



Welcome To "PKD OTAKU" Issue #14

The Editorial

Here comes – after a quite long time of silence – the newest issue of PKD Otaku. We hope you like the new graphics & layout and enjoy it digital in colors or printed in black/white. If you do we encourage you to participate, these zines ain't no spectator's sport as Soda stated in the computer art magazine "Retro" a long time ago. We need your help to come out more often, to fill future otaku pages with interesting content & different point of views. At least your feedback helps us to see where we can improve and what we are already doing the way you like it. But without help or response our motivation will go down for sure and you might lose a beloved tiny magazine about your favorite author. Don't be lazy! While the downloads increased since "pkd otaku" has its own website, the number of contributors decreased. So let us know what you think about us and even share your dreams & thoughts about Philip K. Dick or dickish ideas thereby this won't be the last issue.

Patrick Clark & Marc Oberst (August 2005)

The Content

ORBITING THE PKD PLANET – PKD Memories by Patrick Clark	Page 02
The Portrait Of Philip K. Dick by Lord RC	Page 04
Speaking Of Otaku... by Patrick Clark	Page 05
Interview With The Otaku by Nex Hurlan	Page 06
Recent PKD Bits by Andre Welling	Page 08
An Unpublished Philip K. Dick Letter	Page 09
"Crazy Like A Fox" by Michael Moorcock	Page 10
I Dark by Marc Oberst	Page 12

The Credits

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Come and visit us to read old issues, online articles and see other projects at:
<http://www.SINNSitiv.de/pkd-otaku>





ORBITING THE PKD PLANET

PKD Memories by Patrick Clark

I can remember when I bought and read my first Philip K. Dick novel. It was 1964 and I was thirteen. I had been reading science fiction for a while having been introduced to it by my best friend, Sam. Every week or so the two of us would walk over to the supermarket in my hometown of Delphos, Ohio (population 7,000) to check out the paperback bookracks. Back then, Sam and I were pretty indiscriminate readers -- so long as it was science fiction. Sam liked Robert Heinlein while I favored space opera but we would read whatever looked interesting. I recall we read a lot of John Brunner and Andre Norton, probably because Ace Books churned them out in a steady stream. Ace was our main supplier, especially Ace Doubles. Heinlein was with Signet, so Sam always bought from them but Ace had many more titles available. And Ace was cheaper at 40 cents than Signet at 60 cents.

One day in 1964 my eyes fell upon *Clans of the Alphane Moon* by Philip K. Dick. I didn't recognize the name but I knew I had to have this book because it had such a great cover: a hover-tank manned by a futuristic soldier firing his ray gun at some oddly shaped aircraft in the sky. I scooped it right up. It cost, of course, 40 cents. I cannot now imagine what I initially thought of this strange tale of psychotic space colonists, divorced CIA agents, interplanetary TV comedians and "Ganymede slime molds." Certainly I had no idea who Philip K. Dick could be. SF was so much literary popcorn to me then so I suspect I just read the book in about two hours or so and put it with the dozens of other SF books I had collected.

It wasn't until 1966 that I came to read my second PKD novel. That was *The Crack in Space* with its enigmatic blue spacemen on the cover and its Black presidential candidate, telepathic Neanderthals and orbiting brothel within. That same year I also bought *The Unteleported Man*, an Ace Double, for 50 cents. I remember seeing *Dr. Bloodmoney* on the rack at my grandfather's drugstore but its rust covered illustration with the shriveled-up homunculus floating over a blasted landscape didn't appeal to me. And, as it happened, my father had an old paperback copy of *The Man in the High Castle* but I doubt I ever made the connection that it, too, was by this Philip K. Dick guy. The next year I picked up the re-issue of *The World that Jones Made* and *The Ganymede Takeover*. I don't know how much I differentiated Phil from the many other sf authors I was reading at the time. I suspect he didn't make a very great impression upon me. One thing I do remember, though, is his fascination with women's breasts. Somewhere, sooner or later, in every one of his books would be a description of a female character's breasts. I learned the word "aureole" from reading Phil.

Phil had written a lot of short stories but I had come across only two at this point. "The Turning Wheel" was in an anthology called *Now & Beyond* I found for fifty cents while on vacation one summer. "Oh, to Be a Blobel" was reprinted in *The World's Best Science Fiction: 1965*. The only science fiction magazine I read was *If*, which was the only one that came to my grandfather's drug





store. I read it faithfully from mid-1964 to late 1968 but Phil's work didn't appear there during those years.

