece in *Popular Culture and Philosophy*, explains: “Digital devices, androids, and animal surrogates like Deckard’s synthetic sheep re-spin human beings into ever-new and tantalizing guises, but ultimately offer nothing back to us except more of us.” In a 2014 article in *Science Fiction Studies*, Jill Galvan says of the power of the empathy box and of television over the humans in *Do Androids Dream*: “The pure artifice of the spectacle holds the viewer more greatly than does its content; it is the commodified illusion, the enchantment of unattainability, that piques the viewer’s desire.” The same can now be said of mobile social media, the current electronic obsession of humanity.

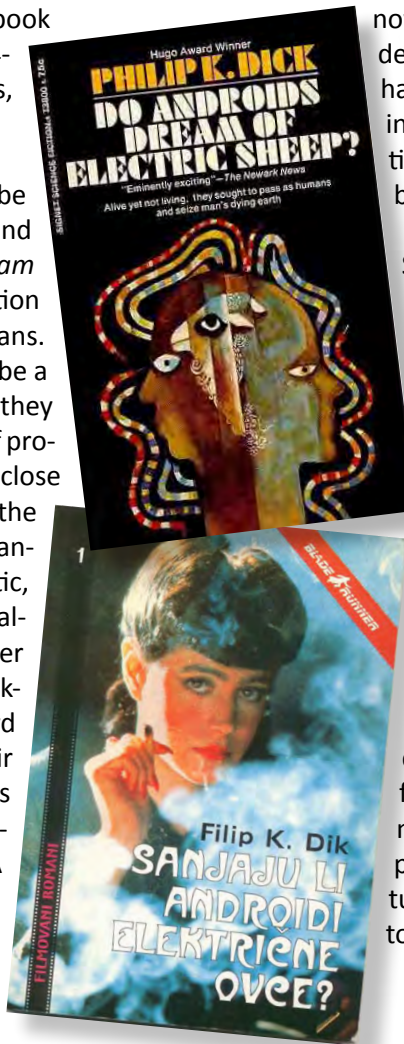
Media technologies and their *DADOES* figureheads, Wilber Mercer and Buster Friendly, also play a role in subjugating and isolating the humans of *Do Androids Dream*. People are turned into sheep who follow without question as they obsessively watch and listen to Mercer and Friendly; while androids, free of interest in media, are able to think for themselves. Android media host Friendly uncovers and reveals that Mercerism is not real. Dick juxtaposes the false-being’s ability to see through the illusion of Mercerism with that of the human listener/viewer’s lack of ability to comprehend that the religion their society is now built on is non-authentic. Mercerism becomes not only a lie spread by a controlling power forced onto society via empathy boxes but also a “mechanized substitute for real human contact,” as





Douglas A. Mackey puts it in his 1988 book on PKD. The same can still be said for 24-hour television choices, radio, podcasts, blogs, and social media.

Today's mobile social media devices can be seen as reflection of both the android and the empathy box in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*. They are the reflection of humans and the connection of humans. What the devices bring people may not be a physical reality (yet), but it is the reality they make for themselves, just as Dick himself professed and has Deckard realize by the close of the novel. As Deckard searches for the truth about his morality, the rights of androids, what is right, and what is authentic, he finds he must accept things at face value. He must make his own reality. "Mercer isn't fake... Unless reality is a fake," Deckard reasons. This thought brings Deckard to accept that "electric things have their lives, too." The point of this thought is that life goes on, no matter the authenticity of the reality you find yourself in. A person's life, his reality is what he makes it. This realization leads to Deckard's "long deserved peace" on the penultimate page of the novel. Rick can sleep



now, without the technology (the mood organ device) to augment his existence, because he has accepted his reality. He now feels genuine in a way that he couldn't before this realization, so he can function emotionally, unaided by media or technology.

Science fiction, as a genre, seeks "to define the status of man in terms of rational science" with a "philosophical dimension" that "could question earlier moral values by showing alternatives to them," says Andrew Butler in his 2005 book examining the PKD's work. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* explores what technology really is, what it means to humans and to the effort of being human, the need to connect via technology, and even how the humans themselves become products of their technological use. The questions Dick raises about media, technology and society can be directly applied to a current media force – that of mobile social media. Dick is not saying media and technology are the problem, but that they reveal the true nature of humanity. He is holding up a mirror to what we are and who we might become.

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## “A PKD memoir?”

Patrick Clark

The internet is vast and littered with stuff you pretty much have to trip over to find. Case in point, this blog posting by Brian Nation. I’m not even sure how I found this. It makes for interesting reading though so I thought I would include it in this issue. The original, with some hyperlinks and some photos of Phil’s autograph, can be found at <http://boppin.com/1995/04/philip-k-dick.html>

### Philip K. Dick

By Brian Nation

*“Reality is anything which, once you stop believing in it, doesn’t go away.” -P.K.Dick*

For about the ten years between 1965 and 1975 I read almost nothing but science fiction. In 1966 Leonard Maler gave me a copy of *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* and my reaction to the book is as hard to describe as the work itself. I was stunned. I read it three or four times over the next few years and possibly two or three other of Dick’s books as well in that time. All my reading came from second-hand book stores and the authors I generally scanned the bins for were Sturgeon, Van Vogt, Sheekley, Clarke, et al, and suddenly, sometime in 1972 I think, Dick’s books began popping up everywhere. Within months I amassed, and read, close to twenty or twenty-five of Dick’s novels and story collections. It seemed strange that after their scarcity I’d find at least one of his books with every trip to the bookshops. Then one day, Petur Sigmundson’s brother Eric, a student at the University of British Columbia told me that Dick was in town for the Science Fiction Convention being held on campus.

Also around this time I was hanging out with Bob Ness who did a radio show called *Street Theatre* on CKLG-FM. These were the last days of so-called “underground FM” when Bob had free rein to unleash his wild imagination on the airwaves. We did a number of shows together where we’d take his Uher out in the Vancouver night and record

our adventures for broadcast the next morning. I called Bob, to whom I’d be raving about Dick for the last few months, and told him he was in town. “You’ve got to get him on the show.”

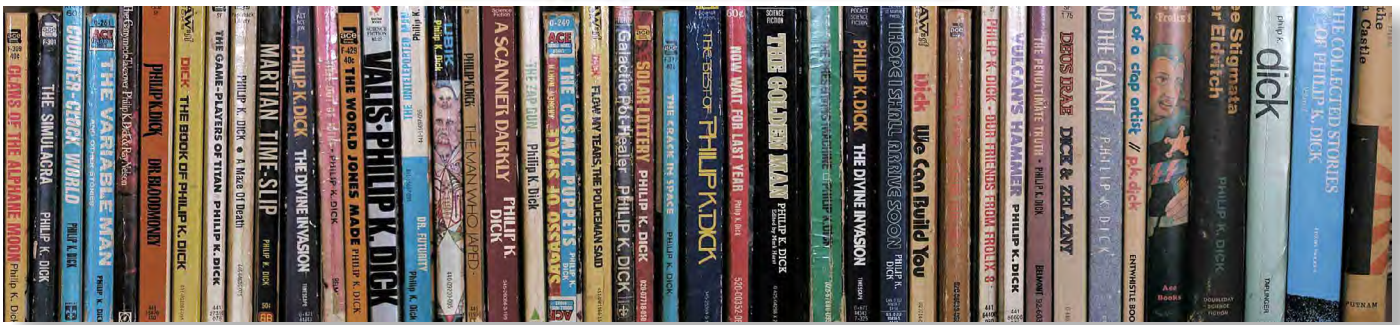
A couple of mornings later Bob called. He was on the air. “Dick’s here. Come on down.” I turned on the radio and there he was, yakking with Bob. I gulped my coffee, got dressed and headed down to the studio. In all, Dick was on the show for three hours talking about any number of things, most of which I’ve forgotten except that we agreed that Heinlein, whose *Stranger in a Strange Land* was still a hot seller, was basically a right-wing hack.

Writers, musicians, athletes, etc., are always on the make and, unlike us lesser mortals, automatically succeed with women. Dick was no different. A couple of girls were also in the studio that day and he offered one a ride back up to S.F.U. where she had to make a class. Dick had no car so I volunteered to drive them up. We crammed into the front seat of my VW bus and rattled and shook up Burnaby Mountain and then the two of us rattled and shook

back on down again. At the time I was working on a video project and we discussed the fledgling medium. Dick was very interested so I invited him over to my place the next evening to “fool around” with the equipment and see what happens. I had no idea what we’d do.

**“A couple of mornings later Bob called. He was on the air. ‘Dick’s here. Come on down.’”**

Word got out and a couple of dozen people showed up the next night. I hadn’t planned on a party and I turned them all away but they all came back. So we had a party. I got Dick to just expound on whatever ideas were on his mind at the time and video-taped him and the various other activities going on. Unfortunately, this video deal I was involved with was basically a scam to get grant money, and involved phony receipts and kickbacks. I was to return my paycheck to the organizers, in exchange for which I’d be able to get on the dole when the project ended. But I kept the money and actually worked on a couple of things. The idea was you’d check out the machines and some tape and then return them when you were through. I didn’t realize that Ralph and the guys weren’t buying tapes, pocketing the money instead, and re-using the same tapes so, sadly, my Dick tape is gone. Among the things I remember him talking about were his days in the classical music record store and how he’d written as many straight novels as Science Fic-



tion, but couldn't get them published.

He soon got involved with X-Kalay, a rehab house for people with drug problems and I only saw him a couple of more times. Once he came by with another chick he was going after. He'd been talking her up and she didn't believe he was a famous author. So he brought her by my place because he'd seen my vast collection of his books. He wanted a few for her to read so I agreed to let him have the four he picked if he'd sign four others. Of course, he'd have gladly signed them all and had I thought about how they'd be worth something someday I'd have asked him to do that.

A few months later he split for California. I wrote him a few times but never got any replies. However, he kept writing these psycho-paranoiac letters to Bob Ness about the FBI, etc. This has all been documented but I never checked it out so don't know how based in "reality" his paranoia really was. I was annoyed that Bob got these letters because he hadn't read any of Dick's books and never answered his letters. I was the big fan and I wrote to him a few times. Years earlier, when Dick was a sadly underrated and neglected sci-fi "hack" Leonard Maler and I had predicted that he'd be discovered one day and would probably have a huge cult following. We decided to get in on the ground floor by writing a critical study of his work which, by the way, I realize we were completely unqualified to do. But if Dick had stayed in touch I could maybe have come up with *something*.

The Library of America, "dedicated to publishing, and keeping in print, authoritative editions of America's best and most significant writing" has put out their deluxe Dick volume. The current New Yorker has a review of the book by Adam Gopnick.

My prediction of forty years ago that Dick would become the object of a cult of readers and that eventually mainstream culture mavens would have no choice but to ac-

knowledge his sur-genius has long since come to pass. Witness the number of Hollywood renditions of his work, pretty much all bogus, with the possible exception of *Blade Runner* which although as inaccurate as the others is at least true to the spirit of Dick's insane but entirely on-the-money vision of things as they really are, or might be. During the brief time that I knew Dick in the early seventies I could have obtained movie rights for all his novels in exchange for some women's phone numbers but, alas, it was one of many missed opportunities in my life.

