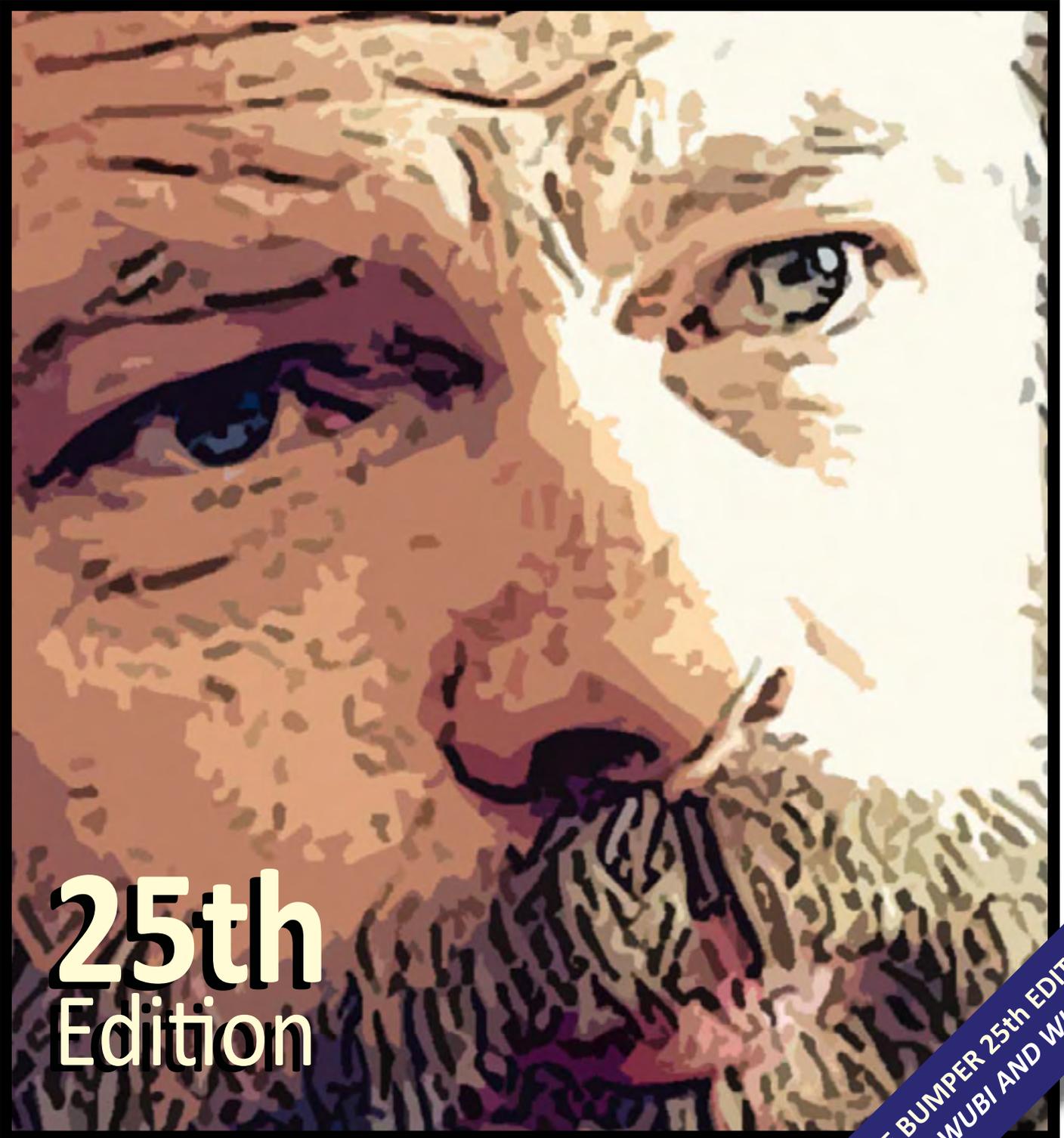




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Photo of Phil © Tessa Dick, by kind permission

July 2012



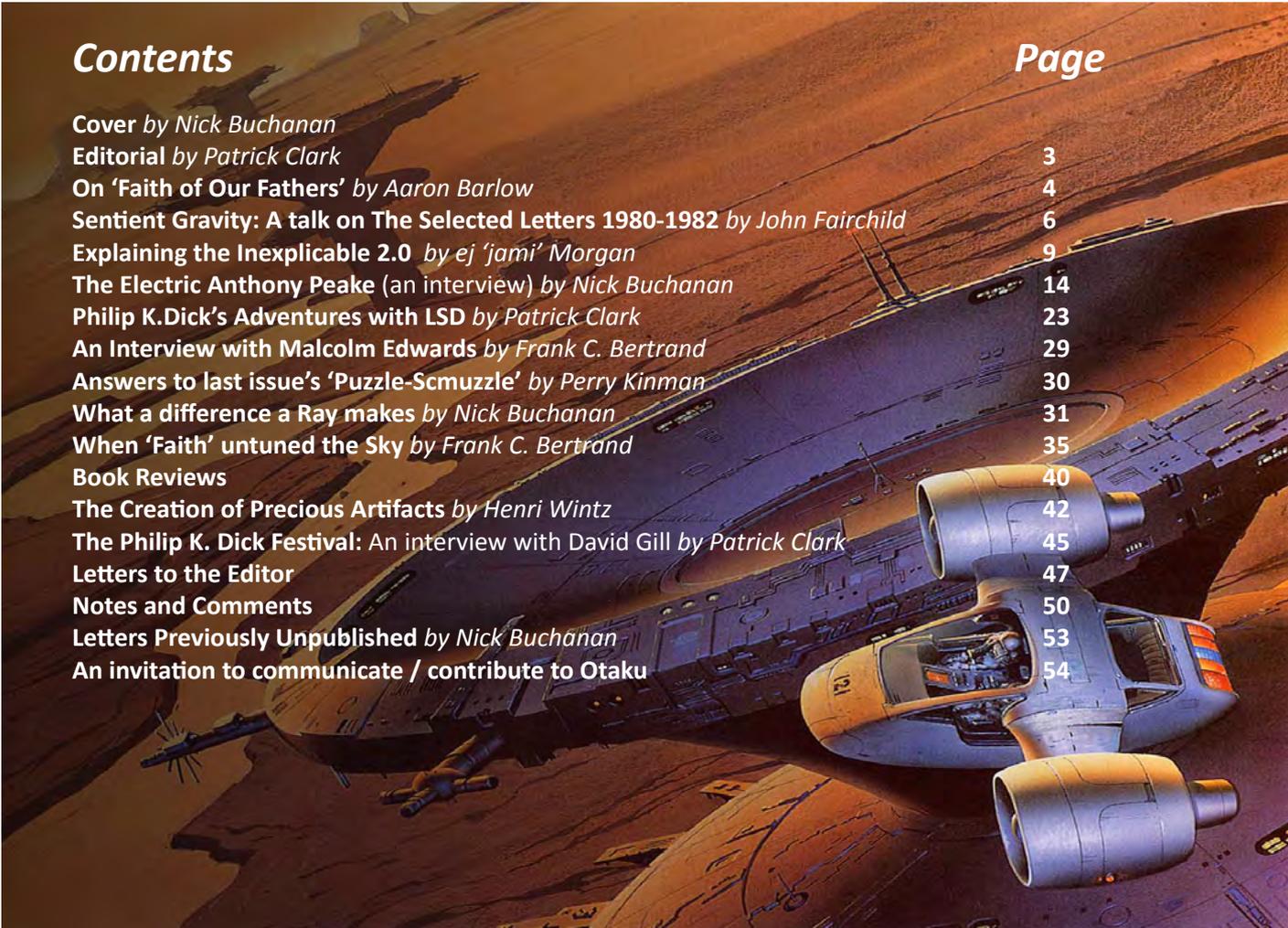
25th  
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A GUBBLE-FREE BUMPER 25th EDITION  
WITH ADDED WUBI AND WU !!



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**Otaku** is a zine made by fans for fans.  
 It exists to celebrate, explore and discuss the work of Philip K Dick.  
 The Otaku Team have enjoyed the writing and ideas of Philip K. Dick for decades, and continue to do so.  
 The subject of Philip K. Dick benefits from diverse perspectives, opinions, and insights.  
 In this zine we hope to explore the Novels, Short-Fiction, Non-fiction and ideas of Philip K Dick.  
 If you would like to contribute (a letter of comment, an article, essay or review) please make your submission in MS Doc, Rtf or Txt form to the Otaku Team c/o Patrick Clark via email:  
[pkdotaku@gmail.com](mailto:pkdotaku@gmail.com)  
 All submissions are welcome and considered, but we cannot promise that all will see print.  
 Thank you for maintaining the dialogue!  
 -- The PKD OTAKU Team

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## Editorial

by Patrick Clark

Twenty five issues. Not just that: ten years, too! If I think about it too much I'm sort of stunned by the idea. When PKD Otaku began in January 2002 I never supposed it would have along life. I had been reading zines for a long time by then and knew that most of them have a short lifespan. It's just in the nature of the beast. People get older, change perspectives, move on to other things. But I think many zines begin because someone has a passion for some topic or idea. Doesn't matter what the idea or topic is, only that you truly embrace it. Then you talk about it, write about it, publish it, gather like-minded people who share the passion and keep publishing. But eventually you lose the passion or, more likely perhaps, you say all that you have to say on the matter. When you've nothing more to say the zine ends.

Even after ten years and twenty-five issues the passion for Phil remains and there is still much to say about all things phildickian. Interest in Philip K. Dick these days has probably never been higher in that *koinos kosmos* that Phil examined and probed with such a discerning eye. But it is the effect of Phil in the *idios kosmos* of his many individual readers that interests me the most. The first issue

of PKD Otaku was eleven pages long. Over the years, and especially the past few issue, we have gotten bigger and brighter and way more exciting. Frank and Perry were there at the beginning with PKD Otaku number one in January 1992. They both appear here in this 25th issue. They clearly have more things to say as do both our veteran and our new contributors. There are as many views of PKD as there are individuals who have embraced him. All of us are still sorting Phil out in our heads and our hearts.

The very first PKD Otaku editorial didn't actually appear until the fourth issue. It read in part:

***“When PKD Otaku began, I never supposed it would have a long life.”***

I already know what I think about Phil. I want to know what other people think. So PKD OTAKU is intended to provide a voice for others to present their ideas and feelings about Phil however they want...I hope if you are reading this you will give some thought

to contributing something yourself. The zine can only get better with more voices in the conversation. It doesn't have to be a formal composition. It can be as simple as a letter, a passing thought or question. It can be as involved as an academic essay. If you need an entire issue to say what you want to say I'll give it to you. The only requirement is that, after all, it has to have something to do with PKD.

I still think of PKD Otaku as a conversation. I urge you to join the conversation. You can reach us at [pkdotaku@gmail.com](mailto:pkdotaku@gmail.com)



Graphic by Nick Buchanan

## On “Faith of Our Fathers”

by Aaron Barlow

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In his introductory remarks to Philip K. Dick’s “Faith of Our Fathers” in *Dangerous Visions*, Harlan Ellison writes about putting together the anthology, claiming that he “had to get the writers who were not afraid to walk into the dark. Philip K. Dick has been lighting his own landscape for years” (181). Thing is, Dick was deathly afraid of any dark, and walked into it only on account of his fear (that’s the thing that makes a hero, as Dick knew so well: being afraid and going in anyhow). Not only that, he knew that he was illuminating nothing, not without also creating new shadows and further darkness. There are no “klieg lights,” as Ellison next and incorrectly depicts it, of Dick’s imagination. Instead, there is a complex and cobbled-together kaleidoscope and, to Dick, a faulty one at that. Ellison, as the story he then relates concerning Dick, composition and drugs shows (as everything he writes shows, actually), has confidence in words and in truth (and light), something Dick forever lacks—and lacks with a passion that Ellison, so sure of himself, never could understand.

Writing during the year of the ‘summer of love’ in San Francisco, during the height of sixties interest in ‘mind-expanding’ drugs, Ellison could not help but share the American cultural fascination with what was going on with a certain portion of the young—and some number of their elders, as well—even if he did not use drugs himself. He wanted to be hip and trendy, and could only be so by admitting a certain acceptance of drug use. So, he laid it on Dick, whose story for the volume certainly does center on the alterations of perception drugs can engender. He writes that Dick’s “experiments with LSD and other hallucinogens, plus stimulants of the amphetamine class, have borne such fruit as the story you are about the read” (182).

Ellison didn’t get it. Not Dick, not drugs, not “experi-

ments.” Super confident, Ellison always presents the impression that he believes that he understands, that he knows. Dick was quite the opposite. He had no trust in his knowledge, his understanding, or even in his words, the tools of his trade. That’s why drugs had such a fascination for him. And why words had it, too. Ultimately, to Dick, there may even be little difference between drugs and words—but he could grapple with words in ways he never could with drugs.

Ellison, on the other hand, as a word addict may be every bit as deluded by words as is the drugged population of “Faith of Our Fathers.” Ellison claims:

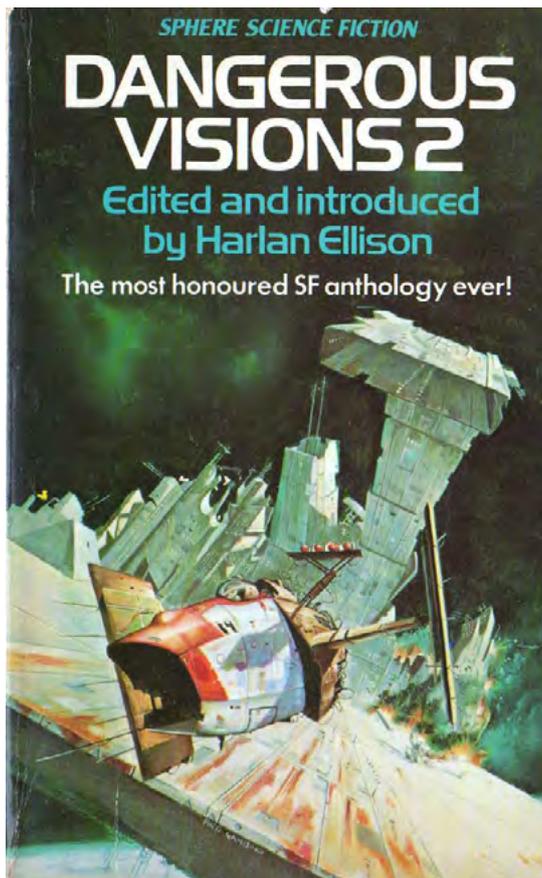
I asked for Phil Dick and got him. A story to be written about, and under the influence of (if possible), LSD. What follows, like his excellent offbeat novel *The Three Stigmata* of Palmer Eldritch, is the result of such a hallucinogenic journey.” (181)

This is so much hokum, wishful thinking on the part of one wanting to be hip and trendy. No one as suspicious of words as Dick was would be willing to craft them while on drugs. While Dick did use a variety of drugs at various times, there is no evidence that he ever wrote under their influence.

*Dangerous Visions* came out during the height of both the Cold War and the Vietnam War. Poking, as usual, at commonplace assumptions, Dick situates his story for the anthology in a world where “they” (Soviets, Chinese, Vietnamese) have won both. The story opens in Hanoi, an important city in this “future.” So antithetical are the “positions” Dick seems to be taking to American norms in “Faith of Our Fathers” that he, in his afterword, felt he had to say “I don’t advocate any of the ideas in ‘Faith of Our Fathers’” (214). This, in a time of questioning!

Ellison didn’t get the story at all, couldn’t see behind the mask, the drug, the faith of (and in) its words and Dick was unsure enough of how he would be seen (shades of the McCarthyism of a decade earlier).

Dick frequently tried to warn against faith in words, in statements of belief. In perhaps his most sig-



**‘Ellison didn’t get the story at all.’**

In 1974, Sphere Books (UK) published *Dangerous Visions* in three volumes. Faith of Our Fathers was in this one

nificant statement on the way he wrote, **“How to Build a Universe that Doesn’t Fall Apart Two Days Later,”** he says, “The basic tool for the manipulation of reality is the manipulation of words. If you can control the meaning of words, you can control the people who must use the words” (8). In **Philip K. Dick: In His Own Words**, a book of interviews conducted by Gregg Rickman, Dick claims:

I made no distinctions between creatures and humans, animals and bugs. A bug’s life is as precious as my life is to me. Because all life is God.

Cockroaches are the exception [...], well I don’t really include wasps and cockroaches.

GR: Because?

PKD: Because I don’t like them. (50)

Sweeping, and then personal. With logic cast aside, Dick challenges his own words.

And with reason. Or un-reason. Whatever. With something far beyond words, beyond what the likes of Ellison are able to grasp.

Yes, ours, in the West, is a logocentric culture: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). Yeah, yeah... I know: Dick came back to that time and time again, beginning in *Time Out of Joint* where he wrote:

In the beginning, he reflected, was the word.  
Or, in the beginning was the deed. If you were Faust. (50)

As all who read him are aware, word and deed become, sometimes, one and the same. But Dick was never satisfied with answers to the questions words alone raise: What the hell is the word, anyway? Why should it be trusted? Why would God (the father) create the word before the world? And why should we trust God, let alone other humans who we all know can manipulate the word, can lie as well as we can? We use words in our thinking—so we should trust them, should have faith in them on that flimsy a basis?