In the Fall of 1968 I went off to college at St. Louis University. Sam went to Florida. When I saw him again in the summer he gave me his copy of the Signet edition of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* He had to get it out of the house because his parents had read the teaser page at the beginning of the book where Rachel Rosen asks Decker if he is going to kill her after they make love. Sam's conservative parents were quite distressed, so I got the novel. It may have been with that novel that Phil began making a stronger impression on me. Or maybe not. I know I read "Faith of Our Fathers" in Sam's paperback copy of *Dangerous Visions* but I can't remember it having had an impact on me at all though later it would amaze me. Since attending the University I was much more discriminating in my appreciation of books and ideas. I still read a good deal of science fiction but more than ever it was for simple escapism. Sometime in 1970 I bought *Our Friends from Frolix 8* at the Famous-Barr department store in St. Louis where I had gone shopping with my girlfriend. And in the following summer I borrowed *Now Wait for Last Year*, *A Maze of Death* and *Ubik* from my local public library. I found "If There Were No Benny Cemoli" in *The Eighth Galaxy Reader*. So amongst the many novels and short stories I had read up to then, I had discovered ten of Phil's novels and four of his stories.

In 1972 I graduated from the university. My girlfriend and I broke up that summer. I moved into an apartment, and got a job. And I bought *We Can Build You*. It cost 95 cents and was the highest amount of money I had ever paid for one of Phil's books. I don't even remember reading it. In truth, I had other things to worry about. I had pulled a 38 in the Draft Lottery and daily expected to be dragged into the army. Nixon was president. The war in Vietnam went on and on. Repression was in the air and a police state was presumed to be in place. I continued to consume science fiction off and on, though except for Ian Wallace's *Croyd* novels I'm at a loss to remember what exactly I was reading. Kibble, probably. The collection of Ace books left over from high school was long gone, passed on to my brother Tim or sold to used bookstores. I waited to be inducted. Back home Sam was reading books on Eastern mysticism. My roommate, Paul, gave me some Vonnegut to read but I had no enthusiasm. My life was something of a mess...

While usually maintaining the posture of a writer of science fantasy for a special group of readers who cherish that genre, always behind Philip K.'s plot smokescreen of extraterrestrials, future societies, machine paradigms, counterclock worlds, and Lewis Carrollian wubs from Mars, is a full-blown religio-mystic Dickian outlook, a theory of reality as we experience it outside fiction--in day to day encounters that posit a just-around-the-corner arcanum of hyperdimensions lying in wait, phantasmal migrations into the no-longer-future and the unbecoming past.





The Portrait Of Philip K. Dick by Lord RC

Glancing up for the last time as I sit here holding my gun I see on my garret wall the photograph of Philip K. Dick that has gazed down upon me for many years. I remember when I ordered the photo back in 1994 or thereabouts. It was advertised at I forget what price in the *Philip K. Dick Society Newsletter*. I must have had some money at the time because I could rarely afford all the fine editions of PKD's books for sale in the zine and what possessed me to order this photo I do not know.

When it arrived in its padded envelope I eagerly took it out and looked it over. A glossy 8X10 titled 'Mona Lisa Smile', signed by Nicole Panter, the photographer, and numbered 11/250. The next day I took the photo to an art shop in New Haven, Indiana where I then lived and asked the lady to frame it for me. I selected a dark, intricate wood and she promised to have it done for me in a few days.

A few days later the framed photo of PKD's 'Mona Lisa Smile' was ensconced above my computer where I could look up to it for inspiration in my writing. And over the years it did inspire me. Lost in reverie over some turn of phrase or simply just lost my attention would be taken by PKD's ever-changing expression. Was I struggling over the description of a violent episode in my story? Then PKD would wear a fearsome frown. Were I excited or amused then PKD would show interest or his smile would transform into laughter.

