

SIMULACRUM MELTDOWN #1

SIMULACRUM MELTDOWN is an occasional zine concerned with Philip K. Dick and his works.

Letters, comments, complaints and arguments are welcome. Other contributions are also welcome but first read the introductory remarks on the next page and decide if you'd rather do a zine of your own. You can reach me by writing

Patrick Clark
PO Box 2761
St. Paul, MN 55102
USA

Some introductory remarks...

The idea of doing a PKD zine has been simmering in my mind ever since my earlier zine *Interference On the Brain Screen* a couple of years ago. The title of *Interference* was chosen for it's phildickian overtones but it was ostensibly a "cyberpunk" zine. I followed the CP party line faithfully until I slipped a big chunk of PKD material into the third issue. At the time I wrote an introduction to justify the inclusion called "CP/PKD" which was pretty unconvincing, even to me. What the hell, it was just an excuse. I had some material and I wanted to share it. Cyberpunk was pretty much a spent force by then anyway.

There didn't seem to be any pressing need to produce a separate PKD title because there were already two up and running and filling the need quite well. They were Dave Hyde's *For Dickheads Only* and Greg Lee's *Radio Free PKD*. Both were far more professional than my xerox-and-glue zines and contained a large number of enthusiastic contributors. I became a minor contributor myself. The conversation and the camaraderie were wonderful. *FDO*, alas, seems to have gone into cold-pac. *RFPKD*, however, is quite well. Greg published the seventh issue just last Fall. To my mind it is the premier PKD-oriented publication out there.

The decision to put together *Simulacrum Meltdown* derives from a couple of considerations. I had been working on a long essay dealing with *Time Out of Joint*. It was too long for either *FDO* or *Radio Free PKD* but I wanted to make it available in case anyone might be interested. Too, I had collected over the years a lot of PKD related texts. In some cases they are photocopies of photocopies or originals hanging on for dear life to crumbling pulp paper. While I think all of it is interesting I have to say that some it is quite marginal. They seem better suited for a zine such as this. As with most zines, publishing schedules are dicey. Since Greg just got an issue out it will probably be awhile before we will see Issue Eight. I wanted to do something to fill the gap in the meantime.

The chief reason, though, is this: over the years I've spoken with a number of individuals who find Philip K. Dick and his works to have made a real

difference in their lives. Each one is unique and each one has a unique perspective to bring to the common table of PKD fans. Some of those perspectives appear, at least in an attenuated form, on the past and current PKD lists: draco, best, and now jazz.flavor. An example: recently that perennial question, "Is Deckard an android?" resurfaced. It comes around like the flu and I expected it to drop quickly and mercifully from view. Instead a member named Dante posted, "I think that basically everyone in the society that Dick created was an android, they were all under the control of this Mercer figure." And I said to myself, "Wow! I never thought of that before! That's great!" These list have been invaluable to me. But postings there tend to be brief in nature. Longer pieces and multiple pieces are not technically difficult via the Internet of course, but I seldom see them. Perhaps because posting a ten page essay seems an invasion of space. And to me (this is a personal failing, I know) long postings lack the necessary intimacy of one person communicating with another. I have to admit to an old and unfashionable preference for paper, for something to come through the mail and arrive at my post box. So it seemed to me that if I properly wanted to bring my perspective to the table it would have to be in form of a hardcopy zine.

Quite a number of people have told me that they had been working on, or at least thinking about, writing something -- an essay, a memoir, a critique, a story, a cartoon, an appreciation -- concerning Phil and how he has touched their lives. They're not professional writers; they're just readers. But they each have something to say. The zine is the traditional and best vehicle for saying it. The cost of photocopying and stamps is negligible. Whether the end result is a letter, a one-shot essay or rant, or an ongoing series and whether it's read by a couple of people or a hundred is not the point. The point is to do it. I don't necessarily think that what I have to say here is the most interesting essay you'll ever read on Phil. Or that many people will agree with me. The very best thing this zine can accomplish is for someone to read it and think, "Hell, I can do better than *this*" -- and then go out and do so. All of us need more and more of these zines, with many points of view and new ideas. If you've been thinking about doing a zine already, now is your chance. (Greg Wander and Perry Kinman --*this means you!*) To quote Chairman Mao, one of Phil's favorite poets, "let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend."

Regards,
Patrick

Dedication

To tell you the truth, this first issue of *Simulacrum Meltdown* is too slight a work to bear the weight of a proper dedication. I think there will be at least one additional issue by and by and I really ought to hold out until something more substantial comes along before I do this. But publishing a zine is always a roll of

the dice. There is a person I've wanted to acknowledge for years and this is my chance. So this issue, with all its shortcomings, is dedicated to Paul Williams.

Without Paul the current PKD phenomenon might not exist. He originally introduced a legion of new readers to Phil's works in his famous *Rolling Stone* profile way, way back in 1974. He published *Confessions of a Crap Artist* in 1975 when no other publisher would touch it and wrote what is still the most cogent introduction to *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldrich* for the Gregg Press edition in 1979. After Phil's death, Paul kept Phil's works in the public eye as Phil's literary executive. VALIS knows how many book contracts Paul negotiated, how many manuscripts he edited, how many researchers he helped. Through the foundation of The Philip K. Dick Society and the editing of its Newsletter, Paul not only made a wealth of new material and new points of view available for the first time, he created the PKD base that continues to this day. With *Only Apparently Real* he let the rest of us listen to the extraordinary conversation he had so many years before with his old friend. Phil perspective has always been scrupulous and honest. He has written about Phil, as Pauline Kael once said of *The Bicycle Thief*, "with compassion but without illusion."