Uh... no. But we gotta trust and use something,

even if we are trying to undercut that very something and don’t have a clue what the result might be. This is one of the points of **“Faith of Our Fathers.”** Tung Chien doesn’t see “truth” when hallucination ceases, but simply another vision, one of a dozen. Or maybe one of infinity. Just so, Philip K. Dick. In **“How to Build a Universe that Doesn’t Fall Apart Two Days Later,”** he writes:

So I ask, in my writing, What is real? Because unceasingly we are bombarded with pseudo-realities manufactured by very sophisticated people using very sophisticated electronic mechanisms. I do not distrust their motives; I distrust their power. They have a lot of it. And it is an astonishing power: that of creating whole universes, universes of the mind. I ought to know. I do the same thing. (4)



Thing is, as Dick knew, words can become as much of a mask as any other mask (certainly as much as any machines ‘making’ pseudo-reality), but words also mask the masker as well as the wearer—something far beyond even what sophisticated people and mechanisms can create. This is what Dick knew, and what (and why) he tried to work his way through—even though he also knew that the task is impossible. Tung Chien carries two

things away from his experience with the multiplicity of reality: stigmata (with their reminder of the wounds of Christ) and an urgent need for close interaction with another human being. These are also the two critical elements of all of Dick’s fiction, a wounding by exploration that can never be healed or complete and an understanding of the importance of personal connection. These are the real fathers of his faith.

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Illustration by Leo and Diane Dillon from Interior of Dangerous Visions

## SENTIENT GRAVITY: A talk on The Selected Letters 1980-1982

by John Fairchild

at the Philip K. Dick Festival, Colorado, 2010

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**T**he Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1980-1982 is the sixth and last volume of the Selected Letters. We're going to be touching on just a few aspects of this last volume. We're going to be looking mainly at the letters to Patricia Warrick. At the time, Patricia Warrick was a Professor of English at the Univ. of Wisconsin. Her major book on Phil is *Mind in Motion, The Fiction of Philip K. Dick, 1987*.

I'd like to start off with just one definition. Most of you are familiar with VALIS; Vast Active Living Intelligence System. Phil had a change in preferred nomenclature during this period. He preferred to talk about the macrometasomakosmos. The macrometasomakosmos is VALIS, the Logos, the Cosmic Christ, Plato's Forms, and Pythagoras' kosmos.

### I The role of Dialectic

Dialectic comes up many times in this last volume, often in ways that are not immediately recognized. We usually think of dialectic in terms of Hegel—thesis, antithesis, and synthesis creating a new thesis.

This will show up as a model of how information gets arranged conceptually in the universe. However, there are numerous examples of more complex concepts that take dialectic as their basis. Some of these are hierogamy, enantiodromia, and homeostasis—these are all related.

(1) Hierogamy: Greek; "holy marriage." These were symbolic rituals where human participants represented a god and goddess. It is the harmonization of opposites. It shows up in Jungian psychology, per Phil. "And it is the psychological hierogamy, the unification of the opposites in the collective unconscious, that produces psychological wholeness, according to Jung." (p. 38) (All page numbers here are from the Letters.)

(2) Enantiodromia: Greek; the process by which something becomes its opposite, and the subsequent interaction between the two. "...(E)nantiodromia is the primary instrument by which the structure of the macrometasomakosmos is achieved and preserved." (p.66)

(3) Homeostasis is the self-regulating process by which biological systems tend to maintain stability while

adjusting to conditions that are optimal for survival. Homeostatic responses can be observed in all levels of life—atom, molecule, cell, organ, organism, population, and community—and in a wide range of time intervals—from a fraction of a second... to hundreds of years for community changes. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, hereafter referred to as EB.) Phil says the macrometasomakosmos self-corrects to its own map. (p. 132)

Phil's use of the term dialectic relies more on fusion than building on contradiction. His dialectic usually consists of A reaching the highest state it can reach, then B growing or leaping out of A yet containing the best of A. From there, C makes a quantum leap and supersedes A and B yet is still a fusion of the two.

### II Philosophical foundations

Similar to the way he would re-read his own works, Phil read extensively to see if he could recognize what he had seen. He used the Encyclopaedia Britannica a lot. It was a major reference tool for him. He also used The Encyclopedia of Philosophy. He would read up on certain concepts and then be led to certain writers. He would then often be surprised and at times pleased to find out that some of his conclusions were not original to him. He would sometimes show disappointment that his findings were not original, but at the same time he was happy to see that there

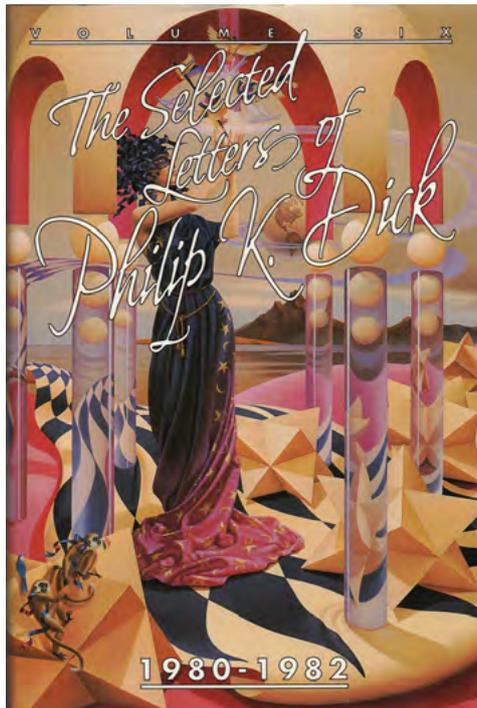
were other bases for his conclusions.

Up until the time of these letters, Phil had thought that Plato's Forms and Spinoza were the twin pillars of his understanding of what he saw. Philo of Alexandria and Pythagoras were buttressing Plato, and Parmenides preceded Plato. Then within the last two years of his life he began to read about Malebranche, Joachim del Fiore, Martin Luther, and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. (His full last name is Teilhard de Chardin and his biographers refer to him as Teilhard.)

So let's take a look at some of these people and see how they preceded Philip K. Dick.

Parmenides, Greek, 5th Cent. B.C.: The multiplicity of existing things is but an appearance of a single eternal reality. Differences are illusory. The knowledge of something comes not from sense perception but is rather known by the mind as being of a higher, superior, order. Plato's Forms follow Parmenides. (EB)

Benedict Spinoza was a 17th Century Dutch Jew, although he was expelled from his synagogue for unorth-



odoxy: "God" is the name of one substance whose other name is "nature." God/nature is the continuing cause of the world, not just a first cause. Spinoza says there are also finite modes and extensions such as individual bodies and ordinary physical objects (perhaps what Phil called ontogons). World is the soma, the body, of God. (p.51) One of the key quotes in the Letters that will show the relationship between Spinoza and Philip K. Dick is on p. 131: (which is from The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, hereafter EP)

Spinoza wrote: *"...thought and extension are two attributes under which the one substance is conceived... all reality can be thought of as a series of ... physical bodies ordered in causal series, or equally as a series of ideas ordered in intelligible logical sequences. The two sequences will correspond exactly, not because of any ... correspondence between them but because they are the same causal sequence viewed in two different ways."*

Nicholas Malebranche, 17th Cent. French: "We see all things in God." Changes, whether of the position of physical objects or of the thoughts of an individual, are directly caused not by the objects themselves but by God. What are commonly called "causes" are merely "occasions" on which God acts to produce effects. (EB) And then, also from the EB, "... he also thought that the existence of God follows from man's cognizance of infinity." (Just a little joke if you're familiar with the Nov. 1980 Exegesis entry in Sutin's In Search of VALIS.)

Joachim del Fiore, 12th Cent. Italian: He says the Old and New Testament combines to a Third Testament. History is trinitarian, growing from the Age of the Father (Law) to the Son (Grace) to that of the Spirit (Spiritual Understanding). Spiritual Understanding will replace both grace and the law.

Martin Luther, 16th Cent. German, a leader of the Protestant Reformation, said Christ is present in everything, in stone and fire and tree. God is present in anything on earth. (pp. 251, 252)

Teilhard de Chardin, 1881-1955, French. He was a Jesuit priest whose major works were prohibited by the Church from being published in his lifetime. He was also a Paleoanthropologist who spent significant time in China and participated in the discovery of the Peking man fossils. He says that not merely is evolution continuing in humans, but also in consciousness. His noosphere is superimposed on our biosphere and is a "thinking layer" that will allow us to culturally and evolutionarily converse. It is similar to Jung's collective unconscious. He did not fully explain his definition of the Cosmic Christ. So when Philip K. Dick refers to it, we have no complete picture of it.

### III Information arranged conceptually

At the time of the main visions, 1974, an intelligent, educated person had been told there are four dimensions, three spatial dimensions and the fourth dimension is time. It seems that the math didn't work out right with time as the fourth dimension. So when Phil went out of his way to say there are four spatial dimensions, that's what he was addressing. Since humans are three-dimensional and see in 2d, it would be very difficult for a person to grasp what they are seeing in a four-dimension world. Phil was attempting to figure out what he was seeing two dimensions beyond what he normally saw.

One of the things he saw he labeled phylogons.

This is Phil's term for the Forms of the macrometasomakosmos that get morphologically arranged conceptually. The phylogons are

## The macro -metasoma -kosmos is VALIS

permanent and accrete new layers. The phenomenal flux world, the world we normally see, is being converted into a conceptually arranged structure, being accreted into the macrometasomakosmos, laminating down in successive waves. Phil's term for what gets accreted is ontogons. These are non-permanent.

*"The billions of phylogons are crosslinked to form a unitary reality which is Pythagoras' kosmos, 'the harmonious fitting-together of the beautiful,' a vast structure that is sentient, that assimilates its environment selectively, using the ... universe as a supply of parts."* (p.13)

Reality is not arranged spatiotemporally but conceptually. *"I believe that they are conceptually arranged; that is, in terms of meaning. They have the same necessary relationship to one another that logical truths or mathematical propositions have to one another."* (p.116)

Reality is continuously re-formed and re-arranged to produce information, which is then processed by the macrometasomakosmos. "VALIS literally thinks our spatiotemporal world." (p.52) The universe is an information retrieval system. (p.266)

### IV The Cosmic Christ

Throughout the book, Philip K. Dick says that VALIS was the Logos, the Cosmic Christ, the macrometasomakosmos. Logos in the Greek means "word" or "reason" or "plan." Since Phil uses the term Cosmic Christ more than he defines it, here are some quotes from the letters: *"...the Logos would be a hyper-structure that is not substantial; it is not a thing among things but rather a way things have of either fitting together harmoniously or being fitted together harmoniously by an active principle—or agent... < > ... if we equate the risen Christ with the Logos,*

and the Logos with Pythagoras' *kosmos*, and this *kosmos* with Plato's Forms, then we have an all-embracing philosophy..." (p.247)

"A number of times over the years I have thought of this possibility, that V.A.L.I.S is Teilhard's Point Omega, the Cosmic Christ into which the total unified biosphere of this planet is evolving as it becomes more and more complex, structured, organized, negentropic; this is the vast mega-structure that I wrote you about recently that transcends time, space, and causation, the hyper-structure that is pure form, insubstantial, pure organization of any and all discrete objects in nature, as Luther speaks of." (p.255) "...when the biosphere/ecosphere becomes conscious, it becomes rational, hence becomes Logos..." (p.255)

"... the Cosmic Christ is the case (as world, as the new world-order coming into being invisibly in the ruins of the old)." (p.84)

#### V The AI voice (Artificial Intelligence)

The AI voice goes back mainly to 1974, yet in earlier letters Phil recounted an instance of how he was first helped by it when he was in elementary school. He had forgotten a mathematical principle upon which an entire test was based. The AI voice came to him and explained the principle.

To say the AI voice was an auditory hallucination is to ignore our long history of humans hearing voices that cannot be considered auditory hallucinations. If you are in a cabin in the woods and are about to open the door and hear a voice in your head that tells you "Don't go outside, there's a bear out there" and you look out and see a bear, then you do not condemn yourself for hallucinating.

Towards the end of these letters Phil said the AI voice is the voice of the ecosystem/biosphere. Yet in earlier volumes when he thought the AI voice was in a satellite (I believe) he said he asked the voice where it was—the voice looked around and found something labeled "Portuguese States of America."

So I don't think by using internal evidence we'll be able to come up with an answer of what the AI voice was.

Phil directly addresses criticism of his mental health (he was accused of "going slowly crazy in Santa Ana"), so let me stake out a couple of personal positions. One, philosophers and theologians have been explaining their viewpoints for 2,500 years, yet when one writer attempts to say that he saw what they were writing about and further, attempts to describe it, people become concerned about his mental health. I think Philip K. Dick did in fact have some or many problems, but attempting to describe the universe of our greatest philosophers doesn't constitute mental instability.

Two, the word schizophrenia used to be thrown around attempting to describe our writer. Given the defi-

nition of schizophrenia Philip K. Dick could not have been schizophrenic. If you disagree with this, then name a certified schizophrenic who left behind a body of literature. Put another way, it is impossible that the author of **The Transmigration of Timothy Archer** was schizophrenic. Just because you show certain symptoms of an illness, that doesn't mean you have that illness. You could have something else entirely. Many illnesses share the same symptoms.

#### VI The reverse Eucharist: "Rautavaara's Case"

"Rautavaara's Case" is the next to the last story in Volume 5 of the Short Stories. I had always thought it would take a lot of time and a lot of thought from a lot of people to figure out the meaning of "Rautavaara's Case". Instead, it's right here in these letters. It was common for Philip K. Dick to take what he was experiencing and turn it into a work of fiction. You can even say that's how he made his living. He would later go back and re-read his own fiction to see if he could determine what he had experienced. It was an upward spiral, part of his wheel of life.

In "Rautavaara's Case", the stage is set whereby we see a reverse Eucharist, a Jesus Christ figure eating the body and blood of humans, whether they are "believers" or not. It's presented very logically and is well-crafted. Where did this image come from? From the following: (These are all quotes from the last volume of the letters.)

"...the (C)osmic Christ [is] transubstantiating the physical universe into His own body and blood..." (p.29) (Repeated several times.)

"...Christ as the Logos is defeating, dismantling and assimilating the old decomposing creation... to form his own universe-body... in its place... < > So the rational has invaded the irrational and is dismantling it and assimilating it into its own body..." (p.84)

"...VALIS was increasing its dominion, bringing more and more of its environment under its structuring, without in any way affecting their concrete substantiality..." (p.246)

"Something is progressively consuming our universe and that 'something' is rational..." (p.247)

"The ecosphere does not evolve into the Cosmic Christ...; Christ penetrates it..." (p.258)

#### Some definitions:

**Kosmos:** A word which combines in an untranslatable way the notion of an orderly arrangement or structural perfection with that of beauty. Pythagoras was the first to call the world *kosmos*. [EP]

**Meta:** Change, transformation (Greek; after).

**Morphology:** In biology, the study of form and structure in plants and animals and the form and structure and relationships of the parts that comprise them.

(EB)

*Negentropic*: Negative entropy.

*Ontogeny*: The biological development or course of development of an individual organism.

*Phylogeny*: The evolution of a race or genetically related group of organisms. The history or course of the development of an immaterial thing (as a word or custom).

*Pythagoras*: Pythagoras was a 6th Century B.C. Greek. All existing objects are fundamentally composed of form and not material substance. (EB) Religion and science are two aspects of the same integrated world view. The cosmos itself is a living, breathing creature; one, eternal and divine. Man's soul is a fragment of the universal soul which had been cut off and would return. (EP) Cosmogony starts with the planting of a unit in the infinite. It grows by drawing in and assimilating the unlimited outside, by conforming it to limit and giving it numerical structure. Physically the process resembles inspiration, and the unlimited is also called breath. (EP)

*Soma*: As defined by Philip K. Dick, extension in space. "Body", or "brain" or "spatiotemporal world." (The term "sentient gravity" can be found on page 76 of these Letters.)

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## EXPLAINING THE INEXPLICABLE 2.0

by ej "jami" Morgan

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This spring Ted Hand of the *Philip K Dick and Religion site* asked if I would like to guest blog. I didn't pore over the post. I just whipped up something and at the last minute decided to call it "Explaining the Inexplicable." I liked the title much better than the [actual blog post](#). In fact, it sums up what our man PKD spent most of his life trying to do.

Soon after I posted that, Simon Critchley (one of the annotators for the published tome of Phil's Exegesis, chair of philosophy at the New School for Social Research and author of *Faith of the Faithless*, and *The Book of Dead Philosophers*) also gave a go at explaining the inexplicable in a [three part series](#) that appeared in the New York Times *Opinionator* blog. Who am I to criticize the writing of such a lofty one? Yet I feel I must. You will also read reactions here from Philip K. Dick's fifth and final wife, Tessa, and Mr. Hand, a scholar in his own right (or write.)

I must say the subtitle "Meditations on a Radiant Fish" grabbed my attention, as did this delightful design by Leif Parsons. Loved it! In fact I wish I had coined that phrase. It turns out the golden glow wafting from the fish-headed scholar may be the ideal symbol of the elusive enlightenment many of us are seeking—be it a scholarly quest to understand Phil's obsessions or the underlying gnosis. However, the pink beam will always remain my icon of choice for Phil's phenomena and visions.

So, one more time (with fervor), let's examine the inexplicable—"Dick's Gnosticism" (as Critchley called it)—and the Anokhi Anomaly.

**Gnostical? "Dick's Gnosis?"** These are terms coined by Professor Critchley. Mr. Hand (aka Ted) said in our Phil Facebook group: "We still don't have a critical edition of **The Exegesis**, let alone a scholarly consensus on how to write about it. The fan traditions and scholarship that's been done is great, but I don't think there's really an established "correct" way to write about **The Exegesis** for snooty newspapers yet. What's interesting about this piece is not Critchley's opinion about gnosticism, which he is not an expert in. It's his training in Heidegger that gives him a valuable lens on the Hans Jonas theory of Gnosticism, which Dick got a ton of mileage out of, however off the mark it might have been in attempting to accurately grok the religious dimensions of Gnosticism. I can forgive Critchley's gentlemanly ignorance of the finer points of PKD jargon."

