



"SCOTT MEREDITH TO PKD"

September 30 [1968]

Dear Phil,

Thanks very much for our letter. Doubleday can't yet release the full \$4500 because the money hasn't come in yet from NAL. We have asked them to advance some -- up to \$1500 -- and we're confident this will be coming in very soon. In the meantime, I'm happy to send you a check for the \$1500, less commission, as our advance on the Doubleday money. Here, then, is \$1350.

Doubleday, of course, is very anxious to see the new book you've mentioned to us and to Larry, and if you could send in a completed half, say in two weeks or so, they'll be able to issue an immediate contract.

And, of course, they're very anxious about DEUS IRAE, mostly because they'd like to contract for THE NAME OF THE GAME IS DEATH as soon as possible, but cannot until they have something more on DEUS IRAE. This is necessary because GAME is only in outline form, whereas the new one is completed in rough draft.

Now I'd like to pass on some very encouraging news from Norman Spinrad -- we know you've been talking to him about this -- that the editor at Essex House is very interested in seeing some of your old unpublished novels. They are of course moving out of the sex lines and the editor is an old S-F fan. They would pay from \$1000 to \$1500 for any they might want to do. By all means, send in these old ones and we'll be happy to push for you in his area.

Finally, I have another project you should perhaps be working on. Collier Books is doing some science-fiction collections from name authors -- and they've asked for you as one of the name writers in the genre of course -- of stories totaling 70,000 words. They must all be based on one theme. One they threw out would deal with the mind and consciousness expanding under drugs (or anything else for that matter). They will do a limited hardcover edition as well as the general paperback (quality of course) for an advance of about \$1750. They're not looking for original stories (though they could use one or two), but reprint stuff. So dig back and see if you can come up with a collection of your stories that would total about 70,000 words on one underlying theme -- and let us know. Okay?

For now, all the best.

A Question of Chronology: 1955 – 1958 **By Lord RC, Dec 2003**

In a letter to Anthony Boucher, editor at F&SF, in June 1957 Philip K. Dick states that he had "stopped writing short stuff for magazine publication back in May of '55..." The reception at the Scott Meredith Literary Agency of his short story "The Unreconstructed M" on June 2, 1955 seems to confirm this.

But in 1958 we note the reception of three more short stories by the SMLA. These were: "Recall Mechanism", "Explorers We" and "War Game." On the face of it there is nothing wrong with this accepted chronology but when we look more closely at what is known about the publishing history of these three stories we note a couple of anomalies that cast doubt on the origin of two of them and by inference doubt on the third.

To me it is necessary to sort out the chronology of four stories: "The Unreconstructed M", "Recall Mechanism", "Explorers We" and "War Game." I see this as important because there is a gap of some five years' uncertainty involved in the dating of these stories. These stories could have been written as early as 1953 or as late as 1958.

To figure out the likely actual composition dates we must take the evidence of these stories singly and then all together and put them in the context of what PKD was writing in this period.

We start with "The Unreconstructed M" and note that the manuscript for this story arrived at the SMLA on June 2, 1955. To support this date we have the above-mentioned letter he sent to Tony Boucher on June 3, 1957 in which he states "I have ceased to write either s.f. or fantasy, Tony; I stopped writing short stuff for magazine publication back in May of '55." This then would solidify the composition date for "The Unreconstructed M" as no later than May 1955.

The next story, "Recall Mechanism" reached the SMLA on May 2, 1958. But was it actually written shortly before that date as one might assume? Or was it written much earlier in 1955?

We have two reasons for saying that the story was probably written in the earlier time frame. First is a letter from PKD to Bill Hamlin, editor at *Imagination*, dated Sep 2, 1955 in which PKD refuses to do a rewrite of "Recall Mechanism". The second reason is more subjective and relies on another of our stories assigned to 1958 -- "Explorers We" -- and the uncertainty around its dating.

"Explorers We" reached the SMLA on May 6, 1958. However, there is evidence that it was written much earlier. In a letter to Tony Boucher, editor at *F&SF* dated April 8, 1954 PKD explicitly refers to this story "late in September of last year..." [1953].

Taking these two cases together: "Recall Mechanism" and "Explorers We" and the doubt thrown on their 1958 ascription by these letters, then we find that if we assign their composition back to 1955 or earlier we have a stark anomaly in the chronology.

The short story "War Game" now stands out singly and sharply as the only remaining short story assigned to 1958. It nestles in its singularity amidst manuscripts of several novels including *NICHOLAS AND THE HIGGS*, *TIME OUT OF JOINT* and *IN MILTON LUMKY TERRITORY*. Now although the SMLA records delivery of "War Game" on Oct 31, 1958 would PKD drop his straight novel aspirations to suddenly revert to an earlier time and crank out a short science fiction story?

