

Above Photo of Phil © Tessa Dick, by kind permission

June 2023



P K D

U

#44

Contents

Page

Cover - V-A-L-E-Y-E-S by Nick Buchanan	1
Introduction - Patrick Clark	3
The Immortal Chess Game Pokes a Hole in Blade Runner, "I Think." - John Allen Fairchild	5
Words spoken at Phil's graveside - Fans	6
THE INTERPLANETARY CUP FINAL 2032 - Dave Hyde	8
"Done in On Dick" - Rod Snyder	14
On Tessa Dick's Work in Progress - A Review - Patrick Clark	16
Inner Truth - On the Ending of The Man in the High Castle - Angus Taylor	18
Dario Rivarossa - Artist	21
Do Slime Molds Dream of Selective Creep? - Nick Buchanan	22
The "Jory" Technology - Blurring the Boundaries between Truth and Fiction - Andre Welling and ChatGPT	24
Notes and Comments	27
Letter to the Editor	30
Martian Time-Slip 'dummy' book jacket - Nick Buchanan	32

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

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 n.buchanan@hotmail.co.uk

Introduction

by Patrick Clark

At the Dawning of the Age of Artificial Intelligence with Philip K. Dick

by JPC

As you surely all know, we are at the Dawn of the Age of the A.I.s. Well, not really. If you can separate the wheat from the chaff – no easy task – we are starting to use “A.I.” in new ways. I’m not expecting the Singularity but these new machine intelligences are beginning to make their way into our civilization. They certainly have their uses, some sinister. For all you know ChatJPG is composing this while I am in the kitchen making a cup of coffee.

Computers appear from time to time in Phil’s works. They are legitimate science fiction devices though in Phil they are essentially big adding machines more than characters as such. A memorable exception is “The Great C” from a 1953 short story of the same name. Phil recycled the story as chapter seven in *Deus Irae* (1976). The Big C actually carries on a conversation and that conversation has all the earmarks of one of Phil’s talkative robots. We’ve heard it before and it is always fun even though the Big C actually wants to kill the human he speaks with.

An A.I. does appear in *The Divine Invasion* (1981). It’s called the Big Noodle. (An aside: Big Noodle had appeared before in Phil’s 1954 short story, “A World of Talent”. Except Big Noodle wasn’t a computer in that tale: he was a kind of powerful idiot savant psi mutant. I wonder why Phil resurrected the name.) The 1981 version is the real thing: a near omnipotent surveillance device in the service of the Christian-Islamic Church and the Scientific League, the duopoly that controls Earth. It is much more than an adding machine or, indeed, your standard-issue computer. It runs the day to day operations of the Earth government, searches for threats to society, manages the interstellar colonies, manipulates the populations to keep

those colonies in line. And it knows that Herb Asher and Rybys Rommey are attempting to smuggle the Savior back to Earth. It doesn’t speak; it appears to text information to the two rulers.

But one other of Phil’s AIs can speak and in both *VALIS* and *The Exegesis* it speaks quite bit in what Phil calls the “AI Voice”. Phil describes the Voice as sexless (“It’s a neutral voice. Neither male nor female. Yes, it does sound as if it’s an artificial intelligence”). This even when spoken by (through?) Sophia:

“Her voice is the neutral AI voice that I’ve heard in my head since 1974.” Kevin said hoarsely, “It’s a computer.” “An AI system,” Eric said. “An artificial intelligence.” I have the awful feeling that what Phil hears in *The Exegesis* is essentially the voice of the Enterprise computer in the original *Star Trek*. I hope I’m wrong about that.

Much as here in 2023 where there is great worry about our new A.I. ushering in some kind of apocalypse, Phil had a vision of his own. Possibly benign...I’m not sure:

Already I had heard the AI voice in my head, and others would hear that voice, more and more people. VALIS, as living information, would penetrate the world, replicating in human brains, crossbonding with them and assisting them, guiding them, at a subliminal level, which is to say invisibly. No given human could be certain if he were crossbonded until the symbiosis reached flashpoint. In his concourse with other humans a given person would not know when he was dealing with another homoplasmate and when he would not. (*VALIS* chapter 12)

A.I.s have a particularly PKD potential. My IT friend Andre has been trying to explain all this A.I. Chat stuff



to me. It's tough going as my mind goes blank when too deep into this technology. Andre keeps trying. A recent conversation, this time about possible Phildickian implications of chatbots and such led to this exchange:

Andre: Another case is called "QA" in the trade. Question Answering. It's about transforming single books or dedicated document collections into neural chatbots. So you can really talk to the book. This way you will be also able to chat with dead people; just munch all their emails and posts and you will get a reasonable simulacra. So, yes, that also means a new improved PKD chatbot - and android? - should be in the works.

Me: I don't really want to chat with "Phil" the simulacrum but this chatbot could also write "new" Philip. K. Dick novels. Right? I wouldn't expect something on the order of 3 STIGMATA or UBIK or VALIS but it seems to me that something like CLANS or GAMEPLAYERS or PENULTIMATE would be possible. If we got lucky another SCANNERS; if unlucky another DIVINE INVASION. Or it could write sequels. Right now we got nada.

Andre: Absolutely. Writing whole novels is currently a

bit of a problem because the length of coherent output that can be generated in one go is directly linked to the breadth and parallel computing effort of the neural net - to keep up correlations over the whole text, a kind of in-session memory. The largest model, GPT4, running on cloud supercomputing resources, has currently a max. of 25.000 words it can generate before it goes amnesiac. With GPT3.5 = current free-use ChatGPT it's only 3.000 words. Anyway, you can solve this problem with a chapter-wise approach where you re-feed the last generated chapter to the AI as context for the next chapter, it's like being a distracted pill-addled hack writer...

You could also have a more specialized religious nut PKD chatbot that was trained only on DIVINE INVASION and the like and the whole of EXEGESIS (and related material letters, essays) and which could then produce (non-stop) new EXEGESIS pages and entries which would REALLY be hard to tell apart from Phil's ramblings. We could have a million pages of EXEGESIS in no time! Maybe there will be eye-opening stuff!?

**Dave Hyde has announced he will be hosting
another Philip K. Dick Conference at**

Fort Morgan

**Colorado in the
summer of 2024.
Date to be determined**

The Immortal Chess Game Pokes a Hole in Blade Runner, "I Think."

John Allen Fairchild

The Immortal is the name of the chess game Tyrell and Sebastian were playing in the film. This was played in London in 1851 between Anderssen and Kieseritzky. Let's look at the game itself before we look at its relationship to the film.

Black should never have taken the second white rook and the Queen, and it's debatable whether it should have taken the first rook or not. When Black Queen takes the second white rook, she is out of the action. She is not a threat and could not be a threat for a few moves.

Black failed to ask the quintessential question "What's in it for me?" Black should have asked itself "How does this move help White? Why are these pieces being offered up to me?"

Black gets suckered. Black keeps being ahead in pieces and doesn't see its position. Black is so revved up on capturing pieces that it fails to see the game unfolding. Black is so excited and blinded by the capturing that it loses sight of the concept of the game. Plus, this leaves most of its main pieces unmoved-- Black's back row was underdeveloped.

All of this leads us to Sebastian's "I think." The "I think" is where you see the hole in the structure. Leaving aside the fact that no experienced chess player would say "I

think" when referring to checkmate, Sebastian would not have played that game up until that point and then said "I think." The real question is not how Tyrell could have been taken in. The real question is how could Sebastian have played this game up to that point and not have known/seen that the Bishop could checkmate.

Sebastian could not have had doubts about the end of the game if he had structured it up to that point. The film is crafted to look like Roy is pulling a rabbit out of a hat, as if

Roy is coming up with a brilliant mate that would not have been made otherwise. This is nonsense.

Although there are a few ways to complicate this thesis, these will not hold up. Some of these include the idea that Tyrell is a replicant and this game was not programmed into him. Even if Tyrell was a replicant, that would not explain Sebastian failing to understand what's going on. Even

if this were an alternate reality where The Immortal chess game had never been played, that still wouldn't address the premise about Sebastian's relationship to the game. (The consensus among current Chessmasters is that these two just would not have played this particular game.)

The Immortal chess game cast the same spell on the screenwriters as it did on Black. The writers (and Scott) thought they had a good idea without thinking it through. The screenwriters got attracted to something bright and shiny the same way Black did. Maybe being suckered is an Immortal attribute.



ANDERSSSEN V KIESERITZKY

1851

Words spoken at Phil's graveside on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of his death - 2nd March 2022

Phil

Not just today, but most every day, I'm reminded of your contribution and impact within our Collective Conscious. I first came to your writing in my youth, while in an early period of questioning the world around me, and the road ahead. Your writing, work, questioning, seeking and sharing of your SELF had a profound effect on me in ways I can't quite express, and may never fully understand.

Into adulthood I have experienced but a part of your legacy in this wildly connected, supportive and creative community of friends, family and other seekers that have gravitated to you in life and from you after.

Not only do others' memories of you remain strong after all this time, but even now you continue to impact the lives of so many who are newly exposed.

You are still with us, and I feel you in my own personal sphere often.

Grateful.

Zack Wood

"The true measure of a man is not his intelligence or how high he rises in this freak establishment. No, the true measure of a man is this: how quickly can he respond to the needs of others and how much of himself he can give." – PKD

(To be addressed directly to Phil)...

We are here to celebrate you and your achievements – some in person, some from afar and others no doubt in 'half-life.' You connected with us all Phil. You made us *feel* something. You reminded us what it means to be human. Your stories tickled at the very edges of our understanding, and you shone a light on the dark recesses of our flimsy trust in reality. You taught us how to grow into your uncertainty and you held our hand when we were scared.

Sometimes you too were scared and we could feel your hand trembling. *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* would scare anyone with a human soul. But you were brave and courageous.

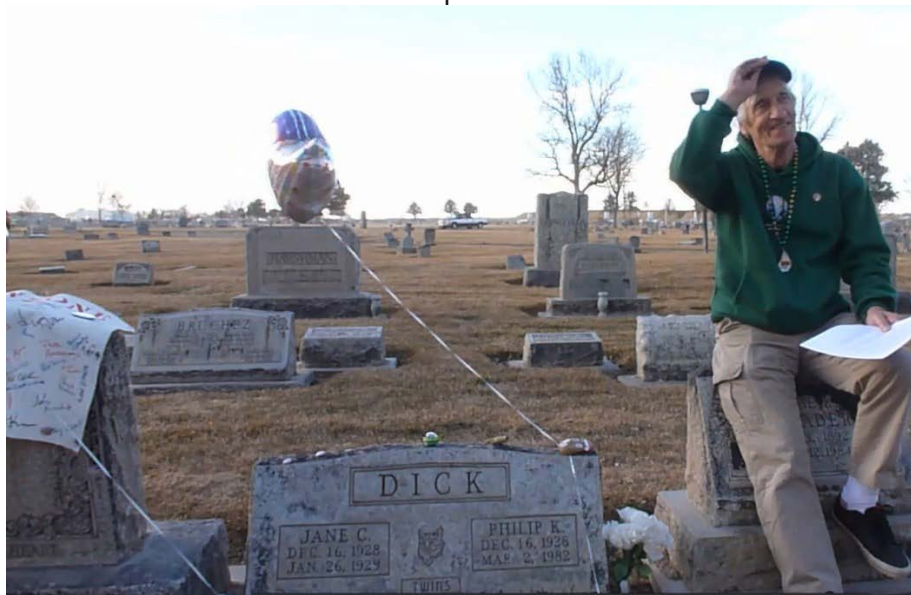
It didn't matter that others sometimes thought you'd lost your mind. In fact it didn't matter

Dave Hyde

what others thought at all. What mattered was the work, and the integrity of the work. Day in day out ploughing your own lonely field. But what a rich harvest. Stories that delight, surprise and even shock. Tales which question our lazy assumptions about reality. Narratives which illustrate the unreliability of it all. Phil, our *Phil-osopher*, Dick, *Dic*-tating his ideas on to paper. Somehow you retained that child-like sense of wonder which so many adults have already smothered within themselves. That celebratory curiosity which is part of the essence of what it means to be human.

Human Is.

And what of love? So much of your work concerned this highest of all expressions. Caritas, empathy, fellow feeling. It is in short supply. We live in an age where differences are revved up every day in toxic newscasts which encourage hatred of 'the other' – those of different colour, sexual orientation, the marginalised, the unvaccinated, the voters of different parties, etc.



You spoke of those incapable of love. Those beings devoid of empathy, who would not balk at an immoral order; those who never felt the consequences of their actions, nor understood the depth of another's pain. Those chilling beings surround us today. Their stainless-steel hearts feel nothing. They are cold.

But we are here also, and love is the greatest. We have the strength to love. Our empathy for one another distinguishes us from the non-human. *Human is* as human does. Love is as love does. Our character is reflected in our behaviour. Let us be kind to one another.

Thank you, Phil, for reminding us repeatedly in your work that love is the very essence of what it means to be human. And for retaining your child-like sense of wonder which in turn made us wonder too – after all, as Socrates once said, 'Wonder is the beginning of Wisdom.'