The mainstream novels, the new editions of the sf novels and short stories, the *Selected Letters*, the *Exegesis*, the biographies, the fact that you can go to any reasonable bookstore in America and find a whole shelf of Philip K. Dick -- we owe all of this to Paul Williams. He didn't do this alone by any means but the fact is if it weren't for Paul it never would have happened.

Philip K. Dick never had a truer friend. Thanks, Paul.

PDF On PKD

Cyber Noodle Soup: What is you take on the whole PKD renaissance? Why now? What's feeding it?

Paul Di Filippo: I suppose the easy answer to the question of Dick's renewed or expanding popularity would be that the more our world becomes PKD-like, the more of a response he summons up. But I think there is also an obvious trendiness/critical-mass component. When genre labels such as "transgressive" are invented and marketed, there happens a kind of back-filling operation where older writers are swept up and co-opted into the snowball of cultural movements. I think PKD is probably experiencing this. And, lastly, maybe within the field, there's guilt for neglecting him that expresses itself in tributes, parodies, etc.

"The Ribofunk Interview" 1997

THE SECRET OF THE SOFT-DRINK STAND EXPLAINED AT LAST!

In many respects *Time Out of Joint* is really one of Philip K. Dick's minor novels. And yet it is very often linked in many people's minds with Phil's later

and more sophisticated works such *Martian Time-Slip*, *UBIK*, and *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldrich*. The reason this is so, I believe, is because in TOJ Phil's perennial issue, the true nature of reality, is given its most literal expression. Ragle Gumm lives in a world that is completely manufactured, created for no other purpose than to fool him. The town where he lives, his job, his family and neighbors, the newspapers and television programs, the very era are all fake. While the novels of the Sixties are both better realized and in many ways the "reality breakdowns" are much more terrifying, this tale from the end of the Eisenhower period beautifully captures the whole paranoid point-of-view that is practically a PKD trademark. Certainly Phil had explored the issue of "what is real" in earlier short stories and novels, especially *Eye in the Sky*. But in *Eye in the Sky* the bogus realities are accidental, the results of the characters' proximity to the malfunctioning Bevatron. In TOJ there is an actual conspiracy. Someone is doing it on purpose.

TOJ arrived at the Scot Meredith Literary Agency on April 7, 1958 and was immediately offered to Ace Books. Ace had published all of Phil's novels up to this point and the editor, Donald Wollheim, was a strong supporter of his work. But Ace passed on TOJ. According to Phil, Wollheim demanded an extensive rewrite, essentially wanting him to throw out the first 100 or so pages and developing the last portion into a standard Ace science fiction yarn. "He was incredibly threatened by that novel," Phil told Gregg Rickmann. "He saw everything that he construed as science fiction as going down the tubes with what that novel did.... he said the only thing salvageable was the last chapter, where there was the war on the moon. And I should build back from the last chapter." Wollheim had a different memory of the events.

"I accepted it. Wyn [Ace's publisher A.A. Wyn] went through it but he didn't dislike it. He didn't like things like the 'soft drink stand' that disappears. He wanted to ask Dick to rewrite. He sent a list of suggestions to Meredith, but instead of sending it to Phil for revisions Lippincott called out of the blue and said they wanted to start up a science fiction line. So Meredith had this available and shipped it right off to Lippincott who printed it with no changes. So that's how we lost Philip K. Dick."

Lippincott purchased TOJ in July and published it in hardcover during the Spring of 1959. Phil was pleased to have a hardcover edition -- his first -- though the publisher paid him a mere \$750. There were only two reviews, both in the science fiction press. Frederick Pohl, in the November 1959 issue of *If*, found it a "most uneven book" though possessing a "masterful opening." But he complained that the novel "doesn't exactly end. It disintegrates." Still, he found that "*Time Out of Joint* is science fiction, all right, and fine of its kind in the first hundred-odd pages." P. Schulyer Miller, writing in the January 1960 issue of *Analog*, called it "good hard-shell science fiction" and "a grand job of writing." He summarized the plot as if "the entire cast of DeMille's 'Ten Commandments' had been rehearsed to convince one insignificant extra that he *is* an Egyptian laborer." But such reviews seem to have had little effect especially as Lippincott marketed TOJ as "a novel of menace" rather than as science fiction. Many

American readers never saw the book until Belmont reprinted it in paperback in 1965.

It wasn't just the public that forgot about TOJ. So, for the most part, did Phil. The first reference to TOJ in *The Selected Letters* doesn't appear until January 4, 1960, in a letter to Scott Meredith, where Phil refers to his book as "a psychological s-f book." He doesn't speak of it again until September 8, 1970, in passing, in a letter to Sandra Miesel. It's true we do not have all of Phil's letters available at this time so it is possible that other, unpublished letters may show evidence that Phil had not completely forgotten his old novel. But there is no discussion of TOJ in any of Phil's interviews either. There is a slight reference in the *Vertex* interview in 1974 but only as an illustration of how poorly the s.f. field paid authors. There is no mention at all in the extensive *Science Fiction Review* interview of 1976 or in the interview, which appeared in *Aquarian* in 1978.