I think not. And when "War Game" is shorn of its 1958 bolster of "Recall Mechanism" and "Explorers We" and we take in PKD's statement that he stopped writing short fiction in May 1955 we can reasonably assign "War Game" to 1955 or earlier.

But, why then, if these three stories were written earlier, is their reception dates at the SMLA recorded in 1958?

The answer to this perhaps lies in the two letters mentioned above: "Recall Mechanism" due to Bill Hamlin wanting a rewrite and PKD not wanting to do it probably laid around the Agency or Dick's abode and just sort of got forgotten. And "Explorers We", also needing a rewrite, seems to have got lost in the shuffle between the Agency, Dick and F&SF.

With no earlier reference to "War Game" than 1958 we assume that sometime in early 1958 PKD went through his files or instructed the Agency to go through theirs to search for any unsold short stories. The four that showed up were "The Unreconstructed M", "Recall Mechanism", "Explorers We" and "War Game."

So, then, in light of this analysis we'll put these stories into our composition chronology at different dates than the accepted ones. Thus:

"Null-O", received at the SMLA on Aug 31, 1953

"Explorers We", referred in letter to Sep 1953

"To Serve The Master", received at the SMLA on Oct 21, 1953

... Five novels, many short stories

"The Minority Report", received at SMLA on Dec 22, 1954

"War Game", indeterminate, received at SMLA Oct 31, 1958

"Recall Mechanism", before Sep 1955 [before May 1955?]

"The Unreconstructed M", received at the SMLA on June 2, 1955

This ordering leaves the year 1958 with no short stories written and PKD working on his straight novels with a sporadic effort to get his old short stories published. It is then not until 1963 that PKD returned to writing short stories. "If There Were No Benny Cemoli" was the first of this series.

NOTES

PKD to Tony Boucher, June 3, 1957

Tiresome as all this is, there's worse to come. I have ceased to write either s.f. or fantasy, Tony; I stopped writing short stuff for magazine publication back in May of '55; since then I've done only novels, both s.f. and what I call straight contemporary serious quality fiction about non-myth type people, and in the last year it's been just the latter, the non-s.f. I have five of these novels in circulation (...) We damn near sold one of them (called MARY

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AND THE GIANT). In fact we had an oral okay over the phone from the editor-in-chief of a reputable hardcover house. They held the MS for six months and then -- as I stood waiting for the contracts, still keeping faith at my end -- they returned the MS with a short note. Personally, I believe they couldn't get a pre-publication softcover house to go along with the book to underwrite their costs.

PKD to Bill Hamling, *Editor Imagination*, Sep 2, 1955

My agent Scott Meredith has relayed to me your request for a rewrite on my story RECALL MECHANISM.

The story is a good one, and I am proud of it. When a rewrite improves the story I'm glad to perform it. I welcome suggestions that help a story. In this case, however, the rewrite would turn a good yarn into a cornball nothing.

With great pride, and a sense of my responsibility to writers in general, to my own ethics, and to science-fiction readers, I refuse.

I have informed Scott, and I assume he'll be looking for the MS back.

PKD to Tony Boucher, Apr 8, 1954

I'm sorry to keep bothering you with phone call and letter, but I understand that Scott Meredith is going to write to you about "Explorers We" and I wanted to get hold of you first.

As you recall, late in September of last year you wrote to me, expressing an interest in that story, and suggesting changes. I made changes and mailed them back within the week; during the first part of October. Since then I haven't heard hide nor hair from you, but I understand that you are officially away, these days, so I have been happy to wait. However, now I'm getting worried. Maybe there was a slip-up and you didn't receive my rewrite. Or something.

In any case, if you want another rewrite, etc, etc. let me know and I will produce. It may be that the time travel angle didn't convince you, in which case I'm sure another resolution can be found. Okay? Thanks a lot ... and maybe

we could get together one of these days, as both of us repeatedly suggest.

Deckard, please be human!
By Marc 'Zito' Oberst

In the last issue of PKD Otaku, Patrick asked his readers by posting a mailinglist mail by Dante (26th October 1998), what they think about the technological state of Rick Deckard. So I am here to give a quite personal answer.

For the adapted movie the answer is clear, I think. There everybody is an android except Bryant (the one who hunts them and hates them most) and J.F. Sebastian (who got killed by them) as you can see in every character's eyes. This question has been answered a thousand times and everybody I talked to agreed that Ridley Scott wanted the audience to recognize it this way, sooner or later. But for the book the question has to be another one in my opinion: "Can even a world of Philip K. Dick be so cruel and make Rick Deckard an android who does not know it?"

