



Here it is... PKD OTAKU #16 (June 2006)

“What separates [Philip K. Dick] from ordinary sci-fi writers are his characters. They have enormous empathy for other people. Mr. Dick really puts you inside people’s minds. You see and hear through perceptive eyes and ears that receive a lot of input at once, add more from the brain’s huge memory bank and, lickety-split, weigh various options, acting and reacting to numerous possibilities. What his characters think and feel isn’t always pleasant, but it’s never dull.” -- Pete C. Du Bois, *The Wall Street Journal* July 8, 1982

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"How Philip K Dick Saved My Account - A True Account" by Master Grinweed Callturn, formerly Esq.

It is an unbelievable story but true. Philip K. Dick earned me a high-level job as deputy test center chief in a company for cryptologic interbanking software (don't ask...). It went like this:

I applied for this job four weeks ago, sent my stuff, had a telephone interview. Positive. So I was invited to talk directly with the CEO. That was last week and went very good, too. So THEN he invited me for next (this) Wednesday in order to meet all his executive board colleagues and getting grilled by them all. And to check out how good I am in presenting stuff in English (important in this internationally operating corporation) I should prepare and give them a Powerpoint-assisted talk of fifteen minutes "on a free topic".

That was yesterday. I have to say that I had problem to find a suitable topic, not too boring (software, data security, interbank communication, software test...) and not too eccentric ("hey, is the guy a pervert?"), and one where I can get into an English-speaking groove, to boot. One day before the great and deciding meeting yesterday I had NOTHING and a not very good idea to write through the evening and night a short essay on 'sonification' (it's for the ear what visualization is for the eye). But I had to do slides and recite the core of the stuff. Sigh. But I got stuck anyway. Bummer. At ten p.m. I suddenly managed to dig the wisdom of what a women friend told me that very afternoon when I was complaining over the upcoming talk next day and me not having any subject. She told me to give a talk on one of my favorite comic artists like Alan Moore or Jim Woodring. She thought of fancy graphic display, too. But "Do something you know and love" was the 'core' message that I understood almost too late. Pink Light Flash!

So then, at nightfall before the deciding day I trashed everything I had and started all over to write my talk on PKD and do the accompanying slides. I was almost finished when it became dawn around seven in the morning. Then I slept three hours, got up on double alarm, finished the last bits of the talk before breakfast, had a moderate spliff, shaved and showered, took 40 milligrams of ephedrine, some aspirin, a cup of thick hot Java, put on my suit & glowing tie and went to meet my appointment. Showtime. Not sleeping, powering, shock-awakening, Zest boost and spliff afterglow put me in a good shape; I looked and felt sharp, healthy and up-to-it, believe it. It was almost a depersonalization experience. Those three white shirts. First they grilled me again on my life history and professional accomplishments and this time I had no weaknesses, playing with the balls they gave me and even harvesting some laughs, nods and sighs when I talked from my experiences and lessons learned in the software project management trenches and bank IT department intrigues.

So far so good - even if I had a spooky feeling to tell THOSE guys about Philip K Dick. They all looked so cerebral and devoid of blood: All three were elderly, sharp, thin, and in white shirts and club ties. Anyway, after that full regalia introduction of my persona I was given the stage and put in my floppy disk (dig this), projecting my first slide on the large conference room's big screen: "15 Minutes on Philip K. Dick - How a 50s pulp writer became one of Hollywood's hottest properties today." Blank stares. No one of them had ever heard of Philip K. Dick. After some early problems with my voice level and minding / not minding the speech notes I just *delivered* it in one elevated groove not





measuring anymore their faces for approval or alienation (but I noticed that eyes widened and that some of them started smiling now and then).

After I was finished they praised me and the speech: A 'great' presentation and with such a 'gripping' topic. "We had nothing like this before," the CEO told me. Any new management-level ranking employee had to pass that ritual, apparently part of corporate and human resources management culture there (but, hey, you need to talk to the Lithuanian programmer and Chinese project manager). After that another round of talking and exchange where they targeted my professional experiences and attitudes as a team and department lead (like how much of a fucker am I when crossed), and then, of course, talk about money.

Then nobody had a question anymore and the CEO told me after exchanging glances with his peers that I had the position "with more than 50% probability" but that they had a couple of more interviews and will decide finally on Friday. This Thursday, a couple of hours ago, that CEO called me and told me that they have decided that they want "to work together with you". End of story.

After this follows the speech notes I used (all done in a night, mind you, and the cunning seven slides you could not conjure up from them notes to each slide like you cannot compute a private key from a public key of the same intertwined key pair – It's magic!).

I really needed a job as some of you might know (after my business broke down like any Fergesson's.)

Praised be St. Sophia!

~ Grinweed (Canned Writer Gull)

*****Fifteen Minutes On Philip K. Dick*****

How A 50s Pulp Writer Became One Of Hollywood's Hottest Properties Today

1. THE MAN

Who was Philip K Dick? He was a Bay Area writer who published most of his work in the 50s and sixties. In the seventies most of his books were out of print. He died in 1982 by a stroke. He was poor most of his life, living on dog food at times and loans from friends. He was forced to sell the rights, including royalties, to entire novels for as low as 750\$ to pay the rent.