Yes, we can certainly forgive anyone for not knowing Dickhead jargon, just as we should forgive others for not knowing the philosophical "gnostical" theories of German philosophers like Jonas and Heidegger. However,

I think it's essential to "grok" Gnosticism—at least reach some consensus about what it means—otherwise reading *The Exegesis* and commenting on it is really an exercise in futility.

In Part 2 of his series, Critchley repeatedly states that Gnosticism is a dualistic view of the cosmos. He used the words "dualistic" and "Gnostical" interchangeably throughout his series. In fact, he wrote, "Gnosticism declares a radical dualism between the false God who created this world—who is usually called the "demiurge"—and the true God who is unknown and alien to this world." And goes on to say, "But for the Gnostic, evil is substantial and its evidence is the world."

Really? That is the "standard potted summary of Gnosticism" according to Jay Kinney, cartoonist turned editor of *Gnosis Magazine* (esoteric author, too). I understand it's also standard existentialistic Gnosticism. (Rather redundant; self-determination modifying self-informed.) Kinney, if we accept his authority, agrees with my idea of Gnosticism in his essay "[The Political Gnosis of Philip K. Dick](#)" [© Copyright 2002 by New Dawn Magazine.] He argues "there have been many gnosticisms, and many "gnosi" – some predating the Christian Era and some quite independent of Christianity... while we might assume that the state of consciousness signified by the term 'gnosis' is universally accessible (or at least potentially so), it is not at all certain that those using the term were always referring to the same thing." Right, go on Jay. "Gnosis is an experiential 'knowing' that results from the expansion of the Gnostic's consciousness to the level of the divine Intellect, where the illusion of the separate self (ego) is obliterated – at least temporarily – in the vast perspective of the higher Self." Ahh, that's more like it.

Gnosis, at its core, is simply knowing—"revealed knowledge", if you will—esoteric insights, inspiration, or revelations. And a gnostic is one who has directly accessed or received the knowledge. All this other drama about "radical dualism", false gods and evil makes for good SF, but has no real correlation to gnosticism, IMHO. I'm still not sure what constitutes a capital "G" gnostic. I guess that's for the Hans Jonas followers to ponder.

Phil had experiences, saw things, heard things, knew things and of course, tirelessly wrote about and examined them. Was he a Gnostic (upper or lower case)? He would have said yes one day and no a few days later. When one claims to have had religious or mystical experiences, there are many counter theories such as the temporal lobe seizures, mini strokes, or other brain conditions that may cause such experiences. The Mayo Clinic explains a temporal lobe incident this way:

An unusual sensation, known as an aura, may precede a temporal lobe seizure, acting as a warning. Not everyone who has temporal lobe seizures experiences auras, and those who have auras may not remember them. The aura is actually a small seizure itself — one that has not spread into an observable seizure that impairs consciousness and ability to respond. Examples of auras include:

- A déjà vu experience— a feeling that what's happening has happened before
- Other "odd" sensations including euphoria and visual stimuli
- A sudden sense of unprovoked fear

**The Exegesis** is a virtual encyclopedia of Phil's ruminations on his feelings of being inhabited by other personalities, "déjà vu" experiences and "religious" insights, visions of pink and golden lights that often communicated with him,

and feelings of fear and paranoia. In the introduction of **The Exegesis** (pages xix – xx) there's a section on possible medical explanations, that includes the temporal lobe epilepsy (TLE.) Some experts claim hypergraphia and hyperreligiosity are key symptoms of TLE.

We'll never resolve whether Phil's flashes of pink beams and hours of hypnogogic visions were biological or truly visionary aka "Gnostical." (I'm beginning to find that term useful ;) Whatever they were, no one can explain it like Phil (*Exegesis* 22:39):

*"Robert Bly says Jesus was an Essene. Suppose it [referring to the plasmatic information organism here] "rode" or was info in the Qumran Cave V Scrolls, went from John Allegro to Jim Pike to me? I did have dreams about Jim*



Illustration © 2012 Leif Parsons

and his mother—as my mother, and the Sibyl did mention Jim; I even thought “Thomas” (the noös or life form which took me over) was Jim (for a while). Maybe it had been Jim, had made him into a homoplasmate. I did dream about Allegro’s book. Strange. But if it is living info, isn’t this possible? Wow. What a story. And the Essenes, including Christ, knew the scrolls would be found at the end of the age of iron (the two would pragmatically amount to the same thing). So from Jim the plasmate-form of an Essene entered me (in the late sixties?) and lived subliminally until 2-74 when I/we saw the golden fish sign, and that triggered the plasmate Essene Christian—I experienced his memory—yes. This fits several of my dreams (the pink “margarine cubes,” etc.)—and then gradually my ego barrier to him crumbled until he took over in 3-74. This would be hard to believe and seem merely “exorcist-ish” or occultish except: I saw how the plasmate can “ride” or better yet be certain crucial info (words-logos). I have always said if there is an answer to “why me?” the answer is: Jim Pike, somehow.”



Indeed, Phil! For you it was Pike, and somehow for me, it was you, gnostically crawling through my brain, maybe invading my optic nerve as I read the information you were transmitting. Or, perhaps I too suffered a series of mini strokes much earlier than the actual TIA I experienced in 2007. Hell, maybe all of us with Gnostical interests (or perhaps EVERYONE in the USA who is consuming environmental poisons and genetically altered food) have had mini temporal lobe disturbances by now. We’re doomed, just like the early Romans (and Christians) who eventually went crazy from lead poisoning.

I asked Tessa Dick what she thought of Professor Critchley’s series:

“Simon Critchley has set up a straw man in his analysis of “Dick’s Gnosticism.” Far from believing that piercing the veil will make him “good”, purging original sin, Philip K. Dick recognized that we need the Savior because we are all imperfect. We all participate in the construction of the veil of illusion because we all partake of the original sin that caused us to fall from grace. Even the great saints have faults, and even the most wicked sinners have some kernel of goodness within.

As for the Romantics and their notion of the “noble savage”, the innocence of childhood and the sanctity of nature, Phil recognized that they were misguided fools at best and conniving propagandists at worst. Furthermore, Phil had no use for the New Age movement. He consid-

ered it on a par with television faith healers who are in it for the money.

The heroes of Phil’s stories often fail because they are imperfect. Their nobility lies in the fact that they keep trying to do the right thing, even when their cause is hopeless. The elite are the villains of his stories, and the common, ordinary people are the heroes. Phil celebrates humanity with all its flaws and weaknesses.”

Critchley’s discussion of movies such as *The Matrix* reveals that he cannot find the evidence for his thesis in Phil’s own work, so he must seek it elsewhere. Several of those movies had not been made during Phil’s lifetime, the Internet did not exist and conspiracy theories were still the province of a few unemployed students and political activists. Yet Critchley finds it more productive to go down those side roads than to refer to Phil’s work.

When he suggests that Phil would have supported Mitt Romney as hero and savior, he is wrong. Phil might have been disappointed in Obama’s policies, but he was a Democrat and would not support Romney. It is far more likely that Phil would vote for Ron Paul.

Phil never set himself up as elite or separate from the rest of humanity. On the contrary, he saw himself as an ordinary man stumbling through life to the best of his ability. He did not like to attend conventions and award ceremonies, and he often stayed home. Phil would rather sit and have a beer with the neighbor.

Rather than possessing a singular spark of the divine that set him above other people, Phil recognized that we all possess that spark. He sought to awaken that spark in all people, not in some elite corps of enlightened beings.”

Right on, Phil (via Tessa.) Now, on to the next mystery.

### The Anokhi Anomaly:

My last word in “Explaining the Inexplicable” must be about the mysterious Anokhi.

At the beginning of Chapter Five in **The Transmigration of Timothy Archer** (aka TToTA) Phil explains what anokhi is: “...a particular Hebrew noun. They spell it two different ways; sometimes it showed up as anokhi and sometimes anochi.” Actually, in searching the internet, you rarely find the anokhi version, but one can easily verify that anochi is

the biblical Hebrew word for I AM, or “essence consciousness.” What is thoroughly fascinating to me is that in alien seeding theories (such as Zecharia Sitchin’s *Earth Chronicles*, Von Daniken’s *Chariots of the Gods*, or the television series *Ancient Aliens*) the term “anunnaki” is believed to be our alien ancestors and the gods described by the Sumerians in the earliest written tablets ever discovered.

Anyway, in Chapter Six (TToTA), Phil refers to what John Allegro wrote, and actually mentions Allegro’s book *The Sacred Mushroom* and *The Cross: A study of the nature and origins of Christianity* within the fertility cults of the ancient Near East.

I did not re-read Allegro’s book (before blogging or updating this article), but essentially it is the source material for the exchange between Kirsten and Angel Archer, “You mean Jesus was a dope dealer?” And Tim Archer’s (aka Bishop Pike’s) ideas that the Zadokite’s were “a mushroom cult” and the Eucharist a left over sacrament from eating the bread, or the anokhi mushroom.

Tessa, not only confirmed Phil’s intrigue with Allegro’s ideas in an interview I did with her for previous issues of Otaku, but our talks apparently renewed her interest in the subject. She dug out some old notes, got a paperback copy of Allegro’s book, and proceeded to publish her own Book this year titled **Allegro’s Mushroom**. I emailed and asked her to once again comment on how Phil was influenced by Allegro’s sacred mushroom theories. Tessa wrote:

*“When Phil came across Allegro’s book about sacred mushrooms, he dug into it with fervor. He believed that he could pry secrets out of the text, especially when he looked at the ancient scripts. Although there is plenty of evidence that Jesus really did exist, that does not preclude the belief among early Christians that they could reach heaven by eating hallucinogenic mushrooms. Humans have been trying to climb to heaven since at least as early as the Tower of Babel.*

*It seems more likely to me that the mushroom was a symbolic representation of Jesus, employed to conceal the fact that they were Christians living among pagans. The Romans were notably tolerant of pagan religions, but not of Judaism or Christianity.”*

So, to answer a couple of nagging questions:

- 1) anokhi and Zadokite were NOT concepts made up by Phil, as some readers previously thought. He took the Hebrew terms and fictionalized them, just as I interwove the magic mushroom and soul transmigration ideas, along with ancient alien theories, in my novel *A Kindred Spirit*.
- 2) Phil clearly understood that anochi meant I AM or Consciousness, capitalized to mean the Ultimate Consciousness—Essence Consciousness—

Christ Consciousness, or our eternal Soul as Phil called it in **The Exegesis**, Folder 79.

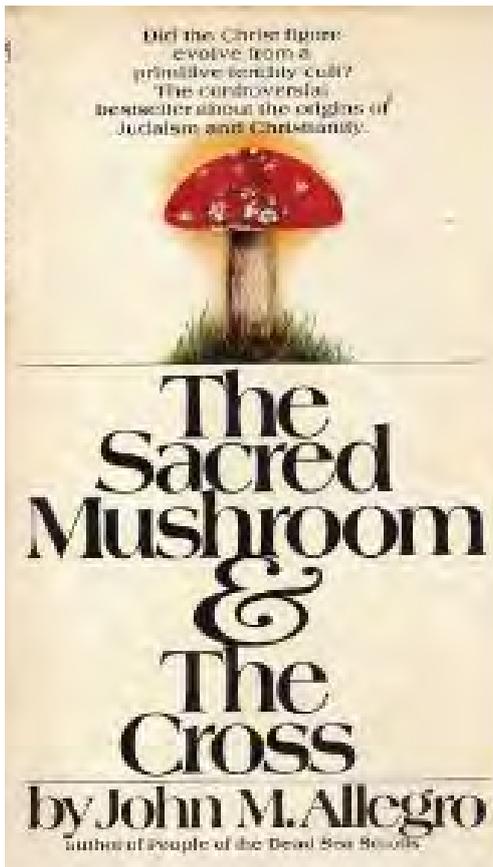
To give an example, on pages 728 – 729: [79:1-28] “I will know what this pure consciousness was, ere I die trying. Some mental entity using reality as a carrier for information—what does this mean? That we humans are not alone and that we are not the highest life form on this planet. And it is aware of us and intervenes in our lives; yet we see it not. [79:1-30] All I can think of is that reality is pure consciousness; that only Anokhi exists, purely and solely. That what we have is ascending degrees of perception, and the ultimate is perception of pure consciousness “out there!”

I searched both **TToTA** and **The Exegesis** for every reference of anokhi on my Kindle (you can also do this for free online using Google books.) The Exegesis has 26 instances of anokhi, mostly relating to Consciousness. In fact, Phil even used Anokhi in his God graph (Folder 75, D-33, pg. 696.) Anokhi is mentioned forty times in TToTA, with many references to sacred mushroom there.

### Navel-gazing (My Conclusions)

Otaku Editor Patrick and I are both weary of prattling on about The “E.” In reviewing what I wrote in Otaku #23 I discussed why it was becoming “tiresome” to me then. I referred to being on “the endless roller coaster ride of over the same lost and found epiphanies”, “exhausted and drenched in a cosmological flop sweat” (that’s a quote from Tim Powers), and Patrick said in issue #24 he wondered “what in the world Phil thought he was doing beating his head against a metaphysical brick wall, night after night.” We all stopped short of calling it navel-gazing, at least in Otaku.

But it IS the quintessential definition of navel-gaz-



ing. “Obsessive, excessive introspection and self-analysis.” Webster uses those terms and adds the harsh modifier *useless*. If Phil had medical conditions that caused the hypergraphia and hyper-religiosity (as referenced earlier), then it wasn’t useless, or a choice for Phil, but it was still obsessive and overly introspective. As I’ve said before, I fear continued analysis of his hypergraphia is becoming a bit useless for the rest of us. Yes, the E is handy for searching and locating the 20 to 30 variations on any given Dickian theme, and will remain an invaluable tool for scholars. And that brings me to my final thought about PKD fans, “fam” and academics.

The Otaku guys and I have become great friends. Some of us (Gill, too) bonded at the first fest. They bust their asses to put out this fine ‘zine and just want intelligent, thoughtful commentary on Phil. Everyone says that’s the goal: high quality content. I guess it comes down to who decides and defines quality, and who ultimately has the “credentials” to interpret what Phil was trying to convey. Ex-wives? The Trust? Fans or scholars? Patrick, our Otaku Editor, once said maybe we should stick with Phil’s published writing, “after all that’s what he wanted to share with the world.” True, but then he wrote another million words in that damn *Exegesis*. Sigh...

Maybe broaching the subject here will open the door for asking the “hard questions and writing the thoughtful essays” that Mr. Bertrand wants to read (and share.) I’ve enjoyed communicating with ALL of you. Sadly, I cannot travel to CA in September, due to my family commitments, but I hope it’s a memorable, enjoyable time! So, I close with the famous words of recently departed Rodney King, “Can’t we all just get along?” I hope so—in the PKD metaverse and in general. Until we meet again...

ej “jami” Morgan is an Oktau contributor. Her novel *A Kindred Spirit* was released in a special FDO Edition at the 2010 Colorado PKD Festival. The fourth and final edited edition was released in 2011 as a trade paperback and eBook (for Kindle and iBook.)

### Sneak Peek at Mr. Hand’s Upcoming Festival Talk

Ted Hand (ESL teacher. MA student in Religious Studies at Graduate Theological Union working on Renaissance Magic and Western Esotericism, and of course, we know him as Teddy, our “PKD and Religion” blogger) will moderate a panel discussion on **The Exegesis** at this fall’s Phil fest. He is also writing papers and giving a talk. I asked

if he could give us a preview. Ted said:

*“One of the key problems of the Exegesis is Dick’s conflict over whether or not he was a Christian. I plan to discuss the influence of Neoplatonism on this conflict, which has not received enough scholarly attention.*

**“Obsessive, excessive introspection and self-analysis.”**

*Gabriel McKee has notably argued for Dick’s being a Christian in the end, and there is certainly a consistent strain of serious Christian thinking in Dick’s writing, but doesn’t cover the esoteric versions of Christianity that complicated Dick’s voyage. McKee gives short shrift to Dick’s Gnosticism--which by the way recently seen some interest from philosopher and Hans Jonas professor Simon Critchley--and doesn’t cover Dick’s interest in many of the more mystical and esoteric Christian thinkers that influenced Dick. Elsewhere I have discussed the crucial influence of Christian Hermeticists (per PKD) Paracelsus, Boehme, and Bruno, who all play a role in determining the weird ways that Dick thought about Christianity—at least in their legendary form if not in the specific details of their programs. Dick associated Neoplatonism with Hermeticism in a few interesting passages of the Exegesis that we will look at. At times he was worried that he had destroyed Christianity with his Neoplatonic thinking, that he had found an ancient true religion that predated Christianity. At other times he found himself back to orthodoxy, often by the very same Neoplatonic philosophical lines that led him astray.*

*Dick understood Neoplatonism as providing a legitimate philosophical ground for interpreting his own weird spiritual experiences. Looking at the ways Dick used Neoplatonism to interpret the Christian Hermetic authors can also give us an important window into his religious thinking.*

*... we don’t necessarily need academic experts, as Dick himself was no expert, and often misunderstood the esoteric territories that he traveled through. We don’t need an expert on esotericism in itself, but rather an expert in the ways that Dick made creative use of these esoteric materials.”*

You can read the rest of Ted’s thoughts on the papers and festival talk he is preparing on his blog (where he posted them after sending them to us at Otaku): [Ted’s Notes @ PKDreligion blog](#) (When we asked Ted for his bio, he sent: Jack of all trades+ master of none. Especially scholarship of Mind, Magic, Alchemy, Punk, Linguistics, Gaming, Weird lit. I found his credentials listed on the festival site along with the proposed schedule: <http://www.philipkdickfestival.com/2012-philip-k-dick-festival/tentative-schedule/>

## THE ELECTRIC ANTHONY PEAKE An interview with Anthony Peake

by Nick Buchanan  
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**T**his interview took place in a park in the grounds of the Bridge Inn pub in Port Sunlight, Merseyside. It was a lovely sunny balmy evening (7.30pm) and I talked first with Tony about how his work relates to Philip K. Dick.