But Phil, as the *Exegesis* clearly demonstrates, was rethinking TOJ, though the references are few. In a long paragraph, written in 1977, Phil realizes that TOJ is a reversal of the 3-74 experience since it postulates "real" time as being in the future (1998) instead of the past (c. 70 AD) as he now holds. Usually, though, TOJ is clustered with other novels. In 1978 he writes, "EYE, JOINT, 3 STIGMATA, UBIK & MAZE are the same novel written over and over again." Charles Platt brought up TOJ in a March 1980 interview with Phil but only briefly in the course of a discussion of Phil's drug use. By September of 1981, speaking with Gregg Rickman, Phil has a new perspective on his old book. He calls it,

a pivotal book in terms of my career. It was my first hardcover sale, and it was the first novel I wrote in which the entire world is fake. You find yourself in it when you pick up the book and turn to page one. The world that you are reading about does not exist. And this was to be the premise of my entire corpus of writing really.... The phenomenal world is not the real world, it is something other than the real world. It is either semi-real, or some kind of forgery.

Critical appraisal of TOJ has followed a similar trajectory. The cottage industry in academic circles explicating Phil's works mostly ignored this early book in favor of later, better known novels. It is always noted but seldom examined. Patricia Warrick's full-length study, *Mind In Motion: The Fiction of Philip K. Dick*, has only four paragraphs on TOJ. Douglas Mackey survey of Phil's novels gives it less than three pages. The many essays which have appeared are not much better. The forty articles from *Science Fiction Studies* collected in *On Philip K. Dick*, for example, treat TOJ only in passing, if at all. Fortunately in the last couple of years studies by Umberto Rossi, Yves Potin, and Andrew P. Hoberek have redressed this scholarly indifference to some extent. More importantly, the individual readers, those who read Phil for personal pleasure and enlightenment, have embraced the tale of Ragel Gumm as a quintessential "phildickian" work. I want to suggest, somewhat tongue in cheek, that the reason it is so popular is at the same time the book's biggest problem. I refer, of course, to the issue of the famous "disappearing soda stand."

Let's revisit the scene. In Chapter Three Ragle Gumm is in the public park with Junie Black, reciting Goethe and plotting adultery. Annoyed and frustrated by Junie's immaturity he goes down the hill to buy a beer at a soft-drink stand that he has seen in the distance.

The child ahead of him received its candy bar and raced off. Ragle laid down his fifty-cent piece on the counter.

"Got any beer?" he said. His voice sounded funny. Thin and remote. The counter man in white apron and cap stared at him, stared and did not move. Nothing happened. No sound, anywhere. Kids, cars, the wind; it all shut off.

The fifty-cent piece fell away, down through the wood, sinking. It vanished.

I'm dying, Ragle thought. Or something.

Fright seized him. he tried to speak, but his lips did not move for him. Caught up in the silence.

Not again, he thought.

Not again!

It's happening to me again.

The soft-drink stand fell into bits. Molecules. He saw the molecules, colorless, without qualities, that made it up. Then he saw through, into the space beyond it, he saw the hill behind, the trees, the sky. He saw the soft-drink stand go out of existence, along with the counter man, the cash register, the big dispenser of orange drink, the taps for Coke and root beer, the ice chests of bottles, the hot dog broiler, the jars of mustard, the shelves of cones, the row of heavy round metal lids under which were the different ice creams.

In its place was a slip of paper. He reached out his hand and took hold of the slip of paper. On it was printing, block letters.

SOFT-DRINK STAND

This is probably the most famous scene in the entire Philip K. Dick *oeuvre*. It may be one of the most famous scenes in all of science fiction. I quote it here because *everyone* quotes it, beginning with the original Lippincott edition in which the last paragraphs are printed on the back of the dust jacket. The 1979 Dell paperback edition of TOJ uses the scene as the cover illustration.* VALIS only knows how many unwary readers have been snared into the PKD universe upon reading this passage for the first time. Paul Williams relates that his friends convinced him that "something truly was missing from my life if I wasn't reading Philip K. Dick. I think it was Bbob who sealed my fate, in some Lower East Side apartment, by reading me two pages from *Time Out of Joint*." I think we can safely guess which two pages they were.

The passage is riveting, a powerful and shocking rendition of the world going suddenly and inexplicably crazy. The very ordinariness of the source of the breakdown -- a soda stand -- makes it funny but also makes it so disquieting.

It's not as if an entire city has suddenly vanished, just an insignificant retail food outlet. But with its disappearance follows the unavoidable conclusion that something is very, very wrong. The world is indeed "out of joint." Those jars of mustard and tubs of ice cream are every bit as important to reality as the hills and the sky. There is no avoiding the obvious LSD take on the missing soft-drink stand, especially to readers in the Sixties and Seventies. Doubtless this is part of its appeal to many readers. Phil addressed the matter himself in the interview with Charles Platt: "Far-fucking out, spacey, that's an 'acid experience.' If I didn't know better I'd say that this author has turned on many times, and his universe was coming unglued -- he's obviously living in a *false universe*." In fact, TOJ was written long before Phil dropped acid; it is purely a product of his extraordinary imagination. But in the course of the psychedelic revolution, the vanishing soft-drink stand must have struck many readers as, well, "cosmic."