I lost track of the photo some years later when my fourth marriage collapsed and I had to leave another once happy home. It was five years later, earlier this year, in fact, that I found it again, still in its frame, tucked behind a chest of drawers in my old home. My ex-wife had stuck it there for some reason. I found it when I was picking up the last of my stuff. I gazed at the portrait in the musty smelling back room, glad to have it again. But the years of neglect and dampness had taken their toll. The frame was a little battered and the photo itself had alternately been baked and frozen in that unused room. Turning the picture in the dull light I saw that the portrait now adhered to the glass. Tilting it further I could see that the dark colours had turned to silver on the photo; some deterioration of the photographic chemicals, I assumed. But if you looked at it straight on this metallic aspect was not visible. However its condition I put it in the trunk of my old Continental along with the rest of my stuff and took it with me when I moved to Colorado the next day.

When I unpacked high in the Rocky Mountains the picture had taken another turn for the worst. It now had a large crack from top left down to bottom right of the glass. If you turned it just right PKD took on a decidedly fractured aspect. Well, I found a spot on the wall for it above my computer and once again PKD looked proudly down on my faltering literary efforts.

As I frowned and smiled and laughed as I wrote whatever I was writing, PKD's portrait mirrored my emotions. If I was happy, PKD was happy. If I was sad, PKD was sad. Unfortunately I've been mostly sad lately and PKD's expression has reflected this. And it didn't help matters when, last week, in a fit of drunken rage at the banality of my life and the fact that my girlfriend, whom I dearly loved, had just left me, I threw a beer bottle into the heart of PKD's face. I hit him right between the eyes,





where his third or *ajna* eye would be located. The glass shattered and dregs of beer dripped from the frame.

I gazed at PKD in a fit of sudden remorse. What had I done? PKD looked down, beer running from his eyes, his face a shattered mirror as if some artist had attempted to portray the disintegration of modern life. "I'm sorry, Phil!" I cried. "I'll fix you up, I'll get a new frame!"

But I couldn't. The photographic paper adhered to the broken glass. It was impossible to repair. What could I do? I replaced the picture on its spot on the wall. It stares down at me now as I write this. But what of its expression? What of my own?

It's all smashed, shattered, broken and hidden behind a harlequin mask of silver and white reflecting the world of my room. If I look at it when the sun is behind me my own reflection turns to shards of refracted ice like a rainbow dropped on a frozen lake. Is Phil smiling? Or what is that jagged expression? I do not know. The sun is going down now and the portrait dims. Should I turn on the light? But that might blow the fuse and, anyway, it doesn't matter. I glance up at the portrait one last time with the light almost gone. PKD has no discernible expression now only a twisted metallic smile. He sees me but I cannot see him. From the corner of my eye I see something move. It's a *gluck*. I've never seen one before but I know a *gluck* when I see one. And I know hell when I live in it.

The next time the *gluck* shows up I'm gonna shoot it. If it doesn't I'm gonna shoot myself. Right between the eyes.

After all, we're only made out of dust and glass and decaying chemicals, and that's really not much of a start, is it.

September 2004.

Speaking Of Otaku... by Patrick Clark

"If you think that the hybrid system of *aidorus* [pop music idols] and *aidorians* is pretty hyper-real already you haven't heard of the virtual idol Haga Yui, yet (which is not a name but the word for "irritated, impatient, annoyed", literally "a tooth-ache"). Virtual she is because she does not exist. She is a phantom consisting of different girls who lend Haga her voice or her body. At concerts her face remains hidden and her voice is play-back. She is an assemblage in a way quite similar to the puppets in *bunraku*. When Haga recently published a photo-book there were three girls sitting at the autograph hour. People would stand in line before the one whom they thought to be the "more real" Haga-chan. An exhibition with her "original" artwork, scheduled for early November, was postponed. But rumor has it that the actual paintings have been done by several renowned artists. The title of the exhibition will be: "Does mysterious idol dream of human-faced sheep?"

"That is, of course, a malicious homage to Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* which served Ridley Scott in the making of *Blade Runner*. The presumption from the beginning that *otaku* perform a perpetual play on the border between the animate and the inanimate seems to harden. 'Android', a somewhat old-fashioned term, is quite fit for idol Haga Yui as well as for the *otaku*. They look like humans but they aren't, and they're playing with factoids (look like facts) but aren't."