In the book, Deckard is the image of a human being. More than anybody else inside as one must notice in the last chapter when he is climbing the mountains and finding the toad, his toad. So one could think in this case, that he can't be human as he seemed to be human all the time. And then he seemingly reached his goal by getting a real and own pet. And the reader gets disappointed as Deckard himself when Iran noticed that the toad has a switch. So... And in this situation Deckard himself should be no human too? Can't be! Dick's worlds are dark enough, they can't be so dark and Dick can't be so cruel to make Rick Deckard an artificial being too! Phil saw, as far as I experienced his writings, always a chance for his characters. He always believed in hope and that what human is can survive everything. He always gave more than one possibility for rescue to his novels. I would be mistaken in Philip K. Dick if Deckard were an android for real as it only seemed one time in the middle of the novel.

So I do believe that Rick Deckard is a child of mankind as Iran is, even if she fulfilled the typical dickian andylike-wife-type of a character at the beginning. I really, really hope so, even if
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"The electric Ant" - the story many people see as the ancestor of "Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?" - indicates that he isn't. He must be human! Please Deckard, be...

(C) 2003-10-07 Marc 'Zito' Oberst

"Mostly rush-writing as a cheap pulp fictioner in the '50s and '60s, Dick became a cult writer of the early '70s in Britain, a well-thumbed copy of such gems as *The Turning Wheel*, *The Man in the High Castle* or *Dr. Futurity* being as essential a fashion accessory to wasted white artschool boys as a copy of Roxy Music's first album."

- Simon Dwyer, "The Plague Yard." *Rapid Eye 2* (1995) p. 156.

Commentary
By David Aylward

I promised Frank Bertrand I'd write a LOC for your fanzine PKD Otaku #1, and at last can get down to it. Rather than run on and on about Dick (don't get me started) I thought I'd address one of the points that he raises in the Metz interview of '77, which you quote. Specifically, he deplores the lack of interest in great literature, not only among SF readers, but the general public.

In one respect, I think he was mistaken. The SF writers of former days were more conversant with classic literature than he allows. Even back in the bad old days (also known as the Golden Age), people like Fritz Lieber, Isaac Asimov, C. M. Kornbluth, James Blish and Robert Heinlein were quite well read. However the literature that *influenced* them -- in their writing, I mean -- was more likely to be the kind that their readers could relate to: Kipling, Dumas, Haggard and Robert Lewis Stevenson, rather than Proust, Joyce, or Virginia Woolf. When all is said and done, science fiction was, and to a large extent still is, an offshoot of adventure fiction.

Let's not forget that modern SF had its origins in the radio-experimental mags of the 00's and teens of the last century -- mainly, if not exclusively read by bright young adolescent males. The field has come a long

way since then, and in some respects it's come too far. Certainly, it's far more sophisticated -- but sophistication is based on repetition, not on creativity.

I'm going to go out on a limb here and state flatly that SF is learning the wrong lessons from current mainstream fiction. It has become diffuse, intolerably wordy and introverted in a very superficial way. Its pages are defaced by acres of empty chit-chat, by outright flattering of the readers' expectations, by completely incomprehensible characters, and by plots that are so convoluted as to be unintelligible.

And I have to say it: whatever PKD thought he was learning from the French novelists, he didn't always get. It is true that his people are realistically portrayed -- to the point of being a bit dull, actually -- but the apparently effortless clarity, conciseness and lack of sentimental illusions that we associate with the best French writing were beyond his reach (and most other writers, French or whatever).

Could it be that French readers find in Dick a relief from what they have grown too used to? What did Colette say to the young Simeon? -- "Just leave out all that literature!" Flaubert himself -- yea, even he -- longed to escape from the quotidian into a world of colour and violence. Maybe what he needed was science fiction!

If we're brave, we can admit that much of what we enjoy reading won't last. The trick is to read widely; too much of any one kind of book and you lose perspective. I have a friend who's a film buff; he thinks that every black and white B movie from the 40's is a masterpiece -- because he's watched too many of them.

To find a mid-point between fan and critic is not easy. I look through the remnants I have saved from my formerly vast SF library. I see that most of it is short stories. Much as I enjoy re-reading them from time to time, who remembers "William Tenn" (Philip Klaus) today, or his tours-de-force like "The Custodian" or "The Servant Problem"? My choice of novels, even of the masters, is often perverse (no, not perverted -- perverse). I still think Asimov's *Caves of Steel* is the only good novel he ever wrote; and that *Gladiator-at-Law* is the best thing either Pohl or Kornbluth ever did.

Similarly, my choice of Clement would be *Cycle of Fire*, over some others.

I could go on...but let me close by deploring the influence of academe. It is the professors' unfortunate habit to take up puzzles -- in order that we will need their help to explain them, like Catholic priests explicating the Trinity. A straight-forward space opera, however well-done (and there have been some dillies, by Harness, M. John Harrison, Lafferty, and Niven/Pournelle, to name a few) is not likely to get on their reading lists.

True, SF is the literature of ideas -- but not necessarily of *issues*, on which one can take "positions" or have "opinions." Literature is an art form before it's anything else, although it certainly doesn't exclude agendas. All we ask is that they be dramatized effectively. One of the reasons I have never been a great fan of Ursula LeGuin is that she's a shade too earnest for my taste. Definitely course-fodder.