Above is a photo of my shelf of Dick novels. (It's probably not all of them because I have a habit of misplacing things. But it's most of them and I'm guessing that the collection would be worth about a hundred grand now except that they were all read many, many times and are therefore in pretty bad shape. As a matter of fact I know some are missing because where's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* And of four autographed copies (add another million to the value of each of those) I can only find three.

**"Dick knocked  
on my door  
one night."**

How these came to be signed is slightly amusing. Dick knocked on my door one night. He was with a very attractive young woman who it turns out he'd just met in a bar. She wouldn't believe he was a published and somewhat famous author. He'd seen my collection of his books so brought her over to see them and borrow a few she could read. I said yeah sure, and he chose four. (It would be interesting to know which four but that was too long ago.) I said, you can have those four if you sign four others. I should have had him sign them all. Of course there were too many but while he was busy signing books I could have made out with his date.

As a matter of fact, there are some letters to Bob Ness in the Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick volumes for 1972-73 and 1974. None of them can be described as "psycho-paranoiac letters about the FBI, etc." It's possible, of course, that there are other letters to Ness that we do not possess that may talk about the FBI. We'd love to see



them if they exist. The letters we do have are sometimes somewhat silly as Phil pretends to rave but they are just Phil being Phil. They are mostly playful missives about Tessa, visiting Canada, his health issues as well as general news about his books being published and interviews taking place. Far from “never answering” Phil’s letters, all but one seems to be in reply to letters Phil received from Ness. And there are some quite funny parts as when he writes on August 31, 1973 about A SCANNER DARKLY:

Nobody knew it at the time (including me) but my entire time in the dope subculture was actually for the purpose of gathering material for this novel. I even had to (ugh) partake of dope to get the true sense of it, and I must say that was awful (heh-heh).

Concerning a return visit to Vancouver written on April 25, 1973, Phil says he and Tessa will fly there.

Our cat Pinky will follow later, disguised as a box of dope inasmuch as it is not legal to ship cats across the border. If he miaows during the customs check I intend to say, “There’s a funny story that goes with that dope,” and hope that I can think of one then because I can’t right now.

The letter is signed:

Philip K. Dick  
Tessa B. Dick  
Pinky, a lid of cat

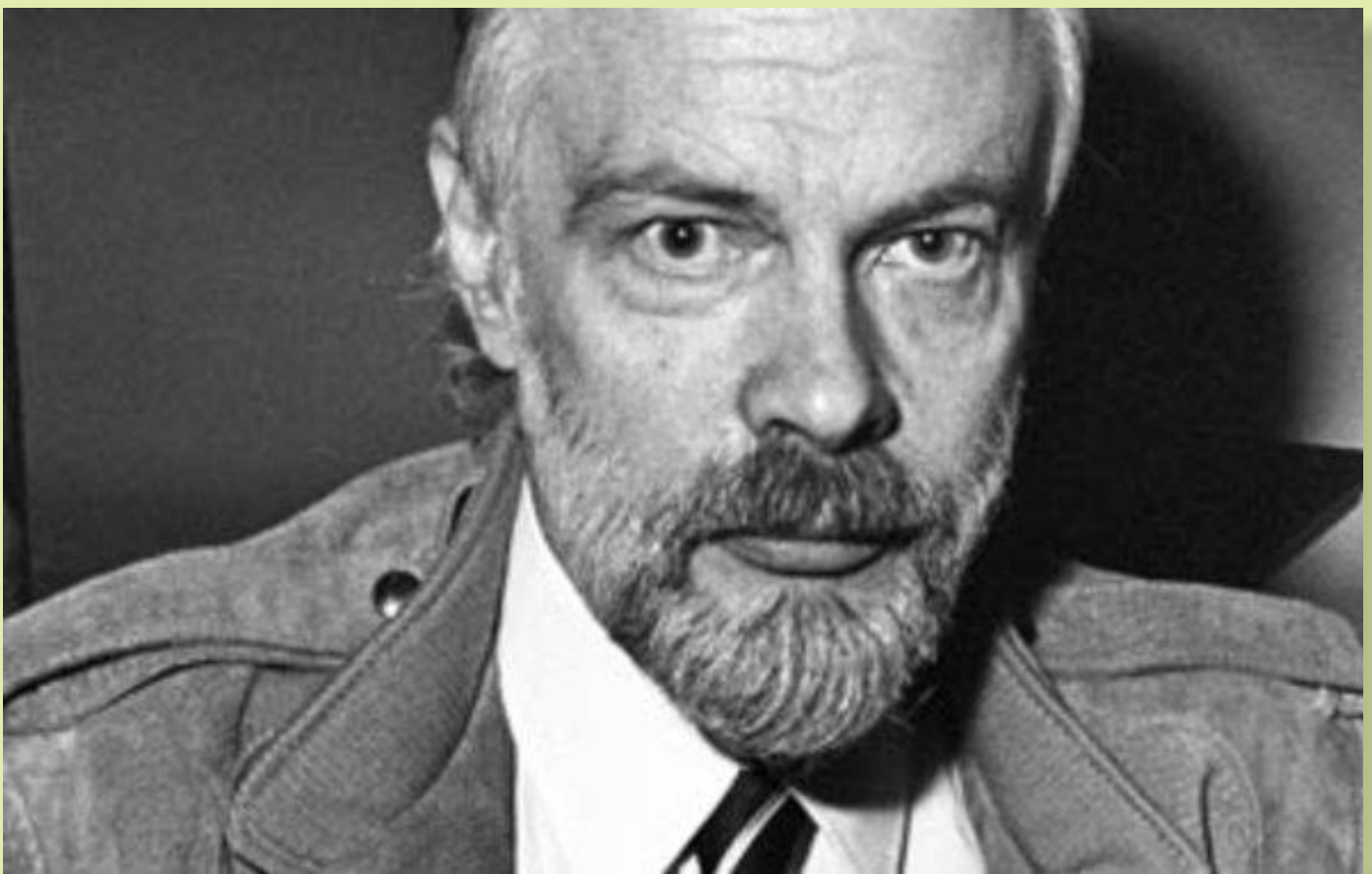


Photo of Phil by the great Kim Gottlieb-Walker 1982  
(check out her wonderful website here <http://www.lenswoman.com/> )

## Interview with this issue's cover artist, Andu T Soare

by Nick Buchanan

**Nick:** Thank you for letting us print your fabulous image of Philip K Dick. Can you remember when you first read him and which book it was?

**Andu:** Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity of being part of this fan magazine. My brother was a big sci-fi fan and he had whole rafters of bookshelves of Sci-fi. It would be my delight to randomly pick one out and start reading it. One day an interesting title came across my eyes and I picked it out... It was **The Man in the High Castle**.

**Nick:** I know that **VALIS** and **Divine Invasion** are very special to you - can you explain why?

**Andu:** I could go on for ages about both **VALIS** and **The Divine Invasion**, but I think I care so much about them because they led me to meet Tessa B. Dick and concurrently to having this portrait I made of him, for her, not only published in this magazine, but also as part of the Philip K. Dick Festival which is coming to Ft. Morgan, Colorado this March 3rd - 4th. I think Phil's books are prophetic in nature and they can be very much use to someone trying to think outside of the box and (as he said) escape The Black Iron Prison. These two books in particular I felt dealt with issues that I was going through and it was a relief to see that I wasn't the only one experiencing unexplainable events that were driving me quite mad. Having confirmation of someone not only describing the same sort of events I came across but actually explaining them helped a lot and eased my soul. All I can say is thank God for Philip, he saved me so many times when I was feeling lost and confused.

**Nick:** Could you tell us something about yourself (your age, background, where you live, job, interests, etc.)?

**Andu:** I am illustrator, graphic designer and animator. I'm 32 years old. I come from Romania and have been living in New York City for almost 12 years. I'm currently working as a freelancer. My dream is to become a movie director both in film and animation, and would love to adapt some of Philip's books. I actually plan to make a short film based on one of his stories that is in the Public Domain.

**Nick:** And if people wanted to contact you where can they get hold of you?

**Andu:** I will have a kickstarter page at some point for a Philip K Dick related project but until then, If people want to contact me you can find me on instagram: @andut.soare and facebook at: andut.soare. I make custom digital portraits if anyone is interested, just like I did for Phil.

**Nick:** Is there anything else you would like to say to Phil's fans?

**Andu:** Make sure to pick up copies of Tessa B. Dick's works to get a full picture of what Philip was like. She has a short story that talks about what it was like to hang out

every day at Philip's house, it moved me to tears. [https://www.amazon.com/Tessa-B.-Dick/e/B002BMDCBE/ref=sr\\_ntt\\_srch\\_lnk\\_2?qid=1484337237&sr=8-2](https://www.amazon.com/Tessa-B.-Dick/e/B002BMDCBE/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_2?qid=1484337237&sr=8-2)

**Nick:** Thank you Andu for letting us reproduce your impressive portrait of Phil and for taking the time to talk with us.

**Andu:** Thank you very much, I feel as I said, truly honored to be part of anything related to Phil he is my favorite author of all time and it just shows when you create something out of love you can end up in a museum show and in a magazine. So thanks a lot to you and to Tessa B. Dick as well.

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## “Another treasure trove gone forever”

Patrick Clark

First read this:

**Dick, Philip K.**

*A SIGNIFICANT ARCHIVE OF CORRESPONDENCE AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY RELATED TO THE NOVELS A SCANNER DARKLY, UBIK AND THE AUTHOR'S RECURRENT THEME OF ALTERNATE REALITIES*

8 typed letters signed (mostly “Phil”) totaling in 24 pages (8.5 x 11 in; 328 x 215 mm) together with 14 pages undated autobiographical essay and over 30 pages of additional various material, ca. April 27, 1977 to February 9, 1978. Housed in a loose-leaf binder, three-hole punches to all pages; some toning. Sotheby's auction: 02 December 2014

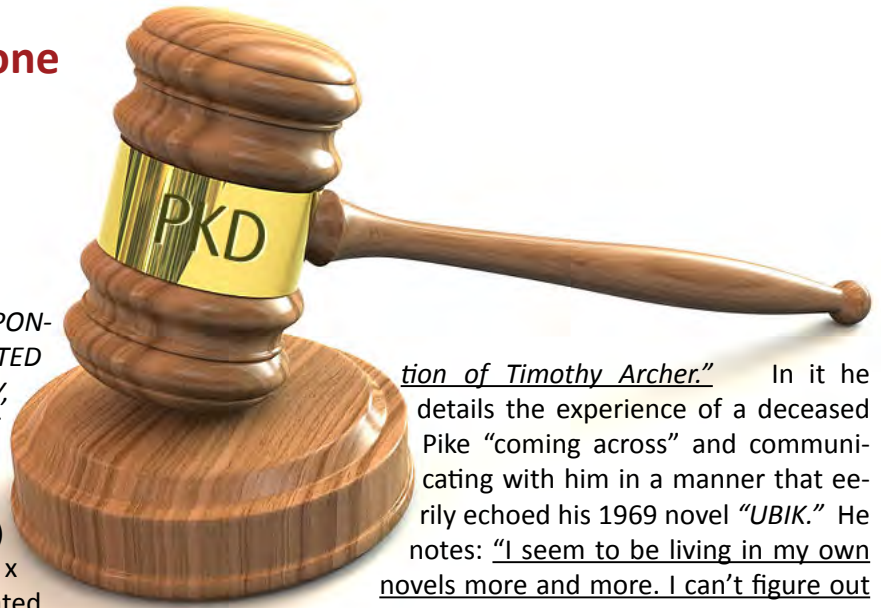
Estimate 15,000 — 20,000 USD

**[LOT SOLD. 18,750 USD (Hammer Price with Buyer's Premium)]**

### CATALOGUE NOTE

**Dick on companionship, philosophy, and his evolving cosmology.** The letters to Simpson coincides with the publication of *A Scanner Darkly*, and includes discussion of the novel's success and the author's struggle to transcend the science fiction genre. Also included is an in-depth discussion of Dick's infamous “golden fish” incident in 1974. Following a dentist visit and a dose of sodium pentothal, the author experienced a series of profound spiritual revelations that he spent the rest of his life to trying to unravel, producing thousands of pages of philosophical writing, eventually published posthumously as “The Exegesis of Philip K. Dick.” The romantic content as it pertains to his relationship with Simpson remains characteristically Dickian in its verbose and metaphysical execution.