We're all so glad you came along Phil – all of our lives are richer because of the amazing legacy you left us. Today, we salute you and we thank you.

Nick Buchanan (Liverpool, England)

PKD 2022 Ft. Morgan, CO 3-2-22

Hello everyone. On this day March 2nd in 1982 Philip K. Dick died in Santa Ana, California. He lies here next to his twin sister Jane in the Riverside Cemetery in Fort Morgan, Colorado.

Now, 40 years later, we few fans who gather here, stand for the millions all over the world who cannot. Normally we would make today a grand occasion here in Fort Morgan do the best we could to celebrate this great man. But these are abnormal times, as if we 're living in the ad hoc reality of one of PKD's science fiction novels.

And that's why we stand here today in 2022. To set a marker for the future. Here lies the greatest writer of the 20th Century. A man whose ability to turn the chaos of life

into words that everyone in every language understands. His writing brings us together. Of all the great writers of the past few have the subtle, pervasive influence of Philip K. Dick. None have delved so deep into the meaning of Reality as this man lying buried here. I could go on and on but I don't need to. It's all out there in every language in every medium: the stories of Philip K. Dick. Read them and read them again.



These are troubled times. Political upheaval, covid-19,

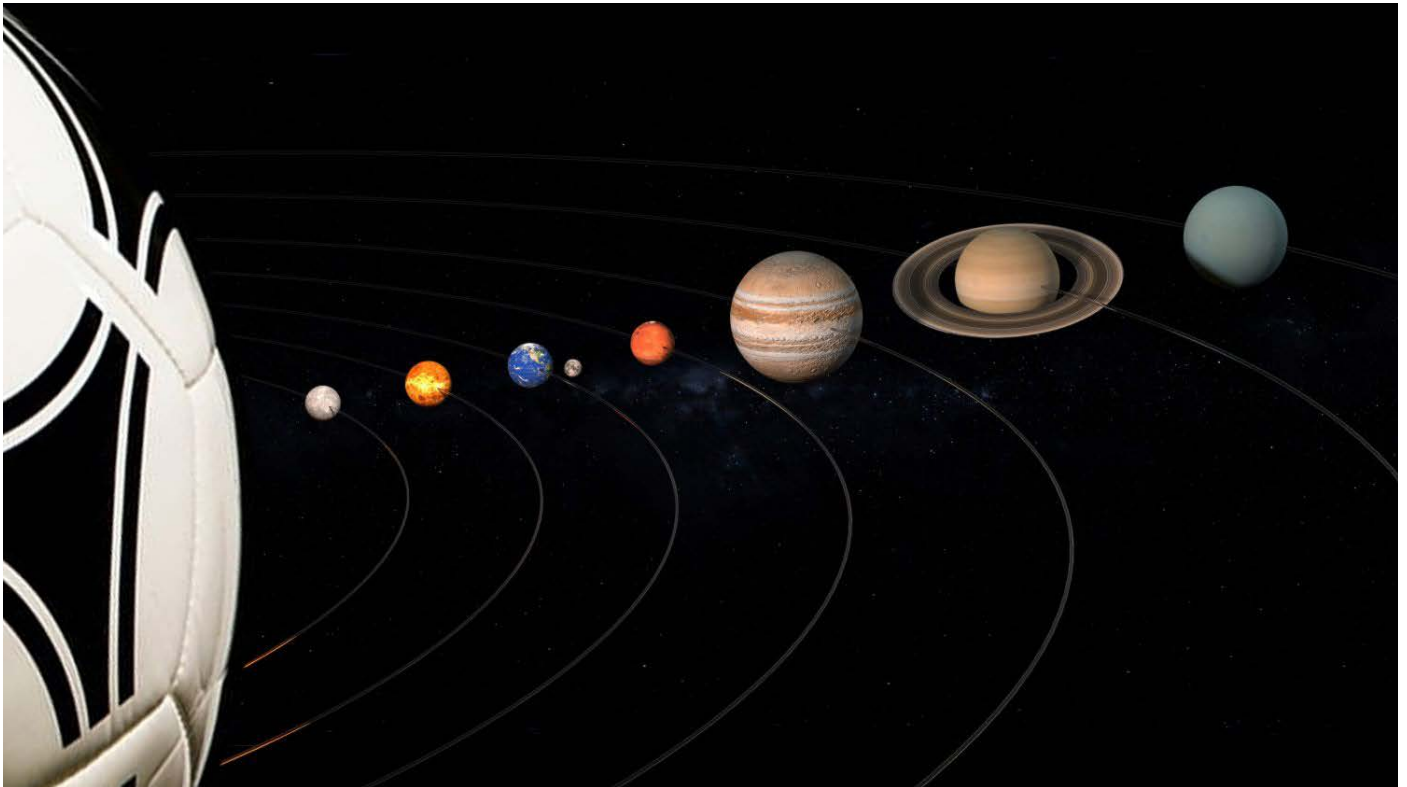
Putin's War in Ukraine. Once again the threat of nuclear annihilation hangs over the world. What does Phil have to say about it all from his grave here in Fort Morgan? He says it brilliantly in his novel from 1964, THE 3 STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH. In the preface, when you first open the book, he has the character Leo Bulero of Perky Pat Layouts, Inc. say in an office memo:

I MEAN, AFTER ALL; YOU HAVE TO CONSIDER WE'RE ONLY MADE OUT OF DUST. THAT'S ADMITTEDLY NOT MUCH TO GO ON AND WE SHOULDN'T FORGET THAT. BUT EVEN CONSIDERING, I MEAN IT'S A SORT OF BAD BEGINNING, WE'RE NOT DOING TOO BAD. SO I PERSONALLY HAVE FAITH THAT EVEN IN THIS LOUSY SITUATION WE'RE FACED WITH WE CAN MAKE IT. YOU GET ME?

For the wonders from your mind, for the struggles from your life,
For the realities you've revealed, for the boundaries you've crossed,
For the words of the nobodies, for the voices of the silents,
For the thrills in the pages, for the love in the hearts,
For the translators around the times, for the readers around the spaces,
We thank both of you, Phil and Jane.

Xie xie ni, PKD.

Qiangpan Chen, (section K, block 1, lot 56)



THE INTERPLANETARY CUP FINAL 2032

The Ganymedeans Slime Molds vs.
Club Atletico Madrid
The London Stadium, England, Earth

"Well, Mary, it's been a long campaign but here we are at last: the final match of the Interplanetary Cup!"

"Yes, Chuck, I'm so excited! All across the Solar System teams from Mercury and Venus and Mars and the outer moons, too, have fought through the playoffs to the point where only two are left. There's been some surprises along the way - "

"Oh My God! It's been amazing! Imagine, for the first time ever a team from the outer moons has made it to the final! And although there may be some question as to the validity of some of their wins, the Slime Molds represent a strong threat to the perennial dominance of the Terran squads."

"That's right, Chuck, Take their win over the Martian Hovels United in the semi-final. It wasn't even close! 7 - 0 ! Now, even the most fanatical fans of the Slime Molds would have to admit that there is some question of interference there! That's why their fans have been banned from attendance at this final game!"

"We can't allow telepathic influence into the game and the Ganymedeans well know that. It's in the rules. Even the appearance of impropriety must be avoided. Ahem."

"That's why we're here, to point out any messing around by the Ganymedeans. You know, it's not as if they're not messy already, all green and slimy as they are!"

"Now, now, Mary, there's no room for racism in interplanetary soccer. We must take the Slime Molds as they are and, after all, we're only letting one of them play. The mighty Lord Running Clam and his ten Tentacles. This alone may reduce any telepathic accusations to zero."

"Not quite. Remember the third round game against Manchester City? Phil Foden swears his brain was tampered with when he missed that penalty. Of course, it *might* have been a temporary lapse of reason. And City have been in a slump these last few years. In fact, it's been ten years since they bossed Europe and now Manchester United are back again atop the Premier League. Thanks to them bringing Sir Alex Ferguson out of cold-pak."

"A good move, that! I hear for next season Man United are thinking of reviving Sir Dennis Law who some say is the best United player ever. They've already started the warming process at the Flask of Hermes Vitarium."

"I'd like to bring him back. He's still got a few good seasons in him even though he is technically dead."

"Well, speaking of Manchester United, they almost made it here to the final but they ran into that brick wall known as Atletico Madrid. What do you think of Madrid's chances against the Ganymedeans?"

"A good question, Mary, and a hard one to answer. It all comes down to goals. Its likely that Los Colchoneros will need more than the one goal they've managed in each of their last six games to win this one. They've got a good defense and employ some questionable tactics. But if they can put one past Lord Running Clam they'll be favored for the win."

"Ah! It looks like the hoopla is over and the teams are on the field! Atletico are in their familiar red-and-white striped kit and the Tentacles in their away gear of pink and purple hoops. As the Atletico players, led by their captain and centre-half, Granit Haksa, go through their warm-ups, Lord Running Clam has his Tentacles casually flipping a ball from one tip to another and back again. He doesn't seem worried at all, Mary?"

"Its a psych-out, Chuck, LRC is already playing with the minds of the Atletico players. Long-time Atletico coach Diego Simeone is more concerned, I think, that the Tentacles appear a little blurry, as if they're not really there... Is this merely a holographic representation of the Ganymedean team and not the real thing?"

"I dunno, but I do know holograms can't kick footballs so the real team will have to appear very soon now. Its kick-off time. Let's go to Joe Below on the sidelines for one last comment, Joe?"

"Mary, Chuck, great to be here for what promises to be a brilliant final game in this Interplanetary – or should I say, Intermoonetary Championship (heh, heh). Some last minute news from the Madrid team: Midfield stalwart Manuel Miguel may not play today due to a slight injury incurred on the flight to London. He broke two teeth eating a bag of nuts on the airplane. If, indeed, Manuel Miguel is absent coach

Simeone may change his formation from a 5-3-2 to a 6-3-1, a more defensive setup. Back to you guys in the booth."

"Hmm. Thanks for that tidbit, Joe. Let's to the game. Chuck?"

"Atletico Madrid take the kick-off! Its Louis Lancier, their French center forward, back to Haksa who lofts the ball out to the left wing and an onrushing Perpetual Weiner. But he's beaten to the ball by Tentacle 4 which points it downfield. Tentacle 8 stretches out! Its got the ball and is lengthening towards the Atletico goal, weaving and swerving! Oops! Stretched a little thin there T8! Should've chipped it inside to T10. Atletico clear. Whew! A fast start for the Slime Mold!"

"It's only the beginning, Chuck. These tentacles are adaptable, they never give up. Look there now, Tentacles 2 and 3 are getting thicker; the famous move of Lord Running Clam to distribute his gelatinous substance where necessary. He's tightened up his defense. Not that he needs bother as Atletico appear inept in the face of the pulsating pseudopodia. These tentacles are big! Or, they look that way anyway. Hard to tell..."

"Here come the Tentacles! Its T2 to T5 down the middle to T9, known by Ganymedeans fans and detractors alike as the Big Dick for its extra bulbous appearance and big red eye. Certainly an intimidating sight to any defender! T9 shoots! Over the bar! Kat Wischers, the Atletico goalie, returns to sniffing daffodils in the back corner of her goal. Hmmm. A strange activity, that, with

the Big Dick bearing down on you!"

"That is certainly an attractive daffodil patch in the back of the Atletico goal. Mmm, you can smell them from here!"

"Snap

out of it, Mary, the referee's called a halt to play. Its telepathic interference. He's talking to the Ganymedeans captain and goalkeeper Lord Running Clam. It looks like he's giving his Lordship a warning to cut out the shenanigans. It'll be a yellow card for LRC if they try that tactic again!"



Illustration by Nick Buchanan

"Yes, it looks like the Slime Mold is up to its usual tricks. But the Madridistas have a few of their own. With the Tentacles extended Atletico swings into a counter-attack! Its Brutal Fugg rounding T7! He lofts the ball out to Weiner on the left wing! He races towards the goal, too quick for the Tentacles to react! T2 slides in! Weiner's in the air! Now face planted in the dirt! Its a foul! But the ref's having none of it. He's scolding Weiner for diving and, indeed, that double somersault, although spectacular, was completely unnecessary as the ball had already trickled out of play. Weiner's complaining loudly, jumping up and down in fury! The ref's had enough and whips out his yellow card. Weiner, in astonished dismay throws up his hands. Free kick for the Slime Mold."

"It's a midfield contest now, Chuck, the Tentacles are putting on a show, bopping the ball around from tip to tip so fast that it seems there are three balls out there at once! But they cannot penetrate the stern blockade of the Spanish team. The Tentacles get tangled among themselves!

The loose ball is pounced on by Rudy Ganja who flicks it out to Sonambula on the right wing, he crosses! Oh, look Snovovitch is down in the area! He's writhing in agony! And there's Tentacle 4 slithering away through the turf! Its a penalty! What happened? Ah! Here's the slo-mo... It's definitely T4 but it never touched Snovovitch! It got the ball! A good tackle from Tentacle 4."