As for PKD, he presents no lack of puzzles, but at least you feel he was on a quest. He does not push you (as for example Heinlein does) but rather *pulls* you into his invented worlds.

BOOK REVIEWS

Solar Lottery

Damon Knight: *Infinity Science Fiction* November 1955, pp. 128-130

Philip K. Dick is that short-story writer who for the past five years has kept popping up all over -- in one year, 1953, he published 27 stories -- with a sort of unobtrusive and chameleonlike competence. Entering and leaving as he does by so many doors at once, he creates a blurred impression of pleasant, small literary gifts.

The surprise of a book like "Solar Lottery" from such an author is more than considerable. Roughly, it's as if Robert Sheckley should abruptly turn into a combination of Alfred Bester, Henry and Catherine Kuttner, and A. E. van Vogt.

This book is remarkable, to begin with, in the way its extrapolations have been handled. Dick writes of a future world in which the radio-and-tv quiz show has evolved into a system-

wide game with all power as its stake: the tyrant, the Quizmaster, is chosen by a random twitch of the bottle that contains an equivalent of everybody's "power card." In practice, most people are "unks" -- unclassified -- and have no p-cards; of those who have, most surrender them to the bosses of the Hills, the great industrial complexes, under medieval fealty arrangements. The masses of people, without any cause-and-effect principle to sustain them, have fallen back on "Minimax" -- the Theory of Games made into a nihilist philosophy.

In a science-fiction magazine serial, this framework would be crudely exposed and bunged into the reader's eye at every opportunity: the lead character would have long solemn thoughts about "how wonderful the system is -- or is it?" -- and we would all grow so tired of waiting for the boob to make up his mind that any distraction would be welcome.

Nothing of the sort happens here; Dick states his premises, gives you enough of a look at his crowded, complex world to let you get your bearings -- and then puts away his maps and charts for good. You are in the world of the bottle and the Quizmaster, the Hill and the legal assassins, and you see the living surface of it, not the bones.

This is not the end of the wonder. There's the tension: Dick has caught and intensified the bare-nerve tautness of our own society at its worst, and put it on paper here so you can see, hear, feel and smell it.

There's the plot -- like van Vogt miraculously making sense as it goes along: each new development not merely startling -- anybody can startle -- but startling *and logically necessary*. This is architectural plotting, a rare and inhumanly difficult thing; and who in blazes ever expected Dick to turn up as one of the few masters of it?

And the characters: Verrick, the deposed Quizmaster, whose single-minded aim to assassinate his successor gives this story its tremendous drive; Eleanor Stevens, the telepathic secretary who renounces her gift to stay with Verrick; Pellig, the golem-assassin, and more. These people are real; they carry conviction. Not the least of Dick's virtues is that he shows the shock to the human nervous

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system of violent events; he fobs you off with no icy supermen.

Some of the small excesses and awkwardnesses of this book are perhaps traceable to the same cause. The bare-breastedness of all the women in Dick's world is hard to account for on climatic, social, moral, esthetic or other grounds, except as a simple reaction of the author's against magazine prudery. And the burning of surplus goods and the use of medieval charms seem to me errors in dialectics.

Yet even in the summing up, that place where the author has got to try to say what his novel means and where he thinks it leads, never quite satisfactorily -- because all novels with any life in them end too soon -- Dick acquits himself wonderfully well.

Cartwright, the new Quizmaster, is explaining how he gimmicked the bottle --making the whole M-Game system meaningless -- in order to get himself elected tyrant:

"Was that ethical?" Bentley asked. "That kicks over the board, doesn't it?"

"I played the game for years," Cartwright said. "Most people go on playing the game all their lives. Then I began to realize the rules were set up so I could not win. Who wants to play that kind of game. We're betting against the house and the house always wins."

Unanswerable.... And then you realize, while that speech resonates in your mind, that it isn't only the imaginary society of "Solar Lottery" that Cartwright is condemning: it's all societies -- including our own.

Philip K. Dick: Electric Shepherd

Angus Taylor: *Foundation* no. 10 (June 1976), p. 124-25

... For the student of Dick, however, the most valuable pieces in this book are the contributions of Dick himself: two letters and the text of "The Android and the Human" a speech delivered in Vancouver in 1972. In these two short letters Dick shows that he is well aware of the themes underlying his work, and gives us a concise statement of his view of the construction and destruction of reality as a function of social organization in an

unorganized universe. "Reality" here is something quite specific -- susceptible of definition and investigation. There is the entropic reality of the physical universe and there is the negentropic reality of the social universe. But above all it is the ability and responsibility of the individual human being that Dick affirms -- reality as a human creation, as distinct from the common experience of reified reality. As he says in the Vancouver speech:

I have never had too high a regard for what is generally called "reality". Reality, to me is not so much something that you perceive, but something you make. You create it more rapidly than it creates you. Man is the reality God created out of dust; God is the reality man creates continually out of his compassion, his own determination. "Good", for example --that is not a quality or even a force in the world or above the world, but what you do with bits and pieces of meaningless, puzzling, disappointing and even cruel and crushing fragments all around us that seem to be pieces left over, discarded, from another world entirely that did, maybe, make sense.