The autobiographical essay included herein explores a perplexing incident in the author's life relating to Dick's friend Bishop James Pike, the central inspiration for Dick's final novel “The Transmigra-



tion of Timothy Archer.” In it he details the experience of a deceased Pike “coming across” and communicating with him in a manner that eerily echoed his 1969 novel “*UBIK*.” He notes: “I seem to be living in my own novels more and more. I can't figure out why. Am I losing touch with reality?”

Dick relates how Pike's otherworldly influence has affected a series of changes in his own personality and physiology: he opts for wine instead of beer, suddenly possesses a deep knowledge of ancient religion, and begins to look differently and act with a more sophisticated air. “There is no known physiological process which could account for such fundamental changes in my character [...] I have been transformed.” In grappling with these experiences, he explores a number of theories including time-travel, and a trauma induced secondary personality (echoing the split personality of the narcotics agent in *A Scanner Darkly* who begins to put a new drug dealer under surveillance, not realizing that he is actually investigating himself).

Additional material includes a typescript synopsis of an unwritten novel titled *Wink-Out!* and a draft of the short story, “*The Day Mr. Computer Fell Out Of Its Tree*” written during the summer of 1977 and later published in *The Collected Stories* (1987). Also included are an array of carbon copy letters addressed to/from contemporaries such as author Robert Silverberg and other friends and associates of the couple.

### Highlights include:

**7 May, 1977:** In the history books there are the names of good men and the names of bad men, and the men who succeeded and the men who tried and lost, those who miscalculated. But the names

of those who did not act do not appear; they do not even qualify as failures; historically speaking they never even were in the first place; they were only figments. Only when a man chooses to act does he become real; failing does not abolish that, although it makes for tragedy. There is not even tragedy in the lives of those who did not act; there was no life in the first place, nothing there to fail.

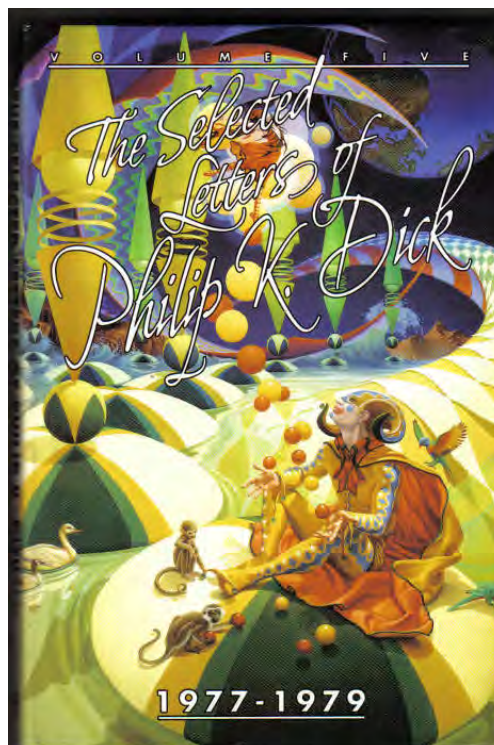
[no date]: What is so good about both of us is that although we each have failed we each are willing to take aim again, and perhaps (which is really extraordinary) at an even finer, more difficult target -- a better, even ultimate target, just as the swan's song is his ultimate song. The swan dies trying, and also succeeding; his final song is not a failure but a triumph. All things die, but the swan dies in beauty as he lived in beauty [...] If we finally fail we will have succeeded up until then.

20 May, 1977: Back during the very bad period of my life, from 1964 to 1972, I had a sense that everything had a purpose and an outcome. It was all necessary. However crazy and fucked up I got I managed to retain that sense of impending meaning [...] Meanwhile I was shaping my cosmology. When it finally took form in the March of 1974, based on my mystical revelations I understood poetically that two opposing forces, powers, sides or entities contended in our world, using it as a gameboard or battlefield. Intellectually I could then identify the two absolute forces with the two forces I had formerly seen as mundane: my foe, which became identified with the Sons of Darkness, and my friends, the Sons of Light... To use the Zoroaster's terms. I had been part of a cosmic struggle acted out on our earth. It was a struggle taking place in the arena of human history.

20 May, 1977: I began in 1974 to develop my exegesis: my account of my mystical revelation and

an account of the cosmology disclosed to me. This carried through to March of 1977, by which point although without a family (i.e. without my female counterpart) I did at least have a new cosmology, one I could be proud of and fairly secure about -- as to it's accuracy, I mean [...] I was free to live my life in safety, but what sort of life? A mental life only.

20 May, 1977: What you mean to me is that we not only have a benign universe, benign in structure, designed by a benign creator -- it means this: that just as you call yourself a gift [to] me, or the gift - you are for me not only the emotional matrix of meaning, you having sought me out, I am able to find verification of everything emanating from my mind in the intellectual, conceptual sphere; you make intellectual sense out of my entire fucking lifetime of experiences.



29 October, 1977: I am searching for the essence of man and I am convinced that a superior being has created and governs him. But, at this point, the concept of God no longer satisfies me, I find him (it) non-communicative. This is why I am searching for a new formulations of this entity.

9 February 1978: I wrote Susan Son-tag again; she won the National Critics Book Award for criticism, and I wanted to say something to her but I couldn't think what; the article in the L.A. Times confirmed what I already knew, that she is "critically ill." She was able to give a speech, and said the award, the first she had ever won, "gave her new hope." She is so lovely a person; she did so much for me, a total stranger.

I tripped over this doing some research. The first I've heard of this collection and the auction. Just when you think that you have all the PKD you can handle, something like this pops up.

The 8 letters are to Joan Simpson and I believe we have all of them in *Selected Letters 5: 1977-79*. In fact, there are ten letters to Joan Simpson in that volume, though one



was possibly never sent. What portions are printed in the Sotheby prospectus overlaps the published version with the exception of a letter dated October 29, 1977, which in Underwood Miller is quite brief but according to Sotheby includes the following:

**29 October, 1977:** I am searching for the essence of man and I am convinced that a superior being has created and governs him. But, at this point, the concept of God no longer satisfies me, I find him (it) non-communicative. This is why I am searching for a new formulations of this entity. \*

This seems to me to be a significant statement on Phil's part and I wondered why it was excluded from the Selected Letters. I know the publication of the letters was fraught with problems. Perhaps it was a simple mishap at the publishers. We are hardly in the dark about Phil's (continuously changing) views on this matter of God. Still, it made me wonder if he had even more to say in that October 29 letter.

Even more significant than the letters are, to me, the "14 pages [of an] undated autobiographical essay and over 30 pages of additional various material." Then there is this: "Also included are an array of carbon copy letters addressed to/from contemporaries such as author Robert Silverberg and other friends and associates of the couple." Probably these are Phil's carbons, which means they were not among his papers at his death and so not available when Underwood Miller began its project. Selected Letters does have a Robert Silverberg letter written July 31, 1977\*\* and a second brief one dated Jan. 9, 1978 asking Silverberg to consider publishing K.W. Jeter's Dr. Adder. Mostly likely the Sotheby letter or letters are different. Why did Phil give them to Joan anyway? In a postscript to his Oct. 30, 1977 letter to her Phil says, "Pages of notes I read to you previously enclosed. Don't show it around; it's too cryptic. Unless you think it'd do any good." What does that mean?

That autobiographical material "related to the novels

Scanners Darkly, Ubik and the author's recurrent theme of alternate realities" plus Bishop Pike...it breaks my heart that it will vanish into some private collection.

Especially frustrating for me is "a typescript synopsis of an unwritten novel titled *Wink-Out!*". I've been hunting for that synopsis for years. Ages ago I got an email suggesting trading copies of (back in those days) obscure philipkdickiana (is that a real word). My correspondent said he had a two-page outline for an unwritten story by Phil called "*White Out*" that he found stuck in a volume at a used bookstore. I emailed back but received no reply. A little later I received an email from the man's son telling me that his father had passed away. I didn't feel like I should press him about his father's papers so the matter ended. But I always wondered about "*White Out*" – which is likely "*Wink-Out!*" I suppose. We will never know now. The Sotheby collection sold for nearly \$19,000. I imagine the papers will be broken up and sold off to other private collectors, never to be seen.

Maybe we have enough on Phil in our possession and, fascinating as this Sotheby collection might be, we don't need it. Good God, the novels and short stories and all the letters and essays and the Exegesis is already more than a human being can absorb. And yet, there is this tantalizing *more* out there. I suspect, too, there are other collections in private hands.

***"But, at this point, the concept of God no longer satisfies me, I find him (it) non-communicative."***

A March 7, 1977 letter from Phil notes an "original rough draft of *A SCANNER DARKLY* written in 1973 which differs enormously

from later versions". It was listed on a buyer's prospective "for the *A SCANNER DARKLY* archive". I wonder what happened to that.

\*Phil noted in a letter to Eugene Warren, October 2, 1977, that an article in a local Metz newspaper after the conference there was entitled "For Philip K. Dick the concept of God is not sufficient!"

\*\*The July 31st letter refers to a letter Silverberg apparently sent to Joan Simpson that she read over the phone to Phil.

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## Telepathy and Murder

(adapted from a talk given at the Fort Morgan, Colorado Library in preparation for the upcoming Philip K. Dick Festival, March 3rd - 4th 2017) – Lord RC

Today, just for the fun of it, I want to talk about two things in science fiction: telepathy and murder.

Now this is only a small aspect of the field of science fiction and there are not a lot of stories containing both telepathy and murder. In some science fiction stories psionic powers are used to kill people, things, aliens, but this is more like telekinesis. By telepathy I mean the ability to read the minds of others.

The question then becomes how can someone commit murder when someone else can read their mind and know their intention?

Think about it. You may want to murder your boss, say, and assume his powerful position and no one must find out you done it. But... the cops have a team of telepaths who can quickly scan everybody close to such a foolish action as murder and immediately identify the culprit – you.

So, what do you do?

One answer is told in the story *THE DEMOLISHED MAN* by Alfred Bester and published in a Hugo Award winning edition in 1953. In this story the police do have a telepathic team but the protagonist – Ben Reich – is determined to murder his business rival anyway. He does it and all the police find is a dead body and a puddle of water.

How did Ben Reich do it and how did he hide the fact? Well, he did it by shooting the man with a bullet made of water shot from an antique gun. The shock killed him and of the bullet only a small puddle of water remained. How he hid the fact was by bribing a powerful Class 1 telepath to run interference for him.