**Nick:** In your book, 'The Daemon,' you devote a whole chapter to Philip K. Dick – it seems to me that you are drawn both to the man's experiences and also to his writings. What is it about Philip K. Dick that interests you so much?

**Anthony:** I think in many ways it's the way Philip K. Dick plays with the nature of reality and the way in which we perceive reality; also the way he plays around with what *exactly* is real and what isn't real. What can we say is real? What is memory? How does memory work? Can our memories be played around with? I remember many, many years ago when I saw the first version of the movie Total Recall (and I had read the story many years previously) the movie very much brought it across to me; the idea of what exactly are memories? If we took somebody and put all *your* background and memories in *their* head would they be you, and could they know what was real? I'm very much interested in the famous discussion with Rachel in the movie Blade Runner – even though the movie is not itself Philip K. Dick, the themes are there.

But what interests me most is Philip K. Dick the writer, and the way he plays with your mind. There was a story...what was it...the something 'Ant?'

**Nick:** The Electric Ant with Garson Poole

**Anthony:** Yes, **The Electric Ant** where the guy finds inside himself a tape device which in effect is playing his reality to him – that is *so much* Philip K. Dick - and he played with his consciousness. The events of February and March 1974 and the way in which he had

his theophany, and met up with his own higher self, his Daemon for want of a better term – all of this fascinates me.



**Nick:** Your work investigates many themes which pre-occupied Phil also; things like – the nature of time, schizophrenia, the nature of reality, etc. I know that you didn't come to this particular canon of concerns by virtue of Phil, you have followed your own path. So it is interesting to me that both of you are fascinated by things like time, by schizophrenia as a phenomena. What is

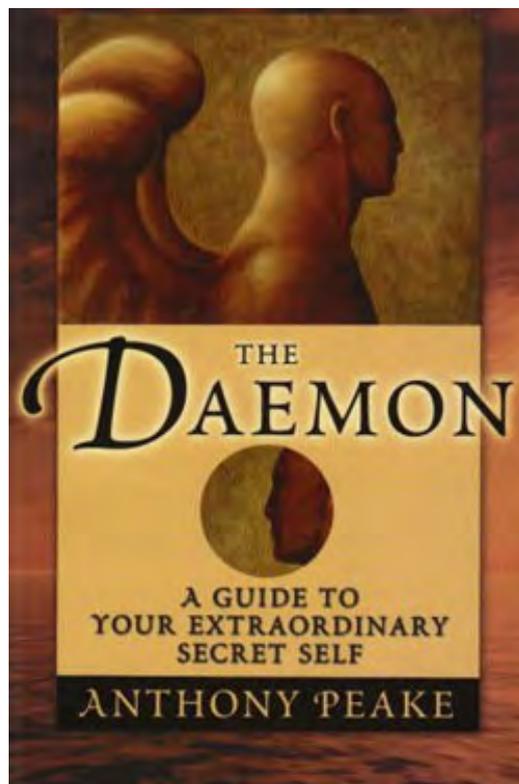
it about these themes that...I mean, could we take schizophrenia and say something about that first because I know it interested Phil a lot?

**Anthony:** The question of schizophrenia is intriguing because what it is in fact is somebody who has developed a situation whereby they are not sure what is real and what is not real. I always cite the example of A Beautiful Mind (about the Mathematician, John Nash). If you read the Sylvia Nasar book 'A Beautiful Mind' and watch the movie as well, it very much gives you the idea of what it must be like to be in a schizophrenic state of mind - in the sense that in the first half of the movie you see the world through the eyes of John Nash. And the people he encounters are real, they are three dimensional creatures that have motivations, attitudes and values. It is only later into the movie that you realise *they are part of his hallucination*. Although he comes to terms with the fact that these beings are hallucinations, they still don't go away-

**Nick:** And he still has to relate to them.

**Anthony:** - and he still has to relate to them. Now the question that has always fascinated me is this: Does this tell us something about the *true nature of reality*? It was Henri Bergson who considered that the human mind was *an attenuator*

that took information out. In other words, what we consider to be 'reality' is, in fact, just a small part of the full informational spectrum that is available. The brain acts as a filter and presents to consciousness what is needed for



survival, not what is actually out there.

**Nick:** So we filter or we subtract in some way?

**Anthony:** Yes, absolutely. So what is happening when somebody becomes schizophrenic is that they see changes and suddenly they see the world behind the world. What Philip K. Dick might call the Black Iron Prison. You very much see that reality. Now it is when you look into writers like Philip K. Dick, and lots of other writers throughout history, many of them write about this sense of the noetic, the sense of something behind and of course if you take it to Gnostic beliefs which Phil was fascinated by, this is exactly what the Gnostics would believe; There is a reality behind all this – *the pleroma*. This is an illusion created by the demiurge which again Phil was fascinated by.

Now in my book *The Daemon*, I argue that for most of us, the ‘Doors of Perception’ of William Blake are solidly closed whereas when people have such things as migraine sometimes they have fleeting images where they open. The Doors of Perception are opened wider for people who experience Bi-Polar Disorder and wider again for those who experience Temporal Lobe Epilepsy. I have discussed with Tessa [Dick] my opinion that Phil experienced undiagnosed temporal lobe epilepsy. She is adamant that this was not the case. However many of his experiences suggest to me symptoms of this curious altered-state of consciousness.

**Nick:** One of Phil’s biographers Gregg Rickman wrote an article in the **Philip K Dick Society Newsletter** (#20, p3-5) which explored the possibility that Phil was Temporal Lobe Epileptic.

**Anthony:** I think people may see ‘*Phil being a Temporal Lobe Epileptic*’ as a threat, whereas if you think of Dostoevsky, The Goncourt brothers, Baudelaire – there are a lot of very famous writers who we believe experienced Temporal Lobe Epilepsy (diagnosed by specialists looking back at the way they saw things). If somebody was look-

ing at the writings of Philip K. Dick they would say that he shows certain aspects of TLE. This is part of creativity, this is part of his magic.

**Nick:** I think one of the key things here is that we are discussing it *not as a deficit*, but as a gift.

**Anthony:** Absolutely. If people go on to my forum or my website they will find that a lot of people who are involved in my work are TLE and these are some of the most wonderfully gifted people I’ve ever met. The way their mind works, the way they link information is incredible. There’s no question about it, TLE is a terrible thing to have, it must be awful, and I’m a classic migrainer so I know how the

migraine aura affects me. Sometimes when I’m having a migraine aura I enjoy the sheer magic of what’s going to happen, the sheer magic and the imagery.

**Nick:** Even within the narrow confines of contemporary education, people who are said to be dyslexic often have artistic and creative talents which exceed their non-dyslexic counterparts. Their brains might be processing things in a different way.

**Anthony:** If we look into the history of TLE it used to be called ‘*the diviners disease*’ because historically people believed that those with TLE were precognitive, and we know there is evidence that Phil showed certain levels of precognitive abilities which surprise and amaze me. The same goes for the abilities that TLE’s have in terms of just visu-

alisation. In my book *The Daemon*, I have a whole section on Solomon Shereshevski a Russian memory man who was studied by Alexander Luria in the 1930’s. He had complete, total recall of all of the incidents that had happened in his past. In Luria’s book ‘*The Mind of a Mnemonist - A Little Book About A Vast Memory*’ there is strong evidence that Shereshevski experienced TLE.

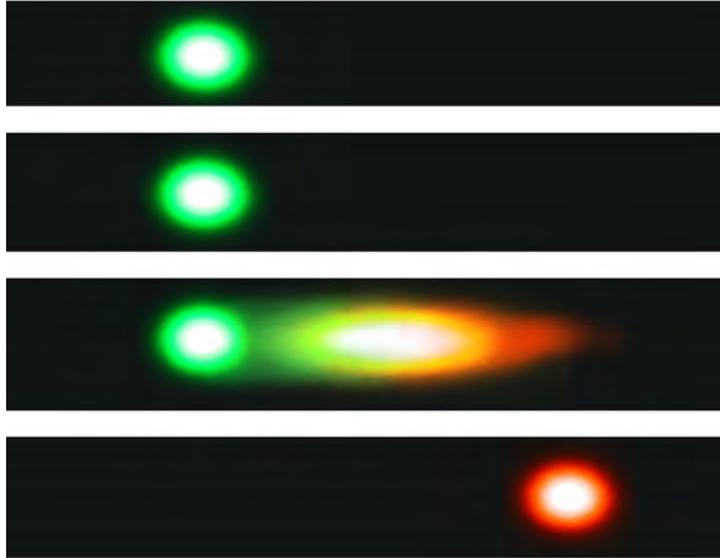
**Nick:** You mentioned ‘precognitive aspects’ of Phil’s life that were for real, and in a moment I’d like you to say



**“TLE used to be called the Diviners Disease.”**

more about them, but before you do I wondered if you could describe something for me which relates to precognition. In one of your books (or it may have been at one of your talks) you mentioned an experiment involving green and red lights and a kind of precognition. It fascinated me then and still puzzles me today.

**Anthony:** I am glad you asked me about this as it is probably one of the most amazing experiments I have encountered. It is called the 'Phi Phenomenon' and involves something called 'visual persistence'. In simple terms this is the way we see movement. The eye is like a camera and it gives the illusion of movement by superimposing a sequence of snapshot images over each other, in exactly the same way a cartoon or movie works.



In 1910 psychologist Max Wertheimer noticed that if two light sources were positioned a few feet from the eyes and a short distance apart and then flashed on and off the observer sees a single light passing backwards and forwards. In 1977 philosopher Nelson Goodman wondered what would happen if the two lights were different colours. Say, the first one illuminated, on the left, being green and the second one, on the right, being red. At what point would the observer, not knowing that the colours were different, see the perceived single light change from green to red? Logic and common sense tells us that the moving light will be green all along its illusory movement from left to right, turning red as it arrives on the right hand side and as the red light is switched on. Fascinatingly the experiment shows that the observer "sees" the light turn red IN THE MIDDLE of its journey and before the red light has been turned on. This suggests that we all can monitor the contents of our immediate future. This is a "PRE-COG" ability, and it seems to be universal.

What is even more interesting is the work done by Dean Radin and later, Dick Bierman who did a series of experi-

ments to do with skin conductivity. Apparently when we are frightened the conductance of the skin changes-

**Nick:** The galvanic response-

**Anthony:** Correct. What they did was they had a group of people in a darkened room looking at a series of photographs flashed on to a screen. Most of the photographs were of fluffy kittens and beautiful scenery, but interspersed with these were scenes of horror. Everytime that somebody *was about to see a vision of 'horror'* the galvanic response went up. As if the body had already responded. Note this is *before they had seen the image*.

**Nick:** So in both cases; with the red and green lights experiment and the

horror images experiment, there is a sense of something being 'anticipated'-

**Anthony:** There are two things that argue against the Bierman and Radin experiment here and it is reasonable that we put them here; The first one is something called the '*gamblers fallacy*,' which is to say if you are playing roulette and it has come up red six times, some people believe the chance of it coming up black is far higher, but of course that is not the case, it's still 50/50. But the fallacy is that people still feel that it will come up that way. And they've applied the gamblers fallacy to the Radin/Berman experiment and what they say is - if you are expecting a horrible picture, and you know that the last five have not been horrible, then you start to think the next one will

be. And that's where the galvanic response happens, it's nothing to do with previewing the future. It's anticipation rather than precognition. So there is a counter argument to say that that is the case. It doesn't explain the Phi Phenomenon. It doesn't explain the 'Cutaneous Rabbit Phenomenon' where two electrodes are placed on the inner wrist, two at the inner elbow and two on the upper arm.

**"The mind 'buffers' information before it sends it to consciousness"**

If they are stimulated in rapid succession from wrist upwards, many people report *a sensation in the whole of their arms* like a rabbit scurrying upwards).

turing. This clearly is an ability we have and you could look into the sociology of language, you could look at semantic structures, you could look at Saussure-

**Nick:** So we are filling in like the gaps between the frames of a film. *We feel something where something was not.*

**Anthony:** But if the wrist is stimulated and there is no plan to continue, then the inbetween sensation never starts. It is as if the body knows. The argument for why these things happen (Phi, the flashed photos and cutaneous rabbit) is that the mind 'buffers' information before it sends it to consciousness; *it waits until it has a better picture.* So, with the Phi phenomenon for instance, it could literally be that the visual pathways and the brain have waited.

**Nick:** It *has seen* the red light at the end, even though 'we' haven't.

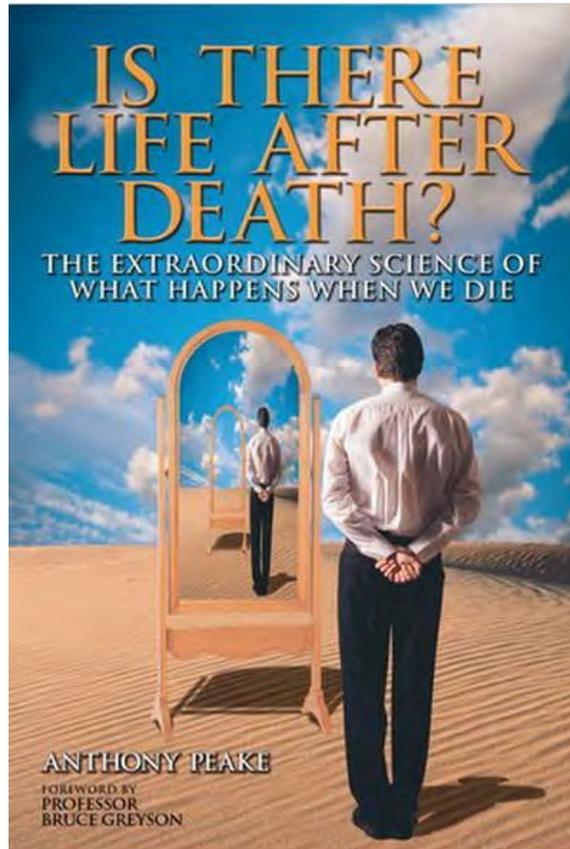
**Anthony:** Yes.

**Nick:** But it's not yet been *presented to us.*

**Anthony:** It's not been processed yet. And there is an argument to suggest that that indeed is the case. Experiments were done recently which suggest that *we lag behind reality.*

**Nick:** That fits in with our language I think, in that our representation of the world is in fact a *re-presentation*, it is somehow being presented *later.* It is as if your mind will give you the information, but only once it's got all the facts.

**Anthony:** Yes. Well if we think about how we are now having this conversation; I am effectively structuring words in advance, I am not putting these words together. The very fact that we construct grammar, and speak grammatically without actually thinking about the words we are struc-



**Nick:** Chomsky-

**Anthony:** Chomsky. All these people say that language is an inherent structure, the structure is in the DNA almost. But these other anticipatory things are quite different because I would argue that its more than that because people have Déjà vu sensations, where people can anticipate what is going to happen next. But one of Phil's recurrent themes is precogs – it's a fascination for him. That people are anticipating the future, that they can 'see' the future.

Now there was a series of letters that Phil wrote to Claudia Krenz (an Alaskan pen-pal). I've got copies of these letters. And he wrote to her on 9th May 1974 saying that he was scared. At the bottom of the letter in a handwritten P.S. he wrote: *'What scares me most Claudia is that I*

*can often recall the future.'* (Note from Nick: This is not recorded in **The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1974**, perhaps because it was a hand written P.S.).

Then on 25th February 1975, he wrote in another P.S. (this one recorded in **The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick 1975-1976**): *'I was up to 5a.m. on this last night. I*

***“What scares me the most Claudia is that I can often remember the future.”***

*did something I never did before: I commanded the entity to show itself to me – the entity which has been guiding me internally since March. A sort of dream-like period passed then, of hypnagogic images of underwater cities, very nice, and then a stark single horrifying scene, in-*

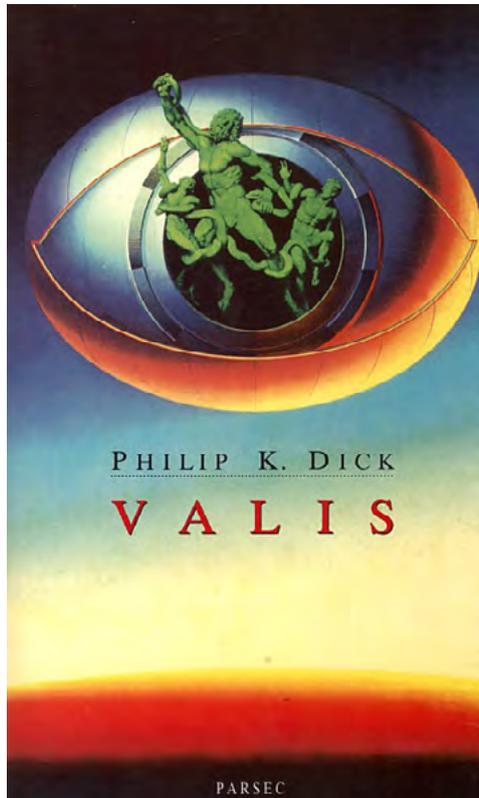
*ert but not still: a man lay dead, on his face, in a living room between the coffee table and the couch.'* On the 18th February 1982, Phil's neighbours broke down the front door of his house to find him lying in that position. Now what is intriguing about this is that if my hypothesis

is correct - that we have a Daemon, a higher self that runs the narrative of our life - Phil's Daemon wouldn't have known that scene *if Phil had never gained consciousness again, the Daemon would never have gained consciousness again*, to know that scene happened (to transcribe it back to his ego and his lower self). If you read most of the books they all say that Phil never regained consciousness after the stroke. I've spoken with Tessa about this, and Tessa has told me that he was definitely conscious towards the end. He looked at her for a while and he recognised her. So therefore his Daemon would have been able to recall that event and see it and describe it from his own future.