This other world is Dick's ideal, organized, humanely constructed realm of the spirit -- of God, not transcendent, external, or above the world, but immanent, the full expression of the human potential. It is on this level that Dick the political scientist/sociologist merges with Dick the religious prophet, for if we recognize in his work the concept of immanent divinity, then the religious and the political dimensions need not conflict. When humanity is God, then politics is religion. The struggle for ideal social relations is the struggle of mankind toward its Godhood. By penetrating the mystifications of various anti-human political orders, humanity can hope to organize the relations among its parts in an ideal, liberating manner, and thus manifest its divine, truly *human* nature.

"When I first discovered Phil Dick's work, I was really happy. He often has this very relaxed, unstuffy way about him. Just folks. And I like that his 'folks' aren't good patriotic honest workers, no, they're neurotics. On the other hand, if I read too much Dick, I get sick of how desperately unhappy his characters are. He'll set up some interesting world, and then have chapter after chapter of a guy arguing with his wife about nothing. It's realistic, but it's not necessarily what I want from a SF book. I want humor, sense of wonder, eyeball kicks, reality warps, conceptual breaks. Dick can do all of those, but I think sometimes his own demons took over and you're just getting page after page of purging. Dick is esteemed, I think, for his sensibility as much for his particular works, as so few of them are fully successful."

- From an interview with Rudy Rucker for the Polish SF magazine *Ubik*: May23, 2003

The Cyborgs Are In Charge
By Pat Cadigan
Infinite Matrix 10.09.03

[re. The election of Arnold Schwarzenegger as Governor of California]

To tell you the truth, I'm flabbergasted X 2. I.e., I'm flabbergasted, and I'm flabbergasted that I'm flabbergasted. I mean, Philip K. Dick knew it all along. I've read just about everything PKD ever wrote and I believe every word of it. So why am I surprised?

It's SFnal, all right, but it's SFnal in a Philip K. Dick kind of SFnal way. And, as you might remember — or totally recall, if you will — Schwarzenegger did star in a movie based on "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale" by none other than our Prophet himself.

Well-read faithful such as myself will recognize this seeming coincidence for what it really is: a message from God revealing the true nature of the universe.

Which is, for the benefit of the not-so-well-read and the heathen: the universe is in fact a movie and we are all in it. God is the director. It's a production that has been plagued by problems from the beginning and, in fact, has

already had a number of directors prior to the one now at the helm.

In an effort to rescue this production from a fate worse than the fiery pit — i.e., becoming the *Heaven's Gate* of its time — the current director, or God, has dispensed with dogma and embraced dogme. It's one of the few techniques nobody's tried yet and in a situation this desperate, there isn't a whole lot to lose.

Thus, the lousy lighting, muddled sound, all those badly-framed shots with things off-centre (not to mention camera-shake!), and the improvised sequences that go on and on and on and don't end until some of the characters end up painting themselves into a corner with their tongues (so to speak).

But there is a script. It's based on things taken from many different books and stories, all of them by Philip K. Dick. And as you probably understand by now, Dick is also the director.

Therefore, PKD = GOD. QED.

I realize the foregoing isn't exactly what anyone would call pithy. But then, scripture never is.

If you give long and careful consideration to everything I've just told you, you'll see I'm right. That's not all there is to it, of course, but that pretty much covers the most important points. I would tell you more, except Chris says that I have to take my medication now. Actually, he says I should have taken it an hour ago, but I really fail to see what difference 60 minutes one way or another could make.

Game in the Maze By Patrick Clark

I suppose the most natural thing in the world is to hope, against all the evidence, that one's favorite author had actually produced an unpublished novel and it was lying somewhere in manuscript waiting to be discovered. Alas, there is no reason at all to believe that an unknown Philip K. Dick book is still out there waiting for some lucky scholar to trip over it and delight the world. *The Owl In Daylight*, the novel Phil had barely begun to think about just before his death, never got to the first draft stage. There are, alas, no unpublished novels to be found. The second most natural thing in
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the world is to wish that that favorite author had written more books when he had the time. For Phil one such period might have been 1966-67.

Between 1963 and 1966 Philip wrote an incredible thirteen novels beginning with *Dr. Bloodmoney* and ending with *Ubik*. But Phil was running out of steam. He later explained to Gregg Rickman:

Ubik started off conventionally, and then all of a sudden I realized I was writing too conventional a novel, and I panicked and just decided to go for broke on anything I could think of, and lucked out. I lucked out because I'd been reading the Tibetan Book of the Dead and I'd had some interesting theological ideas. So I had the material to put in. But that was a rather desperate attempt to infuse something original into that book, whereas the original concept was not original.