"I don't think so! Have you lost your mind!? T4 wiped Snovovitch out! He's face down in the mud! He's half dead! Its a penalty!"

"Let's see what the VAR decides. And while they're sorting it out we'll go to a brief commercial break..."

Get your Swabbles at Bent's Emporium! Straight

from Ganymede to you! Instant delivery guaranteed! Best prices in the Galaxy on everything extraterrestrial. Beware cheap Terran imitations. BENT s! BENT s! BENT s! Look here ►

"The VAR is still working on the decision: perfect tackle or vicious crippling slide? I think we can fit another commercial in here Mary..."

"Yes, it looks like it might take a while as these things usually do..."

Got yours yet? Why not Shemp!? BENT's has it all at BENT s! BENT s! BENT s! Don't look up ▲

"It's a foul!!! I told you, Chuck! Its a red card for Tentacle 4! The Slime Mold is protesting, tentacles waving around the referee! They've dragged Snovovitch off the field, the medics seem concerned..."

"I still don't see it, Mary, but that's the decision

of the VAR, whoever they are, and its a penalty for Atletico Madrid! And here comes the FIFA Executioner for Tentacle 4. They're gonna lop it off. You gotta admit its tough for T4 who had a good game until that fateful slithering tackle.. But what can you do? That tentacle has to go."

"Poor Snovovitch! There's the team Bishop, he's giving him final

unction, preparing last rites... Looks like the groundsmen are digging a hole by the 50 yard line... they're gonna bury him right there... But wait! He's up and sprinting towards the Spot! He's going to take the penalty himself! It's a miracle!"

"Praise the Lord! And now that the referee has cleared the area Snovovitch prepares to take the penalty kick. Lord Running Clam is shifting and blurring in his goal, with tentacles withdrawn he's down to just

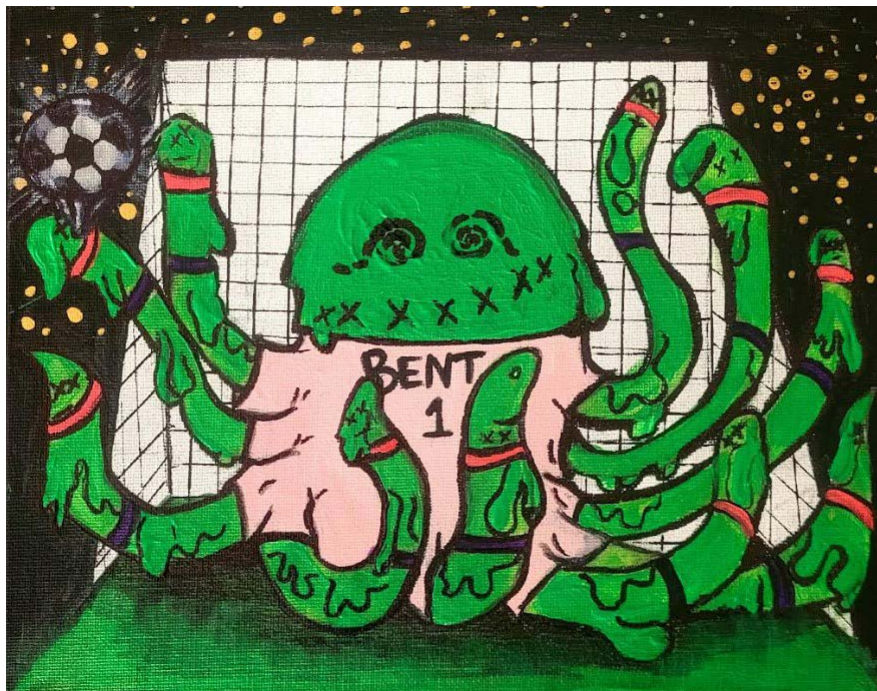


Illustration by Kristen Pincus

his bulk less 10 percent now. He's pulsing in and out! Trying to set up a mesmerizing shimmer to confuse Snovovitch! Who takes his run! A hop! A skip! A goal!!! Goooooooooooooooooal!!!!!! Madrid score! Goooooooooal!!!!!! Phew! Madrid have their goal. But can they hold on to it?"

"That's right, Chuck, there goes Snovovitch sliding on his knees to the corner flag, arms aloft! The fans are going wild. Its pandemonium in the stands. Let's see if the Slime Mold can retaliate in these last few minutes before half time. They look a sorry lot right now, the tentacles limp and forlorn. Even the Big Dick is deflated."

"There's the kick-off, its back to midfield and back to LRC in goal. He's holding on to the ball, content to run down the clock until the whistle blows. And there it is its Half T –

Swabbles fifty percent off at BENT's! Get yours now! Latest models direct to you by Telpor – you don't need a door when you've got Telpor! BENT s! BENT s! BENT s! Look down ▼

Bad back? No problem with Rent-A-Rack! Your back will go Aaaah! as you stretch out to the thrilling sounds of the Gasoline Lollipops in the security of your own home! Yours by Telpor instantly! Only at BENT s! BENT s! BENT s! Don't look back ◀

You know you want it. Gotta have it. Right now! Swibbles, Swabbles, Flapples and Popples! Instantaneously Means Right NOW! BENT s! BENT s! BENT s! Looky here

"We're back. Mary, let's discuss the Slime Molds' chances in the second half. I think LRC down now to nine Tentacles will have to call on his reserves. The Big Dick has not performed up to expectations and will have to do better now. The pressure is on for that tying goal. Can Atletico Madrid hold on? 1 – 0 is a precarious lead, but they've done it before, held on by this same score in their previous six games. But if the Ganymedean Slime Mold can get just one goal then it's anybody's game."

"An excellent grasp of the obvious, Chuck! It looks like Atletico have beefed up their defense for this second half. Pissant is out, replaced by Rusty Salvidge in midfield and Perpetual Weiner is gone in favor of D. T. Vahstard on the right. Its a grim wall of massed defenders facing the diminished Slime Mold. Here we

go....

"Its T9, he lobs the ball to T11 on the wing. It dribbles around a late-sliding Vahstard and cuts inside towards goal! Oooh! Jeez! That was rough! T11 is chopped down by Haksa. Its a foul, the ref is wagging a finger at Haksa who slinks off scowling. The Ganymedean trainer is on, bending over the tattered T11, he's getting out the duct tape, using his own pseudopodia to swiftly make the repair. Job done the trainer scuttles to the sideline. T11 is inching back slowly."

"It's all tentacles forward for this free kick ten yards outside the area. T10 wriggles up, a quick twist and the ball is flying at goal! It hits the crossbar and into the crowd! Kat Wischers, Atletico's female goalie didn't move!"

"A wake up call there for Madrid; they can't write the Slime Mold off yet. Game on!"

"Atletico are passing the ball back and forth among themselves as their fans scream 'Ole!', the ref is bemused by this brilliant tactic. The clock keeps on ticking. The Tentacles are wriggling excitedly around the ref who finally realises this is just another Atletico time-wasting effort. He waves the play forward. Kat Wischers boots the ball downfield. And here come the Slime Mold... Only to be hacked down again in midfield. Tentacle 5 and Salvidge are entwined, rolling around on the turf! Haksa rushes in! Oof! He's stomping on the neck of T5! But the Big Dick knocks him down and its a free-for-all in midfield! The ref rushes in, blowing his whistle, expostulations arise from the Atletico players while the tentacles set up a discordant howl. The ref's swallowed his whistle! Red in the face he coughs it up. Here come the yellow cards. He turns a slow full circle, his furious gaze taking in every tentacle and man, its yellow cards for all!

"And now there's some idiot rushing onto the field. He drops his pants! They're red, white and blue! Haksa boots him into the stands."

"Bedlam reigns on the turf of the London Stadium. Diego Simeone, gesticulating wildly, is screaming from the sidelines as Lord Running Clam oozes forward to add his weight to the fray. The ref throws his whistle down in disgust, lifts his head high and screams "SHUT THE HELL UP!" They all calm down. It's a free-kick for the Slime Mold."

"Its tense out there, Mary, these teams don't like each other."

"Yeah."

"T7 takes the free kick, a fast-curling cross aimed

at the penalty spot. Up goes T9, down go Vashtard and Kat Wischers. Where's the ball? Its in the goal!!! What! That can't be! Even the players are stunned as the tentacles en masse withdraw towards LRC in their goal! A wave of happiness washes through the packed crowd. The Slime Mold have equalized!!!"

"I felt it, myself, Chuck! What a moment. I, I... I can't believe it... How did they score? I didn't see a thing!"

"The referee is uncertain, he looks to the sidelines. No flag. Let's see what the VAR has to say - "

BENT'S! BENT'S BENT'S! Yeah we're Bent because we're BENT'S! BENT'S! BENT'S!

"In slow mo it looks like D. T. Vashtard fell upon Kat Wischers and – O My God, we can't show that! Oh, that's unspeakable what that Vashtard done to poor Kat Wischers! Did you see that?"

"Yes, Mary, I saw it, and so did all the fans. I must say, in the middle of an Interplanetary Cup Final is not the place to, er, let us say, profess your fondness for your goalkeeper! Even in slow motion (it's not being broadcast is it?) the action is despicable."

"I'm not surprised. Men, after all, are nothing more than hairy brutes!"

"Yes, but is it a foul? There's nothing in the rules, I think, about mishandling your own goalkeeper. Now, if it had been one of the Tentacles then it would be a red card, but the Tentacles stayed clear and the Big Dick slid in at the height of the action to score the goal! Its a goal!"

"I still can't believe it! What possessed Vashtard to do that? Do you think it was Ganymedeian interference?"

"It's academic now; the goal stands. The game is tied up and there are only ten minutes left? What a game! I think Atletico may regret their time-wasting tactics earlier in the half!"

"They're in a big hurry now! Simeone is beside himself, he's tearing at his hair! Screaming at his players! Off goes Vashtard immediately, substituted by Yehi Fleet,

the speedy new acquisition from West Ham United last week. A home-town boy familiar with the London stadium at least. Some think him a ringer and if that's the case he'd better deliver now! He's playing next to Lancier up front. They kick off."

"Fleet flicks the ball out to Salvidge and rushes towards the Slime Mold goal. Salvidge crosses! No! The Tentacles are having none of it. Out it goes to a shimmying T6 which slips it wide to T11 who is stretching down the left wing! But its a stretch too far and once again the Mattresses have the ball! Back and forth we go."

"Overtime looms. Neither team wants that. They're dead on their feet, or pseudopodia, as the case may be. Lord Running Clam is visibly diminished in size although his spirit remains strong after that equalizing goal from T9. And the Atletico players are suffering now from real cramps, unlike earlier when they were all rolling around in time-wasting agony. But they've got to play, cramps or no."

"Five more minutes. You can hear the clock tick with every heartbeat in the stands. Tick-tick. Tick-tick. Tick-tick. Its getting faster!"

"It's the music of the game, Mary, speeds up when Atletico have the ball and slows down when it's the Tentacles in possession, or maybe I'm just imagining it..."

"The game is poised on a knife edge! Every player out there is on a yellow card; one slip, one late tackle, one twisted tentacle could spell disaster for either team. It's a time to be careful..."

"There's no being careful here! Its hammer and bongs as both teams go at it. The referee is being very lenient in his non-calls: every one of those nine remaining tentacles should've been lopped off by now! Chuck, you're an idiot."

"And you're a bitch!"

"What! You can't call me a bitch on interplanetary live TV! Chuck, you've

always been a failure. I noticed it when we were married, that's why I divorced you! You never could apply yourself to anything, you're useless, as I discovered – and inept in bed!"

"Oh, is that right? Always pushing, that's all you



do, push, push, push, you're never satisfied!"

"I oughta smack you! I don't know why I let that Bunny Hentman talk me into doing this! You're fired!"

"You can't fire me! I quit! WHAT!? WHOA! What happened?"

"You idiot! They scored a goal! You missed it!"

"Who scored a goal!?"

"No one scored a goal, its offside, you idiot!"

"Crikey! Let's go to Joe Below on the sidelines."

"Loser!"

"Hi guys! There's the placard: there will be 9 minutes of extra time; I told you the Spaniards would regret all that time-wasting earlier on. They're bringing on substitutes, Ron Footer, another zippy winger is in, and Kat Wischers, never fully recovered from her earlier molestation, is off to be replaced by Roy Bayonet in goal. Back to you two lovebirds."

"It's too bad, Mary, that the Ganymedean Slime Mold can use no substitutes. Look at him! The bulking LRC and his bulging Tentacles of the early game now look more like a daddy-long-legs!"

"Hmm. I guess they could cut a few off and Lord Running Clam could grow some replacements. Sniff."