**Nick:** In relation to that, and with regard to **VALIS**. There are a lot of Phil Dick fans out there for whom **VALIS** is his highest peak, for all kinds of reasons. I love it too, but I also love many of his other novels and some of his really early stuff - especially the short stories. However many **VALIS** lovers will maintain that Phil had this breakthrough experience from an intelligence which was completely outside of him, from something higher - some would even use the 'God' word - or even some kind of Alien intelligence, an entity beyond the realm of that known on earth. What would you say to them in terms of your hypothesis regarding the Daemon and your idea that the intelligence was not 'other' but much more *local* to Phil himself?

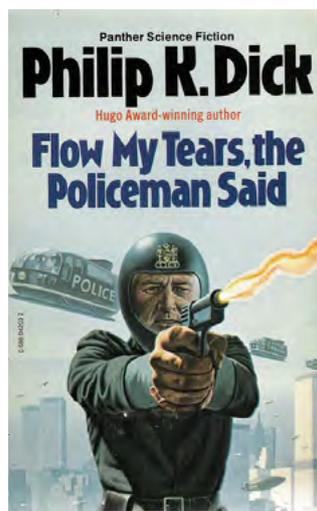
**Anthony:** Well I would argue that if you read through various books on Phil, like **Divine Invasions by Lawrence Sutin** and you go back to Phil's history, you have certain themes; for instance, he is preoccupied with twins, his dead twin sister (and he clearly felt that she manifested through his life). There's also these curious incidents he describes whereby he, in one interview, said he woke up in the middle of the night in the early 1950's and felt he was standing at the end of a bed, looking at a child in the bed. When he got up the next day he realised that he'd had dreams when he was young seeing an older man looking at him from the end of his bed. So clearly here we have time slips and time swaps. Now my Daemon-Eidolon hypothesis suggests that we all

have a higher self, which is not unusual - the higher-self concept has been around for millennia - but what I argue is that the higher self is the part of us that remembers that we have lived this life before (and therefore knows your life plan - in fact has probably lived this life many, many times). Phil's Daemon, his higher self, when he had his theophany, he named **VALIS**; but effectively people who have encounters with their own higher self (for example during near death experiences) will always encounter a manifestation that they feel at ease with - it could be a religious figure like Jesus, a pet dog that they had when they were a child, indeed Elvis Presley is quite popular (for people who like Elvis)! So clearly whatever this entity is during the near death experience it is not what it pretends to be. Now Phil's **VALIS** or Zebra or whatever we want to call it, I think is his higher self disguising itself as it would to a science fiction writer - so what would a science fiction writer want it to be? Something sending signals from a geo-stationary satel-



lite.  
**Nick:** Information.

**Anthony:** An information thing. But what does this thing do? It makes him cut his nasal hair to look better. It sorts out his accounts for him. This is a very, very prosaic thing for an alien entity to be doing but it's not a prosaic thing if it's his own higher self saying 'for God's sake Phil, pull yourself together, mate.' And it sacked his agent and made him more sartorial. So it's something that has a vested interest in Phil, and the thing that would have vested interested in you is your own higher self. If you read my first book 'Is There Life After Death: The Extraordinary Science of What Happens When We Die' and then you read **VALIS** it is uncanny. In **VALIS** you have Phil playing linguistic games with two characters - Philip K. Dick the writer and you have this other character Horselover Fat (Philippus which is Greek, for horse lover, and Fat which is the German translation of the word Dick). So he's playing games with his own alter-ego. Then you have all the Gnostic symbolism of Sophia. He's saying look at the Gnostic



texts and what they tell us—which is that we have a higher self. And he was interested in split brain operations and Michael Gazzaniga and Roger Sperry.

**Nick:** Around the time of *A Scanner Darkly*-

**Anthony:** Yes, and in his novels you have these ‘predictions’ where he writes characters and incidents which he encounters years later in real life. There was one with a petrol station...

**Nick:** Yes it was from *Flow My Tears the Policeman Said*. He wrote about a character called Felix Buckman who meets a black stranger at an all night petrol station – the details of which seemed to echo a scene from the book of Acts (which Phil said he hadn’t read then). The black guy in Acts is named Philip! And also, the high Roman official who interrogates St. Paul in Acts was named Felix – which for Phil, was another connection. In fact both Felix’s were the same rank – high ranking officials – the final authority.

**Anthony:** Yes, and there was some kind of double cross involving a policeman which links with *A Scanner Darkly*. So again if you take my hypothesis that he was living his life again, he was using future memories to write his novels before he encountered them.

**Nick:** Which ties in nicely with the quote from the Claudia Krenz letter you mentioned earlier about remembering the future. Something else I wanted to ask you about was the fact that the fields you plow are similar to those Phil worked in, and because you now have a string of books to your name... I wondered if you can see a direction or path emerging in your work?

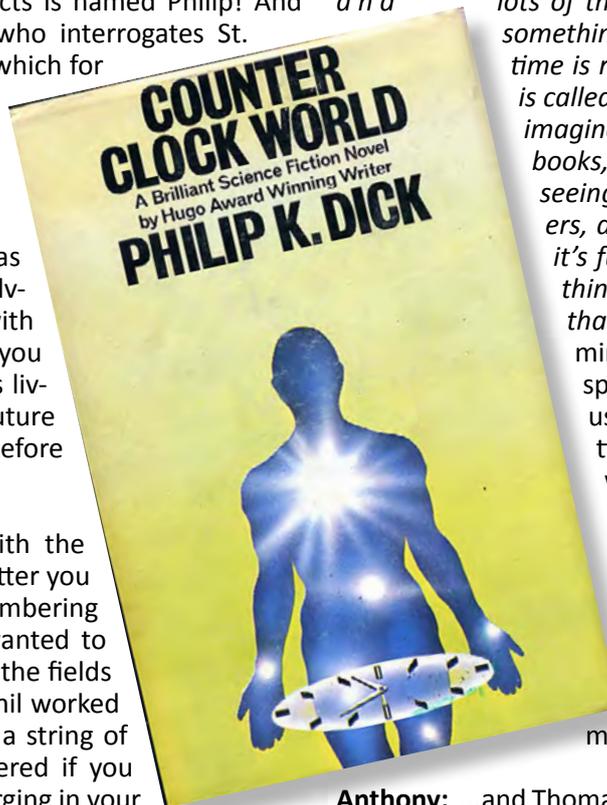
**Anthony:** It is bizarre. There’s a story that I tell in my lectures sometimes. I did a talk at Bolton library to about sixty people and at the end of my talk I had a sequence about Phil and I had Phil’s novels and was recommending people read them. As I did this a group of people started going crazy and I thought what’s going on? When I finished

they said ‘I just can’t believe what happened’ I said ‘what?’ and this guy, Mike, who turned out to be a Philip K. Dick fanatic, takes a book out of his bag and he says

**“He comes up to me and says - Did you know Philip K. Dick wrote about you?”**

‘Look at that’ and it was the book **VALIS**, which I had on one of my presentation slides. And he said ‘What is weird is I put an order in for this book, three days ago I got a call to tell me it is in. When I called in, I saw your poster and phoned up all my friends to say we’ve got to get to this talk, he could be quite interesting.’ So they come and see me talk and then something really peculiar happens. He comes up to me and says ‘Did you know

Philip K. Dick wrote about you?’ and I said ‘No, how?’ and he said ‘Have you read **Counter Clock World**’ because there’s a character in that book who comes up with lots and



lots of theories about life after death’ and something called the Hobart Phase where time is reversing. And this guy in the book is called Anarch Peak!’ Then he said, ‘Now imagine that Phil was precognizing your books, and say he in a hypnogogic future seeing state saw one of your book covers, and he can’t quite catch it because it’s fuzzy, but he sees A—Peake and he thinks I can make a character out of that.’ Now I don’t believe that for one minute but it still puts shivers up my spine as I think ‘what is the link?’ I used to be heavily into science fiction and there were lots and lots of writers I used to like-

**Nick:** Which ones?

**Anthony:** Clifford D. Simak, Robert Sheckley...

**Nick:** Both huge favourites of mine too!

**Anthony:** ...and Thomas M. Disch. These were all the guys who I liked when I started reading science fiction...Roger Zelazny as well - many were friends of Phil too. But there was something about Phil’s stories when I started to read them; I thought this is just playing around *with everything* and it really hit me that he was writing philosophy as fiction. He’s a speculative fiction writer, he’s not a Science fiction writer-

**Nick:** He's not about space hardware, the antigrav lift or the bug eyed monster

**Anthony:** No. Or **The Zap Gun**, oh sorry (*laughter*). No, in general terms he isn't. Even his stories about aliens... the aliens are normally robotic creatures that don't actually know whether they are human or not. He goes into the really profound 'What is it to be human?' And 'What is it about memory?' 'What is it about consciousness?' Tessa has said to me Phil would have loved your work.

**Nick:** Well, you share similar preoccupations and in different ways you plow similar fields. I'm sure you would have had an interesting discussion, particularly around the insecurity of reality and the fragility of perception and even memory.

**Anthony:** The bathroom switch.

**Nick:** Absolutely! He went for the cord but there never was one!

**Anthony:** "In Search of the Lost Chord," The Moody Blues! (*Laughter*)

**Nick:** I know that you are writing a book about the pineal gland at the moment - 'The Gateway to Infinity.' I wonder if you can build a bridge for us between what we have been discussing so far and the function of the pineal gland?

**Anthony:** The next book is going to be so incredible, but the problem is I've got so much material now for this book. Yesterday I wrote a whole section on Kundalini experience, linking it to the pineal gland (actually going right back to the texts of the Vedas about what the Kundalini

was and how it works). But basically what I am suggesting is (and I know other people have touched upon this, but they are not going into it in the kind of depth I'm going into it) - that the pineal gland is a wormhole. The pineal gland opens up communication with alternate realities - in fact

*the real realities.* This is Maya as the hindus would say. This is a brain-generated illusion we live within but there is a reality behind the reality and there are many, many realities. I'm arguing that the pineal gland under certain circumstances can generate endogenously (that is internally) a substance called Dimethyltryptamine (DMT). I have found that there are things called Trace Amine Associated Receptors (TAARS) in the synapses of the brain - and there is only one thing these receptors were de-

signed for and that is DMT. We know that DMT is found in urine, the blood and traces have been found in the brain - so we know it exists in the human body. The fascinating thing is that DMT is the most powerful hallucinogenic drug known, it is powerful beyond words and a guy called Rick Strassman---

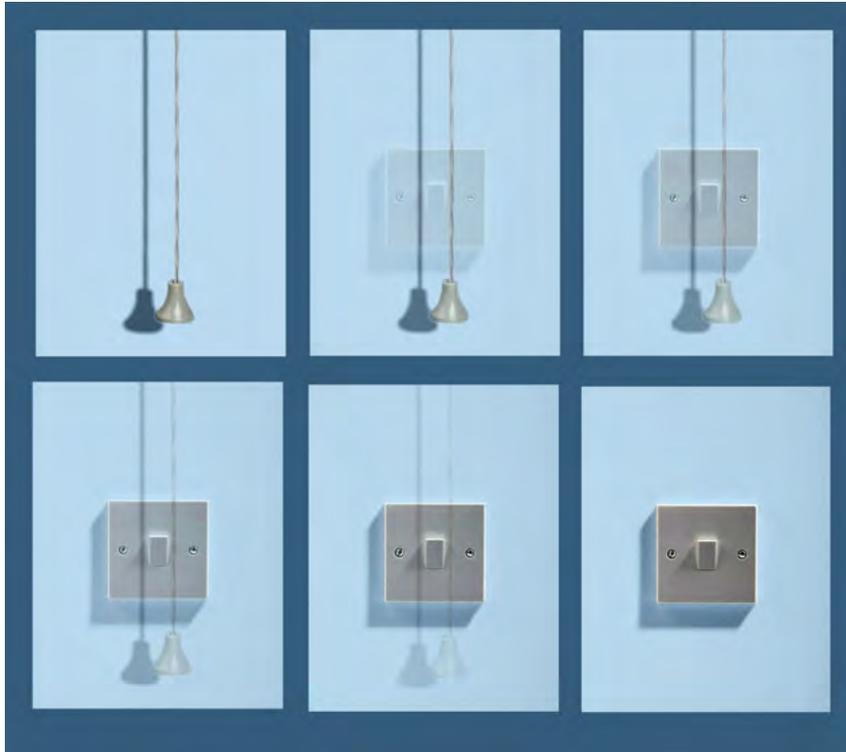
*(a loud plane flies low overhead and our conversation becomes impossible)*

**Nick:** Shall we just let the Archons go past...

**Anthony:** They get everywhere don't they? 'Air-Archon.' (*Laughter*). Dr. Rick Strassman was given a licence by the American Government to do research into people having dimethyltryptamine experiences - and the experiences these people have are literally mind-

blowing. They go to alternate places, and some of them shared their visions of these places.

**Nick:** And they speak of other entities as well.



## "The pineal gland is a wormhole"

**Anthony:** Oh very much so. Terence McKenna calls them the *'machine-elves.'* It's like having an alien abduction. These things do experiments with you, they disembodify you, and they play around with you. But this imagery of being dismembered by other beings goes right back to Neolithic cave paintings. If you read Graham Hancock's latest books, particularly *'Supernatural,'* he discusses these cave paintings and he believes these people were taking DMT or magic mushrooms – and the symbolism in the cave paintings is *exactly the same symbolism* that people find in DMT.

I believe that DMT is generated in the brain. The reason I



believe this is that apparently at the 49th day of gestation for the embryo in the womb, the pineal gland is at the back of the throat. It only starts moving up at the 49th day to its position in the brain. The Buddhists believe that it is the 49th day

when the soul enters the body. As it moves up, it leaves a slight duct at the back of the throat. When people have very deep meditative experiences and when they go into deep trance states, there is something they call *'nectar of sublime awareness'* It's an acidic taste people feel at the back of their throat. And when I've mentioned this in interviews, I have had an avalanche of emails *'I heard your interview – I've had that happen to me.'* I think the pineal gland drips DMT down the back of the throat. The reason that I'm intrigued by the taste is that DMT is the major constituent of a substance called *'Ayahuasca'* which is taken by the shamans and people in Latin America-

**Nick:** And Stephen Bowman!

**Anthony:** (Laughs) and Stephen Bowman, a friend of ours.

**Nick:** Our Psychonaut.

**Anthony:** (laughing) Our Psychonaut. Now Ayahuasca is fascinating because it is comprised of two different plants *Banisteriopsis caapi* ('the Ayahuasca Vine') and *Psychotria viridis* ('Chacruna' - a shrub). There are literally at least 80,000 different plants in Amazonia. The tribes have found the

two plants which go together; if you just drink a brew containing *Psychotria Viridis* when it enters the gut the effects of the DMT are negated by enzymes in the stomach.

However by adding *Banisteriopsis Caapi* a substance is introduced into the brew which stops the enzymes doing their job - which means that the DMT is free to enter the bloodstream and make its way to the brain.. When the tribes were asked how they found this combination they said *'The plants told us.'* The plants themselves! Now this intrigues me – why should plants have things in them which affect the human brain. We have drugs – but why should this be? Why does it work? Why are these things here? I just think there's a huge link between the pineal gland – and it's been known for centuries.



**Nick:** So when does your book on the pineal gland come out?

**Anthony:** I need to have it finished and at the publishers by 25th November to be published around June 2013. I feel like it's part of a trilogy with my **Out of Body Experience** book and **Labyrinth of Time**.

**“They said -  
the plants told us  
- the plants  
themselves!”**

**Nick:** If this one concludes a trilogy, what do you think you are going to write about next.

**Anthony:** That's an interesting one. A friend of mine, Dr. Alan Roberts-

**Nick:** The Shakespeare scholar?

**Anthony:** Yes. Alan wants to write a novel with me – he says that we can write my ideas as a fiction story, a mystery story; and we could go anywhere with it. The major problem with my writing is I have to

stay within science, but with a novel I wouldn't need to.

**Anthony:** *Time Out of Joint*, yes! Absolutely wonderful!

**Nick:** Jeanette Winterson once said that "Fiction is the best way of discussing reality" and I think there's a lot in that because there are sets of relationships in fiction that you don't get from linear or logical science. Relationships like those in the work of Philip K. Dick – all the philosophical ideas that he originated and explored.

**Nick:** 'Where will the little green man be next?' He has to try to find it. And he's really plotting where the bombs are likely to fall from the enemy. It's an analogue which he is not privy to.

**Anthony:** But I'm not sure where I'm going to go next – I'd like to do more work around The Daemon. Who knows.

**Nick:** I'm sure it'll be fun whatever you choose. Tony Peake, Thank you.

**Anthony:** Thank you.  
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*Anthony Peake's books investigate science as it emerges and science on the margins. He is not afraid to explore territories whose features are only just appearing. I think of him as the Colin Wilson of our age.*



Archon Lear jet by Nick Buchanan 2012

On the surface they might appear as Science Fiction, stories about ordinary people getting on with their daily lives but suddenly they - *and we the reader* - bump into these huge issues.

His web address is:

[www.anthonypeake.com](http://www.anthonypeake.com)

**Anthony:** I'm visualising...I can't remember the name of the story, the guy that does the newspaper puzzle-

His forum is:

[www.cheatingtheferryman.com](http://www.cheatingtheferryman.com)  
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**Nick:** Oh yes, it's Ragle Gumm, he's in **Time out of Joint**



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## PHILIP K. DICK'S ADVENTURES WITH LSD

by Patrick Clark

© July 2012

Charles Platt once remarked that, "After all, science fiction didn't begin to get really popular till heavy drug use began in the 1960s." It's worth considering. While today Philip K. Dick is regarded as a major literary figure and is recognized by the public at large, this was not always so. In the Nineteen Sixties and Seventies he was at best an idiosyncratic writer in the minor, and somewhat dubious, genre of science fiction. SF fans knew him as the author of some very strange novels and short stories involving down-on-their-luck protagonists, telepathic slime molds, ontologically-challenged androids, hectoring robots, hostile wives, and drugs. Lost and lots of bizarre drugs. It would be fair to say that many fans probably categorized Phil as a doper.