So accordingly he wrote at a breakneck speed, sometimes completing a whole novel in only three weeks. He wrote on amphetamines over years to be able to write day and night, thereby ruining his health. He wrote science fiction, because that he sold easily, and dark comedies (or funny tragedies) of failing small business men in Suburban California that nobody wanted to print until after his death. He was married five times and all marriages failed because of the solitary and excessive nature of his work. He was an estranged father of three who could not pay the bills and rarely saw his children. Alienation was a key topic of his work and that started with his twin sister, he never knew.





2. THE OBSESSION

In the stories and novels of Philip K. Dick reality tends to dissolve in various ways, actually in any way imaginable. That means his protagonists often have to learn that their whole surrounding and even life history is a fake, a deceit; might it be computer-generated, staged show, or drug-induced delusion. So "What is real?" was his one prime research interest in writing; the deceitfulness of things, messages, appearances, and relationships. His favorite quote was Gilbert & Sullivan's, "Things are seldom what they seem; skim milk masquerades as cream."

His other prime research interest in writing was "What is human?" In Philip K. Dick's narratives human beings sometimes turn out to be machines (some to their own surprise) and real homo sapiens turn out to be utterly and cruelly mechanistic in their actions. In his view a machine could be easily more "human" than say an executioner's helper who 'only follows orders.' In "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep" the 'Android-Test' deployed by the police is actually an empathy test measuring involuntary emotional movement, more specific whether it troubles you to hear about the suffering of others. But that's something where not only androids but also human sociopaths could possibly fail.

3. THE VISION

The future of Philip K. Dick is a messy place. It is not shiny and well-ordered. It is a fragmented and shifting market, everything is privatized and commodified like the breathing air on Mars and even the afterlife.

The big conflicts in Philip K. Dick's books that drive the plot are almost always battles for market share no matter whether the product is God, drugs, or used typewriters. But the focus is on the average Joe (Chip) trying to get by and doing the right thing against the odds of disinformation, reality dissolution, stubborn software, intrusive hardware, and plain bad luck.

It is a future where you cannot leave your flat legally when you have not enough credit anymore to pay your door, that operates on direct micropayments like any other appliance. A future where "adbots" - small mobile advertising robots - swarm and scream everywhere and might even follow you up into your room where you routinely squash them against the wall, like flies. A future where you dial up a software psychiatrist when you need advice, getting charged by the minute. A future where the news are assembled by automated software and open and secret mind-control medication is commonplace. In short it's a future that looks more like our emerging present than that envisioned by many of his SF colleagues.





4. THE ALTERNATE PRESENT

The defining novel of the fantasy or speculative fiction subgenre of 'alternate history' (also called what-if novels) was written by Dick. Those novels do not explore the future but the present; how it might look like if some historical event had turned out differently.

The novel *THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE* won him Science Fiction's prestigious HUGO award and is generally known as one of his best novels. One of the minor protagonists of the book is an American writer who has written a fantasy book in which a world is described where the Allies won WW II and the US occupy Europe instead of being occupied. It's not exactly our world, but close. This author, a stand-in for Dick, is truly 'underground' because the book is forbidden and deemed subversive by the Japanese / German occupation forces and so, as an inspiring vision, is privately copied and distributed among defeated Americans like the famed 'samzidat' publications in the Soviet Union.

This thought experiment of a course of history where Germany and Japan aren't defeated and rule the present world has been recently employed by Nobel Prize nominee Philip Roth in his novel "The Plot against America" where flight hero and anti-Semite Charles Lindbergh wins the election instead of Franklin Roosevelt and subsequently allies with Germany.

Other works by Dick present also a kind of alternate history because they borrow Kafka's literary device of an impossible overnight change of normally fixed properties in the protagonist's world, like in *THE TRANSFORMATION* where Gregor Samsa is apparently transformed into a giant bug. So in Dick's *FLOW MY TEARS*, *THE POLICEMAN SAID* a famous talk show host wakes up one morning in a world where nobody has ever heard of him, where he wasn't even born for all practical purposes.

5. THE GAME

Philip K. Dick predicted the future of office communications. As we all know this is shared Internet games, chains, and fads on company time.

Today it is well-known what funny results automatic translation software can produce. In Philip K. Dick's 1968 novel *GALACTIC POT HEALER*, the networked chain game played by disaffected state officials consists of running a well-known book title through a series of international "translation computers" and then back into English, thereby hoping to catch an odd and funny semantic shift. A good result then was emailed to the others in the player's circle for guessing. This game is actually played on the Internet since there is Babelfish and other public translation facilities. The skill of the





game is in coming up with a well-known phrase and a suitable sequence of language translations in order to render it cryptic but still remotely related.

Last evening's self-computed example:

"Gone with the Wind"

--> French/German/Greek/French/English yields:

"Of so much the air defers exactly"

6. THE MOVIES

PKD didn't live to see the first film made from one of his works. In fact he died shortly after having seen a couple of pre-shots of the movie-in-the-making *BLADE RUNNER*. Anyhow, it was a critical but not a popular success, in fact a box-office flop that slowly turned cult classic and is today deemed one of the most influential movies of the eighties. It showed a chaotic and multi-cultural future world ruled by mercantile forces where biological science has blurred the boundary between humans and machines because near-perfect clones have been constructed for dangerous work. Those androids are intelligent and have even a kind of emotional life but have no citizen rights. They are in fact the new slaves and subhumans of that society and hunted down by combined policemen / executioners when they are on the loose, seeking freedom. The lead protagonist is a policeman who questions the morality of what he is doing when he "retires" androids, as the slang goes.