In the futuristic society of *THE DEMOLISHED MAN* telepathic police are part of the way of life. Everyone deals with it in the same way: they keep their thoughts clean, disobey no laws, and their thinking occurs at the surface of their minds, and to the police telepaths this is all as static, they've got better things to do than read the minds of every Joe Shmoe in the world. But to be extra sure that the police cannot read his mind Ben Reich uses a little trick to mask all his thoughts. He hums internal mantras that go round and round in his head and which form a shield to his deeper thinking. Mantras like one he used: *"Eight, sir, seven, sir, six, sir, five, sir, four, sir, three, sir, two, sir, one. Tensor, said the tensor, tensor said the tensor, tension apprehension and dissension have begun. Tensor, said the tensor..."* and so on ad infinitum. This trick combined with

his Class 1 telepathic guard works up to a point. But the police inspector, a Class 1 telepath himself, knows Reich is guilty and eventually breaches Reich's defenses and busts him for murder.

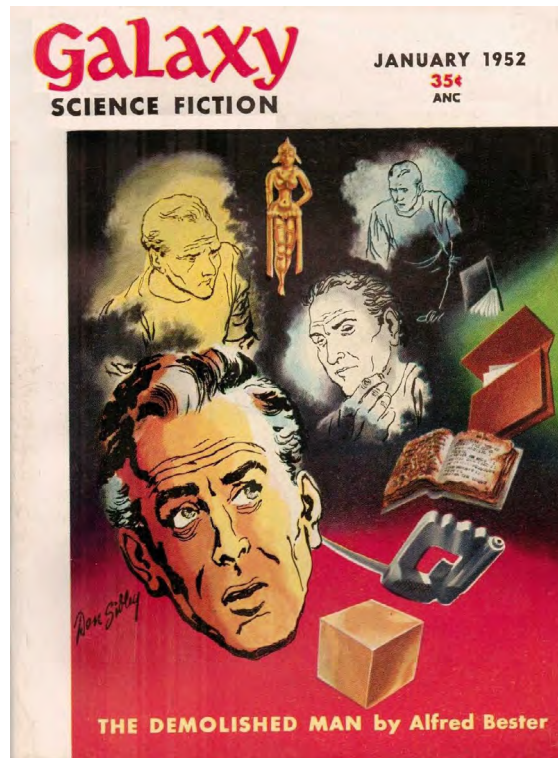
This story by Alfred Bester is considered a landmark in the science fiction field. It's a classic of the Golden Age of the 1950s. Philip K. Dick probably read it first when it was serialized in the sf magazine *Galaxy* in 1952.

But what I want to point out here is that *THE DEMOLISHED MAN* is a murder mystery with the science fictional twist of telepathy added in. You have the murder, the clues, the suspects, the interrogations and the solution. In many ways it is a standard detective mystery, a police procedural, I think they call

it. Agatha Christie could have written it.

Which leads us to Philip K. Dick's first novel, titled *SOLAR LOTTERY*, which he wrote in 1954.

By 1954 Dick had been publishing short stories since 1952 in many of the popular science fiction magazines of the time. In two years he had sold over 70 short stories. But each sale was, at most, about \$50 – he got paid a penny or two cents per word and the magazine editors told him



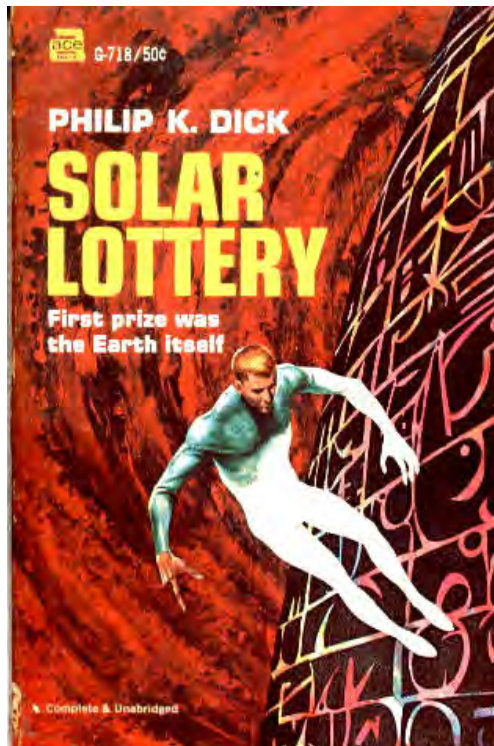


how many words to write.

So, although he was happy to be published in the magazines he realized that it was a treadmill and although he was writing short stories as fast as he could, he could not write enough to make any substantial income. He decided to write a science fiction novel.

As a writer of science fiction, PKD was, of course, also a reader of it. He read the short stories in the magazines and the novels by writers like Isaac Asimov, Robert Heinlein and, the one who had the most direct influence on his writing SOLAR LOTTERY – A.E. van Vogt.

A.E. van Vogt was a generation older than Dick and he had been publishing science fiction stories since before World War 2. He's a good writer and even today his novels are a wild read. The van Vogt novel that sparked Philip K. Dick into writing SOLAR LOTTERY was titled THE WORLD OF NULL-A. I'll describe it briefly:



The hero of the story, Gilbert Gosseyn, dies a series of deaths only to awaken in a different body each time. He doesn't know what's going on but he wants to find out. All kinds of crazy things happen at breakneck speed and in the end Gosseyn still doesn't know what is going on. van Vogt went on to write a couple of sequels to this novel and even after the third one Gilbert Gosseyn still has little clue.

But what caught the general readers' attention – and that of Philip K. Dick – was that van Vogt had used a novel scientific principle to underlie his story. That of General Semantics. This was a linguistic theory founded by Arthur Korzybski in the 1930s. I'm not sure if it is still there but at one time there was an Institute of General Semantics in Chicago.

In the hands of van Vogt this became a philosophy of non-Aristotelian logic. What this means is that, unlike normal Aristotelian logic, null-A logic does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that  $2 + 2 = 4$ . Other factors are involved.

The readers of THE WORLD OF NULL-A were just as puzzled by this novel as its hero. But they knew something

was going on. As Philip K. Dick himself said:

*A point came when I began to feel that science fiction was very important. van Vogt's THE WORLD OF NULL-A – there was something about that which absolutely fascinated me. It had a mysterious quality, it alluded to things unseen, there were puzzles presented which were never adequately explained. I found in it a numinous quality; I began to get an idea of a mysterious quality in the universe which could be dealt with in science fiction. I realise now that what I was sensing was a kind of metaphysical world, an invisible realm of things half seen, essentially what medieval people sensed as the transcendent world, the next world.*

So Philip K. Dick decided to write a "van Vogtian novel". But as he'd also been reading the French realist writers around this time – writers like Flaubert, Maupassant and Victor Hugo – with their complex plots and numerous characters - he decided to do that too.

SOLAR LOTTERY, then, was a complicated novel from the start. From Bester's THE DEMOLISHED MAN he took the idea of a telepathic police corps, from A.E. van Vogt he used a scientific theory like General Semantics – in Dick's case 'Games Theory' and its strategical notions of randomness, to form the logic of the plot. He also turned THE WORLD OF NULL-A on its head, having the assassin in SOLAR LOTTERY not be one mind in many bodies but, instead, being many minds in one body. And from his reading of the French realists he included many characters, most of whom his editor made him toss out. The influence of Isaac Asimov can also be detected.

Now, this novel is complicated, yes, but in no way, is it awful. You can read it today and wonder at Dick's inventiveness - and about our present society, much of which seems to be mirrored in SOLAR LOTTERY.

I'll describe the plot. It has to do with murder and telepathy. But nothing quite like THE DEMOLISHED MAN. In SOLAR LOTTERY there are a lot of things going on.

- The setting is a 9-planet system of Earth, Mars and Venus. Everyone is given a 'power card' that

entitles them to a draw in the Solar Lottery. Anyone can rule the 9-planet system if the infrequent random shake of the lottery bottle pops their power card out the top. But this is a dog-eat-dog world of Big Business feudalism and, as you might guess, the slim chance of anyone winning the solar lottery is made more remote because the big corporations either buy up the 'power cards' at every opportunity or take them as fealty when they employ the owners.

- On the off-chance that someone not owned by the big corporations wins the solar lottery – which only happens once in a blue moon anyway – the society sanctions legalized assassination: the new lucky winner of the lottery can be killed by anyone who wants to go after him or her. But only one assassin is allowed at a time.

- To defend him or herself the new President is under the protection of the Telepathic Corps – an elite presidential guard inhabiting the presidential palace. Being telepathic they can sense an assassin coming a mile off.

- So... the bottle twitches and a new nonentity is popped to the Presidency. Strangely enough, this man has retained possession of his 'power card.' He is the present leader of an obscure religious sect called the Prestonites, which believe the mythical 'tenth planet' lies in the orbit of Venus on the other side of the Sun. They're building a spaceship in secret...

We have then a new President (or 'Quizmaster' in the novel) no one knows much about and a disgruntled ex-president who is the head of a powerful Corporation and who is planning to assassinate the new one. The subplot of the tenth planet known as 'Flame Disc' provides the hope of the dispossessed and unemployed masses for a new frontier and a brighter future.

The two questions to be answered in the novel are: Is the lottery rigged? And how do you assassinate a president protected by a telepathic police corps?

Well, obviously the lottery was rigged and how the Prestonites did it forms the subplot. It so happens that the new Quizmaster – Leon Cartwright – worked all his life as an electronics-type technician on the Bottle itself. Over the years he'd come to know it and had learned how to

rig it. Which he did in his own favor. But the question of assassination is the main plot.

Stop and think about it for a minute. Does the assassin mask his thoughts like in THE DEMOLISHED MAN? Are there alternate means? The ex-Quizmaster, Reese Verrick, cannot send an army as by the rules only a single assassin at a time is allowed and he must do the deed close up and personal. Can Verrick bribe a teep of his own? No, because the nature of telepathy in Dick's novels is different than Bester's. If the Teep Corps wants to teep you then you will be teeped.

How could this assassination be accomplished?

	Bunker		teep corps	
	T	*****	T	
	T	*	*	T
back door	T	=== Q	*	T ← ← Assassin
	T	*	*	T
	T	*****	T	

For an answer we see how PKD melded the ideas of Bester and van Vogt together to come up with a unique solution. From Bester's idea of murder under the gaze of telepaths and from van Vogt's idea of serial lives in different bodies Dick created the serial robotic killer. Add to that another crib from van Vogt, that of Null-A logic transformed into Games Theory and we can see how the police telepaths were defeated.

The assassin, Keith Pellig, is a robot constructed by ex-Quizmaster Verrick strictly for the purpose of assassinating the new Quizmaster. But robotic attacks are illegal, a human must do the job. So Pellig looks, sounds and acts like a human because he – it – is controlled on a random basis by a team of technicians. The strategy of randomization suggested by Games Theory controls the attack. As Herb Moore, the psychotic genius behind the robot assassin, says (Ch.5):

*"Minimax was a brilliant hypothesis. It gave us a rational scientific method to crack any strategy and transform the strategy game into a chance game, where the regular statistical methods of the exact sciences function."*

In effect this strategy nullified the advantages of the police telepathic corps. And all their disadvantages were exposed: they were static, they were in a defensive posture, they were over-confident, they had no Plan B.