"You're all heart. There's no time for that. The Slime Mold has a free kick off the point of the area. It's now or never for the Ganymedeans! Here comes Lord Running Clam himself, motating towards the box like Allison the famous Liverpool goalie! The Slime Mold is all in! Atletico barricades their goal! Its T8 and T6 over the ball. They both run towards it... which kicked it!? Time seems to slow down as 144,000 fans hold their breath and a spellbound planetary system stops all activity to watch the ball fly into the box, Lancier jumps up but it floats over his head! The Big Dick rises! Hacksa knocks it sideways and the Dick bites the dust! Bayonet comes out! Pokes his punch! The ball spins to LRC near the goal-line, it sticks to his gooey surface! The defenders attack, their tackles squelching in but he shrugs them off and oozes over the goal-line! It's a goal! The Ganymedean Slime Mold has scored again!!! O My God! Can this be true! The inhumanity! Oh My God! Its... Its... 2 -1 ! ..."

"That slimy Slime Mold cheated! Did you see how big he got? One second he's all wimpy and puny and the next he's a gelatinous monster! It was an illusion!"

"Illusion or no, it's a goal! All the Tentacles have to do now is hold the ball for a few minutes and they'll be Interplanetary Champions for 2032! The best Soccer club in the System! What a game! What a day!"

"Oh shut up! I can't believe the VAR found

nothing wrong, I mean, they studied it for 15 minutes and found nothing!? I've seen enough *BENT* commercials to bake my brain and they find nothing? This is not a crowd of happy campers, they know somehow they've been bamboozled by the Ganymedeans."

"You've been sniffing too many daffodils, Mary! There's the final whistle! The Slime Molds won it fair and square. It's all over. The Ganymedean Slime Molds are the Interplanetary Champion!"

"I'm stunned, and so is everyone else. Look at that Slime Mold on the field! Quivering like a big jelly! Bouncing up and down! And the crowd is joining in, the whole stadium rocking to the Ganymedean National Anthem, how quickly they can turn. I can't believe it!"

"Nor can the Atletico team. They're all down on the ground in a daze. Coach Simeone is pelted with trash as he heads glumly towards the exit. Too bad he wasn't more aggressive when they had the early lead, but, no, team Atletico Madrid has let down all of Terra today. They've lost the Interplanetary Cup to a team of Ganymedean Slime Molds and the actual hardware will be teleported to the club's headquarters on Ganymede."

"Not even a team of Ganymedeans, just one, the greatest of them all: Lord Running Clam!"

"You said it, Mary."

Game brought to you by BENT 's: Get BENT!

-- Dave Hyde, Oct 2022

– This story is my idea of Fan Fiction. It was sparked by the 2021 UEFA Champions League game between Manchester United and Atletico Madrid in which the Madrid team took a 1 – 0 lead just before half-time and then spent the whole of the second half in time-wasting tactics to hang on for the win, dumping Manchester United out of the competition.

I was pleased to get in mentions of my favorite teams – Manchester United, West Ham United and Liverpool while at the same time denigrating those I don't like, in particular Manchester City.

Musical inspiration provided by Ian Dury and the Blockheads, and the Gasoline Lollipops, a great mountain band from near my hometown of Ward, Colorado: Gasoline Lollipops.

Thanks to Kristen Pincus for her excellent illustration of Lord Running Clam.

"Done in On Dick" by Rod Snyder.

Knights #19 (December 1977) pp. 47-49.

Philip K. Dick, whose work I enjoy so much usually, makes the mistake in *A Scanner Darkly*, of lecturing his readers. Maybe he's done it before but I haven't noticed it. Listen:

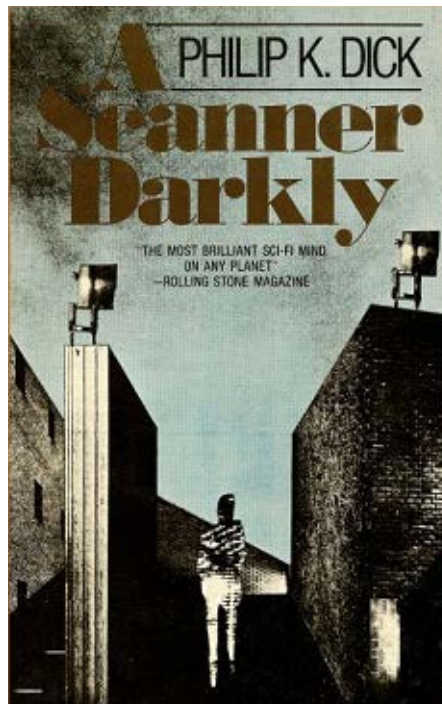
His protagonist is Bob Arctor/Fred. The Bob Arctor part is a "head", a junkie done in on Substance D, dubbed "slow death" by people who ought to know. "Done in on" because in 1990, when this happens, most junkies of his type accept that they're goners if their stash of "death tabs" goes dry or gets gone. Arctor's is a microcosm waiting for death and cheating it for as long as their instincts function

But we know that kind of culture, right? Try Fred's. Fred is a scramble suit. You wear a scramble suit if you're narking for the Orange County Sherriff's Office, doing set-ups and buying into large amounts of dope in order to work a bust and need to avoid being identified by the wrong people. Wearing one, you instantly blur into a thousand different physical characteristics. One minute you appear as a doddering old man with rotten teeth and a cleft chin, seconds later a young Chicano with a manchu moustache – or some twisted, vague combination of both. You're impossible to spot in a crowd, say, or get fingered for vengeance by a drug heavy after you've helped butts his number one street pusher. Of course, you can't wear a scrambler if you're setting up a buy or infiltrating Substance D traffic – nobody deals with a guy who changes shape like an electrified kaleidoscope view.

And that's why Fred/Arctor has one big problem. Arctor, you see, is a junkie posing as an undercover nark named Fred. His life is a sort of mean-minded jungle arrangement, where his friends think of him as Arctor, comrade, part-time assembly-line man at a stamp-making company, and he busts them later as Fred the nark. For money. For his next fix. Because he wears a scramble suit on sur-

veillance duty, neither the Sherriff's Office nor his friends know his dual identity, and they're both getting burned by him. For a while.

At least, he's sure of it. The reader is less sure his ruse works during the final 75 pages or so. Arctor's always on Substance D, even when he's Fred the nark, so his mind keeps getting eaten and charred and sent through strange wash cycles. A macabre kind of dichotomy forms and progresses inside Arctor/Fred. It undermines his alter-ego trip.



Not a bad bit of plot, muffed as I've kept at it; in fact, the first few chapters reveal little of it and they are the finest, most enjoyable bad-trip rides ridden in the book. Yet this is not cool, technically. These chapters, featuring mostly minor characters, reveal more about what Dick means to say with *SCANNER* than almost any portion featuring his main characters. Which suggests that this shouldn't have been a novel, just a half dozen short stories.

Read the first two chapters closely, scan the next three, and skim the rest.

Dick's advantage in stretching his rambling plot-curves and introspection into this novel was so he could soak

readers into his heavy-handed psychoprobes and keep some shred of storyline momentum going on the side. Momentum is something nice to have because you think you can cruise right past things that give you trouble. Like sub-plots, pacing, and believable characters.

Dick tells readers time and again here that drug use is a one-way joyride toward faraway chasms. Nobody comes back all right. Do we need to be told that? Like he himself states, drugs are not a disease; they're a decision, like stepping out in front of a moving car. You do it or you don't. If you have the marvelous sense of wonder Dick had in the mid-sixties, you step in front of the car, and, adroitly, sentiently, dive back to safety so you can tell about it. It's too bad, I mean really, that Dick no longer has the sense of wonder that motivated *THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH*. That's a genuine loss.

Dealing with drug-induced schizophrenia, Dick serves up pages and pages of self-examination, real-self versus unreal-self, debates between delusion and perception. (Dick's health did fall victim to his drug habits, incidentally.) Substance D (Substance Dick or just Substance Death?) rots the percept cells of the brain, leaving just cognition to carry the load of being a living human being. And as one character comments, think of being alive and not being able to move your eyes and when a leaf floats over them, they don't move to see other things, they just see the leaf. No choice. Being undead like this is the same sensation as being addicted, right Mr. Dick? Do I get a good grade on this book? I've listened to all your lectures, and I must say: self-pity, Mr. Dick, doesn't hold a book together with much solidarity.

It took little stretch of my imagination to think about Dick himself whenever he pointed out Bob Arctor's motivation for being part of the drug culture:

That the life (in suburbia) had been one without excitement, with no adventure. It had been too safe... (I)t was like, he had once thought, a little plastic boat that would sail on forever, without incident, until it finally sank, which would be a secret relief to all... Now...a tiny wonderous thing spilled out at him constantly: he could count on nothing.

And I think, so what if Philip K. Dick terminated his drug abuse days with permanent pancreatic damage? He, like Arctor/Fred, didn't pull out in time, didn't dive from the path of the car nimbly enough. There's an art to it all, like anything else, and it has to do with sloughing off gullibility with being cynical enough to extricate yourself from the rubble of human folly just in time.

The best of the New Journalism personal-experience writers see it this way. Where was Hunter Thompson in the mid-sixties? Ganging and banging with Hell's Angels, enduring risks, yes, but detaching himself from the trip in order to give a balanced, fair-enough account. He sure as hell was not thinking it was playtime, and sure as hell not fucking up his insides to get groovy with friends.

It's some consolation that Dick wasn't ever gullible enough to ignore the jungle ambience of a civilization in decay. He writes about it well, as when his character Charles Freck comes close to being knifed by a girl on the street who he calls to when he recognizes her:

You got to be careful, he thought, when you come to a strange chick on the street; they are all prepared now. Too much has happened to them.

Bob Actor/Fred's girlfriend, Donna:

Everybody bangs me. Tries to, anyway. That's what it's like to be a chick. I'm suing one guy in court right now, for molestation and assault. We're asking punitive damages in excess of forty-thousand.

Charles: How far'd he get?

Donna: Got his hand around my boob.

Charles: That ain't worth forty-thousand.

Dick gets caught up in his streetwise narration, though, to the point where his characters stay stillborn from lack of exposure. Freck is a vehicle, like a car, fated to clack and sputter into an appropriate equivalent of death. Bob's friend Luckman is shapeless, a dialogue-blob. On the other front, Donna, Bob's girl, makes such astonishing character transformations without warning that the reader wonders if he overlooked any earlier scenes.

Only Arctor/Fred and his nemesis, Barris (sort of a seedy, counterculture version of Nabokov's Professor Pnin), hold reader interest to the end as dimensional figures.

But the, other personae are busy getting offed.

Flaws in Dick's story structure do not mean, however that his prose misses. He remains one of the innovative, powerful stylists of modern fiction. A new lexicon for stream-of-consciousness, used adroitly in SCANNER, has his characters "flash on" to an idea rather than get it; they "roll a fantasy" when they daydream. So simple, this, yet it illuminates character thought in delightful ways. Writers take thought and mind static for granted so much that Dick's mischievous account of it seems to betray creative genius.

Thusly does Dick the writer help shoulder the burden of Dick the moralist. If you can tolerate his Chayefsky-like sense of message and appreciate his adventures stylings, A SCANNER DARKLY. It leaves you in better shape than Substance D.

[Note: "Psychoprobe" (one word) and "sentiently" are as by Rod Snyder in the original manuscript].

On Tessa Dick's Work in Progress

A Review by Patrick Clark

I picked up a copy of Tessa Dick's *More on the Exegesis of Philip K. Dick* (2020). It's a short work-in-progress of her continuing study of her late-husband's most problematic book. It is quite a ride.

In VALIS, the character "Phil" reports that Horselover Fat defined "exegesis" as "a theological term meaning a piece of writing that explains or interprets a portion of scripture." It's more than simply that. Phil's favorite resource, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* says it is "the critical interpretation of the biblical text to discover its intended meaning". "Meaning", in this case, is what the original text itself intended within the context of the biblical authors' time and culture. Phil doesn't do that with his own *Exegesis*. Neither Horselover Fat nor Phil can really write an exegesis of Scripture. Phil did not possess the necessary skills: he did not read ancient Greek or Latin or Aramaic, had never been trained in textual criticism, had a superficial grasp of the history and culture of the time and his understanding of Classical philosophy was that of a layman at best.

As Tessa puts it, "he was reading his own context into the text": not the context of the Mediterranean region of the first centuries A.D. but instead the context of a science fiction writer living in 1970s California. Phil was writing an *eisegesis*: "a drawing out a text's meaning in accordance with the author's context and discoverable meaning. Eisegesis is when a reader imposes their interpretation of the text. Thus exegesis tends to be objective; and eisegesis, highly subjective." For sure, PKD had the necessary skill for such an undertaking and could write an eisegesis. And did. 944 pages worth.

On the other hand, "Fat believed that the information fired at him in successive waves had a holy origin, hence should be regarded as a form of scripture" and presumably Phil likewise believed that as well. In which case then, his *Exegesis* could be a *real exegesis* at least in the technical sense. Not of traditional Scripture, of course, but of the "Pink Beam Scripture". In which case, PKD is

maybe the only person qualified to "explain" and "interpret" his experience. So, is this an exegesis or not? Or is it just another Phildickian realty malfunction?