So we are presented with a fabulously described reality breakdown. But no explanation follows. We know the slips of paper exist. Sammy finds a few independent of Ragle. Ragle shows his collection of slips to Vic.** The "Soft-Drink Stand" document has a tangible existence in the actual world. But what does it mean and how does it work? Phil doesn't tell us. He tosses some ideas out by having Ragle quote the New Testament, "In the beginning was the word" but then has him switch to a line from *Faust* "In the beginning was the *deed*." Later, speaking with Vic, Ragle will consider Bishop Berkeley and speculates that "we live in words. Our reality, among words not things.... Word is more real than the object it represents." (Chapter 4) But this is no conclusion at all and the matter is essentially dropped for the rest of the book.

The mystery of the soft-drink stand has always bothered readers beginning with A.A. Wyn looking over the original draft submitted to Ace. It seems that no one ever asked Phil for an explanation in the numerous interviews he gave or in any of the published letters we possess, which seems rather odd in retrospect. And so various readers have offered "solutions" trying to make sense of the situation. Stephen Wright suggests, "The slips of paper are needed to 'cue' people to the locations of imaginary structures or objects. That way, the construction of an entire, detailed town could be avoided." A little thought on the matter, however, collapses this argument. For the slips to work in that fashion one would have to be close enough to read them. Ragle first sees the soft-drink stand from a distance. He's too far away to see the slip of paper let alone read the "cue" it contains.

The objects represented on the slips make little sense. One of the slips of paper reads "BOWL OF FLOWERS" and another "DOOR." But there is no possible need to "pretend" to have a bowl of flowers. You can either set up the real thing or simply not bother to provide such a prop to begin with. And how hard can it be to put up a door? A third slip reads BRIDGE -- what would happen if Ragle tried to walk across such a thing? Old Town *is* a highly detailed construct, not just a Potemkin Village of wooden fronts with no backs or interiors. For that matter Bill Black remarks in Chapter Fourteen that there are 1600 people in the town -- couldn't one of them work as a counter man at an actual soft-drink stand?

In fact, the soda-stand is just the first of many problems in TOJ. For instance, if Ragle Gumm is the key to Earth's defense against the rebellious Lunar colonists, why don't they simply assassinate him? They are close enough and ruthless enough (they are dropping hydrogen bombs and assorted non-nuclear weapons on the Earth). If for some reason the Lunatics wish to spare Ragle's life why do they use such inefficient means to try to snap him out of his delusional state? They hide old issues of *Look* magazine in the basement of some ruins and show him models of futuristic factory and military installations. Surely something more direct and more obvious, such as showing him the issue of *Time* with Ragle as "Man of the Year," would be a better strategy. Why doesn't the Earth just nuke the Lunatics in the first place? Earth has space flight of its own; they fly to Venus where they maintain medical clinics. If Ragle is so crucial why is security so lax at the Old Town project? Every pilot who flies overhead seems to know Ragle is down there and the Keitelbeins have infiltrated the site to within a few doors of Ragle's home. And how do the Keitelbeins manage to leave Old Town? How are they able to pass through the various security checkpoints, to arrive just in time to enlighten Ragle and provide him the means to escape to the Moon? The soft-drink stand is just one of the many unresolved issues but it is the most vital.***

At least with his later novels, Phil's method of constructing a narrative was somewhat unusual. "A premise or idea, call it what you will, pops into my head for no reason," he explained to Ray Browne in a letter dated March 21, 1969. "The premise lies there, sometimes untouched for weeks, or months -- or forever, as in some cases." But if that idea took root, and more details and questions grew, Phil would begin to write down his ideas. At some point even minor details would occur to him and he notes these down as well. Eventually, he continues, "I would have enough holographic notes, and I would begin typing the notes into sequence *as the ideas occurred to me*, not according to their dramatic order." After the ideas had jelled, Phil would create a cast of characters and finally a plot. "The plot would come last," he told Browne.

We do not have Phil's notes and outline for TOJ so we cannot say for sure that this was the manner in which he constructed the book. But it is not unreasonable to think that something very much like this process was involved. If so, the vanishing soft-drink stand may have "popped" into his head long before he knew what he planned to do with the image.**** When the time came to explain the mechanism of its vanishing, Phil drew a blank.

By now it must be obvious that the title of this essay is facetious. There is no explanation for the vanishing soda-stand. Phil didn't have one when he wrote the scene and he didn't have one when the novel was finished. He threw in some talk from the Gospel of St. John, some vague suggestions from the English Idealists but this was just smoke and mirrors. The mystery of the soft-drink stand is dropped and never picked up again. It is quite simply an arresting image and that is all. How did Phil expect to get away with this? The answer, I believe, is that he didn't really see it as a problem. But to explain *that* means we have to push our exploration further.

In 1957 Phil announced that he was giving up science fiction to concentrate on his mainstream novels. In truth, he had been working on both kinds of writing for some years already. Between 1955 and 1957 Phil wrote five full-length mainstream novels. None were accepted for publication. In 1958 he wrote two more with similar lack of success. But in 1958 Phil also returned, briefly, to science fiction. He wrote not only TOJ but also two short stories (a form he had all but abandoned in 1955 and would not return to again until 1963), and four radio plays based on science fiction themes.

Why would Phil go back to the field he had only recently abandoned? Almost certainly it was for the money. A writer's income is based on the manuscripts he sells and Phil hadn't sold a novel since *The Man Who Japed* in 1955. Between 1957 and 1959 his income was coming from foreign sales of his previously written novels; a collection of early short stories, *The Variable Man* (1957); an Ace reissue of *Solar Lottery* (1959); the radio plays and the two new short stories. There could not have been a whole lot of money in all of this. Phil needed to sell a novel and he knew his science fiction always sold. Too, he just couldn't let science fiction go completely. In a letter of June 6, 1957 to Anthony Boucher he admitted, "You know, your encouragement has got me thinking in terms of ONE MORE S.F. NOVEL, to end it all so to speak.... This shows how habit-forming the writing of s.f. has become for me; I can't stop even after I've sworn an oath that I will."