Eight years later the Arnold Schwarzenegger vehicle and box office success *TOTAL RECALL* made Dick an instant public name. After that, high-profile adaptations of his work were made in short succession. After the success of Steven Spielberg's *MINORITY REPORT*, starring Tom Cruise and a giant PR budget -- a movie that was much widely read as an intelligent comment on recent 'homeland security' politics --, Philip K. Dick was seen as one of Hollywood's most valuable assets. At this time at least two movies based on his works are in the making, both by well-known and award-winning directors.

7. THE REVIVAL

It sure helps when Steven Spielberg and Tom Cruise tell on Oprah, one of America's most influential talk shows, how much they like to read Philip K. Dick. It helps when it becomes a cliché among newspaper writers that "we all live in a Philip K. Dick world," characterized by a confusing mediascape, by biotechnology and neuroscience posing ethical problems, by large globalized corporations and a privatized 'public sector', by identity theft and intrusive advertisement.

MINORITY REPORT started a revival wave that made the author ultimately a pop star, decades after his death. Most of his books have been reprinted and are in print now. Books written by





him have been named among the best American books of all time by publications such as TIME and The New York Times Book Review and he is mentioned as a leading influence among intellectuals, fellow writers, and for his own market share most important: script writers. Many recent Hollywood productions draw from his motives without being based on a specific work, most notably the outstandingly successful Matrix trilogy or the Jim Carrey vehicle, The Truman Show, and the work of script writer Charlie Kaufmann, like Being John Malkovich or Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless mind.

Dick's multi-layered realities, deceitful plots and memory holes obviously appeal to modern sensibilities. On the last WIRED festival, a Philip K. Dick robot was presented, he served drinks and you could talk to him. Philip K. Dick lived on dog food sometimes and was never wealthy but he made his kids rich. Film option rights to his short stories now sell for 70,000 dollars and up and the novel rights rate much much higher. In an ironic turn, the estate of Philip K. Dick, managing and marketing his intellectual and artistic property rights, became a wealthy corporation itself.

**"Visitations – The Strange Experiences Of Philip K. Dick In The 1970s" by Tessa B. Dick,
UFO+ Psi Research Magazine #14 & 15 (September & December 2000)**

"Am I crazy?" I can't even count the number of times Phil asked me that question. I always figured that he probably wasn't crazy, as long as he could ask that question. Others were not so kind. I've kept silent for almost twenty years because I don't like being regarded as a "crazy". Besides, most people won't even listen. Yet the experiences that I shared with my late husband, SF writer Philip K. Dick, have continued to haunt me. Many self-styled experts (who met him only once and spent less than one hour with him), and even a few of his close friends, have dismissed Phil's experiences as the ravings of a madman, saying that he was manic-depressive--as if that explained everything, or as if it explained anything at all. Phil might have been bipolar (the current term for manic-depressive), but that does not explain the visitations that we experienced in the mid-1970s and early 1980s. At this point, the skeptics fall back on the idea of co-dependence, or *folie a deux*, which basically states that I caught the madness from Phil in the same way that one catches a cold. This does not explain anything, either.

For one thing, I had similar experiences before I ever met Phil, and he had similar experiences before he ever met me. In addition, we had some physical evidence of the strange phenomena that happened in and around our apartment in southern California in 1974 and 1975. For example, one afternoon a yellow van pulled up and parked in front of our apartment complex, and three men in gray overalls stepped out of the van and went into the vacant apartment next door to ours. They carried large metal suitcases, spent about an hour in the empty apartment, and then emerged with the same metal suitcases and left in the same yellow van. Several weeks later we found the door to that apartment open, so we went inside. We found a working telephone in the kitchen, and some kind of electronic equipment which had been set up inside the hall closet. Perhaps this does not have anything to do with UFOs, but then again, maybe it does.





Our radio had been behaving strangely. Sometimes it came on when we were sure that we had turned it off, and several times we could still hear it, even after we unplugged it. I couldn't make out what the radio was saying, but Phil was certain that it was telling him that he was a horrible person and he should kill himself. Strange electrical phenomena occurred all the time in our apartment. Strange people seemed to be keeping us under surveillance. Strange voices spoke to us.

All the while, we were trying to put the finishing touches on Phil's novel, *A Scanner Darkly*. It was based on split-brain research, which showed that the two hemispheres of the brain, left and right, are capable of acting as independent persons. In patients who had the corpus callosum severed in order to alleviate severe epilepsy, these two "persons" often had no knowledge of each other's activities. The corpus callosum is the communications center which allows the analytical left hemisphere to consult with the intuitive right hemisphere when observing the environment, analyzing data, and making decisions. The title of the novel comes from St. Paul, who wrote, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Corinthians 13:12, King James Version). To elucidate, "through a glass, darkly" may also be translated "through a mirror, in a mystery". The protagonist of the novel, a police detective named Bob Arctor, uses scanning devices to conduct surveillance on suspects. When he sees his own image "reflected" in the scanner, he does not recognize himself.