Source: Volker Grassmuck, "I'm alone, but not lonely." Japanese *Otaku*-Kids Colonize the Realm of Information and Media. A Tale of Sex and Crime from a Faraway Place (Dec. 1990)

Strictly retrograde, right? Not exactly, and Philip K. Dick is always happy to explain how not exactly that is. In fact, Dick inhabits a menagerie of unrealizable prototype worlds, half-born anti-conceptions, dim sources of wonder or brightly lit techno cul-de-sacs. Little wonder if some of his most devoted fans seem at times to be forever wandering there. Operating like a traveling one-man Discontinuity of the Space-Time Matrix, Philip mints cosmos after cosmos with a sense of inspired bluff that keeps even his best friends and sci-fi colleagues unsure where method merges with incipient madness.

Interview With The Otaku by Nex Hurlan

Nex Hurlan: What's up with *PKD Otaku*?

Patrick Clark: To tell you the truth I'm seriously thinking about shutting it down.

NH: What? Why quit now?

PC: Well I'm pretty burned out these days. I've run out of archived PKD stuff I collected over the years. That was one of the reasons for doing the zine in the first place. Also I'm having a hell of a time composing any original material. Very few submissions have come in from others and there has been virtually no feedback from anyone new. Marc has done a heroic job making issues available on the 'Net but if anyone is reading it there I haven't heard from them. Hell, there isn't even any feedback from the jazzflavor list where I hang out. There is a core of loyal friends, God love 'em, and I've mostly kept it going for them. Even so I'm really tired. Plus, I don't know, maybe I need to give it up in order to get back to Phil himself.

NH: What do you mean?

PC: It's just that I don't have time to read any Phil when I'm involved with the zine. I haven't read any of the novels or letters in a long time. *Martian Time Slip* has been sitting on the end table for months now. Gathering dust.

NH: What's your view of PKD today?

PC: I still dig him immensely.





NH: No, no, I mean I mean how do you see his presence in today's world?

PC: Oh. Well, he's become a kind of pop culture figure, hasn't he? Academics have totally exploited him; turned him into an intellectual commodity. Pretty ironic when you consider he once said, "You know, sometimes I think it's all a plot, to praise you and accept you and treat you like a serious literary form. Because in that way they can guarantee your demise. The only thing that's worse than being treated as 'not serious' is being treated as 'serious'." *Otaku* was originally started as a reaction to that university colonization of my favorite author. I wanted regular folks to think about and write about Phil.

In the mediasphere he's likewise been commodified. You see him mentioned in the press on a regular basis. I'm always surprised by this as I'm reasonably sure most of the people who drop his name seem to "know" from the movies, not the novels. "Philip K. Dick" has become sort of journalistic shorthand for paranoia and an all-pervasive surveillance society. I saw in the *New York Times* recently the phrase "Philip K. Dick technology" in reference to the Department of Homeland Security. What they really mean is "Orwellian" but for some reason they don't want to use that term. Maybe Orwell isn't hip anymore. It's very strange. After all if "phildickian" means anything it means questioning reality, not a lurking police state. Again, Phil put his finger on it: "You know, if they can't destroy you by ignoring you, they can destroy you by annexing you."

NH: What would Phil be doing if he were alive today?

PC: Tricky question. It's entirely possible that Phil's present day stature is entirely the result of his being dead. "Safely dead," you might say. *Blade Runner* tanked originally and that was really Phil's only chance to break into a larger world. Once the movie vanished I imagine he would have continued to what he had always done: write. *Timothy Archer* didn't sell especially well so probably he would have gone back to science fiction. The various outlines to *The Owl in Daylight* are all pretty heavily SF. Cyberpunk was coming just around the corner. I think he would have liked that and maybe it would have steered him into a new direction. Or, since he now had a decent income, he might have just worked endlessly on that damn *Exegesis*.

NH: He'd have a word processor soon enough.

PC: Yeah. Jeez, Phil with word-processing. Pretty scary idea, isn't it? A typewriter slowed him down at least a bit. A computer would have really opened the floodgates. Imagine the *Exegesis* gushing out at triple speed. He might have eventually started a blog.

NH: What do you think of the movies?

PC: They mostly suck. *Blade Runner*, while a fabulous film, seems to me to have a lot less PKD than is generally believed. David Peoples' script is certainly good and has a phildickian flavor but, really, other than the "what is human?" theme it's mostly a film noir narrative. People are blinded by the





"look" of the film. Admittedly the look is impressive; it's just not especially Phil's look. To tell you the truth, the one film I think was the truest to Phil's story and vision was *Screamers* though most people hate it. They get worse as more of them get made for some reason. *Total Recall* already shows the whole show hitting the skids and let's not even talk about *Minority Report* and *Paycheck*. The trailer to *Scanner Darkly* looks totally fucked up. I'm not even sure I want to see it but, you know, you almost have to when you're in this business.