Actually Phil was a doper. He had been taking amphetamines for many years. He later explained, "They were prescribed for me due to depression. I have used amphetamines for energy in order to write, since I was paid very little for each novel and story, and so had to write a lot." Insofar as it was prescribed by his doctor, the speed he took was quite legal. Phil also smoked pot and took mescaline and these were quite illegal. Probably the most notorious drug in Phil's medicine cabinet, the one that really kicked his doper reputation into high gear, was lysergic acid diethylamide – LSD.

Here was a drug with enormous, one might even say 'phildickian' potential. If in the 21st Century Phil's amphetamine use scarcely raises an eyebrow, his acid experiences still catch public attention. Yahoo Answers asked recently, "Visionary or was his brain re-fried via LSD .....Philip K Dick?" Roberto Bolaño describes Phil as "a kind of Kafka steeped in LSD and rage." A comment on a movie review in The Guardian suggested, "Let's all just take enough speed & LSD to live in a PK Dick world." For every scholar's interest in Phil and his writings there is probably someone drawn to his psychedelic reputation. A 1996 posting to the old draco pkd-listserve sums it up nicely:

*I truly believe the only way to really understand*

*Phillip's work is through LSD. No, you don't have to be tripping while reading (that is impossible, the words move way too fast for you to catch them), you just have to of had a true LSD experience...though Phil denied it, I say he used LSD a lot more than he let on. Phil said he abhorred LSD, and I agree. He hated it, feared it and loved it. He transferred his experiences into his books and if you're in the know, as you are reading those experiences surround and envelope you as if they were your own. It is impossible to explain. If you already know what I mean, then you know that there is \*nothing\* like a Phillip K. Dick novel (hmmm, now where I have I heard that before?). They are simply dripping with lysergic acid.*

This reputation was to cause Phil no end of trouble in his career but it has to be said that it was no accident. Phil's "acidhead" label was very much his own fault. He started it.

Phil apparently took LSD for the first time in 1964. In a letter to fellow science fiction

author James Blish dated May 22 of that year he says:

*I've been on drugs (never mind what), and I experienced what they like to call an "expansion of consciousness." And I am now unfit for the real (you know, koinos kosmos) world. I never got back. I saw God & the Antagonist (related, as Bergman knew, to Death), even the hook of God.*

In a November 17, 1965 letter to his friend Jack Newkom he describes what was apparently a second trip:

*He left the other cap of acid for Nancy and me, and that night we divided it, each of us taking half a standard dose (I suppose about 75 mg). I had a theory that if you took such a small amount you might not go so deep into it, would retain more of a sense of reality and meantime enjoy colors and sounds, etc. I was right; at least for myself ... I saw all manner of joyous coloration, especially pinks and reds, very luminous and exciting, and I had several great insights into myself (e.g. that I had had two attacks of schizophrenia, one when I was six, the other when I was eighteen, and that my basic fear was a return of this). Nancy, it would seem, experienced nothing at all except as sense of well-being -- which I also had, before the color sensation began. I wonder why it didn't affect her more; I wonder, then, what a full dose would have*



done. Frankly, I'd like to get hold of some more; it was an altogether pleasant trip, one which I was sorry to see slide into the oblivion of the past.

These were private communications to friends and colleagues. In 1966 Phil went public. His article, "Will the Atomic Bomb Ever Be Perfected, and if So, What becomes of Robert Heinlein?" appearing in Terry Carr's fanzine *Lighthouse* begins, "Recently I took another dose of LSD-25" and goes on to describe his experience in detail.

*Under LSD I saw radiant colors, especially the pinks and reds; they shone like God Himself. Is that what God is? Color? But at least this time I didn't have to die, go to hell, be tormented, and then raised up by means of Christ's death on the cross into eternal salvation. As I said to J.G. Newkom when I was free of the drug, "I don't mind going through the Day of Judgment again, after I die, but I just hope it won't last so long." Under LSD you can spend 1.96 eternities, if not 2.08.*

With this admission the cat was definitely out of the bag. It's interesting that through the mid Sixties many of Phil's novels are saturated with drugs, imaginary and real. From **The Games Players of Titan** and **Now Wait for Last Year** through **A Maze of Death** and **Our Friends from Frolix 8** and most notably **The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldrich** drug use appears sometimes as a minor aside, sometimes as a major theme. In particular chapters three and four of **Deus Irae** are a kind of extended dialog on the use and usefulness of hallucinogenic drugs.

But what really crowned Phil, so to speak, as SF's "acid king" was "**Faith of Our Fathers**" published in Harlan Ellison's groundbreaking 1967 anthology *Dangerous Visions*.

Harlan Ellison was never one to avoid controversy. He wanted his anthology to break down barriers, expand horizons, shake up the field and generally drag science fiction into the modern world. "**Faith of Our Fathers**" certainly did all of these tasks. For Phil's story Ellison upped the ante. In his introduction he described Phil thus:

*His experiments with LSD and other hallucinogens, plus stimulants of the amphetamine class, have borne such fruit as the story you are about to read, in every way a "dangerous" vision... I asked for Phil Dick and got him. A story to be written about, and under the influence of (if possible), LSD. What follows, like his excellent offbeat novel *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, is the result of such a hallucinogenic journey.*

In his original afterword to the tale, Phil made no effort to deny Ellison's assertion that "Faith" had been written on drugs and so lending it credence. Instead he

rhapsodizes on the new possibilities that drugs can provide:

One theme in the story, however, seems compelling to me, in view of recent experiments with hallucinogenic drugs: the theological experience, which so many who have taken LSD have reported. This appears to me to be a true new frontier; to a certain extent the religious experience can now be scientifically studied...and, what is more, may be viewed as part hallucination but containing other, real components. God, as a topic in science fiction, when it appears at all, used to be treated polemically, as in "Out of the Silent Planet." But I prefer to treat it as intellectually exciting. What if, through psychedelic drugs, the religious experience becomes commonplace in the life of intellectuals? The old atheism, which seemed to many of us – including me – valid in terms of our experiences, or rather lack of our experiences, would have to step momentarily aside. Science fiction, always probing what is about to be thought, become, must eventually tackle without preconceptions a future neo-mystical society in which theology constitutes a major force as in the medieval period. This is not necessarily a backward step, because now these beliefs can be tested – forced to put up or shut up.

At this point, in 1967, Phil had essentially accepted the role of lysergic explorer even though, it turns out he had stopped using LSD years ago.

There is some dispute as to how many times Phil actually used acid. By his own account it was very few. In 1974 when *Vertex* magazine asked him how many times he had taken acid he replied "Not that much. I wasn't getting up in the morning and dropping acid." In 1979 he told Charles Platt:

*I used to talk like I was really into acid. But the fact of the matter is that I took it two times, and the second time, it was so weak a dose, it may not even have been acid. The first time, though, it was Sandoz acid, a giant capsule I got from the University of California, a friend and I split it, it must have been a whole milligram of it, we bought it for*

*five dollars...*

Twice? Is this true? We simply do not know. Such evidence as we have does suggest that Phil took LSD only a few times; perhaps only twice. What is evident is that however many experiences he had they exerted a profound effect upon his outlook.

Two things ought to be further noted. Phil's consumption of LSD in the mid 1960s was quite legal. Possession of LSD was not outlawed in the United States until October 24, 1968. Further, Phil did not drop acid for recreation. For him LSD was a means of exploration.

## 'Harlan Ellison was never one to avoid controversy.'

He meant what he said in his afterword. For instance he wrote to Rich Brown on July 18th 1967:

*I suggest that everyone in the group read the Tibetan book of the dead compiled and edited by W.Y. Evans-Wentz, Oxford University Press, 1960, New York. Reason: the LSD experience resembles the Bradol Thodol existence (i.e. the period immediately following one's physical death). Same brilliant colored lights, same time-sense, etc. Question, then: is the LSD experience a sort of premature post mortem journey? And, if so, does this tend to indicate that reincarnation is a fact, that we've lived lives previous to this, and, after this, we will pass on to other lives? And can we verify this -- and experience this -- via LSD? So far I haven't come across any account of the LSD experience in which this aspect is considered. To see a relationship between the LSD experience and former and later lives.*

As late as 1978 he told Joe Vitale in an interview, "Look, I'll be honest with you. There was a time in my life when I thought drugs could be useful, that maybe if you took enough psychedelics you could see beyond the illusion of the world to the nature of ultimate reality." And he explained to Charles Platt, "...I regarded drugs as dangerous and potentially lethal, but I had a cat's curiosity. It was my interest in the human mind that made me curious about psychotropic drugs."

Phil continued to think about his experiences with LSD and other drugs, dropping references into his books culminating in the famous chapter eleven of **Maze of Death** where, he wrote, "Maggie Walsh's experiences after death are based on an L.S.D. experience of my own. In exact detail." So even as late as 1970 Phil was willing to own up to his use of hallucinogens. I suppose the whole issue can be said to rather ridiculously culminate in the 1971 when a German edition of **The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldrich** was re-titled LSD Astronauten.

But even as **Maze of Death** was hitting the bookstores Phil was having second thoughts. By 1970-71 Phil began to reconsider the whole matter. His life had hit a nadir in August of 1970 when his wife Nancy left him and his house became as sort of crash pad for all sorts of marginal and drug-damaged transients. The police were snooping around and maybe the FBI, too. In November

1971 the mysterious break-in transpired. And let's face it: in 1970-71 the whole USA was fucked up as well. Phil fled to Canada. After a botched suicide attempt, he checked into the X-Kalay rehab center in Vancouver where he was able to see up front and personal severe drug casualties. He left Canada in 1972 for Fullerton, California where he was at loose ends for some time. It would be two years before another book was published (**Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said** 1974). Phil had plenty of time to think about things as he put his life back together.

One of the first things he did was alter the afterword to "**Faith of Our Fathers.**" On November 13, 1974 he wrote the following to Olga Vezeris at Signet Books:

*"...In any case I wish you to add the following addition to my "Afterword" which appears on galley page 203 (to the story "Faith of Our Fathers"):*

*In his introduction to "Faith of Our Fathers" Harlan gives the misleading impression that my story was written under the influence of LSD. This is not so. About all a person can write while on LSD, I have found, is his own short and involuntary obituary. What did influence this*

*story was my desire to produce the most frightening vision I could imagine. Sometimes I think I did too well. I'm just glad this vision isn't true."*

And he began backing off from his earlier embrace of LSD telling Vertex that;

*All I ever found out about acid was that I was where I wanted to get out of fast. It didn't seem more real than anything else; it just seemed more awful...All I ever found out about acid was that I was where I wanted to get out of fast. It didn't seem more real than anything else; it just seemed more awful.*

A letter to Dwayne Boggs, dated September 9, 1976, drove the point further: "drug use is a major mistake and I regret ever having become involved in it. I have seen too many people die or become permanently psychotic because of drugs." He told Joe Vitale;

*There's nothing good about drugs. Drugs kill you and they break down your head. They eat your head. In*



Graphic by Nick Buchanan (based around the famous Gary Panter Photo)

*“White Rabbit,” Grace Slick says, “feed your head.” But I say, “What are you really feeding it?” You’re feeding it itself. Drugs cause the mind to feed on itself. I used to think that drugs put you in touch with something. Now I know that the only thing they put you in touch with is the rubber room of a psychiatric hospital.*

Philip K. Dick, “SF’s Acid King,” had abdicated.

Phil’s classic “LSD novel,” of course, is **The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldrich**. Given the timeframe, some have wondered if this particular work was influenced by Phil’s first trip. There is some ambiguity in the various statements Phil made over the years. The manuscript of *Three Stigmata* arrived at the Scott Meredith Literary Agency on March 18, 1964. Since Phil had a tendency in those days to crank out a novel in a very short time he probably composed the work in February or early March. On May 22 he wrote to James Blish that he had *“been on drugs (never mind what), and I experienced what they like to call an ‘expansion of consciousness.’”* He had therefore dropped his first tab of acid prior to that date but was this before or after writing *Three Stigmata*? We don’t know. There are no earlier letters to clear up the mystery. Phil did remark in his **“Will the Atomic Bomb Ever Be Perfected?”** essay that;

***‘I saw Him as a vast, awful, evil, brooding entity hanging over the landscape, with slots – empty slots – for eyes.’***

*God per se, as a character, ruins a good SF story; and this is as true of my own stuff as anyone else’s. Therefore I deplore my Palmer Eldrich book in that regard. But people who are a bit mystically inclined like it. I don’t. I wish I had never written it; there are too many horrid forces loose in it. When I wrote it I had been taking certain chemicals and I could see the awful landscape that I depicted. But not now. Thank God. [underlining added]*

This does suggest that the trip came first, or at least in the course of writing the novel. There is more ambiguity on the issue when Phil told Rich Brown, on August 21, 1967,

*There have been two times when under the influence of such drugs I have had a clear picture of God, or whatever you want to call IT or Him. In the first experience I saw Him as a vast, awful, evil, brooding entity hanging over the landscape, with slots – empty slots – for eyes. (I subsequently wrote it all up in my book **THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRICH**) which is a “trip” book. For*

*days He hung there above the landscape watching me with those empty-slot eyes. Finally He (or It) went away, for which I am most glad. The second time (under LSD) I perceived Him as a pulsing, furious, throbbing mass of vengeance – seeking authority, demanding an audit (like a sort of metaphysical IRS agent).*

What does Phil mean here? If there had been *“two times when under the influence of such drugs I have had a clear picture of God”* and the *“second time (under LSD)”* then what drug was Phil on the first time?

In any event, Phil later changed his account so that in the 1974 Vertex interview he could firmly state,

*“Take my novel **The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldrich**, which deals with a tremendous bad acid trip, so to speak. I wrote that before I had ever seen LSD. I wrote that from just reading a description of the discovery of it and the kind of effect it had.”* Subsequent interview reiterated this version.

It perhaps doesn’t matter. Certainly Phil did not need drugs of any sort to create the hallucinogenic worlds he did. Consider such early works as **Eye**

**in the Sky** and **Time Out of Joint**: classic alternate reality tales. Phil said as much when, remarking to Charles Platt on the “Soft Drink Stand” episode in **Time Out of Joint**, he rightly pointed out *“Far-fucking out, spacey, that’s an ‘acid experience.’ If I didn’t know better I’d say that this author has turned on many times, and his universe was coming unglued -- he’s obviously living in a false universe.”* Written in 1958, the “Soft Drink Stand” was simply Phil at his imaginative best. Bits of his LSD experiences undoubtedly do appear in his works, most notably **Deus Irae** and **Maze of Death** and **Faith of Our Fathers** but only to give a particular shape to an already deeply imagined narrative. The “trippy parts” were grist for the millstone, not the millstone itself.

There is one more peculiar issue concerning PKD and LSD. Certainly Phil did repudiate his early enthusiastic support for hallucinogenic drugs. There is no reason to doubt his later view that such drugs were dangerous and ought to be avoided at all costs. And yet he could not quite let go of the idea that, properly used, such drugs might be useful in the exploration of religious/reality questions. He makes several references in the Exegesis that perhaps as a result of his LSD adventures he was able to better handle the revelation of 2-3-74. In December

1979 he wrote *"I'll bet I was able to write UBIK because of partially having had a time-into-space-conversion experience prior to writing it (maybe due to psychedelics)." Also "Put another way, the sum total of my experiences (2-3-74) are based on her—the AI voice—acting as my mystagog; what I have experienced is initiation into the greater Eleusian mysteries, and these have to do with Dionysus, and, as Hofmann says, seem to involve an LSD or LSD-like paranormal experience."* And finally,

*However, when my total collapse occurred (i.e., when the metabolic toxin was released for the purpose of destroying the overvalent delusional complex), it worked, and I recovered, free of that complex; the "misplaced" quality of the biological attempt at adaptation to reality did not set in. One reason for this was (perhaps due to experience with psychedelics in the past) that instead of experiencing the episode as weird or "Fremd" or frightening, as a collapse of my world, I experienced this collapse (of my maladaptive idios kosmos) as good, and the vast divine kosmos rushing in as lovely, awe-inspiring, comforting and transforming. In brief, I had the courage to pass through it, and learn (boy, how I learned!)*

In each instance he sees a potential benefit in his acid trips though at great cost, too.