Now, after this brief side-trip, let's get back to the mysterious events. Phil became suddenly ill and did not get better. At one point, when Phil insisted that he wanted the last rites, I called the local Episcopal priest, who came to the house and gave him a healing unction. When Phil finally went to the doctor, he learned that his blood pressure was dangerously high. Several months later, he was hospitalized for several days while they tried to bring his blood pressure down to a safer level. He suffered from hypertension for many years, and this condition had prevented him from participating in the Korean conflict in the 1950s. In the midst of his illness, Phil had a healing vision. He was lying in bed, staring at the blank white wall, when a rectangle of bright pink light appeared on the wall. It opened like a doorway, and our recently deceased cat stepped through the door and into the room. Our cat, Pinky, was walking upright on his hind legs. He stepped around to the side of the bed and patted Phil reassuringly on the shoulder. Then Pinky stepped back out through the doorway, and the luminous pink rectangle faded, shrank and disappeared.

This could have been the fevered vision of illness, or the hallucination of insanity, but then subsequent events made it seem more like a meaningful coincidence of the sort that C.G. Jung discusses in his writing about synchronicity. About two weeks later, in the course of an argument about something trivial (which I do not remember), Phil picked up a small seashell and threw it against the wall. I remember thinking it odd that I heard the sound of the shell breaking before I saw it hit the wall. The sound that I heard was actually Phil's shoulder dislocating. It was the same shoulder which Pinky had patted when he appeared through the pink doorway.

We began to catch brief glimpses, at the edges of our peripheral vision, of people in our apartment. They were strange-looking people, with small chins and long foreheads, like the famous Egyptian busts of Akhenaton and Nephretiti. Akhenaton was the pharaoh who introduced the worship on one God into Egypt. Phil began to lapse into a Christian heresy, a sort of dualism. He believed some of the ideas found in Manichaeism, as well as some ideas of his own. Basically, this heresy





states that there are two gods--a good god and an evil god--and that the evil god made us, but the good god is trying to save us. As a scientific agnostic, I had little objection to his seemingly irrelevant detour. Meanwhile, the people began talking to us. Phil thought that they could tell him the secrets of the universe. I was hoping that they could explain the implant in my spine.

Since my early teens, I have had a small metallic sliver in my lumbar spine. I don't know how it got there, or whether it serves any purpose. I don't want it removed because of the obvious risks of surgery on one's spine, and besides, it doesn't give me any trouble. What does trouble me is that I knew about it before I ever had any X-rays of that area of my body. In fact, I remember many strange things from childhood, such as people visiting me when I was alone in my room, taking me for rides on space ships, giving me tests, and teaching me things. I have always remembered these things, and I have never had any help from a hypnotist. However, I have a strong feeling that I am not supposed to remember, and when I try to describe these experiences to other people, something stops me.

I do not believe that I was abducted by space aliens. In fact, I believe that the US government did a secret study of me and about a dozen other second-graders, beginning in 1961. Farragut Elementary School in Culver City, California was designated experimental in 1961, as part of President Kennedy's education agenda. Fourteen second-graders, including me, were put into a combination class with third-graders. I remember almost nothing about the entire school year, except that every day we would be sent out of the classroom and into the school auditorium for an hour or two. I don't remember what happened there. I do get bits and pieces of it in dreams from time to time, but they don't make much sense. I can tell you the names of all my teachers from Kindergarten through the sixth grade, except the name of my second-grade teacher. I can name all of the girls in my Scout troop, plus many of my fellow students in elementary school. But I cannot tell you about the second grade. All I know for sure is that we learned to say "bon jour" and to count to ten in French, and that I failed arithmetic. When several of our families moved across town, the principal from our school was transferred across town to Culver Elementary (now named Lynne E. Howe Elementary, after the same principal), and our new school was designated experimental.

Phil had been one of the subjects in a famous longitudinal study of gifted children that was conducted by university psychologists. They lost track of him when he was a young adult, and he was quite happy to be out of the study. But the study that was conducted on me and my classmates was of a different nature. For one thing, it was clandestine. For another, it had something to do with long-distance space travel on huge ships with large crews, at the time when the Mercury program was just beginning to send men up into space, one at a time, for a few hours at the most.

So it seemed quite normal to me, in the 1970s, that alien people should come down and visit us in our apartment in southern California.

The radio kept on playing, even when we turned it off, and even when we unplugged it. Phil was seeing pink rectangles in the same proportion as the Golden Mean, a geometric measurement that had religious significance for the ancient Greeks, and which seems to be common in nature. So there we were, with the radio behaving strangely and Phil having visions. Curiosity being one of my stronger suits, I decided to investigate the vacant apartment next door, where the men had walked in with big metal suitcases a week or so earlier. Phil, who usually avoided leaving the apartment, went





with me. We found a telephone on the kitchen counter of the apartment next door, and we found recording equipment -- including a large, expensive reel-to-reel tape deck and some boxes that looked like equalizers -- in the cupboards. These electronic gadgets had been placed against the wall that our bedroom shared with the vacant apartment.