NH: Are you really going to quite doing *Otaku*?

PC: I don't know. I do have a long piece on Phil and LSD that I've been thinking about for years. I just can't seem to get started. It needs a lot of work and research and I don't know if I have it in me.

NH: Damn, I hope you keep the zine going.

PC: We'll see.

Recent PKD Bits by Andre Welling

#1 I found a PKD reference in Neil Gaiman's ENDLESS NIGHTS.

#2 When I think about my dwindling 1-man business I feel like Al Miller and Jim Fergesson at the same time.

#3 My ex-mistress and bearer of my child is a dark-haired girl. Her name means 'wrath' in some languages.

In his late life Phil thought that there are worse worlds out there and our world was 'bettered' by divine choice. So no Nazi-ruled US and no totalitarian US president. But an imperialistic one. And Auschwitz (and Buchenwald, Dachau, etc.) still happened. Auschwitz and the Tsunami. Where is room for a benefactor operating on earth? Not easy to see the guy.

Downing your Zolofit uppers with caffeinated 'Hyper-Moo' milk (in 2005!) makes you a bona fide PhilKDickian character, Patrick. I'm not making fun, pal. That's the highest blessing in our coven. I noticed that I am a REAL PKD character when rekal one of my arguments with a dark-haired girl, Ira Frauenzimmer. She is a painter of abysmal creatures and was together with Andre Welling, our target person. They have a baby girl, Ava. Analysis of tapes reveal a high level of distress in recent verbal exchange of the former couple. Maybe she found out that his 'unemployment' and 'job-search' is a hoax, a front for pushing substance D. Recent recordings show W. in a confused state, in one instance he needed full four seconds to find the second anchor for the bell play string on the baby wheel cart. "What narcotic did you use to numb your pain" she asked, referring to both his yesterday painful visit to the dentist (!) and his present fumbling. "Uhm, half a bottle red wine", W said. Forensic analysis of the phrase and facial dynamics suggest that he hides something. -- Bob





An Unpublished Philip K. Dick Letter

To: Mr. Shokichi Kawaguchi

December 8, 1968

Dear Mr. Kawaguchi,

I am told by Mr. Fukushima of Hayakawa Shobo & Company that you translated my novel, MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE. I wonder if I could ask you several questions about the Japanese edition. Viz.:

Did the novel sell well in Japan?

Were the reviews of the novel favorable? If so, what did the reviewers like, and if not, what did they dislike?

I like Japanese people and Japan (which I would very much like to visit). In the novel did I manage to convey my positive feelings toward Japan and the Japanese? I felt that the Japanese occupation of the USA, described in the novel, would be stern but fair -- unlike the German. A major aspect of the novel was my desire to contrast the two, German and Japanese occupation. Did this contrast get across? I would be very distressed if I turned out that my favorable feelings toward Japan did not get across in the novel, as seen from your standpoint. After all, the basis of the novel was Mr. Tagomi's thwarting of German designs, his deep humanitarian quality which defied the German authorities. Of all the fiction I have written, nothing has meant more to me than the scene in which Mr. Tagomi confronts the German authorities and wins out against them, in the name of humanity.

Did the special speech of the Japanese living in the USA West Coast seem convincing to you? Or did I misrepresent the Japanese manner of speaking English? I would be very upset if, in your opinion, this speech was not convincing.

Did you yourself personally like the novel?

I am sorry to be putting so many questions to you, but all this is very important to me. I am sorry for causing you any inconvenience, and any and all answers you might give me to the above questions would be quite valuable to me. Thank you very much for your trouble and time, and I will hope to hear from you.

Cordially,
Philip K. Dick





Kippled Out L.A. 2019

By the time Dick fan Tim Leary actually got around to giving Phil a phone call in the spring of '69, it was already too late. Phil's fascination with the good doctor's elixirs was on the wane. He was way beyond that now, he told Leary--to be specific, January 3, 2021. Meanwhile, entropic forces wrought havoc in his personal life: suspected FBI surveillance, IRS audits, and rampant over- consumption of stimulants were combining and combating on every plane of Phil's existence.