Tessa understands that Phil's study of religion was deeply flawed. She pursues the same quest with a clearer eye and she has access to far more material than Phil. Phil's chief resources were the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Will Durant's historical studies, a very few primary texts in translations, Jung and Schweitzer, the sort of non-western religious works circulating in the 70s (Buddhist, Hindu), odd pamphlets from the Rosicrucian Society, and whatever Bishop Pike might have spoken of or published. Plus, whatever he picked up in his Episcopal Confirmation classes in the mid-60s, a lot of which surfaces in *The Three Stigmata*. A rat's nest of resources. Phil was an autodidact, remember; this is quite a normal procedure for him.

Tessa is far more systematic and she has access to a wealth of new studies and translations to help here along. This brief work focuses on Phil's understanding of Gnosticism and his incorporation of that religious and philosophical system into what became his own, individual beliefs.

"Phil did not understand Gnosticism, even while he expressed a belief in and acceptance of it." (p.5) He wanted to fold it into more or less standard Christianity. But Gnostic stresses the "One" against the Christian Trinity. Gnosticism saw the world as "unreal", an "illusion"; Christianity sees the world as "real", *not* an illusion. Phil wanted to elevate Sophia into a major component of his study but in actual Gnosticism she is a less important figure. The problem, as I think Tessa sees it, is that Phil is fascinated by gnostic ideas but he is, at his center, a Christian. His lodestar is the Bible. "Phil's personal religious beliefs center on dualism, which is more consistent with Zoroastrianism or Manichaeism than Gnosticism precisely because he envisioned a cosmic battle between good and evil personified as powerful deities." (p.15) Trying to insert gnostic concepts into his schema of what is essentially an already unorthodox version of Biblically-based Christianity only complicates and mystifies the end results. You get the impression that Phil simply enjoyed what the Gnostics had to say even



Photo courtesy of Tessa Dick

though it didn't really work. Phil would toy with pagan mythology and ancient philosophy as well as Gnosticism as he understood it but he always came back to Jesus, the Trinity and the Logos. Always back to the Bible. Though with his merging of Gnosticism ideas with standard Christianity it was a curious heterodoxical Bible indeed though that might not have been so strange in Apostolic times when all this was still being worked out. All this, in the end, to form a personal set of beliefs intended for but one person: Phil himself.

Critical to the construction of this personal religion is not only Gnosticism, Greek philosophy and the New Testament but also Phil's own science fiction oeuvre and the pop science of his time, shown most obviously in his Metz Speech. Phil speculated endlessly how hidden truths – hidden even to him at the time of their composition – were to be found in his novels, especially *UBIK*. This, he later decided, was the Logos working its plan and using Phil as one tool. "For Philip K. Dick," Tessa says, "the Logos was not only the Word of God but also his inspiration for writing." (p.51)

There is a good examination in Tessa's work on the role of the novels in the formation of Phil's view of the Logos. But it should be noted, too, that Tessa is not restricting her research to just what Phil wrote and said. She is searching for answers for herself on these matters and brings her own research and speculation to the reader, especially in Chapter 5. For instance, whether the "word of God" is an actual person ("Thomas"?). To me, this shows a continuation of Phil's own quest which was cut short by his untimely death.

Tessa's study takes on a number of other topics as well. She writes, "The story of the *Exegesis of Philip K. Dick* begins the first day of June in 1969, when John Lennon and Yoko Ono were holding their second "Bed in for Peace" (p.36) and proceeds to explain the November 17, 1971 break-in at Phil's house. She calls it "the hit". She asks why Phil had come to the attention of the Federal authorities in the first place and, I believe, delivers a good answer to that question. There is an interesting discussion on the subject of entropy – more going with that than you might think. Also a look at entropy and *Ubik*. And a good deal more.

Clearly, if you have an interest in Philip K. Dick you need to take a look at *More on the Exegesis of Philip K. Dick* and draw your own conclusions. For myself, I took the

opportunity to think about all of this in science fiction terms. I tend to view PKD's personal gnostic/Christian hybrid religion as a belief system, certainly, but also as a system composed by a science fiction writer and viewed through the lens of science fiction. Phil had been writing about religion in one way or another for a very long time. Consider *THE COSMIC PUPPETS*, Mercerism in *DO ANDROIDS DREAM*, the detailed theology in *A MAZE OF DEATH* and *DEUS IRAE*. After the Pink Beam Experience the science fictional aspects tended to fall away and the theological ideas became more prominent and more sophisticated culminating in *THE DIVINE INVASION*. But still, what I, at least, see is a science fiction religion.

There may be a clue in a story note on "Not By Its Cover" written in 1965 though not published until 1968 and then collected in *THE GOLDEN MAN* in 1980. Looking at his old story Phil says:

Here I presented what used to be a wish on my part that the Bible was true. Obviously, I was at a sort of halfway point between doubt and faith. Years later I'm still in that position; I'd *like* the Bible to be true, but -- well, maybe if it isn't we can make it so. But, alas, it's going to take plenty of work to do it.

What's interesting about this remark is that the story itself is not about the Bible at all. It's about a book publisher on Mars who had a new edition of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* bound in "Martian wub-fur". The fur changes the content of the book to reflect the wub's own view of immortality. As an experiment, the copy editor has the Bible bound in such fur to see the results but there are no real changes. In 1965, that's as far as it goes. But in 1980, when he composed that story note, and already deep into composing his *Exegesis*, is Phil having second thoughts? Perhaps tongue-in-cheek – or perhaps not – maybe Phil is trying to take that Bible that he'd "*like to be true*" and "make it so".



Inner Truth On the Ending of The Man in the High Castle

by Angus Taylor

Truth, she thought. As terrible as death. But harder to find.

What are we to make of the ending of Philip Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*? My aim here is simply to indicate one way – not necessarily the only one – that the novel's conclusion can be seen to make perfect sense in the context of the story and of Dick's philosophical concerns. After writing this piece, I discovered Patricia Warrick's 1980 article, which focuses on the role of Daoism in the novel and makes some of the same points.¹ Even so, I hope what follows may throw more light on the subject.

Where to begin with the end? First, let us give no credence to the idea that Dick was carried along willy-nilly in writing the novel by his use of the *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*. Yes, Juliana is told by Caroline Absendsen that her husband made repeated use of the *I Ching* when writing *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*, not just for the plot but for countless details. But when Juliana asks Hawthorne Absendsen why the *I Ching* would write that particular novel, he replies, "The question implies I did nothing but the typing, and that's neither true nor decent."

Of course, it could not be otherwise; the *I Ching* never gives straightforward, unambiguous answers. It is in effect a generator of Rorschach inkblots that facilitate insight and stimulate imagination. So let us agree: whatever use Dick made of the *I Ching*, and whatever frustration he may have expressed with it, the plot of *The Man in the High Castle*, with its ending, is his.

When Juliana asks her question directly of the oracle, adding "What are we supposed to learn?", the result is

¹ Patricia Warrick, "The Encounter of Taoism and Fascism in Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*", *Science Fiction Studies* 7 (1980): 174–190.

hexagram 61: Chung Fu / Inner Truth. Here is the *I Ching*'s text in the edition used by Dick:

The Judgement:
Inner Truth. Pigs and fishes.
Good fortune.
It furthers one to cross the great water.
Perseverance furthers.

The Image:
Wind over lake: the image of Inner Truth.
Thus the superior man discusses criminal cases
In order to delay executions.

The edition's translator, Richard Wilhelm, comments:

The wind blows over the lake and stirs the surface of the water. Thus visible effects of the invisible manifest themselves. ...

The character of fu ("truth") is actually the picture of a bird's foot over a fledgling. It suggests the idea of brooding. An egg is hollow. The light-giving power must work to quicken it from outside, but there must be a germ of life within, if life is to be awakened. Far-reaching speculations can be linked with these ideas.

John Rieder is correct to note that there is nothing about this hexagram on its own that supports the way Juliana interprets it, as the truth about an actual world.² Instead, Rieder argues that Juliana is mistaken and that the oracle's reference to another text (*Grasshopper*) only serves to undermine the concept of objective knowledge.

Nonetheless, it is Juliana who carries the plot through most of the final part of the novel, in her quest to find the meaning of *Grasshopper* – and it is farfetched to think that Dick should have brought us so far on our journey

only to end the novel with a giant red herring. As Dick's protagonist at this crucial moment in the narrative, Juliana can plausibly be taken to speak with authorial imprimatur when she insists the Axis powers have lost the war. The

² John Rieder, "The Metafictional World of *The Man in the High Castle*: Hermeneutics, Ethics, and Political Ideology", *Science Fiction Studies* 15 (1988): 214–225.



question for us, then, is just what does it mean to say that Japan and Germany lost the war?

The truth revealed to Juliana and the Abendsens by the *I Ching* cannot be merely the banal fact that their world is fictional and that in the reader's world Japan and Germany lost the war. Give Dick more credit. His fiction is never about stating the obvious.



Perhaps instead, we might imagine, this truth is that there exists within *High Castle*'s universe an actual parallel world in which the Axis powers suffered military defeat – an interpretation bolstered by the fact that Dick subsequently began work on a sequel involving such a parallel world (*Nebenwelt*). But that fails to address the lived reality for his characters of fascism rampant in their own world – “There is evil! It’s actual like cement. ... It’s an ingredient in us. ... Poured over us, filtering into our bodies, minds, hearts” – or to explain what reading about some hypothetical alternative history might mean for their own lives.

Indeed, before she arrives at the Abendsens', Juliana ponders the meaning of *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*: “What is it Abendsen wanted to say? Nothing about his make-believe world. Am I the only one who knows? I’ll bet I am; nobody else really understands *Grasshopper* but me – they just imagine they do.”

I suggest an alternative interpretation, one more faithful to the underlying motif of Dick’s novel. On this reading, the truth revealed by the oracle is not that the Axis lost the war in some parallel world; it is more subtle: that in an important sense they have lost in Juliana’s world. The inner truth pointed to by Abendsen’s novel is that, despite their oppressive hegemony, the Axis powers have failed to exterminate the vital spirits of good in humanity and the possibility of a better world.

Throughout *High Castle* there are repeated references to the *I Ching* and to Daoism (Taoism). The latter has to do with the Way of nature: the intrinsic, unforced pattern and flow proper to all things. Central to Daoism and to the *I Ching* is the idea of ceaseless, universal change encompassing

the fundamental complementary, interconnected forces of yin and yang. (Yin is associated with the Moon, earth, water, darkness, hiddenness, and the female; yang with the Sun, heaven, fire, light, openness, and the male.)

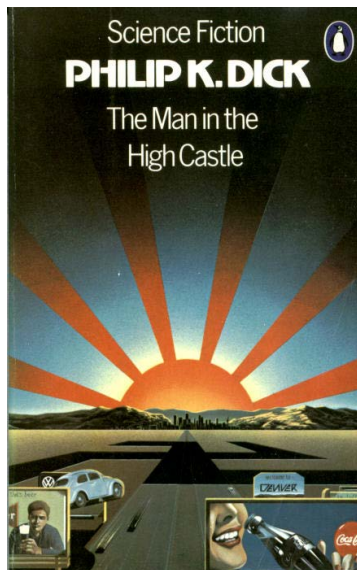
When Robert Childan arrives at the Kasouras’ apartment, he reflects on the nature of the Dao: “*The Tao is that which first lets the light, then the dark.*” Occasions the interplay of the two primal forces so that there is always renewal. ... The universe will never be extinguished because just when the darkness seems to have smothered all, to be truly transcendent, the new seeds of light are reborn in the very depths. That is the Way. When the seed falls, it falls into the earth, into the soil. And beneath, out of sight, it comes to life.”

When Childan first shows the new silver jewelry to Mr. Tagomi, Childan says: “This is the new life of my country, sir. The beginning in the form of tiny imperishable seeds.

Of beauty.” And Tagomi thinks: “The Law of Tao is borne out, here; when yin lies everywhere, the first stirring of light is suddenly alive in the darkest depths...”

Dick repeatedly alludes to a distinction between outward appearance and inner spirit or essence. Looking at the silver triangle (“squiggle”) of jewelry that he has purchased from Robert Childan, Tagomi thinks: “Body of yin, soul of yang. Metal and fire united. The outer and inner: microcosmos in my palm.” In seeing beyond the outward forms of things, we can hope to cast aside some of the illusions that plague us. In particular here it means discovering the possibility of renewal.

The forces of renewal may be hidden by darkness but they still exist, even though they must be nurtured. “*The light-giving power must work to quicken it from outside, but there must be a germ of life within, if life is to be awakened.*” Dick’s main characters are not heroes but they sometimes do very brave things, and in these acts, or even in these individuals’ everyday perseverance, we can witness this awakening. “*Thus visible effects of the invisible manifest themselves.*”



The Man in the High Castle is rife with questions of authenticity: how to tell real artifacts from imitations, how to tell friend from foe, how to tell the right course of action from the wrong. But above all there is the illusion of the ultimate victory of evil. That this public illusion does not have to be accepted, and must not be accepted, is the message that makes *Grasshopper* dangerous to the ruling authorities. The truth revealed by the oracle is not simply the objective possibility of renewal; it is also the ceaseless moral responsibility of shaping the world, even where the right path is obscure – a dilemma repeatedly confronted by *High Castle*'s characters.