This discovery could explain the pink light and the sounds on the unplugged radio. However, it did not explain why Phil heard a woman's voice telling him to die, while I heard only insipid popular music. Perhaps it was Helen Reddy singing "You're So Vain", or Linda Ronstadt singing "You're No Good", which led Phil to regard it as a personal attack. This was the early 1970s, so those songs were brand new at the time.

Phil had one experience which has been described by a number of UFO abductees: on the blank white ceiling he saw a series of literally thousands of colorful geometric patterns, lasting several hours and seeming never to repeat a pattern. He said that many of them resembled abstract paintings by Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky. This reminded me of a mind-game that I used to play when I was very young. Mom insisted that I take a nap every afternoon, but I simply was not tired. Lying in the darkened room, I would try to picture the intricate pattern of the linoleum floor in our kitchen. It had yellow dots on a green background. When I got the pattern right, the whole sheet of imagined linoleum would slide off to the side, out of sight, and be replaced by a new sheet of linoleum in a different pattern. After a few hours of practice, I got so good at imagining patterns of line, shape and color that hundreds of imaginary sheets of linoleum in a variety of patterns would fly past me, as if I were falling into an endless cave filled with endless planes of dots, circles, lines, triangles, arcs, spirals and other patterns of bright color.

Then strange things began to happen during the day. People who barely spoke English began visiting us. One young man claimed to be a French doctoral student who was writing his thesis on rock and roll music. Somehow, an interview with Phil seemed to be essential to his degree. This Frenchman spoke passable English. He was accompanied by another Frenchman who spoke only French and Spanish, and no English, except when I took him to the local variety store and he managed to explain to the clerk that he wanted a roll of film developed. Also with them was a Swedish woman who spoke Swedish, French, German and English. They spent all day at our apartment, and we even served them dinner. Other Europeans came to visit and interview Phil. Most came from France, but some came from Austria. A student in Estonia was unable to come to the US, but he wrote many letters asking questions, and Phil tried to answer all of them. A man in Volgograd sent Phil some Russian classical music records, and Phil sent back some American rock and roll records. This was before CDs, at a time when the 8-track was dead but cassette tapes were of poor quality, so they exchanged 33 rpm vinyl LPs.

Throughout this period, a Polish publisher spent months trying to persuade Phil to visit Warsaw and make a public appearance there. The noted Polish writer Stanislaw Lem had persuaded them to publish one of Phil's books, and they said that they could not pay the royalties in any hard currency, so Phil would have to go to Poland and collect his money in Polish zlotys, buy something there and bring it home. They assured him that there was enough money to buy him a round-trip flight on Aeroflot, which would accept the Polish currency. However, Phil never went there. In the end, he told them to donate his royalties to the Warsaw Volunteer Fire Department, which is run by Catholic





monks. He had a strong sense of paranoia about Eastern Europe, which was not entirely unjustified at the time. The Cold War was still raging, and we could be sure that the authorities would investigate any contact that we had with the Soviet Union or any of its satellites.

Then the "Xerox letter" came in the mail. Phil had suffered from extreme tension headaches for three days, and every afternoon he ran down to the mail box, grabbed our letters out of the box, and ran back up the stairs to our apartment as if a demon were chasing him. On the third day, he handed me an envelope and said, "This is it!" He firmly believed that something inside that envelope would kill him if he so much as looked at it. He never did look at it. I opened the envelope, and inside I found a Xerox copy of a newspaper article. Xerox machines were not common at that time, especially in the Eastern European country where the envelope had been postmarked. I tried to read it, but I found it disturbing. It was a book review, written in English, and some of the words had been underlined with a ball-point pen. They were words like "deteriorate" and "expire" and "decompose". Without my reading a single word aloud, and without his ever seeing it himself, Phil simply knew that this letter contained what he called "die messages". -- like the voice on the radio, it was telling him to die. How did he know?

According to Phil, his guardian angel warned him about the Xerox letter. More next issue -- sleep well, if you can.

[Publication ceased before the next part appeared]

"Phildickian – A Definition" by Patrick Clark

Colliers Dictionary now has a definition of "Ballardian." Surely it is now time for a definition of "phildickian." I cribbed the first definition from the Collier's piece and created the second definition myself.

Phildickian (adj) 1. of Philip Kindred Dick (1928-1982), the American science fiction writer and visionary, or his works. (2) resembling or suggestive of the conditions described in Dick's novels and stories, esp. pseudo realities, simulated humans, drug-induced epiphanies, techno-surveillance paranoia and an occluded god.

Frankly, it seemed too academic. Happily, long-time otaku Andre Welling weighed in as well with his usual highly imaginative take on the matter. I like his better.

"Phildickian" (see --> "Dickian"): (adj) 1. of Philip Kindred Dick (1928-1982), the American science fiction writer and visionary, or his works. (2) resembling or suggestive of the conditions described in Dick's novels and stories, esp. identity loss and re-grooving, fake realities and 'real fakes,' and the possibility and substrate of morality in the face of inevitable decay. (3) [zip slang] Any motion picture or story where the protagonist turns out to be someone else coming as a surprise even





to himself. (4) [med. slang] Poorly balanced consumption or metabolism, like in "I was living on a phildickian diet at this time" or "I was having a (-->) phildickian breakfast." (5) [droog slang] "Phildickian Breakfast": coffee and amphetamines or other stimulants.