“Crazy Like A Fox” by Michael Moorcock

The Guardian: *June 4, 2005*

Emmanuel Carrère, *Philip K. Dick in I Am Alive and You Are Dead.*

Like Hammett, Chandler, Faulkner and Eudora Welty, US writer Philip K Dick was first taken seriously in England and France. *New Worlds* magazine serialised his "breakthrough" novel *Time Out of Joint* in 1959 and I believe mine was the first published essay on Dick to suggest that he was something more than a good genre writer. People such as Maxim Jakubowski began to publicise him in France. *New Worlds* commissioned the late John Brunner to write the first appreciation of Dick to run in a national magazine.

In 1965, after *The Man in the High Castle* won Dick his only Hugo award, I contacted his agent on behalf of the publisher I was advising. The agent said we could have any four Dick titles for £600, and an option to buy the next four at the same price. The publisher, perhaps believing books that cheap couldn't be any good, passed. I wrote to Dick saying he was being undersold. Dick, notoriously his own worst enemy, did not, as I suggested, change his agent. Had it not been for Tom Maschler, impressed by the enthusiasm of other writers, Dick might have been as indistinguishably published in the UK as he was in the US. At Cape, Maschler presented Dick, like Ballard, as non-generic, bringing him to a wider if not more lucrative audience. Younger writers such as Fay Weldon and Martin Amis became fans. And Dick's legend as the Acid Sage of Berkeley (though he only ever took one trip, a bad one) was established. Initially, he did nothing to dispel it. Already a mythomane to rival SF writer L Ron Hubbard, founder of Scientology, he discovered the reputation passingly useful as he enjoyed guru-status with the Berkeley young.

In 1952, Anthony Boucher, founding editor of *Fantasy & SF*, serial mentor and customer of the classical record store where Dick worked, had published his first story. After that, Dick's chief inspiration, when he began turning out fiction for the dwindling magazine market, was his need to pay the rent. He wasn't the only SF writer of his generation to make wholehearted use of dexadrine and valium but for a while he allowed readers to think inspiration came from acid, far more chic in the 60s. Mostly, he was running, as prolific writers generally do, on adrenaline and caffeine.

Emmanuel Carrère thinks the posthumously published social novels Dick produced were done to please snobbish friends and lovers. However, Dick was continually looking for the form which





would best suit his ideas. No great stylist, his problem was that he had a hard time putting a story together without the conventions of genre fiction. His best work uses the methods developed in the pages of *Galaxy* by a group of writers including Pohl, Kornbluth, Bester, Sheckley and Harlan Ellison. What we today recognise as the "PKD future" is actually a collaboration between these socially conscious writers responding to Eisenhower's and J Edgar Hoover's America and specifically to McCarthyism. Unlike the conservative techno-SF writers, they actually predicted the world we know today.

Dick began to produce twists on conventional dystopias. He lacked Bester's sophistication, Pohl's Marxism, Sheckley's irony or Ellison's eloquence, but he captured the readers' imagination as previously only HP Lovecraft (Carrère's other literary hero) had done. Educated by Quakers, raised in radical Berkeley, a born-again Episcopalian by 1964, he accepted the malignity of the consumer state, but questioned the nature of its reality.

By the early 60s he had written *The Man in the High Castle*, *Dr Bloodmoney* and *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, and was consistently exploring the themes which would make his wider reputation. Not all his contemporaries found his obsessions stimulating; they saw, in fact, the ruination of a talent. Ellison expressed it with his usual laconicism: "Took drugs, saw God. BFD." But Dick was on a roll, helped by God and the I-Ching. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (on which the film *Blade Runner* was based), *Ubik* and *A Maze of Death* led steadily away from his generic roots. Meanwhile he divorced his third wife, left the relative isolation of Marin County, returned to the city and married again, increasingly losing his grip on reality, eventually coming to believe that a spirit guide had saved him and his new-born son from madness and death. After a short spell in a Canadian rehab clinic, he left admirers and hangers-on behind, and wound up in Fullerton, outside LA.