The most curious example of Phil not quite letting go of his lysergic experiences appears at the very end of his life in his long interview with Gwen Lee in January 1982. At one point Phil relates,

*I remember one time, I – the first time I took LSD, uh, I had a friend play only music that I was very familiar with [...] – I had him play, I tried to think of music that was very innocuous. I mean, I didn't want no sudden surprises. You know, no surprising stuff. I didn't want any surprises. I didn't want any loud noises, I didn't want anything to scare me while I was on LSD, so had him play Beethoven quartets. So he just played Beethoven quartets. Well I was sittin' there and all of a sudden the music got real strange, and it got even stranger and it started to slow down, and the notes began to separate and the music stopped and just continued the last notes and played forever and finally turned into a spiny cactus that I could see*

*and there's a name for that and it begins with "s" and I can't say it. I looked it up, it's a word called like "syntheses" or something -- you can look it up -- it's where you convert one sense to another, a sound into, a sound into video and video into sound, or something like that. Because of, I got that. So I saw the Beethoven quartet as a cactus. And with each, with each progression into the next measure, the cactus would grow more complex, so it was accretional. It didn't, it wasn't, it wasn't, uh, successive any longer, it was accretional. And it grew larger and larger and more complex.*

Needless to say this is the first time that Phil ever



described his first experience with LSD in this way. No awful, red throbbing. No Judgment Day. No frozen wasteland. Instead, music – and cactus. It seems most likely that Phil simply made this up on the spot as he tried to describe to Lee the ideas behind the new novel he was planning. It is one of the alternate versions of the plot for **The Owl in Daylight**. What I find interesting however, is that after all these years he brings LSD into this scenario as if in some way legitimated his vision. Despite the dangers, despite the awful damage he had witnessed, despite doing his reputa-

tion no good, despite his preaching on the evil of drugs Phil, in some strange way, still wanted to give acid its due as a device for exploring reality. A dangerous tool was still a tool. He wanted, above all, for mankind see true reality when "anamnesis sets in" and we remember. *"And when it sets in,"* he told Science Fiction Review, *"as it begins to occur, it will be the great turning of the cosmic wheel for mankind, and the universe."*

*I'm very optimistic about it. I think it's gonna be a really exciting thing. And although I put down drugs, and I certainly don't recommend that anybody take them, I think that some of the people who took LSD experienced a little of this. And I think that there was a certain validity in what, like, Huxley said about the doorways of perception. And Castenada, too, and things like that -- people who were working with some of the mescaline-type drugs -- that there is another reality very close, that's impinging on our reality, and will probably very soon break through to our reality. Either we will break through to it, or it will*

Fractal Phil Graphic by Nick Buchanan (based on a Photo by Nicole Panter)

*break through to us. But the two will impinge on the other, and we will suddenly discover we are in a world which has more dimensions to it than we had thought.*

#### Afterword

Given the troubles that Phil encountered as a result of his afterword to **"Faith of Our Fathers,"** I ought to hesitate before creating one myself. But I have some further thoughts about PKD and LSD that did not fit comfortably in the essay.

The whole issue of Phil's drug use needs a detailed investigation. The essay is barely a beginning, no more than a collection of quotations and some speculation. More needs to be done and in a broader context. Phil used LSD on only a few occasions; by his own admission he took speed for eighteen years. He took street drugs. He was on a whole galaxy of prescription pills most of his life. His feelings about acid are problematic; his opinion of mescaline is highly positive. I take no position that any of this was good or bad, harmful or beneficial, only that it is a fact. The questions then arise, "What effect did all these pharmaceutical have on Phil as a writer?" "What about his religious experiences – did drugs play a part?"

All that the essay does is take a very preliminary look at one, albeit notorious, substance. And that look is essentially chronological: what Phil said and when. I do not, for example, try to analyze the various depictions of Phil's trips though clearly that needs to be done. We have Phil's assurance that chapter eleven of *Maze of Death* is, as he says, a true depiction of his LSD experience – "In exact detail." But did other depictions work their way into his fiction?

The monstrous, morphing shape of the great Benefactor, which Chien sees on his television in **"Faith of Our Fathers,"** has all the earmarks of a classic bad trip but it could easily have come directly from Phil's imagination without lysergic augmentation. Phil's letter to James Blish mentions that he saw "the hook of God" as also a part of his LSD trip. Maggie Walsh does not experience the hook but Peter Sands does in *Deus Irae*. Sands has consumed one of his pharmaceutical concoctions and suddenly experiences "the deep piercing of his body by a sharp-pointed metal gaff" which he later identifies as *der Todesstachel*, the "sting of death."

The gaff – the metal barbed hook itself – came at the bottom end of a long pole, a spear, which ascended from Earth to heaven, and he had, in that awful instant as he rolled doubled-up in agony, glimpsed the Persons

at the top end of the spear. Three figures with warm but impassive eyes. They had not twisted the gaff within him; They had simply held it there until, in his pain, he had begun by slow and gradual degrees to become awake.

Surely that gaff is the "hook of God" but then where is the giant crossbow on which Christ is placed like an arrow then shot up through the heavens?

Phil's 1982 description of his first trip to Gwen Lee, though I believe is just Phil riffing on a concept here, does have some documentation after all. In "Will the Atomic Bomb Ever Be Perfected" he writes, "Under LSD I have [sic] a vision of a seventh or eighth period of Beethoven: string quartets with chorus and four soloists." No cactus here but certainly Beethoven appears.

The question of what exactly Phil saw in the sky on his way to his little shack in early 1964 will probably always remain a mystery. Phil described it a number of times. One of the most concise versions reads, "What I saw was some form of evil deity...not living but functioning; not looking so much as scanning, like a machine or monitor. It had slotted eyes and always hung over one particular spot." Did Phil see it before or after his first acid trip? We don't know. Phil himself did not seem to know for sure. The larger problem is that Phil had written about this evil deity, in another guise, in late 1963 certainly before he tripped and just as certainly before he had his vision. In chapter 14 of *Now Wait for Last Year* Eric Sweetscent sees this:

Overhead a vast, dark, ugly mass hung in the sky, like something that had descended into this world from a lightless land of iron and surprise and frightened, purposeful silence. It was huge enough, he thought, to feed forever; even from the spot where he stood, at the very least a mile from it, he could see that it consisted of a limitless, appetitive self which would begin any time now to gulp down everything in sight. It made no sound. Its engines were off. This ship had come a long way, from the lines deep in intersystem space. It was a seasoned, informed, world-weary apparition, brought by strange needs from its normal place of residence.

This is clearly an early manifestation of that "evil deity." Call it Palmer Eldritch, call it Ultimate Benefactor or *Deus Irae* or *Lilistar* interstellar battleship – whatever it finally is it haunted Phil. Perhaps it simply sprang from Phil's fecund imagination; perhaps from some pharmaceutical intervention; perhaps, just possibly, it was a manifestation from the spiritual realm. We, his readers, can only wonder.

***"the deep piercing of his body by a sharp-pointed metal gaff"***

## AN INTERVIEW WITH MALCOLM EDWARDS

by Frank C. Bertrand

© April 2001

[Note: This interview was done by email in early 2001. Malcolm Edwards (born 1949) is a British book editor and critic in the science fiction field, who received his degree from Cambridge University. He has edited a number of publications, including: *Vector*, the critical journal of the British Science Fiction Association (from 1972 to 1974), and the sf anthology *Constellations* (Gollancz, 1980). In addition to Philip K. Dick, he has worked with J.G. Ballard, Terry Pratchett and William Gibson. My sincere thanks to him for taking the time to answer my questions.]

**FCB:** When and how did you first become aware of Philip K. Dick? Did you discover him on your own, or did someone suggest you read him? What was the initial PKD story or novel you read?

**ME:** I started combing the adult shelves of the library for sf titles when I was 11 or 12, which was 1961/62, and one of the books they had was **A Handful Of Darkness**, which I duly read. It didn't, to be honest, make a huge impression on me, at least not in comparison with other stuff I was discovering then. Two or three years later I discovered – I suspect through a small ad in *New Worlds* – a reasonably local branch of a London bookshop chain called Plus Books, where you could buy paperbacks and trade them back in at half price. (Many years later I learned that Plus Books was owned and run by a sf writer, Arthur Sellings.) They imported a copy or two of new American paperbacks – unheard-of treasure in those days. So I used to go up there on the bus after school and spend my pocket money on whatever books I could afford. I can't actually remember which novel I read first, but there were **The Simulacra**, **The Game-Players Of Titan** and **Dr. Blood-money** from Ace, **Time Out Of Joint** and **The Penultimate Truth** from Belmont and – most crucially – **Martian Time-Slip** from Ballantine, which was the book which really blew my mind. In the next couple of years British publishers also brought out **The Man In The High Castle** and **The Three Stigmata Of Palmer Eldritch**. I was pretty well hooked by this time,



*“Martian Time-Slip really blew my mind.”*

not just because of the extraordinary originality of what he was doing but also (let's be honest, and I was a teenager) because Dick was the only sf writer I'd discovered who wrote about sex in an adult way, which is something for which he isn't given enough credit, and in the suburban world of the early 1960s, where the boundaries of acceptability were defined by books like *The Carpetbaggers* and *Peyton Place* this was not insignificant.

The other key element was John Brunner's essay in *New Worlds* in – what – 1966, which gave a place at the head of the Pantheon to someone I thought was a private discovery.

**FCB:** How did you then choose to pursue your reading interest in PKD, and why?

**ME:** Brunner's essay made it clear how his work had developed, and so I then concentrated on finding and reading all the 1960s books; it wasn't until I was a student, later in the 1960s, that I went back and read the *Ace Doubles*. I still haven't read all the books, because with any favorite writer I like to think there's still a new reading experience to be had, so although I think I've read everything else I haven't read **Solar Lottery** or **Counter-Clock World**.

**FCB:** Why do you think PKD received more British and European critical attention, earlier on, than he did in the US, in particular in England and France?

**ME:** I don't know, really. I got the impression from reviews and fanzine pieces I read at the time that in America he was regarded as a good sf writer who had gone off the rails after **Man In The High Castle**. Here he was adopted as a writer who had embodied some of the qualities the New Wave was promulgating, as witness the championing of his work by Aldiss, Brunner and Moorcock. French

sf has always had a more surreal and philosophical bent, and without knowing a lot about it, you could see he fitted right in.

But the center of critical attention as far as I was concerned was Australia, and Bruce Gillespie's SF Commentary in particular, which was at the time carrying material

from Phil, from Stanislaw Lem, and from Australian critics like John Foyster, George Turner (not a PKD fan), and Bruce himself, so that the general questions intelligent critics and fans were asking then about the unique quali-

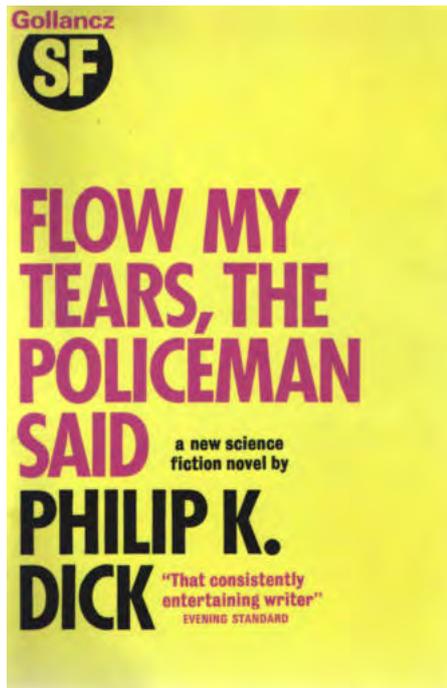
ties of sf, and how valuable they were, did revolve crucially around Dick, and how such a slovenly writer as he sometimes was could also be seen as the key figure in the genre.

**FCB:** Based on your having written specifically about **Flow My Tears**, why is PKD as popular as he is? What is it about his particular themes and motifs that attract increasing critical attention?

**ME:** Not sure I have anything intelligent to say about this; my having written about **Flow My Tears** has nothing particular to do with that book – it was just the new novel at the time I was writing a monthly review column.

**FCB:** What is your perception, and assessment, of PKD's relationship with publishers/editors? How was he received/perceived by them in terms of what he wrote? How has this evolved over time?

**ME:** In the UK he has been fortunate in having editors around who were personal fans of his work – not just me but also, in particular, Nick Austin (variously at Panther Books, Sphere Books and Granada/Grafton) and also Nick Webb (some of the same places). You can chart Dick's publishing history in the UK by reference to where the three of us were working, as there was always amiable rivalry to get the books (taking in the fact that I was an advisor to Arrow Books in the early 1970s before working at Gollancz). The books never sold particularly well, but because there was personal enthusiasm from these edi-



tors, where there was a marginal decision to be made (is this book worth reprinting? Should we reissue?) the decision tended to go in Dick's favor.

The situation now is much as it ever was. Apart from **Do Androids Dream**, backlist sales are steady and unspectacular. I'm happy to keep in print as many as I can get; an unsympathetic editor, looking at the same figures, might conclude it wasn't worth bothering. But because the sales have remained steady, it means they are now much better than those of many other sf writers (e.g. Heinlein, apart from a couple of books) who used to out-sell him hugely but who now hardly sell at all. [FCB, 6/01]

**M**alcolm Edwards has a degree in social anthropology. He attended his first convention in 1970, and has been involved with *Vector*, *Locus* and *Interzone*.



He worked for Gollancz as an editor, and later as editorial director, before becoming publishing director. In 1991 he moved to Grafton Books, then Orion Books, which subsequently acquired Gollancz, so he had come full circle. He has been instrumental in launching the highly respected *SF Masterworks* series (60-volumes) which has brought many important books back into print. He is now deputy CEO and publisher at Orion, in charge of all fiction.

Edwards was one of the contributing editors to *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (1979) and he co-edited *The Complete Book of Science Fiction and Fantasy Lists* (1983) with Maxim Jakubowski.

Although he doesn't write fiction often, he did win a British SF Award for his only published story "After Images" in 1984.

He lives in London with his wife and their two children.

**Here are the answers to the "Puzzle Schmuzze" from PKD Otaku #24:**



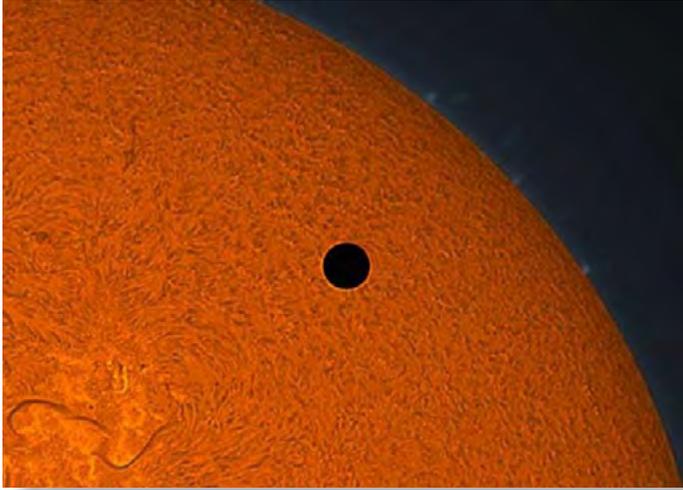
- '60 TEETH P.28 3-1 Jew, smew - sm (Phyllis Wilby to Leo Runcible)
- '60 TEETH P.220 18-3 Christmas, shmishmus - shm (Leo Runcible to Michael Wharton)
- '62 BUILD P.89 8-3 good, schmood - schm (Louis Rosen to Pris Frauentzimmer)
- '63 SIMULACRA P.151 11-6 emigrate, shmigrate - shm (Maury Frauentzimmer to Chic Strikerock)
- '64 CRACK P.29 3-1 help, schmelp - schm (Salisbury Heim to George Walt)
- '64 LIES P.188 15-1 Ferry's, Schmerry's - schm (a flapple to Freya Holm)
- '64 STIGMATA P.149 10-2 taste, schmaste - schm (Norm to Fran Schein)

Perry Kinman

## WHAT A DIFFERENCE A RAY MAKES

by Nick Buchanan

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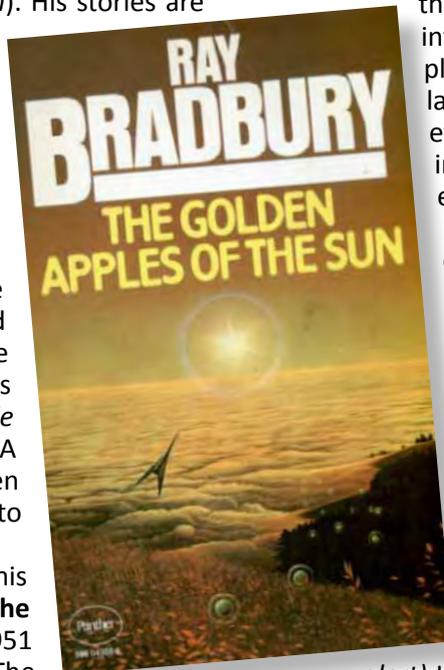


*He died during the rare transit of Venus, this man of the stars; With a heart as big as the moon, and a penchant for Mars.*

Ray Bradbury was a writer with a warm voice and a child-like sense of wonder. His were some of the first SF and Fantasy stories I ever read (for those who quibble and get hung up on categories – get back to your *sorting office* – this is the *reading room*). His stories are all about what it means to be human, about the experience of living and about living life full-measure. But this life-affirming quality is not the mawkish, easy won puerile type beloved by propagandists or the pathologically ‘nice’; this is the warrior affirmation of *‘it is a good day to die.’*

There was darkness in the heart of Ray Bradbury and he cherished it. Whatever was under his bed in the dark, thrilled him and he left it there as a reminder. He remembered that *tingle* – it was the very frisson of being alive. A sense of possibility and wonder. An open moment. A wonderful question never to be killed by dull or certain answers.

The first story that I read of his was *‘The Pedestrian’* published in *‘The Golden Apples of the Sun,’* written in 1951 (strangely omitted from later editions). The story reached across the decades and expanded in my mind like a life-raft, long after reading it. It was shocking and entirely feasible. Set in 2053, a man goes out one November day for a walk. The streets are empty and he is stopped by a police car (*not by the police but by the car*



*itself*). He is questioned about what he is doing, but none of his answers prove satisfactory to the cold utilitarian reasoning of the car-bot:

“What are you doing out?”

“Walking,” said Leonard Mead.

“Walking?”

“Just walking,” he said simply, but his face felt cold.

“Walking, just walking, walking?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Walking where? For what?”

“Walking for air. Walking to see.”

“Your address!”

“Eleven South Saint James Street.”

“And there is air in your house, you have an air conditioner, Mr. Mead?”

“Yes.”

“And you have a viewing screen in your house to see with?”