Herb Moore goes on to say (Ch.5):

*"The random factor is a function of an overall rational pattern. In the face of random twitches, no one can have a strategy. It forces everybody to adopt a randomized method: best analysis of the statistical possibilities of certain events plus the pessimistic assumption that any plans will be found out in advance. Assuming you are found out in advance frees you of the danger of being discovered. If you act randomly your opponent can find out nothing about you because even you don't know what you're going to do."*

Here's how it was done. The Keith Pellig robot with its 'thumb gun' of fire is controlled by one technician and sent on its way towards the bunker where the new Quizmaster, protected by the Teeps Corps, is holding out. When the robot gets close it is detected by the teeps: they can read the mind of the controlling technician and lock onto it. But then, suddenly, the mind disappears! Gone! The effect on the minds of the telepaths is devastating. The vacuum sucks several of their own minds into madness. But, soon, they pick up the assassin again with a new mind in control. It's getting closer, in the building now, burning a hole with its thumb gun directly towards the secret back-door of the bunker (conveniently installed by previous Quizmaster Verrick for just such an occasion) where in the new Quizmaster is thought to be hiding.

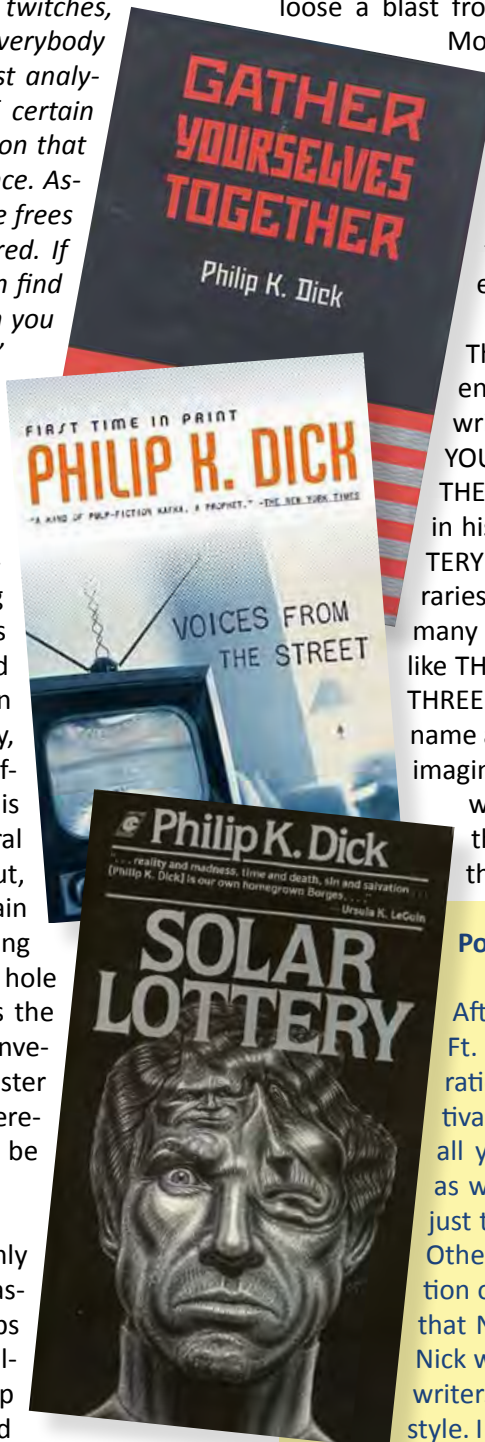
Again another technician is randomly switched into control of the robot assassin Pellig! More of the Teeps Corps minds shriek away! Their leader realizes they are beaten, they cannot stop the assassin. Conventional police and military forces are called in, but it is too late. The assassin is burning down the back door.

Fortunately for the new Quizmaster, the police have long since whisked him off to a secret hidey-hole on the Moon.

The attacking forces discover this soon enough and the Pellig robot – no longer much resembling a man – lets loose a blast from its ass and speeds off towards the Moon.

And from there the story goes fast and furiously to its conclusion. I won't ruin the ending for any of you who haven't read SOLAR LOTTERY. I suggest you read the novel, indeed, that we all read it even if we've read it before.

This is Philip K. Dick's first published science fiction novel, published after he had written two mainstream novels, GATHER YOURSELVES TOGETHER and VOICES FROM THE STREET, neither of which was published in his lifetime. In essence, then, SOLAR LOTTERY is Dick's first novel for his contemporaries. It's a lively one! He would go on to write many more novels, acclaimed masterpieces like THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE, UBIK, THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH, to name a mere few, which explore the unlimited imagination of Philip K. Dick. But it all started with SOLAR LOTTERY. If you are new to the world of PKD then I suggest you read this first.



#### Postscript for PKD OTAKU.

After I gave my little talk to the people of Ft. Morgan, Colorado, as part of the preparations for the upcoming Philip K. Dick Festival there this March 3rd - 4th 2017 (I hope all you fans reading this will come join us as we celebrate our favorite writer), I read, just today, the essay "Those We Love, Loved Others Too" by Nick Buchanan in the last edition of PKD OTAKU, #34. I was pleased to see that Nick, like me, is a fan of A. E. van Vogt. Nick writes about the difficulty science fiction writers like Damon Knight had with van Vogt's style. I remember when I first read THE WORLD OF NULL-A, how gripping the story was, how, indeed, numinous revelations seemed to lay just around the corner. I had no difficulty with it. While I was discovering Philip K. Dick I was also discovering A. E. van Vogt.

## The Exegesis of Mother Goose

by Charles C. Mitchell

Like Philip K. Dick, the late David Bowie was known for being ahead of his time. His thought-provoking space rock-n-roll found its way into millions of ears over the years and underwent several stages, adapting multiple instruments and elements from various genres. On top of creating over five decades of innovative music, Bowie found time to appear in several films, work on stage productions, write short stories, collect art, paint, and raise a family. The six-foot androgynous Brit expressed a deep interest in the occult, ancient mysticism, extraterrestrials, unidentified flying objects, and other phenomenon. His first hit 'Space Oddity' was inspired by Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* and was played to the UK by the BBC during the Apollo 11 moon landing. When most of us picture David Bowie, his glam-rock alien alter-ego Ziggy Stardust comes to mind. That, or we imagine him as the Goblin King once again strutting up and down a flight of M.C. Escher style stairs. Yet, there was a lot more to Bowie than this. He possessed a confident mysterious quality that caused some people to speculate that he knew some sort of esoteric knowledge; some great secret hidden from the masses. In his *Exegesis*, Philip K. Dick wrote, "Just like we think Bowie knows something these people think I know something." (p.283)

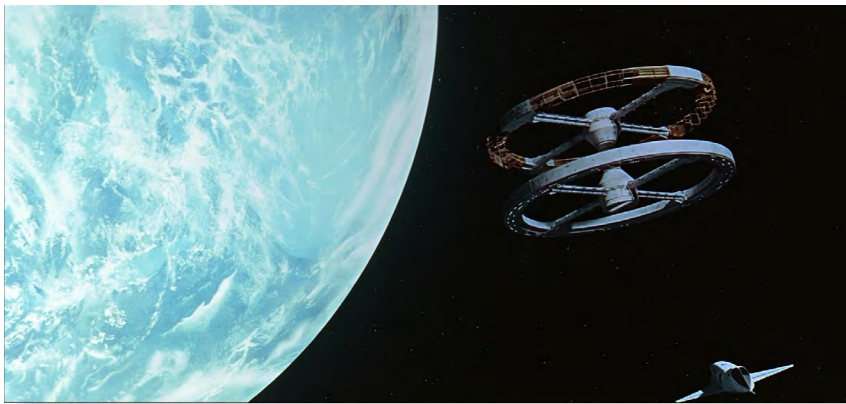
When Dick thought of Bowie, he didn't generally picture the leader of The Spiders from Mars like so many of us do; he instead pictured Thomas Jerome Newton, yet another extraterrestrial character portrayed by Bowie, this time on the big screen. This was Bowie's first lead role in a major film production and the experience helped him jump off the cocaine train that he'd been aboard and onto a healthier track. He was so taken with the character that he integrated imagery from the movie into two of his album covers. The "Bowie flick,"

as Dick would say, is called *The Man Who Fell to Earth* and is an adaptation of the Walter Tevis novel with the same title. Dick saw similarities between the flick and his own visionary experiences and used this as inspiration in his novel *VALIS*, or Vast- Active-Living-Intelligence-System, which is a satellite sent from Sirius to beam information into some of our minds. In this pseudo-autobiographical tale, he included a rock star named Eric Lampton, or Mother Goose, who was based on David Bowie, and had him star in a film called *VALIS* found within the book. "In no way is the film *VALIS* the plot and theme of *The Man Who Fell to Earth*," said Philip K. Dick into a phone receiver back in a 1981 interview, "but the idea occurred to me that a

science-fiction film, if well done, could be as rich a source of knowledge and information as anything we normally derive our knowledge and information from. The film tremendously impressed me; I just loved it. My use of the film *VALIS* is my homage to *The Man*

*Who Fell to Earth*."

This idea of a science fiction film containing an abundance of information seems to mirror the film *VALIS* and the ending of *The Man Who Fell to Earth*. Similar to the subversive music created in Dick's *Radio Free Albemuth*, Thomas Jerome Newton releases an LP containing cryptic messages intended to be broadcast for his other-worldly wife to receive and decode. In one frame, Newton's album can be seen next to one of Bowie's, implying to some that the pop-stars music also contains hidden messages. Again turning to *The Exegesis* of Philip K. Dick, we find him exploring this theme in another book, "*In The Morning of the Magicians*" it's conjectured that if super-humans (mutants, etc.) live among us undetected they would use such things - carriers - as popular novels (and I suppose music and films) to "communicate" - keep in touch - with one another." Dick goes on to examine why pop writers would be ideal vehicles to carry these super-human messages and points out that they can send word-for-word messages





internationally among a sea of pop-culture, with the receivers blending in, listening with the rest of the fans. He then compares this to the Bowie flick and mentions how it would be ideal for the author to be in the dark about the whole thing and cued subliminally. "The only way he might ever come to know about this tutelary telepathic link would be if/when he heard a voice inside his head thinking thoughts he couldn't or wouldn't think himself-including foreign words- and have strange quasi-dream experiences." (p.336)

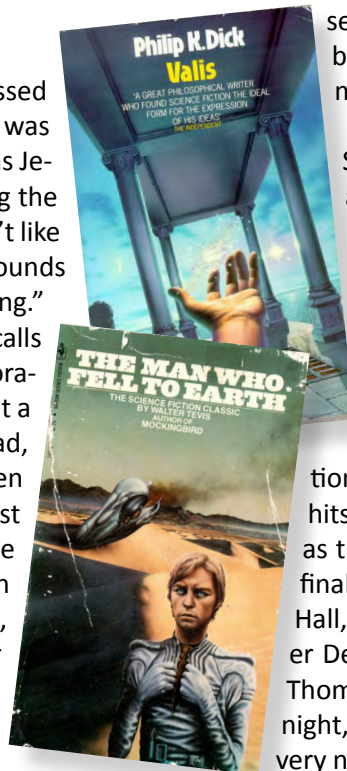
Will these surmised messages be passed down? When Bowies son, Duncan Jones, was told that Philip K. Dick thought that he was Jesus (a reference to Eric Lampton fathering the Buddha in VALIS) his response was, "I don't like where this is going... a laser crucifixion sounds both incredibly impressive and terrifying." Jones, now a successful film director, recalls his father helping him discover an adoration for science fiction and Philip K. Dick at a young age. Bowie encouraged him to read, supplied him with the books, and even introduced him to *Blade Runner*, the first film adaptation of Dicks work. He has since taken to social media to voice his opinion on other Dick film adaptation, tweeting, "Original Total Recall is the Rock Horror Picture Show of PKD movies... And that's a good thing!" Jones has made his own contributions to the sci-fi world by co-writing and directing the perplexing film *Moon* in 2009 and directing *Source Code* a few years later. He then adapted the *Warcraft* game into a film; incorporating alternate dimensions, magic, a mysterious book, and interactions between aliens (the orcs) and humans. He is currently working on *Mute*, a film project which he describes as a *Blade Runner*-esk spiritual sequel to *Moon*.