When Dick finally began to make money from foreign sales and film rights, he credited his spirit guide with helping release a secret store of cash. Living off this money, struggling with mental instability and an imagination no longer reined by genre demands, Dick produced little publishable work in the last years of his life. He devoted himself to a kind of sequel to *The Man in the High Castle*, called *Exegesis*, in which he tried to develop the notion that his world where Hitler and Hirohito had won the second world war was no more the real world than was this one. He became so strange that when I was living in southern California in 1979/80 I felt no desire to visit him. Some paranoiacs seem touched by divinity but equally they can be touched by banality. As with William Burroughs, listening to conspiracy theories could be exhausting.

Never leaving his home for weeks, sitting in the dark, playing Dowland and the Grateful Dead, he became increasingly absorbed in his own myth, fed back to him by fans who, like Tolkien's crankier readers, could fairly be called disciples. Yet at an SF convention in Metz, he seriously disappointed fans who had expected a divine junkie and got a Christian missionary. He died in 1982, leaving hundreds of thousands of unpublished words, many of which have yet to see the light.

It's a shame this book contains no index and does not refer to the half-a-dozen or so other critiques and biographies of PKD, nor to interviews, such as Charles Platt's, which was done towards the end of Dick's life and is a rather better journey into his mind. In his excellent *Who Writes Science Fiction?* Platt spoke respectfully of his subject, revealing a courteous, self-mocking man and





recording a classic piece of monologue. Off-tape, Platt wanted to know if Dick was discussing his fiction or whether he really believed all he had talked about in his interview.

Fairly typically, Dick switched to ironic mode: "Why, no, of course not. You'd have to be crazy to believe in something like that."

Another friend, Tom Disch, had his own interview terminated by the intervention of Dick's spirit guide who said it was time for Disch to leave. A courteous soul, he complied.

"Do you think he's crazy?" I asked later.

Disch smiled tolerantly. "Like a fox," he said.

Between the phone and the mail slot troublesome heaps of angry messages and threatening correspondence were mounting, as the centrifugal force of Phil's paranoia picked him up and paperwadded him into a startling techno-trashed vision of the new century. Page after page of replicant toads, electric sheep, bizarre 21st century pet hospitals, fugitive androids fleeing desolate Martian outer colonies, and endless proliferations of "kipple"--a Phildickian term for accumulating junk that exemplifies the breakdown of history into final disorder--all became vividly characterized in Phil's favorite typeface between the well-worn ribbon and the hard-rubber roller of his responsive manual Royal.

I Dark by Marc Oberst

There's nothing... Simply nothing, except my thoughts... I don't know anything. I don't know who I am. Do I need to know this? I don't know. I can breathe. Luckily I can breath. I can feel the motion of my chest. Up and down. Calm and slow.

Blackness. Everywhere. But I am not blind. I feel my eyes moving. I don't see anything, but I know I am able to if there is anything to see. I am not blind. Am I?

There was a light! A small one, but a light. At least a shadow. Something in front of the background. A sign of life? It is so dark. Why the hell is there no light? Seems I am lost somewhere, but where?

Did I forget something? I think there was something I was thinking about one moment ago. But I am not sure. I guess I haven't thought anything before. So this is the first moment of my existence? What is my name? I know I have a name. I don't remember... But I remember having a name so I have to had existed before. Who should have given me a name otherwise?

I know, I am dead. This is the explanation. I am just dead. The blackness, the calm, the gap in my memory. It were too painful to remember the way I died. Surely it was a traffic accident or a street robber has killed me. Something extremely hard, something I couldn't work up in my current state.





Damned, if I could remember my name, my job, my life... Death, the big mystery. I always thought I would directly go to the other world, the life after death. I never liked waiting rooms. When you know there is something coming but you still have to wait although it could have happened already. Who knows how long I will have to wait here in the darkness for the transfer? Come on God, give me something to play with. I am bored.

Slowly I am getting nervous. Nothing happens around me. I can remember what I thought before but I am just sitting in the dark waiting for something. If I was dead something else happened. Surely. But maybe this isn't heaven and I will have to wait here forever. I mean eternally. No, can't be. My minds are twisting. I can't catch a single real thought. God and Devil are playing soccer and my brain is the ball. But if this is neither hell nor heaven, what else could it be that I can't see. Maybe I am abducted by aliens. Little grey man wanting to play doctor with me as you can see it on tv too often these days. TV shows... I am remembering the world I used to live in. Traffic, cities, people, jobs, sex... What is my sex? I can't remember if I am male or female. I still can't remember my name.