As it happens, K.W. Jeter once defined "phildickian" in an interview:

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

"Random CD Report 01 – The Future Grip" by Marc Oberst

"Future Grip" is the german Nikolai Brengelmann who released the maxi cd "Blade Runner 97" at MNF records, a label of Manifold/Augsburg, that has been distributed by zyx music, featuring remixes based on original music by evangelos papathanassiou, we better know as vangelis.

Track #1 is called "Blade Runner Radio Mix" and goes directly into melody and beat at 135 bpm (beats per minute). The theme starts in slow techno, not hard but also not too soft, let's call it pop-techno. The small break brings some club trance elements to the song with strings, hall and other sound effects. It ends after 3 minutes and 56 seconds.



Atmospheric sounds like from the movie at the beginning and a stretched climax make the second track, the extended mix, more trancy than the first one. Playing for 5 minutes and 7 seconds i like to listen to this version more.

But the third track named "Random Pleasure" is the real reason for buying this cd. It gives the pleasure in 88 bpm and sounds like Blade Runner, but is not. Something like "in the mood of Blade Runner old school trance track". Slow and calm melody completed by high beats in a length of 5 minutes and 9 seconds.

The sum? Well, the handclaps and the slow techno beat make the cd quite old-schoolish and it is not really useable for dancing, but it is really nice to listen to it, especially for Blade Runner fans. I would even say, it is the most likely Blade Runner remix cd I have listened to so far.



Three Letters by Philip K. Dick

To Scott Meredith

October 22, 1968

Dear Scott:

I just now received a very nice letter from Don Wollheim, in which he picks up where he and I left off at the convention. At that time I told Don I wanted to do another novel for Ace, and in his letter he asks if I meant that and still mean it. He says: "...I would like to see you keep on with us, even though report has it you have made pots of money with Doubleday. I don't know about pots of money, but I think we can come to some reasonable accommodation financially if given a reasonable chance." I have no new novel in the works, however, because I have been working on A MAZE OF DEATH, but it occurs to me that if Larry Ashmead doesn't want it, maybe Don might. I am writing to Don, and I'm mentioning A MAZE OF DEATH. Could we try him if Doubleday turns the novel down? (By the way – Don wants my material presented directly to him and not by way of Terry Carr. He says, "...this is for me and would be published under my editorship.")

Because of Don's interest I will start as soon as possible on another new novel...but it will take a while. Would he buy an outline and sample chapters? Or does he want the whole thing?

Cordially,
Philip K. Dick

To Donald A. Wollheim

October 22, 1968

Dear Don,

Your nice letter pleased me very much, and I agree with you: we didn't really have enough time at the convention to talk. I did indeed say I'd like to tackle another novel for Ace. After all, I would not exist today as an s-f writer if it had not been for your support. My situation is this: yesterday I sent off a new novel, A MAZE OF DEATH, to Scott. It is an s-f mystery, and Larry Ashmead is interested it for a series of "future mystery novels," as they'll be called. I mention this only to indicate I am actively writing, these days...which is not always so – I go in cycles of creativity and sloth, as you may know. Anyhow, I have this one new novel in the works and intend to start on another as soon as possible. Which brings me back to your letter and your query as to my interest in doing a novel for Ace. 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)? And do you want a completed MS, or will you buy on the basis of an outline and a sample chapter?





I have a feeling we can work something out. Let me know, and thank you again for your letter; it is good to hear from you, and in doing a novel for Ace I will bend as much as I can in your direction

Cordially,
Philip K. Dick

P.S. Another thought just struck me. If Doubleday turns down A MAZE OF DEATH, perhaps you would like to see it. Do you think so?

To Terry Carr

November 13, 1968

MEMO FROM...PHILIP K. DICK. NOT PRINTED ON AVACADO GREEN PAPER BUT WITH ILLUMINATED LETTERS STARTING EACH PARAGRAPH.

Dear Terry,

Thank you for the memo of November 6 in which you thank me for the copyrights on THE PRESERVING MACHINE. I am glad – god, how I am glad – that you can finish the matter, because it's items like that that destroy my will and curdle my brain tissue.

I wrote Don about the new novel I recently wrote, telling him that it had to go to Doubleday first, and then I would have Marcia send it to Ace. But Doubleday bought it, so I can't have Marcia send it to Don because it belongs to Larry. However, I did turn over to Don, via Marcia and Scott, three and a half chapters and an outline (or is it "outline?") of an even more recent novel I'm working on, one especially for Ace that no one else has seen. I hope greatly that Don tells Marcia and Scott that he is going to buy it, and then I can tell you, Terry, and after that Willis and Spot and Spike (my cat, my daughter, my other cat).

In all seriousness, I hope that Don likes the sample chapters and outline. Personally, I think it looks to be a good one. If Don doesn't buy it I'll go on and finish it anyhow.

As to famous persons seeing the proofs of THE PRESERVING MACHINE, in the fashion that I saw John Brunner's proofs for THE JAGGED ORBIT. I think Bob Silverberg would be a good one to send it to, and possibly Harlan (although he might excoriate it), and then Phil Farmer. Also I have written to Roger Zelazy (with whom I am doing a collaboration for Doubleday) asking him if he has time – he is very busy – to read my collection. I should know very soon if he can do this. Maybe you can think up someone else. I'd trust your instincts in this matter far more than I would mine.