Dick's personal notes reiterate his belief that God will once again take human form, so perhaps it is Bowie and his wife Iman's late-in-life 'miracle baby' Alexandria that is Christ resurrected. After all, in *VALIS*, it is a female, Sophia, that Mother Goose fathers. The two girls names are both of a Greek origin with Sophia meaning 'wise' and Alexandria meaning 'defender of humanity.' Her name could also be a reference to the ancient library of Alexandria; a vast collection of knowledge destroyed by the Roman Empire; forgotten information erased by foes of Dick. This theory of Bowie fathering the new Jesus is perhaps as entertain-

ing as it is preposterous, yet it is tethered to this reoccurring theme of a divine or cosmic transference of information. In this Exegesis passage, Dick describes the function of Zebra, a camouflaged plasmatic entity similar to the holy spirit: "It assembles itself intact in a human brain from a collage taken from song lyrics, ads, novels, TV, movies – any and all info media, verbal and graphic. Once begun, it governs the person into seeking out the missing parts of the pattern (i.e, it). It even describes itself - e.g., the Bowie flick, *Ubik*, etc. What must be realized is that its pattern (identity) is a (total) message: it is info." (p.418)

Shortly before his death, Bowie helped create a musical sequel to *The Man Who Fell to Earth*. Co-written with Enda Walsh, *Lazarus* premiered at the New York Theatre Workshop in Manhattan on December 6th 2015 and briefly ran into the next year. Post-Bowie performances of *Lazarus* ran at London's King's Cross Theatre from October of 2016 to January of 2017. All of the music in the production was written by Bowie; most of which are old hits, though there are a few new additions, such as the song 'Lazarus' which made its way onto his final album *Blackstar*, as a single. Actor Michael C. Hall, best known for his portrayal of the serial killer Dexter, took over the role of the extraterrestrial Thomas Jerome Newton. Hall says that on opening night, Bowie gave him an artifact from his past and a very nice letter. He has failed to allude as to what this object might be out of respect for Bowies privacy, but told *The Guardian* in an interview, "It will be a talisman to me for the rest of my life."

Evidently Dick and Bowie were fans of each other; possibly sharing inspiration from the same mysterious entity. The 'Sirius moonlight' that Bowie sang of could be the same pink beam of information that struck Dick back in 1974, since both originate from the Dog star, or 'Diamond Dog' of the Canis Major constellation. It is conceivable that someday we will piece together the puzzles presented within the opuses of Philip K. Dick and David Bowie. Until then, folk like myself will continue to wonder. Wild speculations aside, the pairs quest for knowledge and absolute certainty presented the world with a complex storm of self-expression that appears to still be brewing, all the while deliberately howling and perhaps cryptically whispering something along the lines of, "ubiquitous freedom; ubiquitous justice."



## Three more book reviews

Patrick Clark

Old book reviews of Phil's novels were a staple of PKD Otaku in its early days. I focused for the most part on reviews that appeared with the first publication of the work in question. In the start of Phil's career that pretty much meant the science fiction pulps and fanzines, sources not particularly easy to come by. Bits and pieces would come my way from used bookstores or library periodical collections and I would duly transcribe them for inclusion. After Phil's literary fortunes improved it became simpler of course. Following his death more and more new editions began to appear and new reviews followed. Their number greatly increased and in, shall we say, more prestigious venues. For the most part I preferred to stick to the earlier critics, the sorts of things Phil could have read himself. After Perry Kinnman resurrected an old Qui review of WE CAN BUILD YOU a while ago I searched for addition material and located the three which follow.

Davidson's review of HIGH CASTLE appeared in the justly famous SF monthly the "Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction" and it is particularly fine. Note, too, how early it is in Phil's career. Xavier Hamerberg's piece on FLOW MY TEARS appeared in the underground newspaper the "Berkeley Barb", a somewhat unusual place but one that probably pleased Phil quite a bit upping his street cred with the counter culture. But it is Nicholas Velary's review in "New Scientist" that is really interesting. It's a good review, quite succinct. What struck me, however, was the company it kept. The same feature that examined FLOW MY TEARS also reviewed "Techniques in nuclear structure physics", "Aspects of Anglo-Saxon archaeology", "Handbook of microbiology" and "The anatomy of human destructiveness" (by Erich Fromm). It is difficult to imagine a more diverse set of titles.



**Avram Davidson: *Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* June 1963, pp. 59-61**

This is a remarkable book. Just how remarkable it is is little suggested by the basic premise, which is that the United States lost the Second World War. Other writers, such as Budrys and Kornbluth, have based stories on this notion, but in neither case was

the story one of their best. If Mr. Dick ever writes anything better than this (indeed, if he ever writes anything else as good), he deserves to take his place among the foremost in the field; how he has escaped my notice until now I do not know. I don't think he will elude me again.

The United States of America lost the Second World War. The United States of America now occupies less territory than it did prior to the Mexican War; and is a puppet of Nazi Germany. The Pacific States of America go the way Imperial Japan wants them to go. And in between, are the Rocky Mountain States. Some of the action takes place there; most of it in the PSA...Underground? *What* underground? There was (in our time continuum) one against the Germans and the Japanese, but that was while the war was still on; there was none afterwards – and there is none in this post-war America, either. Had Mr. Dick posited one, he would have had another bam pow Tonight-We-Liberate-Chicago adventure story; he has been too clever to fall into that trap. Given even a slight opportunity, people –if completely conquered – tend to admire their conquerors, and then, logically enough, to emulate them. I cannot sufficiently praise the dexterous way in which he shows that process; for example, in the relationship between R. Childan, owner of Artistic American Handicrafts, Inc. – his good customer, Mr. Tagomi, official of the Japanese Trade Mission (the de facto rulers of the PSA) – and Mr. and Mrs. Kasoura, a young couple here on a sort of Nipponese Point Four Program. It may seem easy enough to reverse what happened to and in Japan vis-a-vie the Americans after 1945; to do it at all might be easy, but Mr. Dick has done it *well*. Which is quite another thing.

"...the gum-chewing boorish [Japanese] draftees with their greedy peasant faces, wandering up Market Street, gaping at the bawdy shows, the sex movies, the shooting galleries, the cheap nightclubs with photos of middle-aged blondes holding their nipples between their wrinkled fingers and leering...the honky-tonk jazz slums that made up most of the flat part of San Francisco, rickety tin and board shacks that had sprung up from the ruins even before the bombs fell. [...] 'I could arrange to arrive at your apartment, yes,' Childan said. 'Bringing several hand cases, I can suggest in context, at your leisure. This, of course, is our specialty.' He dropped his eyes so as to conceal his hope. There might be thousands of dollars involved. 'I am getting in a New England table, maple, all wood-pegged, no nails. Immense beauty and worth. And a mirror from the time of the 1812 War. And also the



aboriginal art: a group of vegetable-dyed goat-hair rugs.” I don’t know, I may not be picking the right passage with this last quote; but – time after time Mr. Dick clearly shows his Americans either speaking imperfectly in Japanese or attempting to speak English like Japanese – but he never says that this is what he is doing; sometime he has them *thinking* like Japanese, with dreadful concern over face and manners. Well. Perhaps a minor point, and I don’t want to get hung up on it. But it’s very effective.

There is Tagomi; Tagomi is awaiting Mr. Baynes, a Swedish businessman who is deeply interested in something more than Sweden and business; there is Frank Frink, a master craftsman and a war veteran who has not only forgiven his conquerors, he is thankful for them – Frink is a Jew, it is death to be a Jew nowadays in the USA but in the PSA “these civilized band-legged little shrimps... would no more set up gas ovens than they would melt their wives into sealing wax.” (The Japanese are still consolidating the Co-Prosperity Sphere; the Germans are moving into outer space; there are no more Russians to speak of.) Frank’s ex-wife, Julia, is wandering through the RMS with a strange, intent foreigner who talks endlessly of the glories of Fascism. Everybody is reading and talking about a book called *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*, by Hawthorne Abendsen, who lives in a house – the High Castle – protected by barbed wire and machine-guns; the reason? *Grasshopper* dares to depict a world in which the Allied, and not the Axis powers, won the Second World War. Julia and her escort are looking for him.

But Abendsen is not the principal personality of Mr. Dick’s book, nor is Childan, Tagomi, Baynes, Frank, nor Julia. The principal personality is the millennia-old *I Ching*, the Book of Changes, an oracular work – Tagomi uses it, Frank uses it, so does Julia; and her search for Abendsen is based partly on her conviction that he uses it, too. In calling this venerable Chinese work a “personality” I have been preceded, I find, by C.G. Jung, and from his preface to the translation continually referred to by Mr. Dick I quote the

following: “For more than thirty years [written in 1949] I have interested myself in this oracle technique, or method of exploring the unconscious... I was already familiar with the *I Ching* [...] to see the *I Ching* at work...I personified the book in a sense...” And he goes into details of his consulting the oracle, and his conviction that its replies were correct. A *steady* appeal to it has to be based on belief in chance and the suprasignificant configurations of the moment; it is opposed to causality. It always seemed to me that Leninism and Psychoanalysis were alike in denying causality; Jung says here that “The axioms of causality are being shaken to their foundations” by modern physics. Just what Mr. Dick intends to imply or declare about the nature of the present by his use of the Book of Changes, I do not know. But whatever it may be, the effect is fascinating. As is, of course, the whole book.

It’s all here – extrapolation, suspense, action, art, philosophy, plot, character: really a superior work of fiction. Don’t take it out of the library – buy it.



Xavier Hammerberg: *Berkeley Barb* May 30, 1975, p. 13

“Dick’s Terrible Imaginings”

If an author can operate outside of reality (what is real now, but may change) he is writing science fiction. If he can operate outside of plausibility (what we experience as real, but we could be wrong), he is writing fantasy. Short of these, he is at most an imaginative naturalistic author.

The reason for the recent upsurge of interest in the works of Philip K. Dick is that he shows himself able to operate outside of actuality (which has got to be real, if anything is). Despite its superficial type-case quality, this book is

definitely postgraduate reading, not for Asimov buffs, or even Ellison buffs.

On the surface, it's where you've been before. The ugly future, the artificial super-race, the switch to a different alternate world. Plus the weary old Dr. Jekyll bit of a "new drug" as an explain-all device. On the surface.

To get down to the surface: We have a future in which the revolution of the 1960s happened, and failed, on apparently a global scale, though we are only given the American end of it. The students now live underground (literally) in the ruins of the onetime universities. A law has been passed that allows a Black couple to have only one child before being sterilized, so that the Blacks will progressively die out.

The world is controlled by the pols and nats (police and national guard). Dissidents are sent to forced labor camps of the Stalinoid type, but a friendly Jehovah Witness pol explains that such places are really not so bad. You can have a visitor each month, and you can worship as you please.