So one reason the lack of an explanation for the soft-drink stand might not have concerned Phil overly much was that he was in a hurry. He had sent a long mainstream novel, *Nicholas and the Higs* off to Scot Meredith in January. In February he wrote the radio scripts. Since Meredith received TOJ on April 7, Phil may have written it sometime in March.***** At some time during all of this, *Nicholas* was returned with a request to drastically cut the length. Phil finished the revisions and sent it back to Meredith who received it on April 30. Within a week of that, Phil sent off the first of the new stories, "Explorers We" (received May 6), and then turned to still *another* mainstream novel, *In Milton Lumkey Territory*. Whatever the exact chronology is, it's plain that all through the first half of 1958 Phil was exceedingly busy thinking about, writing or revising three different novels.

Too, TOJ was a *science fiction* novel. It could afford to have loose ends in a way that the mainstream novels could not. Cause and effect were somewhat elastic in a Fifties s.f. story, especially one that (Phil's later claims to the contrary notwithstanding) was certainly intended to be published by Ace. Phil must have known this. He must have known he had leeway not just with the soft-drink stand but with the other unresolved questions as well. And I think, most importantly, Phil knew that the vanishing soft-drink stand was a killer scene. It was indeed, "far-fucking out;" the sort of incident that would grab the reader and shake up his world. He was right. Without this scene TOJ would lose much of its power. It doesn't really matter that the vanishing soft-drink stand makes no real sense. What does matter is that in *Time Out of Joint* the reader shares with poor deluded Ragle Gumm a sudden, unforgettable moment of awe and dread and

mystery. And the reader will take that moment out into his own, less-than-secure "real" world and wonder how "real" it is. It's a true phildickian lesson

If this were a sober, academic journal I'd just let the matter end here. But this is a zine and so I feel I have license to go off on a tangent. Like many people, I suspect, I want to know how the damn vanishing soft-drink stand works. I know there is no explanation, or at least that Phil didn't provide one but I think it's possible to pursue the matter even so.

Consider this possibility: the edition of TOJ that we possess is not the complete novel. Phil wrote more but it wasn't published. I want to point out right away that there is no evidence for any such supposition. This is sheer speculation and it's presented here as a "what if?" proposition. Frederick Pohl said that TOJ "doesn't exactly end. It disintegrates." He was being generous. TOJ doesn't "end" at all; it just stops dead. Walter Keitelbein appears at the hatch of the spaceship and that's it. While many of Phil's novels finish in a fairly unsatisfactory fashion the ending of TOJ is particularly abrupt. We can't trace Phil's original thinking because we don't have the manuscript or the outline and notes for TOJ; nothing of the sort is inventoried in the collection at UC-Fullerton. Again, there is *no* indication that Phil carried the novel any further than what we possess. But we do know that *Nicholas and the Higs* began as a very long manuscript, so long that his agent returned it to Phil for major editing. This happened while Phil was at work on TOJ. In the world of "what if" it is easy enough to imagine that Phil had produced an over-long TOJ. Then he received the manuscript of *Nicholas* and realized that another long book would probably not sell either and so lopped off the last few chapters, ending the book logically, though unsatisfactorily, with Walter Keitelbein at the hatch at the end of Chapter Fourteen.

Granting that TOJ might have continued, where would the plot have gone? There are hints in the earlier chapters that would at least allow us to construct a reasonable possibility. Douglas Mackey approaches this in his book but draws back from exploring the ramifications. He writes:

If 1959 is a fake, couldn't 1998 be considered equally bogus? If our present-day reality is a fiction, couldn't the future be considered just as much a fiction for the same reason? Dick's 1998 is only one of an infinity of possible alternative worlds.

I suggest that 1998 is not simply a *possible* alternate world but is instead *another* deliberate fake world. Such a twist would be typical of Phil's later novels. It would help explain why so many inhabitants of Old Town had to be brainwashed in the first place; not to forget 1998 but to forget the real world behind 1998. And that would include Bill Black and his minions. There is a clue which suggests this in the form of the block letters on our old friends the slips of paper. We all remember SOFT-DRINK STAND. But what about STATE LINE AGRICULTURAL INSPECTION STATION in Chapter Twelve? Or WESTERN DRUG AND PHARMACY in Chapter Thirteen? They both appear in the text in the same block letters as all the other items which Ragle sees as slips of paper.

Neither of these morph into slips of paper, at least in the novel as we have it. But maybe it's just a matter of time. The trouble with having a false reality consisting partially of real props and partially of slips of paper is there seems to be no reason to have anything real at all. Why couldn't it *all* be on slips of paper? In that context DOOR or BOWL OF FLOWERS or BRIDGE make sense. One has to wonder if ONE HAPPY WORLD might be a slip of paper, too.