I was writing for Larry Ashmead (at Doubleday), and he liked **Ubik** a lot. It was his favorite, of all those that I sold him. But I had to pull that out of the fire.

Now there is an element of desperation that began to show up in the writing, a recognition that I'm beginning to repeat myself and an attempt to do something new when I wrote that one. What we're seeing with that, though, is the beginning of an ossification in my writing where **I am** beginning to repeat myself. There was beginning to be evidence that my whole format had frozen, and I wasn't advancing. **Ubik** was a desperate attempt to advance it. (*Philip K Dick: In His Own Words*: pp 183-84)

Ubik reached Phil's agent, Scott Meredith on 2 July 1966. At this point, Phil's writing grinds nearly to a halt. For the remainder of 1966 and all of 1967 Phil's output is negligible: a script for the television program "The Invaders," a plot idea for "Mission Impossible" and a chapter and some chapter excerpts for what will one day become *The Galactic Pot-Healer* totally thirty pages. (PKD to Cynthia ____: February 27, 1967 and PKD to Scott

Meredith: Nov. 3, 1967) In 1964 Phil had written an outline and an opening chapter for a work he called "The Kneeling Legless Man." Based upon the outline, Doubleday had contracted for the finished novel but Phil couldn't complete it. Failure to deliver the work caused complications with Doubleday.

Two additional manuscripts were written in 1967. These were outlines for proposed novels composed to catch the attention of some publisher who might be tempted sign a contract and pay an advance. The two outlines were entitled respectively "Joe Protagoras is Alive and Living on Earth" and "The Name of the Game is Death." They were eventually published in 1992. (*New Worlds* #2: pp. 255-283)

Joe Protagoras is a typical PKD character living in a dreary, failing socialist future working in a dead-end job and with a pushy girlfriend. Through a series of improbable events he lands a job at the REM Corporation designing rides for an amusement park. In reality REM is constructing a fake utopian world as part of a convoluted political conspiracy to get rid of the current elderly despot and replace him with a younger, though by no means more enlightened, successor. There are the usual wheels-within-wheels plot developments revolving around that familiar PKD device the "fake fakes." But the narrative itself appears fairly straightforward. The plot to "Joe Protagoras" looks like it contains elements first found in "Today the World," an unfinished story thought to date from 1963. (*PKDS Newsletter* #20" pp. 2-3)

"Name of the Game Is Death" is something else again. It involves two future societies, 2017 and 2118, a complicated board game world reminiscent of *The Game Players of Titan* and *Eye In the Sky* mediated by different mushrooms and murder, a form of communication known as "speedch" and illegal group sex involving electronic amplification. Even as an outline it's a bit of a mess.

Scott Meredith received "Joe Protagoras" on May 1, 1967 and "Name of the Game" on May 4. In a cover letter Phil wrote:

Here is a new outline for a new s-f novel, which I am in the process of

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working on. Terry Carr at Ace wrote me recently and asked if I had anything for them, and I mentioned this particular novel and that I would shortly be preparing an outline. However, I really don't think Ace would be right for this one, in spite of their loud noises of all at once being in the market for "adult" science fiction. If you want, try this on them, but primarily I'd like to see you submit it wherever *you* think best. (PKD to Scott Meredith April 24, 1967)

Two weeks later "additional material for the science fiction outline The Name of the Game is Death" arrived in New York.

Meredith shopped both outlines around but without much luck. Doubleday and Avon rejected "Joe Protagoras" outright. Berkeley received it next and sat on it for a year and a half before finally accepting it on January 31, 1969. Phil stiffed them and never wrote the novel; Williams says Phil didn't finally fulfill the Berkeley contract until 1978 when he sent them the collection *The Golden Man*. (*New Worlds* #2 p. 256) What this also means is that by 1969 Phil had *two* unfulfilled contracts with two different publishers: *Deus Irae* for Doubleday and "Joe Protagoras" for Berkeley.

Despite Phil's misgivings "Name of the Game" went first to Terry Carr at Ace who held it for five months before declining. It then went to Avon and Lancer who both rejected it. At last Meredith submitted it to Doubleday in May 1968 possibly because Doubleday had requested something by Phil:

"By the way -- I got a letter from Larry Ashmead at Doubleday asking for another novel. This is a good sign, I think." (PKD to Scott Meredith: February 28, 1968).

Considering that Phil had not yet delivered *Deus Irae* this seems like a strange request. It might explain why Meredith originally submitted "Name of the Game" to the paperback houses (Ace, Avon, Lancer) first rather than directly to Doubleday in 1967.