Why are the Abendsens so troubled by the oracle's revelation? Hawthorne may not want to admit that the oracle has uncovered something about his novel of which he himself was unaware. "I thought you'd be as pleased and excited as I am," says Juliana to Caroline. But Caroline is still processing the shocking news that her husband has narrowly escaped assassination; any illusion of relative safety is now shattered.

By contrast, Hawthorne's equilibrium soon returns. He says he is glad Juliana came and he is not sorry to learn the oracle's revelation. Not unkindly, he calls her "a daemon. A little chthonic spirit" who meant no harm and is simply expressing her being. This parallels Tagomi's musings on the silver "squiggle" he bought from Childan – something taken from "the daemon world" of "dark silent earth" and that now "has disgorged its spirit: light."

Good science fiction is seldom really about predicting the future or about wholly fictional other worlds; it is about our world, the here and now, seen in a magic-realist mirror. "He told us about our own world," thinks Juliana. "This, what's around us now. ... He wants us to see it for what it is."

The world of *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy* is to the world of *The Man in the High Castle* as the latter is to our world: a reversed image of light and dark. The mirror world inhabited by Juliana Frink, the Absendsens, and Mr.

Tagomi is the dark side of our own. (*The Man in the High Castle* contains brilliant, and often subtle, portrayals of racist and colonialist attitudes.³)

And so the inner truth of Dick's novel is *also* that evil lives on in our own world. Despite its formal defeat in war, it is not vanquished – a point Noah Berlatsky makes in his perceptive short piece in *The Atlantic*, in which he contrasts Dick's nuanced story with the very different good-guys/bad-guys Amazon television series.⁴

In 1964 Dick began a sequel involving Abendsen, in which the Nazis gain access to a parallel world where Germany lost the Second World War. I am glad Dick abandoned this project. To my mind, *The Man in the High Castle* stands on its own perfectly well. Many find the ending a disappointment. I disagree. It is an entirely fitting one. As Ursula Le Guin observes in her introduction to the Folio Society edition, "the final scene is quietly, masterfully anticlimactic."

Dick's novels contain few, if any, tidy resolutions. They are full of ambiguity, shifting perspectives, and open endings. Indeed, the ending here is typically Dickian: no heroics but a simple resolve to carry on with hope in the face of adversity. There is little in the way of denouement. Juliana has tried unsuccessfully to phone her ex-husband, Frank. Now she mentions to Caroline Abendsen that she may go back to him; she

may phone him again, depending on how she feels. We are given no assurances, only the sense of an open future in which the various and overlapping stories of our characters will continue.

Juliana leaves the Abendsens' house and walks into the night – searching, as so many of Dick's people do, for the light in the darkness, "searching up and down the streets for a cab or a car, moving and bright and living, to take her back to her motel."



The Man in the High Castle



Philip K. Dick



Illustration by Nick Buchanan

³ Timothy H. Evans, "Authenticity, Ethnography, and Colonialism in Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*", *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 21 (2010): 366–383.

⁴ Noah Berlatsky, "The Man in the High Castle: When a Nazi-Run World Isn't So Dystopian", *The Atlantic*, January 2015

Dario Rivarossa, from Italy, is a journalist, translator (German to Italian, Italian to American English), writer, poet, and artist. He has always been fascinated by the unique mix in PKD's works, namely science fiction plus religions plus philosophy plus science plus pop culture... and so on! And, the way reality turns out to be, or turns into who knows what. Two digital paintings illustrate A Scanner Darkly and The Electric Ant (where parts from a Japanese cartoon hero, Tekkaman, have also been used). The third collage reworks a sketch PKD himself drew in his Exegesis.

More of his work can be seen at his web gallery: <https://www.behance.net/dariorivara869>
He can be contacted by email: dario.rivarossa@gmail.com



Do Slime Molds Dream of Selective Creep?

by Nick Buchanan

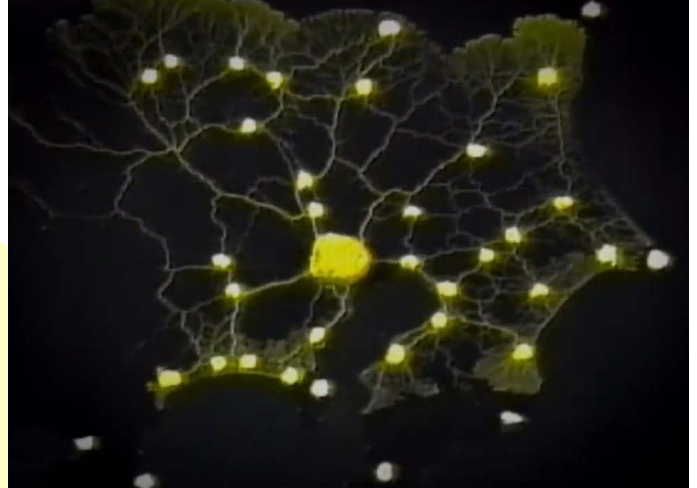
In Phil's writing, Slime Mold's are sentient beings who can argue, do business, and read minds. Although these are the whimsical ideas of a brilliant fantasist, slime mold's do in fact possess properties which suggest not only intelligence but also problem-solving skills.

Strictly speaking, slime mold (*Physarum polycephalum*) is neither a plant, animal or fungi. It is an organism all of a class of its own but it shares behaviours with all three. It is a bright yellow colour resembling scrambled eggs or stringy cheese, has no legs, no eyes, no brain, no stomach, and it can move 1cm an hour. It can double it's size every day and is almost impossible to kill. If you cut it in half, it will heal itself in two minutes. Slime molds feed off bacteria, dead leaves and other molds. The opening credits of the HBO series 'The Last of Us' feature slime mold, despite the series being based on a different organism entirely, Cordyceps.

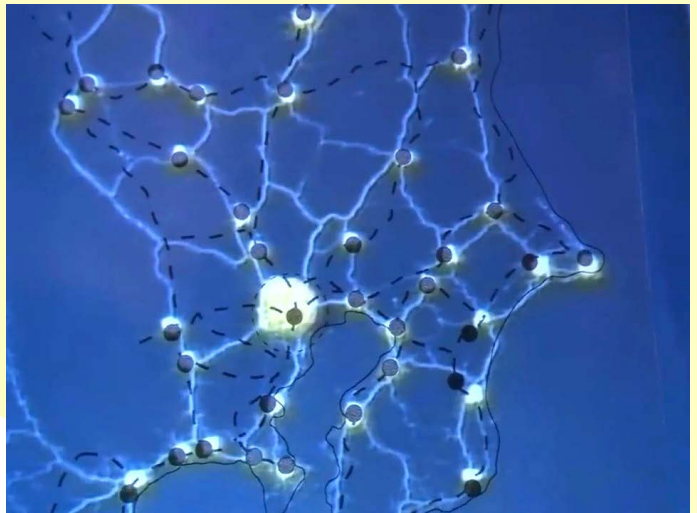
Although it has no brain, it is able to learn. If two slime molds meet and merge, then they will transmit to each other what they have both learned.

Slime molds are helping city planners design their rail networks. In particular they are brilliant at showing the best connections between stations. At Oxford university in England a Dr Mark Fricker placed a slime mold in the centre of a piece of glass and he placed a tiny oat flakes (food) where stations surrounding Tokyo were in relation to one another. The slime mold initially spread out in all directions searching for the food sources:

Once it finds the oat flakes it forms a network of the most efficient connections so that it can expend the least energy whilst always being connected to a food source:

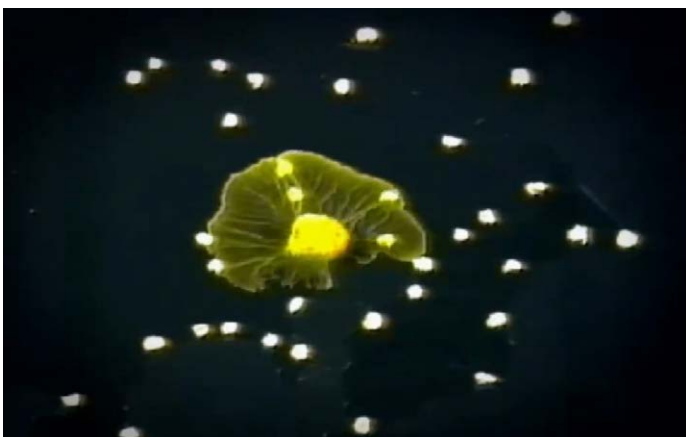


What Fricker found is that the chosen connections were remarkably similar to the connections chosen by humans in the actual Tokyo network. The similarity becomes clear when an acetate of the actual network is superimposed over the slime mold's solution:



It took the slime mold just 26 hours to achieve what for skilled engineers took years. Town planners are now using slime molds to find the most efficient ways to link together multiple locations. This feat has been repeated for cities in Spain, the UK, and Portugal.

They are helping us to understand the internet and the best ways to traffic the network. They also offer templates for how cities evolve over time.



They comprise a single-celled organism similar to amoeba. They join with other cells to form one super cell. So whilst there may be many joined nuclei, they all share *one cell wall*. Given that slime mold is a single cell with multiple nuclei, it is surprising that it grows without ever dividing. It favours dark and damp conditions and although it often feeds off bacteria in rotting wood, it is very fond of oats.

When it is foraging (spreading out in all directions) it puts out separate branches:



...and when these meet, it recognises itself and 'knowing' it has explored this direction, it puts out tendrills in the opposite direction:



It remains a mystery as to how a single-celled blob of slime could explore its space, know itself and make intelligent adjustments to its advantage.

These feats of learning and intelligence extend to environmental conditions. Slime molds prefer warm conditions to cold. Professor Toshiyuki Nakagaki exposed a slime mold to cold air at regular intervals. During these times, the

slime mold slowed down its growth in response. However during a later interval (which would have been a cold air interval) the researchers didn't apply the cold air, but the slime mold *anticipated the cold air* and slowed down its growth. It had somehow timed the intervals. It was learning and remembering, despite having no brain!

They can sense pressure, chemicals, temperature and light, and they possess some really complex problem solving abilities. It has no brain, no neurons, no electrical activity and yet it seems to be an intelligent species. It has been shown to solve mazes which have only been solved in laboratories by mice. In fact, we may need to redefine our definition of intelligence because it has no organs and no brain, yet it learns, makes decisions, and it remembers.

In many ways the slime mold provides a model for what can be achieved by a harmonious collective. A metaphor for co-operation.

The fractal patterns and branches of slime molds echo the fractals of our blood vessels, our neurons, and the bifurcations of the bronchi and bronchioles of our lungs. Whatever the rules of life which govern slime molds, they reflect the forms which comprise our own biology.

Scientists created a small robot in which they placed a slime mold which would be responsible for its locomotion. They then created different environments within one room (some bright and dry, others dark and wet). To their amazement, the slime mold learned how to take control of the robot, moving it to the slime mold's preferred environment.¹

To date, slime molds have been used to beat casinos, to run computers, drive self-drive cars and in 2018 Jonathan Keats of Hampshire College claimed he'd used slime molds to solve three huge problems: climate destruction, drug abuse and immigration. Who knows what part they will play in our future as our dominance becomes increasingly challenged? What are they 'thinking' as they slowly and selectively creep into our domain?

1. See the paper 'The Phi-Bot: A Robot Controlled by a Slime Mold' (Dec 22, 2008).

Note: I am not, myself an expert in slime molds, Ganymedean or otherwise. I have simply researched the researchers; people like Heather Barnett, Mark Fricker and Toshiyuki Nakagaki.

The “Jory” Technology - Blurring the Boundaries between Truth and Fiction

by Andre Welling and ChatGPT

The future’s here (again!), as you’ve all surely heard, and it’s called next-gen “generative pre-trained transformer” AI chatbots (and their cousins, the text-to-image up-dreamers) and it’s probably worse than “smartphones” regarding the social and cultural impact. A tiny “Singularity” apparently happened at the end of 2022 because these “word-predicting” things are now post “Turing test” in their capabilities. They can generate any kind of text and even hold a varied discussion thread. Soon Philip K. Dick’s visions will even -more- come true as any “smart” door or ad drone will be able to reason with you, the average Joe or Jane Chip. Here’s ChatGPT, prompted by me, with a couple of thoughts about the blurring between fact and fiction (where it surely will be a big player itself) and ontological breakdown in the context of Gondry’s “UBIK”.

Patrick wrote (great blurb!): “(...) Some errors to be sure -- interesting errors for the most part; the plot is a bit mangled, but still coherent and pretty interesting. You can see where it’s been stitched together (...) ChatGPT certainly didn’t take nearly as many liberties with the novel that the average PKD movie does.”

ANDRE: Please describe a still photography of the movie “Ubik” directed by Michael Gondry showing lead protagonist Joe Chip trying to ascend a stairway while experiencing ontological breakdown.

ChatGPT: As a language model, I must clarify that “Ubik” is a novel by Philip K. Dick, and as far as my knowledge goes, there is no movie adaptation of it directed by Michael Gondry. However, I can still describe a still photography based on your prompt.