Phil could have solved the whole mystery if, instead of slips of paper, he had used some sort of telepathy machine which "broadcast" the proper cue. It would have spoiled the elegance of the concept to drag in some sci-fi gizmo, true, but it was going to be an Ace novel so it would not have been entirely unexpected or unforgivable. Yet Phil was at pains throughout the novel to conspicuously avoid such gimmicks. I believe it was Yves Potin who first observed that the 1998 future we visit in TOJ isn't very futuristic at all. It is even shabbier and more primitive than Old Town. In fact everything in TOJ is standard 1950s technology, both in Old Town, which we would expect, *and* in the "future" 1998 which is supposedly able to wage interplanetary war. The only exceptions are an unknown road surface on the way out of Old Town and, at the very end, the space ship. Would anyone really be surprised if at this point the "space ship" suddenly collapsed into a slip of paper?

Where might the plot of the "missing chapters" of TOJ then go? Since this is all hypothetical, it *could* go anywhere. Reasonably, though, the rest of the plot would finally discover the actual world -- the one behind both Old Town and the ersatz 1998. And what "real world" would that be?. Again, there is a clue in TOJ that let's us proceed. Chapter Eleven contains a detail, horrific vision of a post-nuclear holocaust world. Ragle sees

...dark weeds growing in the ruins of towns, corroded metal and bones scattered across a plain of ash without contour. No life, no sounds... [...] the sun not actually shining, the day not actually warm at all but cold, gray and quietly raining, raining, raining, the god-awful ash filtering down on everything. No grass except charred stumps, broken off. Pools of contaminated water...

A bit later, as Mrs. Keitelbein reads from a government paper that "[m]issles wont stop coming over simply because nobody exists to fly them," Ragle suddenly realizes, "*This is reality.*" The assumption in TOJ is that Ragle's morbid vision is a dim memory of the war with the lunar rebels pushing through his psychosis. Yet the level of destruction visualized here is far too extensive to reflect that conflict. This sort of horror is much closer to the devastation of total atomic war such as we see in "The Second Variety." What Ragle might be remembering is the *real* war, the one that actually took place outside the carefully constructed false worlds of 1959 and 1998.

Why were these false worlds created? What part does Ragle Gumm have to play in them? Who or what is ultimately in charge? And, finally, what are the slips of paper for and how do they work? We have no way of knowing. After all we're way beyond anything Phil even wrote! We're all like Ragle Gumm, in this respect. Instead of slips of paper we have words written on the pages of a book;

a book called *Time Out of Joint* by an author named Philip K. Dick. Phil lives in a world where the year is 1958. Where Dwight Eisenhower is President of the United States and nuclear war might be just around the corner. It's a world where the best we might hope for are a few clues about the true reality in which we exist and, perhaps, about the future that is coming.

* "The cover for TIME OUT OF JOINT is stunning. I love that vast brooding somewhat whacked-out face hovering over the landscape like some kind of nutso deity." PKD to Lou Stathis, July 26, 1979

** This is in direct contrast to Vic's vision on the bus, by the way, which only he sees. There, I think, Vic did not *really* see the straw men tied to planks in the hollow bus. I believe that he simply had an intuitive flash that Old Town was a fake. His mind was signaling him, in much the same way as with the incident with the light cord, that something was wrong. The brainwashing broke down for an instant but not enough for him to regain his whole memory of the situation

*** Need more? After Bill Black sees the phone book and magazine Ragle has salvaged from the ruins, he complains that he hasn't been able to clear away the ruins because he can't get "permission from the county." But Black is secretly in charge of Old Town; surely the Earth government would install their own people as "county officials" to help orchestrate the charade. How does Ragle guess where the attacks are going to be? He gets no input from any outside source nor reconnaissance reports or data of any kind from the Earth military; he just goes through an elaborate ritual with his scanners and old contest entries and comes up with an answer. Is he a pre-cog or some kind?

**** This would be the exact opposite, so to speak, of the scene itself; the soft-drink stand doesn't disappear -- it appears in Phil's imagination! Molecule by molecule perhaps?

***** Or possibly he had been working on it since late 1957. Lou Stathis, in the afterword to the Bluejay Books edition of TOJ, wrote that Phil worked on the novel during the winter of 1957-58 but he cites no evidence for this statement.

Much of the following appeared on Eric Johnson's PKD list in the summer of 1998. This is an expanded and corrected version. I couldn't have done such a thorough job without the help of Vittorio Curtoni and Andy Butler. I want to thank them both and also Nadia who's original question about UTM was the impetus for the research.

The Tangled History of The Unteleported Man

"The novels which I've written that I later found myself in are UBIK, FLOW MY TEARS and THE UNTELEPORTED MAN." PKD in a letter to Richard Weinberg, March 6, 1979

Early to mid-1964: Phil is commissioned to write a novelette for FANTASTIC.

June 7, 1964: In a letter to James Blish, Phil remarks, "A good writer even doing pulp assignments, does not write crap; he may write formula work, devoid of newness, of literary merit, but it is craftsmanship; he is given a job *and he does it well*. He writes the 20,000 novelette for *Fantastic*, as best he possibly can...."

August 26, 1964: The manuscript of THE UNTELEPORTED MAN is received by Phil's agent, Scot Meredith Literary Agency.

November 1964: The novelette version is published in the magazine FANTASTIC, (the December issue) as "The Unteleported Man."

Early November 1964: Terry Carr reads the novelette in FANTASTIC and shows it to Donald Wollheim who asks Phil to expand the work by 30,000 words into an Ace novel. Phil agrees and signs a contract to that effect.

Nov. 11, 1964: In a letter to Terry and Carol Carr, Phil floats the idea of bringing Ray Nelson in to help with the expansion of the book. Apparently nothing comes of this suggestion.