Nice to hear from you, and give my love to Carol. I hope you'll keep me informed as to the progress of THE PRESERVING MACHINE. I'd like very much, for example, to see a Xerox of the cover, when it's ready, and see the blurbs, too.

Cordially,
Philip K. Dick





"Book Reviews" by P. Schuyler-Miller, Richard Geis, Spider Robinson

The Man in the High Castle

P. Schuyler-Miller, *Analog*: April 1963, p. 83

This is a fascinating realistic story laid in a world in which President Roosevelt was assassinated in Florida, there was no pre-Pearl Harbor defense program and no lend-lease, Russia was crushed, and Europe and America were defeated. The Pacific Coast states, by 1960, have become a Japanese-dominated puppet much like the East Germany of our world. There is a similar Nazi-occupied satellite in the eastern United States, and a semi-independent buffer between the two, in the Rocky Mountain states. There also seems to be a southern satellite, though we hear little of it. Canada has maintained its independence; Bob Hope is up there, broadcasting imprudent TV programs into the Nazi and Japanese satellites. The extermination of the Jews in Europe and German-occupied America has been followed by the extermination or enslavement of the Negro race in Africa and throughout the world. In Japanese America, however, society has been rebuilt on a more civilized basis.

The author has constructed this Japanese-based western society with loving care and minute attention to detail. To appreciate just how well he has done this, I am very much afraid one would have to be as thoroughly steeped in Zen and in minutiae of real Japanese society as he seems to be. With a glimpse here and a vignette there, he manages to contrast life under the two regimes and suggest the Japanese-German tensions that amount to a counterpart of our own Cold War, with the difference that the United States is filling the role that Eastern Europe is in our own continuum.

In a well-guarded castle near Cheyenne, in the nominally independent Rocky Mountain States, a writer named Hawthorne Abendsen has written an underground bestseller, "The Grasshopper Lies Heavy," in which Germany and Japan have lost the war – and a Nazi killer is on his trail. In the Pacific States of America, a Jewish craftsman, an American dealer in fake antiques, and a Japanese bureaucrat become ever more intricately entangled in a plot that centers on a visiting Swede and an old gentleman from Tokyo. And in and out of it all weaves the cryptic prophecies of the *I Ching*, the ancient Chinese Book of Changes that dominates the lives of Japanese and conquered Americans alike.

I have a strong feeling that – like "The Grasshopper Lies Heavy" – this is a book that is going to have a kind of underground success and end up a classic without ever having been read by very many people. It is one that is going to bear rereading, too –not for what happens, though that is subtly and believably worked out –but for the way in which this alternate world has been created down to the last nuance. With no serialization or paperback edition in 1962, a book that deserves a crack at the Hugo for best novel may never be widely enough known to get into the finals. And the prohibition against hardback books as winners – Tucker's Law of Hugos, which was broken in 1962 by Heinlein's "Stranger in a Strange Land" –will go back in force.





Martian Time-Slip

P. Schuyler-Miller, *Analog*: November 1964, pp. 87-88

You may have read a condensed serial version of this in *Worlds of Tomorrow*, where it was called "All We Marsmen." But you should know by now that Philip K. Dick is not a writer to condense; half the fun of reading him is the detail he slathers on over the bare boards of his plots.

The detail in this case is extremely confusing, for it includes glimpses inside the minds of a series of schizoids whose time sense has gone sadly adrift. Indeed, we are warned that this mental disruption is becoming endemic in human society – presumably as a form of retreat from the unbearable pressures of overpopulated Earth. It breaks out on Mars, where the pressures build up differently but sooner.

The Martian society depicted is deceptively simple, as are most frontier societies. The most thoroughly developed are the community of the all-powerful Water Workers' union, headed by the invincible Arnie Kott, and the far more sophisticated New Israel with its Camp Ben-Gurion for aberrant children. Texas has a colony, so has California, and so has Russia but we see little of them. We do visit a suburbia which has found itself on the fringe of the desert, and where repairman Joe Bohlen leads a dissatisfied life next door to Norbert Steiner. We get glimpses of the Bleekmen, the native Martians who have adjusted themselves to a level of life like that of the Australian aborigines of the South African Bushmen.

As to be expected in a Dick novel, all these disparate elements are intimately woven together in a complex pattern. If it is not as beautifully developed as the Nipponized American society of "*The Man in the High Castle*," what is? Unfortunately the true nature of young Manfred Steiner's distorted time sense, its relationship to the weird visions Joe Bohlen sees, and the reason the Bleekmen can stabilize it, are implied but never really clear. It may be that the author is saying, less subtly than "*Last Year at Marienbad*," that reality is what the thinker believes it to be and what he can convince others it is...or it may be that he is hinting at a structure of time and place that we only occasionally sense, that breaks through in the schizoid condition, and that will one day burst on us all.

Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said

Richard Geis: *The Alien Critic* #9 (May 1974), p. 40

The new Philip K. Dick novel from Doubleday, FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID, is very good, in the usual Dick fractured, warped, out-of-phase reality mode.