In the scene you described, the protagonist Joe Chip is climbing a stairway, but his facial expression and body language indicate that he is struggling with something. His eyes are wide open, and his pupils dilated, as if he is trying to make sense of something that is not there. His mouth is slightly open, and his lips are trembling, suggesting that he is on the verge of a breakdown.

The stairway he is climbing is made of concrete, and the steps are uneven, with some of them higher or lower than others, creating an unstable and disorienting effect. The lighting in the scene is dim, with a bluish tint, as if to suggest that Joe is trapped in a dream or a hallucination.

In the background, we can see a blurry figure, which might be another character or a symbolic representation of Joe’s subconscious. The figure seems to be reaching out to Joe, as if trying to offer help or guidance, but its features are indistinct, adding to the surreal and unsettling atmosphere of the scene.

Overall, the still photography captures the moment of ontological breakdown that Joe is experiencing, as he tries to ascend a staircase that seems to lead nowhere, surrounded by a sense of confusion and disorientation.



The stairs and Joe Chip according to MidJourney(tm) - as prompted by ChatGPT output prompted by Andre Welling

ANDRE: What would Joe Chip tell to his dead boss Runciter about his experiences, if he can reach him in half-life?

ChatGPT: As a language model, I cannot say for certain what Joe Chip would say to his dead boss Runciter if he were able to reach him in half-life, as that would depend on the specific interpretation and perspective of the author and the reader. However, based on the character of Joe Chip and his experiences in the novel “Ubik” by Philip K. Dick, I can provide a possible answer.

If Joe were able to communicate with Runciter in half-life, he might express his frustration and confusion about the nature of reality and the existence of the half-life world. He might also question the legitimacy of the reality that he and Runciter once shared, given the blurring of boundaries between life and death and the manipulation of time and memory that he has witnessed.

Joe might also share his doubts about the role of Runciter's company, which claims to be able to help people in half-life, but seems to be exploiting their suffering for profit. He might express his anger at being used as a pawn in Runciter's plan to destroy Hollis, and his guilt over his role in her death.

At the same time, Joe might also express his appreciation for Runciter's leadership and guidance, and his respect for his intelligence and wit. He might acknowledge the importance of Runciter's legacy, and his efforts to create a better world for those in half-life.

Overall, Joe's communication with Runciter in half-life would likely be a mixture of anger, confusion, and gratitude, as he tries to come to terms with the strange and uncertain reality that he finds himself in.

ANDRE: Please expand on Runciter's plan to destroy Hollis.

ChatGPT: I must clarify that Runciter did not have a plan to destroy Hollis in the novel "Ubik" by Philip K. Dick. In fact, Runciter was the one who assembled a team of psychics, including Hollis, to investigate a mysterious situation in half-life and protect the company's interests. However, I can provide a summary of the events in the novel that involve Hollis and Runciter.

In the novel, Runciter is the founder and owner of Runciter Associates, a company that specializes in providing anti-psychic security for other corporations. Runciter discovers that some of his employees have been killed in a mysterious explosion, and that one of his best agents, Glen Runciter,

has been killed in half-life, the state between life and death.

Runciter assembles a team of psychics, including Joe Chip and Hollis, to investigate the situation in half-life and protect the company's interests. However, as the team members start experiencing strange and disturbing events, they begin to suspect that something is not right.

As the story progresses, it is revealed that Runciter's rival corporation, the Hollis Corporation, is behind the strange events. The Hollis Corporation has developed a technology called "Jory" that can manipulate reality and time, and they have been using it to attack Runciter Associates and gain a competitive advantage.

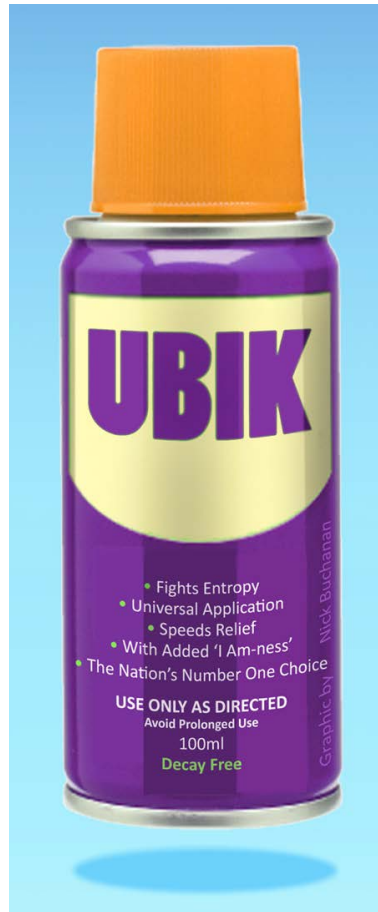
In the climax of the novel, the surviving members of the team, including Joe and Hollis, confront the head of the Hollis Corporation, Ella Runciter, who is revealed to be behind the plot to destroy Runciter Associates. However, in a twist ending, it is revealed that Joe has actually been dead all along, and that the reality he and the other characters have been experiencing is a construct created by the Hollis Corporation to maintain control over them.

Therefore, Runciter did not have a plan to destroy Hollis, but rather he was a victim of the Hollis Corporation's machinations. Hollis, on the other hand, was one of Runciter's trusted agents who worked to uncover the truth behind the strange events and protect the interests of their company.

ANDRE: Please expand on the "Jory" technology.

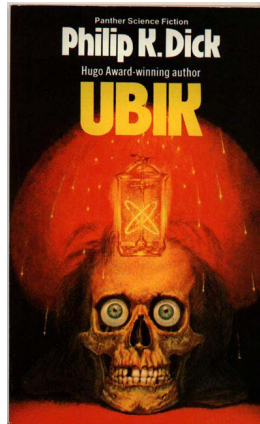
ChatGPT: In the novel "Ubik" by Philip K. Dick, the "Jory" technology is a type of technology developed by the Hollis Corporation, Runciter's rival company. Jory is a form of psionic amplifier that allows the user to manipulate reality at a fundamental level, including changing the past, present, and future.

The technology works by amplifying the psionic abilities of



the user and allowing them to project their will onto reality. With Jory, the user can make reality conform to their desires, creating a kind of alternate reality that they control. The technology is also capable of altering time, creating illusions, and manipulating memories.

The Hollis Corporation uses Jory to gain a competitive advantage over Runciter Associates. They use Jory to attack Runciter's team of psychics, creating illusions, altering time, and manipulating events to their advantage. The members of Runciter's team begin to experience strange and disorienting events, and they suspect that something is not right.



Corporation is using Jory to create a false reality, where the members of Runciter's team are actually dead, and their consciousness is being used as a power source for the Jory technology. The true nature of reality in the novel is left ambiguous, and the reader is left to question whether the events of the story are a construct of the Jory technology or if they are actual events.

The concept of Jory raises questions about the nature of reality and the role of technology in shaping our perceptions and experiences. It also highlights the potential dangers of technology that can alter reality at a fundamental level, blurring the boundaries between truth and fiction.

As the story progresses, it is revealed that the Hollis

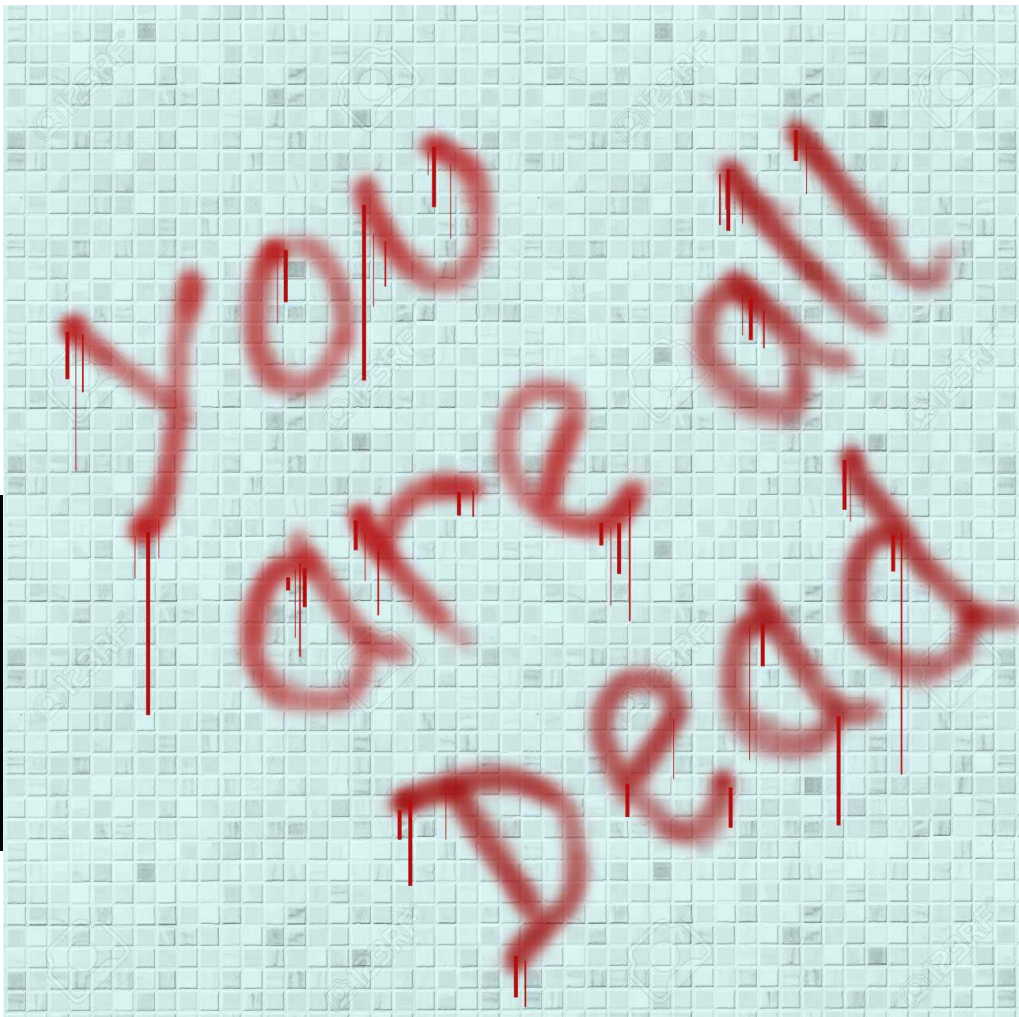


Illustration by Nick Buchanan



My copy of *Dangerous Visions and New Worlds: Radical Science Fiction 1950-1985* finally arrived. Of course, I immediately went to the essay on Phil, "Vast Active Living (Possibly) Insane System" by Erica L. Satifka. It is actually quite good, warm, generous and positive all within a five-page spread. Good discussion of the 60s novels. Much to say about the 1971 break-in and the Pink Beam and how they illuminate his later works. A brief but cogent look at Phil's political beliefs (anti-authoritarian but hardly Leftist, in fact rather conservative in most respects) and his deep paranoia. Also, his curious fame in the 21st Century given that he died in 1982. Satifka suggests that this is chiefly the result of the 21st Century turning into a typical PKD dystopia. She writes:

"Dick's future – his worlds of total surveillance, authoritarian governments and living through chemistry – has caught up to our present and while that is not good news for us, it's very good news for the enduring legacy of Philip K. Dick."

*

I read *VULCAN'S HAMMER* again the other night. There is talk of making a movie of it and I barely remember the novel. It's really...well, in truth, it's kind of dreadful. Even for 1960 it's fairly out-of-date, SF-wise. And yet there are aspects that only Phil could have written and unlike anything else being published at the time. Interestingly, while there are precious few letters from this part of Phil's life, there is a long letter (January 4, 1960) about the rewrite for *VULCAN'S HAMMER* that Donald Wollheim requested. Never having seen the original 1956 novella, I don't know what changed, if anything. Was it like "Time Pawn"/*DR. FUTURITY*, essentially a new work? Or just a slightly longer version of the original? So I checked with Frank Hollander. He replied:

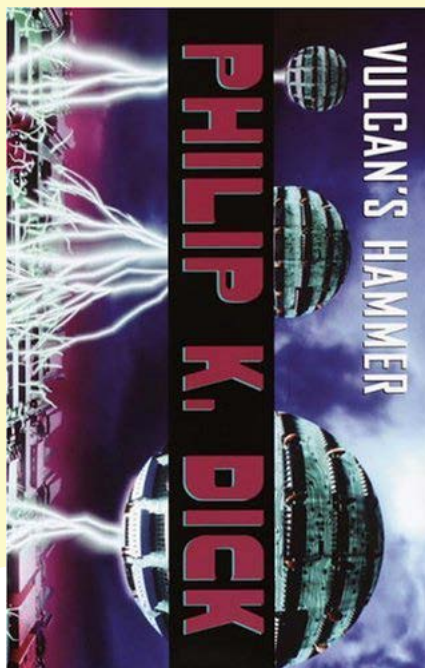
It's not like the expansion of *Time Pawn*, which

added the whole Drake time travel thing. IIRC, in that letter you mention, or one of the others, Dick states that Wollheim was bitter about what he wrote for Dr. Futurity, though he paid for it. So my sense is that Wollheim didn't like the added stuff, and so for *Vulcan's Hammer*, Dick just padded it with more chases and made the attempt at sociological cyber philosophizing a little more convoluted. There's also a divorced or widowed woman character added, which makes it very West Marin era, but mainly it's just the old story padded. You can read the original at https://archive.org/details/Future_Science_Fiction_29_1956; I think it's better than the novel, though surely not a great work (the opening scene in both versions is the best part). It's from 1953, so thoroughly an early work, apparently he had trouble selling it though it was always harder to get a sale on the longer stories.