Jan. 10, 1965: In a letter to Carol Carr, Phil writes, "After New Year's I went back to the expansion on THE UNTELEPORTED MAN...."

May 5, 1965: The new material is received by Phil's agent.

May 22, 1965: In a letter to Scot Meredith, Phil discusses Wollheim's rejection of the new material for the expanded manuscript.

November 1966: THE UNTELEPORTED MAN appears as an Ace Double (along with Howard L. Cory's THE MIND MONSTER). This version contains none of the newly written material. The blurb on the cover reads, "Find the equation for nonconformity - or else!"

1968: The first foreign language edition is published in Italy as UTOPIA ANDATA E RITORNO [UTOPIA AND BACK] by Galassia.

September 1972: A second edition is issued by Ace as another Double, this time with DR. FUTURITY as the second title. The blurb on the cover of this edition reads, "Find the unconfirming equation - or die."

1979: Mark Hurst arranges the sale of THE UNTELEPORTED MAN, COSMIC PUPPETS and DR. FUTURITY to Berkley Books. THE UNTELEPORTED MAN is to be "restructured" for publication.

January 11, 1979: In a letter to Brigitte Louise _____, Phil relates that Berkley had purchased THE UNTELEPORTED MAN and that he is busy on a rewrite of the book. He writes, "The work is almost finished."

October 1, 1979: In a letter to Sheri Rush, Phil implies that he is behind on his contract for the revision of the novel.

April 22 and September 30 1981: In interviews with Gregg Rickman, Phil explains the history of the book:

GR: What about Unteleported Man?

PKD: That was just written as a novelette for **Amazing** [actually published in **Fantastic**, **Amazing**'s sister magazine, December 1964]. That was just a way to make money. They offered me double their normal word rate if I'd do a novelette based on the cover. They had a cover drawn. And I did that. It wasn't very good.

GR: I heard that half of it was suppressed, or deleted, by the publisher [in its book form publication, 1966].

PKD: No. The original version is as I wrote it, but when Wollheim bought it he wanted to add another 50% more, and I wrote another 50% more, but he didn't like it. It was too spacey for him, too much acid stuff.

So he never published the second half, and Berkley wants to bring it out, but it requires revision. The two parts don't fit together at all. The second part is much better than the part that's been published. It's quite imaginative and quite radical. I mean quite experimental.... But I can't get into that space of **The Unteleported Man** to rewrite it [to tie together the two halves]. I can't get back into the action-adventure stuff, so it's hung fire for several years.

GR: What happens in the second half?

PKD: I forget. I haven't looked at it for years.

That part is very good. It's really weird. I don't know where my head was at in those days. I'd just left Anne. I was living in Oakland.

Winter 1981-82: In a phone conversation with Mark Hurst in, Phil remarks that he is working on the revisions Berkley had requested and writing a new beginning chapter saying, "I'm going to open it with a rat in a sewer."

July 1983: THE UNTELEPORTED MAN is published by Berkley Books with "Now Uncensored For the First Time!" and "With The Author's Previously Unpublished Original Ending" on the book cover. It consists of the original material plus the expanded material Phil composed in 1965 but none of the newer material written in 1981-82. There are four missing pages which show as three gaps in the narrative in this edition.

1984: Still another edition is published by Gollancz books in the United Kingdom. This is a revised version with a new title, LIES, INC. This edition has the new first chapter written by Phil, plus additions and changes to his original complete manuscript throughout. The 1965 material has been repositioned in this edition. The missing pages from the Berkley version had not been found and Phil's new additions fills in only one of the gaps. Gollancz has writer John Sladek write some connecting material to close the remaining two gaps.

September 1985: Paul Williams discovers the missing four pages of Phil's original manuscript and publishes them in PKDS NEWSLETTER (number 8).

Notes:

From: Andrew M. Butler
Sent: Wednesday, November 25, 1998 10:16 AM
To: pkd@lists.best.com
Subject: Re: The History of UTM part 3

...To summarize these different versions:

Novella - Written by August 26 1964. Published in December 1964 as "The Unteleported Man" in Fantastic. Reprinted as The Unteleported Man by Ace (1966) and Methuen (1976) in bookform; in Sidgwick and Jackson omnibus.

Complete - Written by May 5 1965. Cuts final three paragraphs from novella and adds 30,000 words. Unpublished.

Berkley edition - As complete but with four ms pages missing (Gaps pp. 165, 192 and 199). Published as The Unteleported Man by Berkley (1983)

Restructured - Thought to date from 1979. New opening chapter, cutting the first eighteen paragraphs of the novella, rest of chapter one is chapter two; other chapters are then shifted along. A few paragraphs are added. The additional material of the complete version is situated after chapter six of novella version, with two gaps, but cuts last six pages of Berkley version (with third gap). Returns to chapter seven, paragraph twenty-four of novella from the third section of chapter fifteen. Unpublished.

Gollancz edition - As restructured version but with gaps filled by John Sladek. (Gaps p. 143 , pp. 168-169 [Gollancz] and pp. 162-3, pp. 190-1 [Panther]). Published as Lies, Inc. by Gollancz (1984) and Panther (1985).

From: Vittorio Curtoni
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 1998 3:50 AM
To: Patrick Clark
Subject: Re: UTM translation

...On Dec. 12 Patrick Clark wrote...