In the end, neither outline bore fruit. It seems unlikely that Phil would have been able

to write the novels in any case as throughout the year he was essentially suffering from writer's block. He confessed to his friend Avram Davidson:

As to my end of things, I've been having a good deal of trouble, too. I started on a new book the other day (for which I have been making notes for four months straight), got 16 good pages done, and then -- bam. Nothing. What followed was just awful. (PKD to Avram Davidson: April 27, 1967)

Phil may be referring here to "Name of the Game" but whatever it was it's clear he was at an artistic impasse. Possibly he was simply burned out from his thirteen novels spree. Certainly he was tired of his "what is reality" plot device as his remarks to Rickman plainly show. In a reply to Donald Wollheim about doing another book for Ace, he asked,

"Do you want me to handle any particular theme? Do you want me to avoid any particular theme (such as reality-versus-illusion, for example)?" (PKD to Donald A. Wollheim: October 22, 1968)

Soon after Phil opened a correspondence with fellow SF writer Roger Zelazny and the idea of collaborating on a novel grew up. (This would eventually produce *Deus Irae*, the title by which "The Kneeling Legless Man" finally was completed.) In a letter to Zelazny on October 26, 1967 Phil pitches an idea for collaboration on a new book. This is before the *Deus Irae* collaboration comes up. The plot he sends to Zelazny appears to be a merger of the "Joe Protagoras" and "Name of the Game" outlines. Paul Williams points this out in his *New Worlds* introduction. Here is the interesting part. Phil writes:

"I have pages and pages of notes on this novel, including a full list of well developed characters. What I do *not* have is any sort of final part -- i.e. resolution -- of the novel. In other words I have half a novel...."

"Half a novel" *finished* is one possible interpretation though perhaps that reads too
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much into it. It does sound like Phil continued to think about his two orphaned outlines even though they were both still circulating separately amongst various publishers. Or he may have spontaneously melded the two together in his excitement at the idea of working with Zelazny, whom he obviously greatly admired. But the plot described in the October 26 letter is sufficiently different so that it seems more likely that Phil had been thinking about the matter at least somewhat before Zelazny came into the picture. What he apparently is *not* thinking about at all is "The Kneeling Legless Man."

1968 was a busy year for Phil. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (written in 1966) was published. In March he finished and sent to his agent the manuscript of *Galactic Pot-Healer*. His friend and mentor Anthony Boucher died of cancer on April 29th. In June Phil and his wife Nancy purchased a house in San Rafael. He had been collaborating in fits and starts for some time on the novel with Zelazny. Then, in September 1968 Phil attended a science fiction convention in San Francisco nicknamed "Baycon." Shortly after the convention he wrote to Ashmead:

"Meanwhile, I have started on a novel which I think is a giant step forward for me. I am not going to do an outline on this one. It is, I think a totally new sort of novel for me, one in which the nature of reality is firmly stated; there won't merely be layer after layer of illusion. I had the idea before the Baycon, and when I came away from it I had a totally new piece of material emerging, perhaps because of what I said there and what was said to me. Perhaps I was too timid in the past to dare say what reality was; I only felt competent to say what was illusion. My confidence in myself is much greater at this point than it ever was before in my seventeen years of s-f writing and selling." (PKD to Lawrence Ashmead: September 7, 1968)

This novel would eventually become *A Maze of Death*.

There has been some confusion as to origin of this work. Some authorities believe it to have originated as "Name of the Game. But I believe that Phil abandoned his original concepts from 1967 and struck off on a completely new direction as "Joe Protogoras" and "Name of the Game" plots have very little in common with *Maze*. In fact I believe that "The Name of the Game Is Death" was never the new novel's working title, as some have suggested and certainly it was not the source of the ideas found in *Maze*. Properly "Name of the Game" refers only to the 1967 outline.

Despite what he told Ashmead, Phil did indeed write an outline. It is part of the collection at Bowling Green State University. The 1968 outline has the working title of "The Hour of the T.E.N.C.H." This was the title on the carbon copy of the draft in the Bowling Green collection as well, which, again, casts doubt upon the "Name of the Game" as source material. Phil did draw on other authors for some of his ideas and he conveniently lists them for us:

"Novel of an Earth colony on a far off planet, and the decline and decay both socially, economically, and psychologically of them all: ala Paul Bowles & "The Beckoning Fair One," & THE CASTLE -- ending ala NICHTS NEUS IN WESTEN: the last death. A study of advancing entropy ala "Silent Snow."

"Each character arrived on his own ship. Prior to start of book they don't know one another. Like AND THEN THERE WERE NONE (do they actually die off, one by one? YES. (Again like NICHTS NEUSE.)"

"As the last one dies he sees a rocket arriving with help. They were not an experiment; it was an accidental SNAFU, without meaning or purpose. (Maybe the rocket has a medical robot, which saves him -- as in end of LORD OF THE FLIES.