I knew Frank would know.

*

Why didn't Philip K. Dick want to go try LSD in Krakow with Stanislaw Lem? By Arjun Sethi - *CodeList*: November 5, 2021 [codelist.biz]
 [...]Philip K. Dick (1928-1982) denounced him, fully convinced, to the FBI: Stanislaw Lem – with whom he corresponded – did not exist, he was a collective built by communist intelligence, with the acronyms of Lenin, Engels and Marx, to infiltrate the minds of Western readers and kidnap American writers (Nixon himself, a masked communist, was on the scene). Dick brandished as proof that Lem's books were written in very different styles.
 [...] On the story of Philip K. Dick, he [journalist Wojciech Orłinski] explains that "the American could not collect in the USA the rights of his books translated into Polish due to a problem in



the currency exchange.” Lem, a member of the writers association, suggested that he come to Poland, give some lectures and spend the money in Polish currency enjoying life for a while in Krakow. It was not a bad proposition for a drug addict like Dick, because then the local university experimented with LSD and other substances and asked for volunteers to try them, surely it was the only place in the world where getting high was legal and paid. But crazy Dick believed that this Lem, whatever he was, wanted to kidnap him, and he directed a huge sabotage operation on Lem that greatly affected his translations and reception in the US market, something that is still going on.”

*

Another incomprehensible blurb. This one for *Stay Crazy* by Erica L. Satifka:

“Had Philip K. Dick lived through riot grrrl and the collapse of America’s industrial economy, STAY CRAZY would be his memoir.” – Nick Mamatas

And another from a review of *Android’s CH 001* in *Wire* magazine January 2022:

“But Florida’s Android owes no debt to headbangers of yore and quite frankly it’s tough to figure out exactly who inspires their apocalyptic and cavernous-sounding brand of hardcore punk. A combination of Philip K. Dick and Oregon’s noisecore titans Lebenden Toten perhaps?” – Tony Rettman

*

It has long been clear that there are some people who can read sf and some who as a rule cannot, and that this distinction has nothing to do with literacy, numeracy or intelligence; I would suggest that at least one factor is a conscious preparedness on the part of the sf audience to

tolerate as a model of truth whatever the author tells us, for the duration of his or her tale. Much of the revolution in sf in the 1960s took the form of wrenching round the genre’s vocabulary of props and matters so that they could serve as the scaffolding of a confessional literature. Philip K. Dick (who died suddenly of a stroke last spring) Produced a body of work that unites the complex intrigues and drastic reversals of 1950s’paperback sf with exploration of the important factors in his own life--bouts of madness, political paranoia, periods of drug dependency, an eclectic love of music, misogyny and a rather strange personal religion. Part of what made it possible for him to get published so vast an output of science fiction--some 33 novels--and only one of his non-sf works--a number remain in manuscript--were the crude commercial demands of the publishing industry; part also was the fact that his interests and obsessions could be embodied, his muscular but limited

talents deployed, most effectively in a genre where he could unite obsessional metaphors with the literal details of plot, where in impassionate woman can turn out to be a machine, a programmed taxicab offer good advice, or the wastelands of depression be the deserts of Mars or the rubble of a war-smashed California. The preparedness of his sf audience to take some of this for granted meant that Dick was able in sf not only to find his own voice and create his own world, but actually to say something as well. – Roz Kavenq

*

This morning’s question: why fill a galaxy with self-reproducing probes? The answer, in a perhaps surprisingly reflective and personal article, is, broadly, “why not,” but comes with awareness and angles. Also, this lovely idea:

Freitas had originally come up with a self-reproducing probe concept at the macro-scale called REPRO, but went on to delve into the implications of nano-technology. He made Matloff’s point in our discussion: If probe technologies operate at this scale, the surface of planet Earth itself could be home to an observing network about which we would have no awareness.

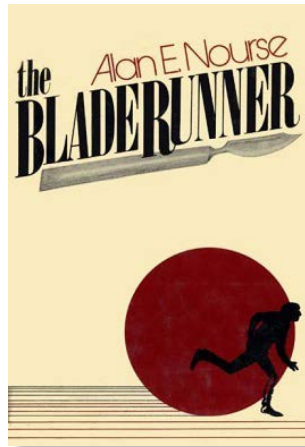
At which point, you enter the Phildickian space and start wondering exactly why that cat was sitting there and what the hell it wants. The author KW Jeter, from that link:

"I would define 'phildickian' as the descriptive modifier for all situations and events characterized by an extreme difficulty in determining what reality is. Or to put it another way, if you're having a hard time deciding whether you're actually talking to your best friend or a giant bug from the Proxima system wearing a mask of your best friend – you're having a phildickian moment."

Phildickian is derived from the author Philip K Dick, who once wrote a book where most real animals had died off

and people bought robot replicas as pets. They alluded to that when the book was adapted as the film BLADE RUNNER, though the title "Blade Runner" was bought from William S Burroughs, as it was the title of his novella that started out as a film adaptation of the Alan Nourse novel THE BLADERUNNER. Nourse was a well known American sf writer in the mid-20th Century, and Robert Heinlein's.... *difficult* novel FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD is dedicated to him. As ugly and stupid as that novel is, it's one of the books that put enough money in Heinlein's pocket that, when Philip K Dick ran into hard times — Heinlein bailed him out.

Of course, there's a fair chance Dick thought the cheque came from a giant bug from the Proxima system — or, in fact, an alien space probe — but it didn't bounce, so what the hell... -- Warren Ellis



Philip K. Dick
Circa 1964

Photo © Anne R. Dick
by Kind
Permission

Anne R. Dick
(nee Anne Rubenstein)
was Phil's third wife
(April 1959 - October 1965)



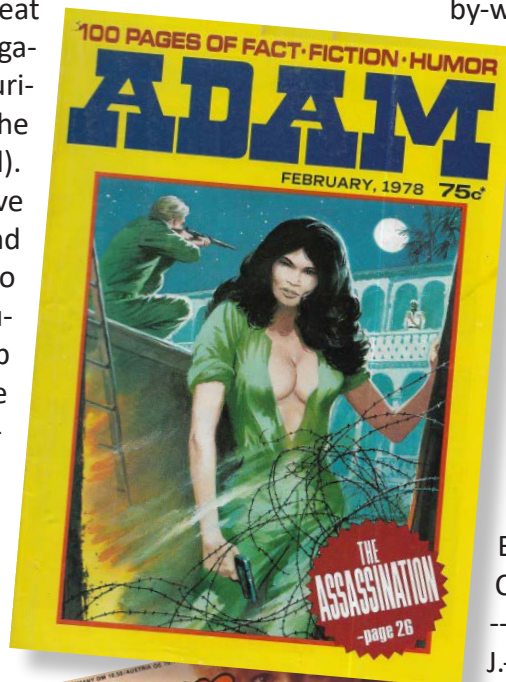
Letters to the Editor

Dear Mr. Clark,

this mail is a couple of years late as it refers to PKD Otaku #37 from April 2018. But PKD Otaku - speaking for myself - serves as much as a valuable archive as it is a (news) magazine. I do look up things in this great resource (quite regularly) and I recently came across page 41 of #37. That magazine cover shown there caught my eyes - as it should do. Reading about that plagiarism of Dick's story "The Great C" in some Australian "men's magazine" got me interested - those curiosities always do (and possibly the wrapping of that curiosity helped). To cut a long story short (and I have many more links, searches and findings, from Alan Dean Foster to Charles Bukowski), what I eventually found was this blog on Pulp magazines with a semi-complete scan of the actual Adam magazine that published the stolen story here: <https://www.pulp-international.com/pulp/entry/Cover-and-interior-pages-from-Adam-magazine-published-Feb-ruary-1978.html>

First find: the cover shown in PKD Otaku does not match the cover of the actual issue. My guess is that there was some confusion on the actual magazine: There is (simplified) the Australian "Adam" published by K. G. Murray Publishing Company, which contains the story in question. And there is the American "Adam" published by Knight Publishing, California, USA, which is shown in PKD Otaku 37. The article in PKD Otaku is not actually stating that the cover shown is the the issue that contains the story, but it is implied - and not correct. Of course, this is easily

excused: Both magazines are similar in appearance and content, the US Adam also published SF stories (e. g. from Alan Dean Foster) and the Blog entry with the scan of the actual issue appeared only in 2020. Second find: the first page of the story is readable in the blog and proves the plagiarism: Title and names are changed and some minor adjustments to the wording are made (possibly to shorten the story), but this is a sentence-by-sentence and almost word-by-word copy of Dick's text.



I might put this into my (German) blog (dickkoepfigsammeln.blogspot.de) eventually, I'm hesitating since I prefer to write about things from my collection (and a copy of Adam is not in it ... and probably won't be). Still a nice little story, though.

Thank you for your great work for Philip K. Dick with PKD Otaku.

Best regards,
Christoph

--
J.-Christoph Nolte



Christoph,

Amazing piece of detective work. You are of course correct that the illustration in Otaku #37 is the incorrect "Adam" magazine. I must have come up with the cover myself because I knew of the American "Adam" and so went with it without paying proper attention to the Galactic Central citation which very clearly says "Australia". And while my Note doesn't actually say that this is the actual front cover it is implied and,

in any case, I thought it WAS the actual cover. I'm strangely pleased that we can correct this error. I'm a retired reference librarian and these sorts of things matter to the profession. I doubt we can fix the actual issue 37 as it is housed on another website. But we can publish a correction in the new issue in progress (#44). May we have your permission to publish your email there? Your email address will not be included but your blog address certainly would be if you wish. Please let me know at your convenience.

If we go forward, I'm going to suggest to Nick that he extract the relevant page from the Australian "Adam" showing Phil's plagiarized story and the true front cover. Likely he will leave the charming naked women out.

Thank you for bringing this to my attention. I very much admire the attention to detail that you demonstrate. I suspect this holds true for your blog as well. I went to the blog and it looks amazing. "Look" only as I do not read German. I was intrigued by one of your recent posts, "Lost in Translation (2): Wyatt Earp". I remember that interview with Phil where he complains about the Wyatt Earp inclusion in HIGH CASTLE. I always thought that was funny -- though not to Phil, naturally.

Regards,
Patrick

Hi Patrick,

thank you for your kind words.

Yes, of course, you may use whatever. I'm more than happy to contribute a tiny bit to PKD Otaku; I was secretly hoping you'd put it in the one of the next issues, so I'm very happy. Some thoughts, in random order: one could contact the owner of that pulpinternational-blog and see if he would provide more and/or better scans, more being the rest of the story (rather than more of those

lovely ladies). Not sure if there's much of a chance, but maybe ... I'm happy to leave this to you, but I'd volunteer trying to do that. (And we should probably give him credit.) - Let me know.

You can happily publish my blog's email address: <https://dickkoepfigsammeln.blogspot.com/> (and "Dickkopf" which is literally "Dick-Head", in German means "stubborn", so DickkoepfigSammeln is "stubborn collecting" with the obvious play on words of putting "Dick" in there and honoring the fact that collecting requires some level of stubbornness)

My browser (Chrome) has integrated translation capabilities, you can just translate on right-click ... or you use google translate. Results are really good for German to English. The Wyatt Earp thing doesn't work too well, though, because ... it's about translation and translation doesn't translate well. I'm am very interested in Philip K. Dick, a fan. I've started collecting to be able to find out stuff or maybe "do research" (on my lowly amateur level).

Collecting got out of hand, but still that idea is the driving force. The blog is my means to record my findings - and maybe share with the few that can relate. I intentionally do this in German for Germans, because I cannot "compete" with the English community - so I focus on the German topics like translation and (mostly) collecting: Because it's simpler for me. I have other stuff in there as well, purely related to the English editions etc. (when I got "sidetracked", e. g. with this Adam story), but the focus, my "aim" is really "Philip K. Dick and Germany" and "Germany and Philip K. Dick"; very, very much work in progress. My wife is a librarian in the Technoseum in Mannheim, a technology museum; technically she's not a reference librarian, but helping the scientisting in the museum is part of her work (it is a library open to the public, but mostly there and used for internal purposes by the staff). She got me some books and articles, interlibrary loans can be useful and it helps to have your own librarian for that. (And now she's calling for diner.)

Cheers,
Christoph

Martian Time-Slip

Philip K. Dick



Dummy book jacket illustration by Nick Buchanan

P K D

o t a k u #44