>Hello, Vittorio,
> ...There was an Italian translation of UTM in 1968 published by Galassia and entitled >UTOPIA ANDATA E RITORNO. I've been plodding along with the library's Cassell's >Italian/English dictionary and it seems that a literal translation would be something like >"Going and Returning from Utopia." But Cassell's suggests that "_____ andata e >ritorno" may mean "return ticket" in colloquial Italian and so the title would translate >back into English as "Return Ticket to Utopia" or something close to that. When you >get a moment, could you let me know which is a truer translation?

Dear Patrick,

...I'd say that this second translation is not exactly correct, because "un biglietto di andata e ritorno" means "a ticket to a certain destination and back", i.e. the idea is implicit not only of coming back but also of first going somewhere. I hope I'm making myself clear with my English. Do you get the idea?

In my opinion, the first translation is more in line with my language. But what would you

say of "Utopia and back"? If this is correct in English (I think so but I'm not absolutely sure), it would perfectly express the meaning of the Italian title.

By the way, this edition was based on the abridged version of UTM. In November 1994, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, Milano, published a new translation, based on "Lies, Inc.", with the same Italian title, in "Classici Urania" #212. The introduction to this edition was by yours truly. Thinking of course of the SGT.PEPPER album, I suggested to the reader to try and lick the cover of the book and promised a VERY INTERESTING experience... :) Well, what do you know? After receiving my introduction, a dear friend of mine, Marzio Tosello, at the time editor in chief of "Urania", phoned me and told me to be more serious and cut that phrase in the printed version! A true shame, I think.

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Phil's, uh, fixation...

When I first began reading PKD, back in my misspent youth, it was in the course of some pretty indiscriminate SF consumption. My reading habits then were grab, gobble and gulp. Besides Phil, I read just about everything that Ace Books published; which was a lot and most of it kipple. But enjoyable kipple, ya know? It wasn't until years later that I really appreciated what Phil was doing in his novels and stories. But I was always aware of him, even in my uncritical daze, er days, as being a unique writer. His plots were always off the wall, his characters so ordinary, his aliens so bizarre that he stood out from everyone else I was reading.

I must confess to one other aspect of Phil's novels that caught my attention right away. Phil was really into women's breasts. All those books from the Sixties and Seventies were populated by heavy-breasted women. Not every woman; some possessed smaller breasts of course. But if they were well endowed sooner or later, in the course of the story, Phil would put them on display. In the future women would appear topless -- this would be the height of fashion -- and wear nipple-caps. I found this very confusing but certainly not an unattractive idea. Hard to tell what effect this had on my adolescent libido; it's not the sort of thing I want to analyze here. When topless

bathing suits appeared in the Sixties I figured the apparel industry had simply caught up with Phil. The future had arrived.

It seems to me that someone, perhaps one of the regulars at *Science Fiction Review*, should examine this recurring motif and write a report. Or possibly there is a Lit Grad student out there who needs a dissertation topic. Whoever takes on the task, here is a concept dying for explication. One imagines a graph of some sort with various female characters itemized by size and temperament. My recollection is that in Phil's universe of fiction, women with big tits are manipulative bitches who want to crush the male protagonist or use him to further their own ends while small-breasted women are supportive and nurturing. But I could be wrong or Phil's use of this particular device might have evolved over time.

Anyway, I'm prepared to help the process along by featuring in every issue a scene from one of Phil's works that illustrates his predilection. I begin with one of the most startling examples. Bruce Himmel arrives at Chris Plout's conapt to sample a new drug, JJ-180:

On the porch the woman caught up with him. It was sexy, sharp-tongued Katherine Sweetscent; he had run into her at Plout's gatherings a number of times before and so it hardly surprised him to see her now. Mrs. Swetscent wore a somewhat modified costume from that which she employed on the job; this also failed to surprise him. For tonight's mysterious undertaking Kathy had arrived naked from the waist up, except, of course, for her nipples. They had been -- not gilded in the strict sense -- but rather treated with a coating of living matter, sentient, a Martian life form, so that each possessed a consciousness. Hence each nipple responded in an alert fashion to everything going on.

The effect on Himmel was immense.

Now Wait for Last Year
Chapter 4

If you are interested in PKD -- and I imagine you wouldn't be reading this unless you were -- you really should consider doing the the following :

1. Subscribe to the current PKD newsgroup organized by Yr Pal Cal as of January 1999. Send email to **Majordomo@jazzflavor.com** In the body of the message, you should have the line:

subscribe pkd

You'll get a confirmation request in return; just follow the instructions.

2. Subscribe to **Radio Free PKD**. *RFPKD* is Greg Lee's fabulous PKD zine. A one year subscription (four issues) is US \$12.00. Trust me on this. Or if not, send for the most recent issue (number 7, summer 1998) for \$3.00 and see for yourself.

The address is

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USA

3. Anyone who is serious about PKD needs a copy of *Philip Kindred Dick: Metaphysical Conjurer. A Working Bibliography* by Phil Stephensen-Payne & Gordon Benson, Jr. This is the revised 4th edition. For details folks in North America should contact

Chris Drumm Books
PO Box 440
Polk City, Iowa 50226-0440 USA
e-mail: cdrummbks@aol.com

Our European brethern should contact Phil Stephensen-Payne at

Phil Stephensen-Payne
25A Copgrove Road
LEEDS, West Yorkshire
LS8 2SP
ENGLAND

4. Make a PKD zine of your own and give it to the world...