All the elements that went into what finally became *A Maze of Death* are present in the outline, including the ending when the crew is revealed to be in a "polyencephalic drama." (To quote from the outline again: "Or are they one polyencephalic organism ala the Damon Knight story?") A few elements for this new work are lifted from the "Name of the Game" such as the characters all arriving separately and, most significantly, the mysterious murders. There are a number of minor differences between the outline and the finished novel though in the main Phil stayed on course.

The working title "The Hour of the T.E.N.C.H." is a bit of a mystery. Phil used the *Maze* title -- or a variation of it -- in his letter to Donald Wollheim on October 22, 1968:

"My situation is this: yesterday I sent off a new novel, A MAZE WITH DEATH, to Scott [Meredith]. It is an s-f mystery, and Larry Ashmead is interested in it for a series of "future mystery novels," as they're called."

"The Hour of the T.E.N.C.H." draft at Bowling Green must then pre-date October 22. Perhaps it is the "rough draft" Meredith speaks of in his September 30 letter. The manuscript has numerous handwritten corrections, all fairly minor in nature, and when Phil typed the final draft for Doubleday perhaps he changed the title to A MAZE WITH DEATH. On November 13 Phil wrote to Roger Zelazny:

"Speaking of Doubleday -- I got news from my agent today that Doubleday has bought my most recent novel, a sort of "future mystery," as it's going to be called (working title: A MAZE WITH DEATH.)"

Note again the alternative wording of the title. The actual title was still up in the air in 1970 as the book was nearing publication. Phil kept tinkering with it until the last minute:

"I, too, prefer MAZE OF DEATH, but I think a THE should start it; i.e., THE MAZE OF DEATH (or possibly A MAZE

OF DEATH). So go ahead." (PKD to Judith M. Glushanok: January 13, 1970)

In retrospect, Phil classified *Maze* as yet another ossified work. He told Rickman:

A Maze of Death is really a desperate attempt to come up with something new. In no way is it new. It repeats familiar things with a multi-foci basis and the epistemological theme, the reality versus irreality. That's the last gasp of those things that had become my stock in trade. At that point I could not go on. I had exhausted all the possibilities in the type of thing I was doing. (*In His Own Words* p. 183)

So my guess would be this. There are *three* manuscripts in contention at Doubleday in September-October 1968; the unfinished *Deus Irae*, the outline to "The Name of the Game is Death" and the completed rough draft of what will eventually be titled *A Maze of Death*. *Maze* is the "new one" they speak of. The relevant paragraphs of the September 30 letter from Meredith read:

"Doubleday, of course, is very anxious to see the new book you've mentioned to us and to Larry, and if you could send in a completed half, say in two weeks or so, they'll be able to issue an immediate contract.

And, of course, they're very anxious about DEUS IRAE, mostly because they'd like to contract for THE NAME OF THE GAME IS DEATH as soon as possible, but cannot until they have something more on DEUS IRAE. This is necessary because GAME is only in outline form, whereas the new one is completed in rough draft."

Meredith may have the manuscript for "The Hour of the T.E.N.C.H." in its possession but from the sense of the letter wants a more polished draft to send to Doubleday -- though they may have contacted Larry Ashmead about the manuscript's existence.

Meanwhile, while all of this is going on, the outline to "Joe Protagoras" is sitting at Berkeley waiting for them to make up their minds. The *Deus Irae* collaboration with Roger Zelazny continues *and* Phil is also working on a novel for Donald Wollheim at Ace -- what will become *Our Friends from Frolix 8*. He wrote to Terry Carr on November 13th "I did turn over to Don ...three and a half chapters and an outline...of an even more recent novel I'm working on, one especially for Ace that no one else has seen." There are so many outlines and manuscripts and contracts and collaborations in play it would be a wonder if Phil himself could have kept it all straight.

Despite being able to write these new works the energy soon dissipated again and Phil found himself at the end of 1968 pretty much as he was in 1967: blocked.

So with **Maze of Death** there was no way there could be a further novel based on those things. Something new had to be done. And the next novel, well, the next novel was **Our Friends from Frolix 8** (1970). And that is a throwaway novel. That was simply written for money. It was not intended to be anything else but a novel for Ace Books. It was under contract for Ace Books. It was simply a regression. (*In His Own Words* p. 183-84)

With the exception of three short stories (itself a kind of regression to his early writing days) Phil falls silent until 1974.

"The law of diminishing returns appears to have caught up with Hollywood's Philip K. Dick infatuation. The man was a literary workhorse, so it's not as if there's nothing left to adapt; it's more that the diversity of his vision has been so diluted by well-meaning dilettantes and profit-hungry bandwagoners that it now has the unmistakable rigidity of formula. *Paycheck*, the latest big-dollar cinematic Dickwork, flogs that formula mercilessly."

- Mark Holcomb, "Philip K. *Paycheck*"
Village Voice Dec. 24, 2003