There is a small class of people called "sixes," products of an undescribed genetic experiment, supposedly able to make it under and circumstances (also a possibly mythical class of "sevens"). The "sixes" theoretically could rule the world, except for the fact that they can't stand each other.

Jason Taverner is a "six," also a popular TV entertainer, who one morning wakes up in a Skid Row hotel, in a world he never made, where no one knows him.

What follows is predictable: his attempt to get the necessary ID's, the forger who supplies them and proves to be a police spy, the pursuit by the cops, the capture, the policeman who turns out to be unexpectedly nice, the

escape sequence made possible by unexpected befriendings. Routine on the surface.

But Jason does not get projected back to the reality he lost. It creeps back to him. And the police who have him in custody come to realize it first.

Theodore Sturgeon, back in the forties, played around gently in a couple of stories with the idea of "what if you're not real, what if you're a figment of someone's imagination?" That was kid stuff. The cover blurb of this book is right in calling this story "solipsism's scariest margin... the age we are already half into."

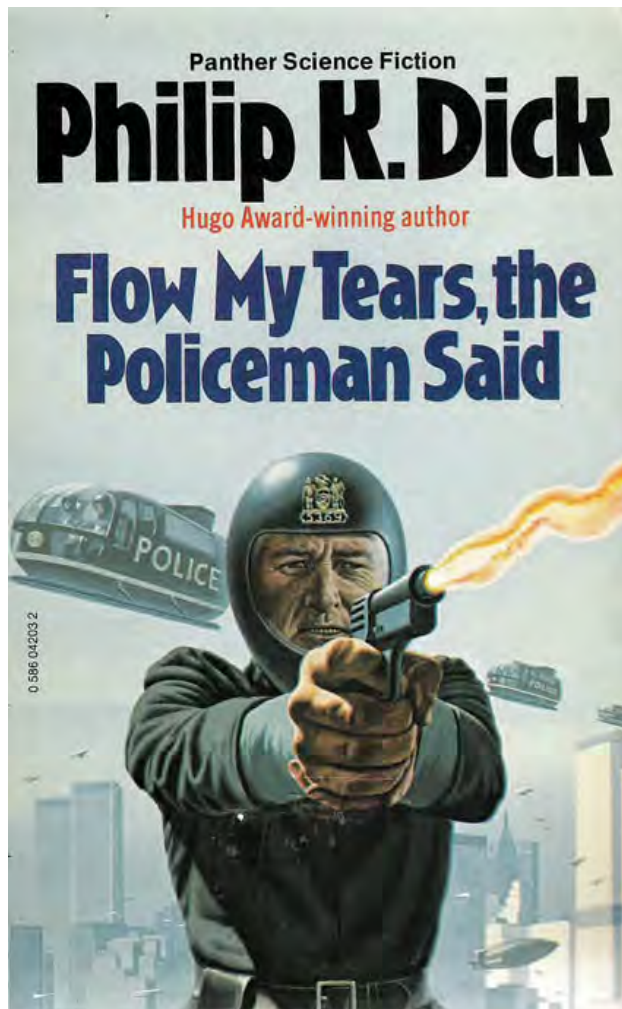
That goes beyond science fiction, that goes into the realm that can only be classified some way by calling it "projective." Philip Dick manages to imagine a situation that goes past the spectrum of realistic imagining.

Technically, the book is brilliant, especially in its picture of the slang of the future and of the "betrayal state," that surpasses 1984 or any other

police state. The psychology of the characters is such that one wonders how any man had the psychology to create them. They are not just in depth, they are out of sight; it would take Rollo May to unravel them, and better than him to unravel the mind that could have conceived them.

My final judgement on this novel is: Jee-Sus Christ! (and perhaps even he couldn't quite figure it out).

I am through with describing any achievement in projective writing as "insurpassable." It seems that, to quote the TV Western cliché, "there's always one faster." There's always one more surpassing. I live in anxiety over the day when there will come one that surpasses me; so then no more X.H.





# NewScientist

Nicholas Valery: *New Scientist* October 24, 1974, p. 291

Jason Tavener, a middle-aged TV personality with a weekly audience of 30 million, wakes up one morning in October 1988 to find himself in a grubby little Los Angeles hotel with all his identification cards gone. Without them he is a non-person. Like the renegade students, he has become fodder for the forced labour camps. He phones his agent, then his lawyer, to find that neither has ever heard of him. Nor has his show-biz mistress. But Tavener is still wearing his expensive silk suit and has a wad of high denomination dollar bills in his pocket. And he still has his special genetic make-up. He's a "six". A member of an elite band of genetic crosses, the sixth and final generation in an experimental programme to breed a race of mental supermen.

Dodging police checkpoints, Tavener makes his way to the former riot-torn Watts district to buy forged papers on the black market. But the forger is a police informer – and so the net closes. The police, however, quickly become baffled. Why has central records no knowledge of this man? Is he part of a secret syndicate so powerful that it

can delete files in the government's data bank? Is this a plot, the beginnings of an uprising? Tavener is really the vehicle upon which the police chief, General Buckman, and his sister, Alys, alternately take their sinister trips into their personal experiences of ecstasy and despair, they are Schwester und Braut.

Tripping on fine mescaline (imported from Switzerland, capsuled in Bond Street), Jason Tavener sees Alys reduced to a skeleton before his eyes. Burnt out by plugging too often into the orgasm grid (courtesy of Bell System?) and from an overdose of an experimental drug that empowers the mind to steal the realities of others, Alys finally dies and releases her hold over Tavener. His own personal reality comes flooding. He is recognized in a coffee shop. The juke box is playing his latest hit "Nowhere Nothin' Fuck-up". For Tavener, sanity at last! But for the policeman, Felix Buckman, brother and husband of the deceased, now the agony begins. He resolves to blame Tavener for his pain.

Mr. Dick is vastly more than a sci fi chronicler of the future. He has spun here a rare gothic tale with vivid dialogue. It is pure Chandler with haunting echoes everywhere of *Die Walküre*. Addicts of his controlled, literary mind-blown style will find the saga of Jason Tavener a strange, rewarding tale.

## Piper in the Woods?

Phil's house in San Rafael in 1971

Photo by kind permission of Tessa B. Dick



## The Book Whose Pages Were all Exactly Alike

By Nick Buchanan

There are few Philip K. Dick novels I haven't read, so I decided to give **The Man Whose Teeth were all Exactly Alike** a go. Of course, being one of his ten mainstream novels, I knew it would be very different from his Science Fiction and Fantasy work. I had read most of his other mainstream novels and particularly enjoyed **Confessions of a Crap Artist**, **In Milton Lumky Territory**, **The Broken Bubble** and **Puttering About in a Small Land**. I chose this one as my next PKD read because I remembered Elvis Costello promoting it in his fake advert in the documentary *Philip K. Dick: A Day in the Afterlife* (BBC – Arena). I used to like Elvis Costello before he started singing for Presidents and sounding like himself.

The first thing I noticed about **Teeth** (as it shall be called henceforth) is that it is slow - almost excruciatingly at times. My perception may be coloured here by the fact that I had just finished reading three hard boiled thriller type novels (if you must know, they were - *The Cutie* by Donald E. Westlake, *Quarry* by Max Allan Collins, and *Voodoo River* by Robert Crais – all of which I heartily recommend). Going from these to **Teeth** felt like a new boat launch being slowed by the water. I found it an effort to keep going. Books shouldn't feel like that. Even tough books like Joyce's *Ulysses* or Shakespeare's *King Lear* keep us interested by the musicality of their language and the artfulness of their communication. I don't mind hard work – it usually pays dividends by the end – it certainly does with *Ulysses* and *King Lear* - but not with **Teeth**.

**Teeth** was made even more difficult to get through because of the lack of any likeable characters. These are small town folk whose main preoccupation seems to be inflicting petty cruelties upon one another. They are nasty, self serving and sometimes deeply unpleasant. There's a horrible marital rape (uncomfortable to read) and most relationships appear to be a kind of hell-on-earth for both parties. People undermine one another, ridicule each others best efforts, bully each other and generally delight in the demise of others.

I say this knowing that the essence of fiction is conflict, that indeed there has to be obstacles to overcome, problems to be solved and sometimes conundrums to be grappled with. In good fiction, these are of some import - they are of a much

bigger scale. What we have here is just the petty minded, inconsequential inconveniences which preoccupy undeveloped personalities and tiny minds.

The story concerns a Realtor, Leo Runcible and his alcoholic wife Janet. Leo loses a sale when his neighbour Walt Dombrosio invites a black man to his house. Enraged, Leo phones the police to inform them of Walt's drunk driving. Walt loses his licence and has to have his wife, Sherry drive him to work (which he finds degrading). Sherry gets a job in the same place. Walt quits his job. Leo finds what he thinks is a Neanderthal Skull on his land, and believing it will increase the value of his properties, he sets about trying to publicise the find. And so it goes...



Actually, this compressed summary makes it sound more interesting and eventful than it is. Bear in mind that this précis takes us up to page 180. It is harsh of me to suggest that this book's pages are *all exactly alike* (the temptation of a snappy tagline was too hard to resist)

but there is some truth in my exaggeration. This is a book which leaves the reader wondering what it is ultimately about. When Dick submitted it to Harcourt Brace, it was read and rejected (in July 1960) by Eleanor Dimoff with this note:

*"At some point, the relationships between Phil's couples become so crystalized into a nasty, inhuman quarrelling (or such a dead end) that somehow the characters become interesting only in a clinical way."*

**Teeth** appears to me to be Dick wanting to write the great American Novel - like Nathaniel West or F. Scott Fitzgerald. I think he fails because the scope of his focus is too small. With Fitzgerald for example, a green light across a bay might represent all those things we yearn for which nevertheless elude us. Whereas in **Teeth**, it's all just people quarrelling. The metaphors of West and Fitzgerald open out on to much larger themes and the reader is invited to explore them. In **Teeth**, however, there is a claustrophobic pettiness which seems to infect all of its characters - a desire to be cruel, to hurt, to undermine, etc. At any given moment characters are always flirting with notions of cruelty, and it goes *on and on*.

Dick wrote **Teeth** in 1960 after writing **Confessions of a Crap Artist** and before writing **The Man in the High Castle**. These, I believe are two fine novels both deserving our attention. Dick was quoted as saying in 1981 that he thought **Teeth** was a 'Masterpiece.' However **Teeth** remains for me, one of the few Dick novels I won't be re-reading.

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From *Vice Motherboard*:

## How to Get High in the Future: A Pharmacopeia of Speculative Drugs

**Can-D:** When life lets you down, there's always Can-D. Even if you're huddling for survival on an extreme Martian colony, you always can wolf down the illegal psychotropic, imported from Ganymede, which induces collective hallucinations and transports its users into miniature Barbie dollhouses called "Perky Pat Layouts." This one comes from the great Philip K. Dick, whose personal drug intake rivaled only his prolific literary output: he also gave us Substance D, an unholy crack-esque LSD (the "D" stands for "Death"), Neuronin, a gaseous form of heroin, and KR-3, an experimental compound that shatters the brain's capacity to distinguish between alternate realities.