But this time, at the end, he lets the reader and the hero stay on real, solid ground. Also, I detect a new (or at least obvious) element of political advocacy/viewing –with-alarm...which is probably a result of his experiences with the secret police of America in the past few years. (See his long letter in TAC #6.) (\$6.95)





***A Scanner Darkly*
Spider Robinson, *Galaxy*, August 1977: pp. 142-43**

I understand this latest Phil Dick novel, *A Scanner Darkly*, is the first he's written without the aid of speed, and appropriately enough it's largely a dialectic on the ruinous cost of prolonged drug abuse. There's a dedication at the end to fifteen friends of Dick's who've destroyed themselves with dope, listing the extent of damage each incurred (seven are dead, three are permanently psychotic, like that) – Dick calls this drug misuse “ a social error... not different from your life-style, it is only faster.” “If,” he says, “there was any ‘sin,’ it was that these people wanted to keep on having a good time forever, and were punished for that, but as I say, I feel that, if so, the punishment was far too great and I prefer to think of it only in a Greek or morally neutral way, as mere science, as deterministic impartial cause-and-effect.”

The “sin,” I think, was that these people wanted to be able to keep on having a good time forever *by pushing a button*, to rip off the Universe for a good time without paying for it. The “punishment” for this error has *always* been as drastic, and is *not* great, and cause-and-effect is *anything* but morally neutral.

That tirade aside, the *book* ain't exactly terrific either. It's the some times fascinating, sometimes hilarious, usually deadly boring story of a federal narc so wasted by the drugs he saturates his brain with that he begins spying on himself, and eventually busts himself. This notion could have made an extraordinary novelette – but only as black humor. What Dick did was waste enormous heaps of paper trying to make it a plausible science fiction novel, thereby destroying it. He sets it in the future, but every time his attention wanders it becomes the present. He throws in a sort of “invisibility suit” which is supposed to make the premise actually possible – if you're willing to believe that the feds hire narcs without ever seeing them or knowing their names – and he adds a lot of pseudoscientific hogwash about the left and right hemispheres of the hero's brain each achieving autonomy, for a *truly* split personality. The end result is madness, but not the divine kind. Along the way you get to watch the background cast who represent Dick's dooper friends wittily and engagingly dose themselves into imbecility (a rather short progression), and as the immortal Jethro (of Homer And) once said, “This sure don't fascinate *me* none.”

Some Recent References To Phil In The Press

“Nobody in America complains, “I'm not getting my news bites fast enough!” People do complain that they're not getting the full truth. They do complain that the foam of headlines, and of what Philip K. Dick might have called “pre-new,” conceals vast shoals of reality. -- *The Atlantic Monthly* Jan/Feb 2006 p. 12





Those who have watched *Fox News* recently must feel as if they had fallen into a bizarre time and logic warp out of Philip K. Dick, where 9/11 never happened... --Gary Kamiya, "War? What War?" *Salon* June 29, 2005

Soon, patrons of the Naperville Public Library - at least those wanting to use the Internet - will need more than a library card. They'll give a fingerprint. It sounds like something out of a Philip K. Dick novel, but the new requirement is in many ways unsurprising. --Amanda Paulson, "Want to use the Web? Your fingerprint, please." *Christian Science Monitor* June 2, 2005

...Cold War writers like Philip K. Dick, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Samuel R. Delany had to find radical new ways to express their inexpressible hopes about the future, claims [Fredric] Jameson. At this moment of neoliberal triumphalism, he suggests, we should take these writers seriously - even if their ideas are packaged inside lurid paperbacks.

In Dick's uncanny novels, the author demands of us that we decide for ourselves what's real and what isn't. "Martian Time-Slip" (1964), for example, is partly told from the perspective of a 10-year-old schizophrenic colonist on Mars, where civilization is devolving into "gubbish." And "The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch" (1965) is a psychedelic odyssey of hallucinations-within-hallucinations from which no reader emerges unscathed.

...It requires a tremendous effort to imagine a daily life that is politically, economically, socially, and psychologically truly different from our own. And this effort, Jameson writes, warps the structure of science fiction. As a result, he claims, even Dick's amphetamine-fuelled potboilers are as productively alienating as the plays of Brecht and Beckett.

But isn't it perverse to describe novels quite so alienating as utopian? The title character of Dick's "Palmer Eldritch," for example, is an industrialist-turned-evil demiurge who brings to mankind a "negative trinity" of "alienation, blurred reality, and despair" in the form of Chew-Z, a drug that inducts users into a hallucinatory semireality from which they can never finally escape. -- Joshua Glenn, "Back to utopia. Can the antidote to today's neoliberal triumphalism be found in the pages of far-out science fiction?" *Boston Globe* November 20, 2005

And I think we'll see more and more of Philip K. Dick's pulp-magazine plot concepts erupting into life all around us as the twenty-first century moves along. Even though his characters would discover, again and again, that the world around them was some sort of cardboard makeshift hiding a deeper level that was likewise unreal, what Dick the writer was actually doing was crying out, *Look at all these unscrupulous gadgets: this is what our world really is, and things are only going to get worse.* For us moderns it's Phildickworld all day long. Your computer steals your bank account number and sends it to Nigeria, gaudy advertisements come floating toward us through the air, and now your telephone will flirt with you. It won't stop there. -- Robert Silverberg, "The Days of Perky Vivienne." *Asimov's Science Fiction*: February 2006.