How much time passed since I came here? Minutes? I think some minutes only. But maybe I was asleep here already for years. Only awake for a few minutes in regular distances. Past moments I can't remember. Maybe never will. Caused by a machine, programmed to take care of my state of health. Cerebral activity. Thoughts. Feelings. Creativity. Illness.

I am dreaming. Everything seems so unnatural, so constructed. As if I am working up some tragic experiences. Loneliness. A friends death. A woman who left. Blackness as the ultimate sanctification of evil minds. Must be! But I can't remember to have friends, to love a woman, to be alone or not. As abnormal as it seems. I can remember. I already had a lot of extreme strange dreams. Also some very realistic ones like this one is. I am sure that this is the solution because I am very open minded for dreams and other spiritual influences. Seems to be the kind of my character. There was for example the dream where I was a pilot. Our spaceships started off from the moon and I was loading in big grey cases. The base was built on the dark side of the moon. But the ships could only take off in the sun light, so after I had closed all doors I had to take the rope which was fixed on the peak of the ship and tow it to the other side of the moon. I took the rope in my mouth and without wondering I sprung into water and swum like a dolphin with the rope now in my left hand to where I knew the sun. It was a feeling of freedom I never felt before or afterwards. I swum and swum springing from one wave to the next. And than the sun appeared in all her beauty and above the winding of the horizon I could see the earth – the planet of my ancestors in green and yellow colors. The water in front of me iridescend blue and silver and I knew that my life as a moon whale had a sense. Wow, I could dream! I remember! Remember a lot of other dreams. I can't see a connection to what I am and how my life was before I wake up here in the darkness, but by thinking about my dreams the current night will hopefully be over very soon! Now I know there was something before. I am something. Somebody. I guess I am waking up at the moment. I changed from one phase of sleep to another that is the reason for the feeling of having done something before but not remembering. I only have to wait for the morning.





Time passed and I ate the memories of the dreams I thought of. But they were not enough. I still seem to be asleep, so I try to stand up. An action that is not as easy as I thought, because there is nothing beyond me! Oops... And what was I sitting on all the time I can remain being here? Seems a kind of unreal reality? Reality? How shall I use this word in such a situation? I cannot see anything. I cannot remember anything. I cannot feel anything surrounding me. How should I stand up in nothing. But how can I exist and stay in an empty space? Maybe I am not what I think to remember to be? Maybe I am only dust on the back side of the universe. Or a cell somewhere in a body of someone. Maybe an experiment which went wrong and transported my mind into the brain of a mole? I know I am definitively not sleeping. This "dream" lasts too long for now. But I wish I could sleep. I want to fall in a deep dreamless sleep to forget all those things, dreams, possibilities, doubts. But I cannot.

Tell a person who has no knowledge about time what a clock is. What is time? What an objective moment for a subjective individual person who is probably somewhere beyond the so-called "standard time"? What if this person recognizes a single second as thousand years? Or even millions??? Nothing. Useless. Maybe I am god. I am god who lost his memories, so that he can not remember how to handle the universe. A god who stumbled over his own feet and hurt his head so bad that he lost his memories. Haha...

Damned, that is it! Yes, I am god. But there is still nothing besides me. I need to create. I have to make life at first. I am the only essence all over. Oh, come on brain. Remember how to make Adam or better Eve. Hmh... I need someone to play with. I am so alone, so hungry for society. For love. For anything except blackness...

But blackness. Everywhere. Even where I believed to know my body, there is blackness. My thoughts begin to fade out. I get to know how I start forgetting all the things I knew before. I can see my mind flying away. It turns black. As black as my soul. As black as my ego. As black as my own being. I see only black. I feel black. I remember black. I am black. One last idea comes to my vanishing mind, but I am really happy that I forget it right afterwards. It is a too bad idea to cope with.

Maybe I am the dark... damned!

We have been taught to forget--forget the poisoning of our atmosphere, the deformed landscape, the occluded senses and thoughts of our neighbors -- we are at home in our forgetfulness and have no memory of our true condition. Even so, Phil replies hopefully, the vast biofeedback system that the Universe is will eventually teach us to listen, to remember what we already know, and to hear our friends starting up everywhere, whether along the optic conduit to the pineal body in each of us, or in the serendipitous pulp pages of some dog-eared Ace double, with a Dick novelette like THE UNTELEPORTED MAN or DR. FUTURITY each side up.