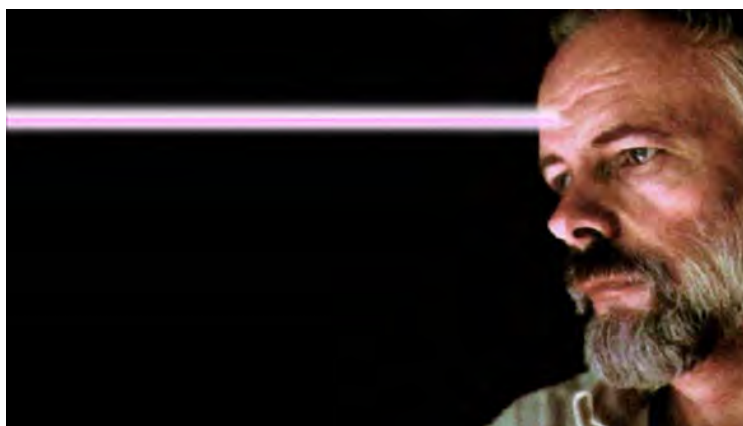
**Chew-Z:** When Can-D stops working, try Chew-Z, a more realistic alternative with the dubious tagline: "GOD PROMISES ETERNAL LIFE. WE DELIVER IT." Chew-Z, from Dick's *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, is a kind of demented DMT, which rather than translating its users into a temporary, subjective high, takes them to seemingly endless plane of alternate time and space, populated by their own memories and desires. On Chew-Z, you can live forever as a shadow of yourself, correcting the past and visiting alternate futures. While a trip only lasts minutes in the "real" world, it can take an eternity to play itself out in the universe the drug unleashes in your mind.

\*

The Internet is filled with little odd squibs relating to Phil. I come across them all the time. Typically, they make no sense to me. Here are some recent finds:

"During the brief time that I knew Dick in the early seventies I could have obtained movie rights for all his novels in exchange for some women's phone numbers but, alas, it was one of many missed opportunities in my life." – Brian Nation

"Philip K. Dick's Black Iron Subdermal Prison" – Wade Inganamort



"PHILIP K. DICK Ex-Girlfriend Copy ROBERT HEINLEIN book" [On eBay for \$45. It's an old paperback copy of *The Puppet Masters*]

"We're delighted to find that Philip K. Dick inveighed against the internet of things half a century ago." – *Slate*

"Dick, for all his darkness, was a true Groucho Marxist." – Mark Dery

"...Dick suffered the ordeal of VALIS as he experienced what it was to be part of an enormously abstract machine identical to the cosmos..." – Richard Doyle

And my absolute favorite:

"Have you read *Ubik*? It's basically cyberpunk through the lens of 1969." – reddit cyberpunk

\*

From "Four Kinds of Dystopia" by Darren Allen. Number four is:

**Phildickian.** Rule by replacing reality with an abstract, ersatz virtual image of it. This technique of social control began with literacy—and the cre-

ation of written symbols, which devalued soft conscious sensuous inspiration, fostered a private (reader-text) interaction with society, created the illusion that language is a *thing*, that meaning can be stored, owned and perfectly duplicated, that elite-language is standard and so on—and ended with virtuality—the conversion of classrooms, offices, prisons, shops and similar social spaces into ‘immersive’ on-line holodecks which control and reward participants through permanent, perfect surveillance, the stimulation of positive and negative emotion, offers of godlike powers, and threats to nonconformists of either narco-withdrawal or banishment to an off-line reality now so degraded by the demands of manufacturing an entire artificial universe, that only hellish production-facilities, shoddy living-units and prisons can materially function there.

The other three are “Orwellian”, “Huxleyan” and “Kafkaesque.” I don’t really buy Allen’s fourth category but I do like the idea of a “Phildickian” dystopia.

\*

#### Jonathan Lethem on Philip K. Dick:

“When I was 19, and I dropped out of college and ran away to Berkeley, what I was going there to do was involve myself in the Philip K. Dick Society and help Paul [Williams] fold and stamp these newsletters and send them out to people who cared—I think at its peak about 800 people were receiving this newsletter. ... The only [Philip K. Dick] book you could buy in a new bookstore was a movie tie-in edition of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* that had Harrison Ford on the cover, and was re-titled. That group of readers and critics and true believers changed literary history. ... There’s almost no comparison to [Philip K. Dick’s] retrieval from the margins of American literature.”

\*

#### Ursula K. Le Guin and James Tiptree Jr discuss PKD.

Source: “Dear Starbear: letters between Ursula K. Le Guin

and James Tiptree Jr.” *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. (Sept. 2006)

Tiptree to Le Guin: 25 Nov 72

And Dick. That business of plonking you down in some incredibly complex, totally gaga and insanely believable Ur-world in which the hero proceeds to wander about grumbling over his underwear, while stuff that would make ten short stories for me flashes by, and hero goes on looking for his zipper while cosmic tortures are loaded on him, he tenderly carries Kleenex to berserk devil-women ... How much of that is stealable trick I wish I knew. My hunch is, not much ... How he gets that effect of churning you ‘round & ‘round in radioactive granola while furies feed you candied Confucius ... I Do. Not. Know. Oh, that Dick. [...]

Tiptree to Le Guin: 16 Jan 73

And Dick ... I know precisely what you mean, he’s a mass of flaws that spell out JACKPOT. A sort of total dogged naivete, the language creaking and jerking so you can’t believe it, any ten-year-old would know better—like a magician with muscular dystrophy, you see the pigeons

lumping around in his sleeves and the thousand silk scarves all over the floor—my god, can he have the nerve to go on with this? -- and yet it works. Like you, I shall firmly maintain that that thing hopping around on the floor is positively NOT an escaped rabbit—until it’s recognised that he’s done

something unique & grand & lovely & nutty. Or until somebody comes along & does it better. But I have a hunch the dropped eggs are weirdly part of it. Someone once did

a story about a genuine telepath who kept trying to be a phoney mindreader.

You know, another part of it is, I can only say this in a very low mumble so that no one else hears, there are so very few sf writers whose work I do like. I love sf & writing sf but sometimes I feel horribly lonely—morally lonely, psychically lonely—an outsider born. I just loathe so much of the stuff that is generally admired. Not just Heinlein but much less benighted people. Phil Dick I love & admire with an



enthusiasm that I realise is partly defensive: when he at last comes into his kingdom & is recognised as a really first-rank 20th-century novelist, then I'll happily draw back and start knocking him where he's sloppy; but till then I'll stand up for everything he does.

Le Guin to Tiptree: 25 IV 74

Last week Phil Dick called from Calif. I have never met him either, we have written a few times. We are both scared to death of each other. Each of us is the other's Unconscious, I think. Anyhow he had just had some kind of emergency operation & was half seas over on sedatives, utterly enigmatic about what was actually wrong with him & whether he was out of danger, funnier than Charlie Chaplin, laying his soul bare in great swathes, absolutely overwhelming. Geniuses do tend to be overwhelming, I guess, don't they? Well, so I left the phone (God how I hate the telephone) exhausted, & after worrying about him for 48 hours decided, all right, now with this man it would be proper, and consulted the

I Ching, which I have never done before except to find out how the less communicative levels of myself were feeling about things. I asked if he was OK, & it gave me two beautiful, strong, Yang readings about the "great man" coming through all happy & successful, though there was a goat who would have to do some butting against a wall, first. I do like the I Ching. Once it told me I was a little fox who was about to get her tail wet. Boy, Was it right, too! Anyhow that cheered me up a lot, & I wrote Phil right off. Today got back a response, which left the little fox all wet tailed again. Typed, so he can't be absolutely bedridden, so that's good; but very weird & sad. I mean, to me it was. He keeps saying he had some kind of conversion experience--he was in a Catholic hospital--but then veers off and chatters about nothing. Oh hell I don't blame him, I suppose anybody who gets within letter's length of me scents the Voltaire lying in wait. But anyhow it was very depressing. One feels so inadequate when faced with mad geniuses.

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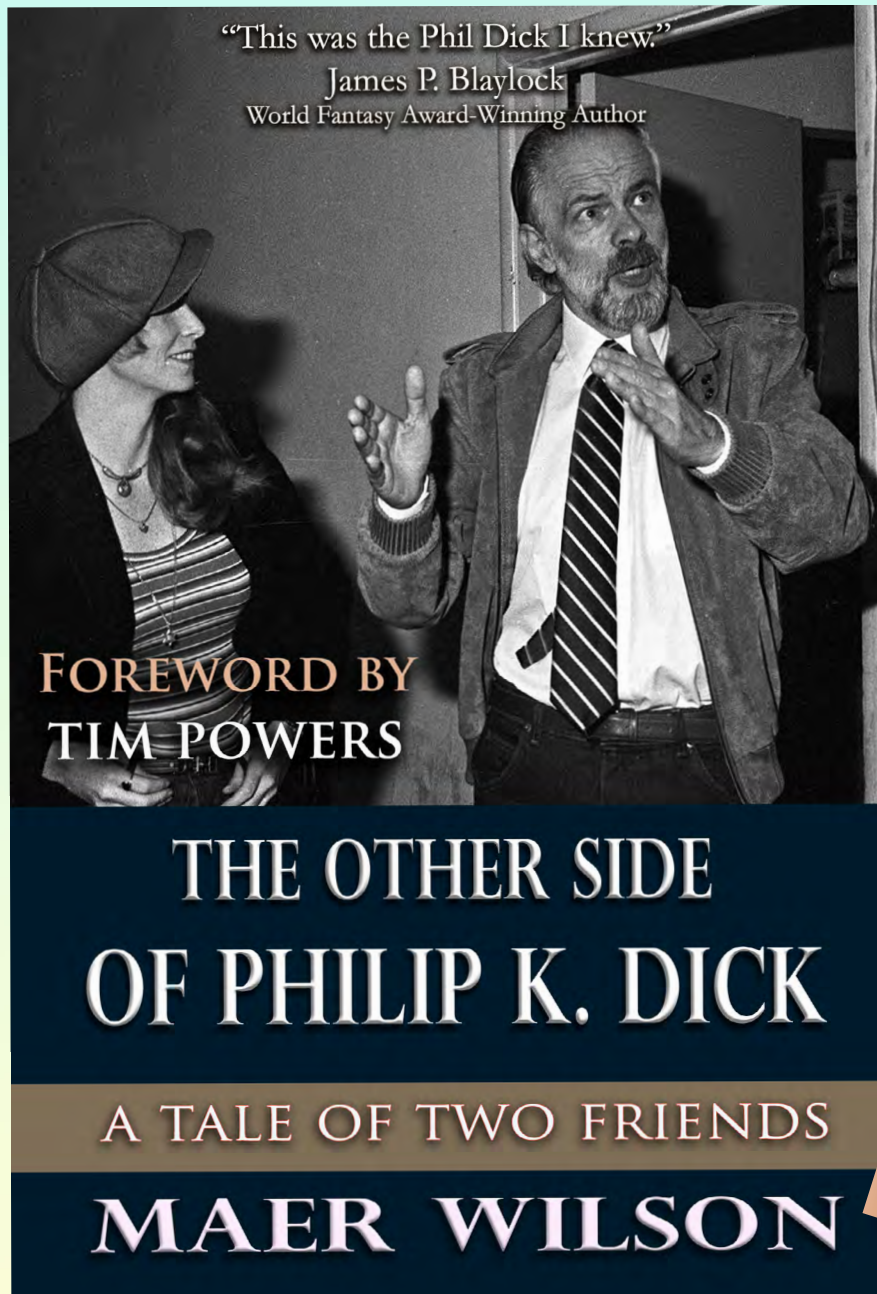
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