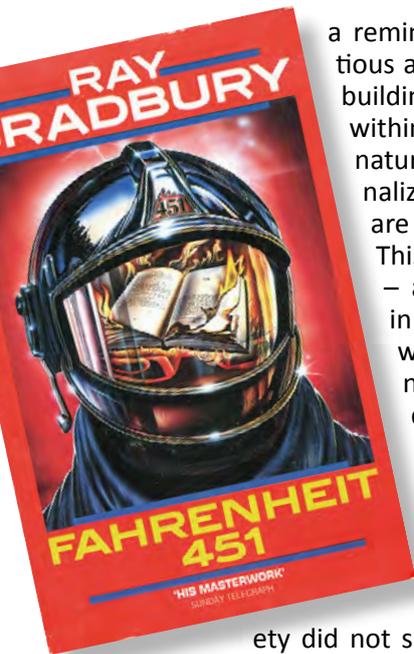
“No.”

“No?” There was a crackling quiet that in itself was an accusation.

This simple dialogue expressed the profound difference between the pedestrian and the car-bot. The bot fails to understand the ‘purpose’ of the man’s walk – and finding no answer satisfactory to a robot, suspects the man of ulterior motives and criminal intent. How could a robot understand the pleasures of a walk, the beauty of a tree, laughter, the joy of swirling snowflakes, etc? How could one explain them? How inadequate is language at capturing the enormity of such experiences?

But the problem isn’t just the difference between the human and the robot, the problem is that the human has to justify his movements, desires and motivations *to the robot*. It is not a difficulty of language – it is about different experiences of *being-ness*. Human currency is not legal tender (it seems) in robot-land. If you met someone who had never tasted Broccoli – you could not give them the experience by merely telling them about it? Language is too coarse a mesh to capture something as refined as taste. (*Spoiler alert*) In the story the man is deemed to have ‘Regressive Tendencies’ and is ordered into the car and is taken away to the ‘Psychiatric Centre.’

The story is very short, but I recall it sat with me long after I had finished it – and wouldn’t let me alone - it hung in the air as an atmosphere. This chilling fable was



a reminder that we need to be cautious about the kind of world we are building and the place of the human within it. The casual way in which natural human behaviour is criminalized, the way reasonable rules are applied in unreasonable ways. This was fascism in its purest form – an intolerance of the human, in favour of the system. There was no kicking and screaming, no outward atrocities; just a quiet, methodical removal and destruction of a human being. It is a credit to Bradbury as a writer that he has this take place while the rest of the world is watching TV.

Such a totalitarian society did not seem to me as unfamiliar as it should. It looked like an easy place to get to – in fact, if we did nothing, we might arrive there soon by default?

In many ways, **The Pedestrian** was a precursor of his later dystopian masterpiece novel, **Fahrenheit 451**, which also serves as a hymn to the great value of reading and books themselves.

I resist discussing SF in relation to its prophetic nature (*Did PKD predict the future? No, he did something far more important. He explored what it means to be human and he tested reality to see if it was substantial - and found it was not! So let's not reduce great writers and philosophers to mere racing tipsters*). However, I am mindful that I live in a nation where there is more surveillance than anywhere else on earth – cameras trained on the public, which follow pedestrians as they move – some of which have loudspeakers which give commands too 'You, pick up that litter!', 'You, stop shouting!' etc. It's all for our own protection you understand.

In 2002 posters started appearing all across London telling us that we were 'Secure Beneath the Watchful Eyes' of the Metropolitan Police - with CCTV on buses as well as in streets. They want to keep us *safe*. I wish they kept us *free* instead. Each year they persuade us we need more security and greater powers for police as they ratchet up fake threats of imminent terrorism and strife.

**The Pedestrian** seems alarmingly close now. Perhaps we are there already?

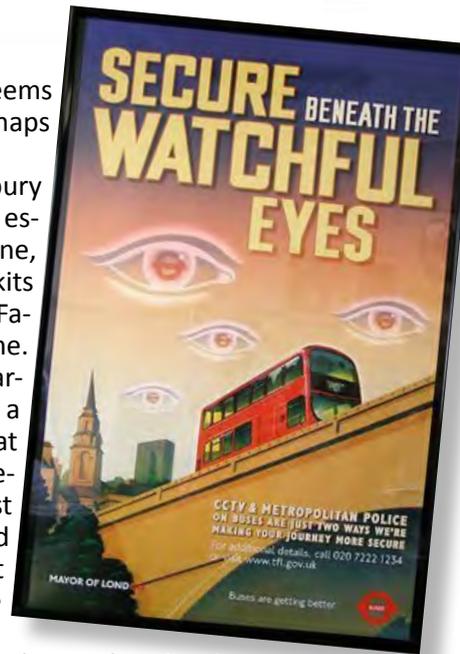
For me, Ray Bradbury embodies the exuberant essence of the Twilight Zone, EC Comics, Aurora model kits and Forrest J. Ackerman's Famous Monsters magazine. A generosity of spirit married to a playful curiosity - a huge 'What if?' He finds that visceral core of wonder, delight and fear - a place most vivid perhaps in childhood when emotions were writ large and sensations were close and tactile.

His work was a catalyst and an inspiration for so many great ventures in Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror.

Rod Serling borrowed heavily from Bradbury when he wrote Twilight Zone gems like Walking Distance (which many feel resembles **Dandelion Wine**). It was alleged that Ray felt sore about Rod 'borrowing from his stories.' But William F. Nolan, remembers Serling confessing that "... he read so much science fiction and came under so much pressure to turn out scripts that he rarely questioned where an idea came from when it popped into his head, and even if he did question, he could never trace it to the original...through the devastating clutter in his mind."

Rod loved Ray's work and even paid tribute to him in many episodes: In 'Will the Real Martian Please Stand Up' one character refers to the strange situation as a 'regular Ray Bradbury!' In 'Walking Distance' one character makes mention of "Dr. Bradbury." In 'A Stop at Willoughby' a character refers to 'the Bradbury account'.

Ray submitted many scripts for the Twilight Zone (including 'Here There Be Tygers' and 'A Miracle of Rare Device'), but only one was accepted - 'I Sing the **Body Electric**' which aired as the 100th episode. Serling felt that Ray's writing didn't translate well to the screen and Buck Houghton thought the stories would be 'logistical nightmares' to film. In a 1975 interview Serling said of Ray's writing "That which reads so beautifully on the



printed page doesn't fit in the mouth...and you find characters saying the things that Bradbury's saying and you you say, 'Wait a minute, people don't say that.'"

Ironically, when Ray got his own show - **Ray Bradbury theatre**, the shows were often almost word for word the same as his stories. So Rod Serling may have made an error in judgement. They translated comfortably and were well received. When the **New Twilight Zone** show came out in 1985 two of Bradbury's stories were chosen - **Burning Man** and **The Elevator**.

E.C. Comics were another iconic slab of popular culture which obviously took inspiration from Bradbury. This great publishing phenomenon gave us titles like **Weird Science**, **Weird Fantasy**, **Tales From the Crypt**, **The Vault of Horror**, **The Haunt of Fear**, **ShockSuspenStories**, etc. with some of the most socially relevant stories - about heroin addiction, racism, the corrosive nature of extreme patriotism, police corruption, anti-semitism, etc. (not the usual comic book fayre for 1950's America).

In 1952, Bill Gaines (owner) and Al Feldstein (editor) used elements from two of Bradbury's stories, '**Kaleidoscope**' and '**Rocket Man**,' to create a plotline and use concepts for a 'new' story, 'Home To Stay.' (Weird Fantasy #13). Previously EC Comics had plundered Bradbury's '**The Handler**,' to create their story 'A Strange Undertaking...,' (Haunt of Fear #6). So when Bradbury (an EC fan) saw 'Home to Stay,' he wrote them a good humoured letter praising them for the quality of their adaptation, and remarked that he had 'inadvertently' not yet received his payment for their use of his stories. He also invited them to contact him about the possibility of adapting other of his short stories.



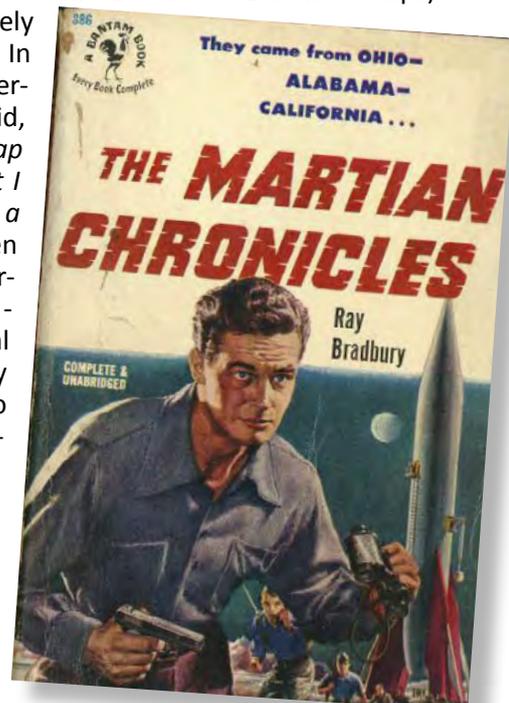
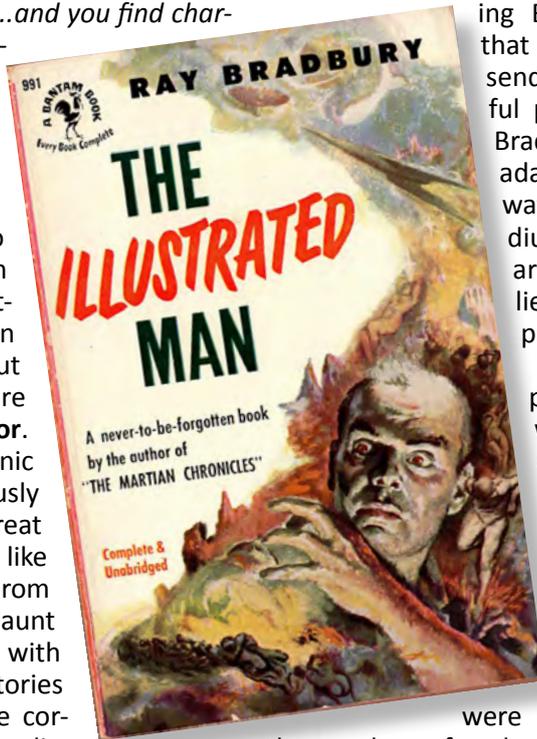
Gaines was pleased that, despite his success, Bradbury was keen to have his work adapted in comic form. Gaines responded with equal good humour send-

ing Bradbury a royalty check saying that they 'hadn't been sure where to send the check.' Thus began a successful partnership. At least twenty four Bradbury stories were successfully adapted by EC comics. EC remains a watershed in the history of the medium; renowned for the quality of its artists and writers - indeed some believe EC were the finest comics ever produced.

When short stories were proving difficult to sell, Bradbury was advised (by Walter Bradbury, an Editor at Doubleday Books) to find a way to link them all together as if they were part of one big story. As a Consequence we have **The Martian Chronicles** and **The Illustrated Man** both of which resist the artifice of their disguise. Nevertheless their sales

were helped considerably. The stories themselves often have a fable-like quality manifesting archetypes which resonate very deeply.

Although obviously different to a writer like Philip K. Dick, there are some things common to both. Like Philip K. Dick, Bradbury cherished our most human attributes and he feared the cold android mind with its steely, fleshless values. Both writers were concerned about totalitarian states and the fragility of modern society. Both found treasure in mediums deemed to be 'trash' by much of society (Bradbury with Comic Books and Dick with Pulp) - and they were fiercely loyal to such media. In a Paris Review interview, Ray once said, 'A conglomerate heap of trash, that's what I am. But it burns with a high flame.' Both men cared for the underdog, the little man - and both had a social conscience. Bradbury led campaigns to keep public libraries open, and raised funds to prevent their closure. He often said '**Libraries raised me**,' and all his life, he remained suspicious of colleges and universi-



ties. He felt that learning should be more direct, more visceral - a personal encounter between reader and writer.

He said: *'You can't learn to write in college. It's a very bad place for writers because the teachers always think they know more than you do—and they don't. They have prejudices. They may like Henry James, but what if you don't want to write like Henry James? They may like John Irving, for instance, who's the bore of all time.'*

## ***'Phil loved Dandelion Wine. And he said that Ray Bradbury was the nicest guy he ever met.'***

**- Tessa Dick**

Bradbury was a singularity, a man who knew his own mind and followed his intuition. Like Joseph Campbell, he believed that life supports those who follow their bliss. Indeed his life long credo was - *'jump off the cliff and build your wings on the way down.'* Many of his stories began simply with a noun on the page (The Fog, The Lake, The Visitor, etc.) and a confidence that his unconscious would find material if the author 'travelled hopefully' and worked hard.

He wasn't going to wait for Science Fiction to become popular and he didn't care for critics - *'The critics are generally wrong, or they're fifteen, twenty years late. It's a great shame. They miss out on a lot. Why the fiction of ideas should be so neglected is beyond*

*me. I can't explain it, except in terms of intellectual snobbery.'*

Some writers develop a body of work which reveals their major theme: many would say that Theodore Sturgeon's work has 'love' at its core; Harlan Ellison's centres on *'Rage against injustice and stupidity;* with Philip K. Dick, most folks would settle on *'What is real? and What is Human?'* With Bradbury, it could be argued that his theme is 'life' itself - not what it means to be alive, but what it feels like to be alive - the very experience of being human.

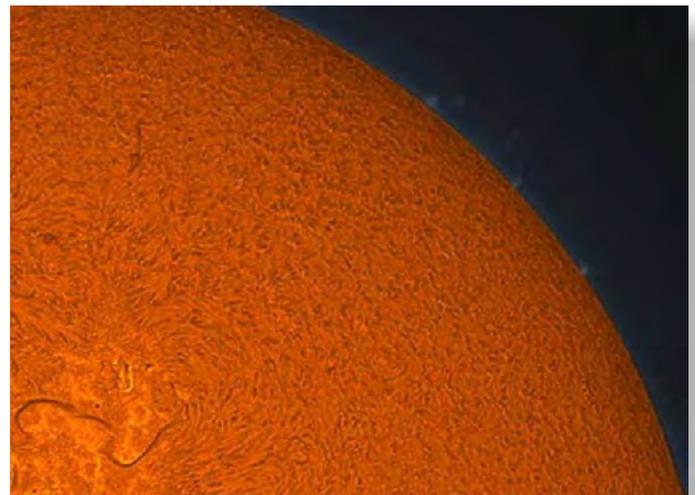
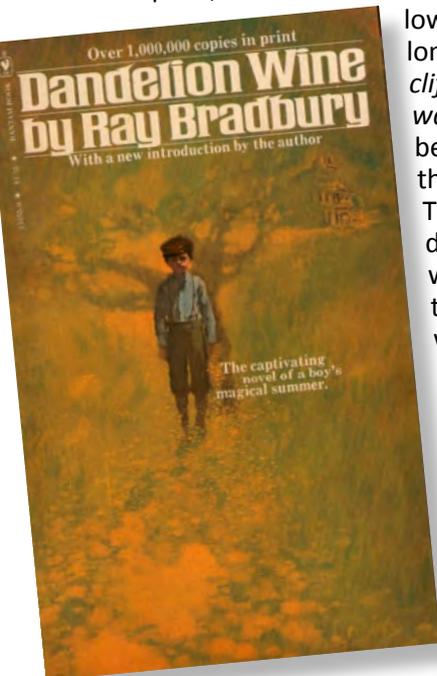
Some would say that Bradbury never grew up, but I think he simply never betrayed his inner child. He cherished his intuition and nurtured a sense of wonder

which he refused to trade for the banal and dull 'responsibilities' of modern life.

So if you wonder what a four page piece on Ray Bradbury is doing in a PKD zine, just remember that a great man died recently, someone whose shoulder was alongside Philip K. Dick's trying to push open a heavy door. Ray helped a lot. He made a difference - we should pay tribute to the man

and his outstanding contribution. Just like Phil did...

In a personal conversation with Phil's widow, Tessa, she told me - *'Phil loved Dandelion Wine. And he said that Ray Bradbury was the nicest guy he ever met.'* (June 15 2012)



*On the sixth of June 2012, Venus had passed the Sun; And glancing back to earth we saw, that Ray was already gone.*

**(Ray Bradbury August 22nd 1920 - June 5th 2012)**

Died aged 91.



Tessa Dick quote used with kind permission from Tessa Dick

## When “Faith” Untuned the Sky

By Frank C. Bertrand

© July 2012

### PROLEGOMENA

(a fancy \$7 obfuscating academic word that means “prefatory remarks”)

In a 1983 essay by Eugene Warren, titled “The Search for Absolutes,” he writes:

“...this story, which succinctly carries the dark side of Dick’s vision of life to its ultimate extreme end... is the epitome of the dark and terrifying side of his effort to penetrate appearances and come to reality.” (*Writers Of The 21st Century Philip K. Dick*, Taplinger Publishing Co., 1983, p. 182, p. 186)

Two years later Adam J. Frisch, and Joseph Martos, in their essay “Religious Imagination and Imagined Religion,” indicate it:

“...has at its core a fear that the fundamental reality will in fact turn out to be a trivial one,” and “...his sincere desire to discover a course of human action that can survive even this extreme a metaphysical foundation.” (*The Transcendent Adventure*, Greenwood Press, 1985, p. 21)

Also in 1985 Karl Wessel, in “Worlds of Chance and Counterfeit: Dick, Lem and the Prestablished Cacophony,” characterizes it as “...a story perhaps best described as Maoism turned metaphysical nightmare.” (*Philip K. Dick: Contemporary Critical Interpretations*, Greenwood Press, 1985, p. 43.)

Then, in his 2005 book length study, *How Much Does Chaos Scare You?*, Aaron Barlow states it “...presents the dark side of Dick’s vision of the savior, of the leader, even the God.” (*Shakespeare’s Sister, Inc.*, 2005, p. 193)

Finally, in 2009, Jason D. Vest, in *The Postmodern Humanism of Philip K. Dick*, writes it is one “...of Dick’s gloomiest works,” which “gives way to ontological depression and spiritual ennui.” (Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2009, p. 116)

Thus, in a span of 26 years we have three essays and two books that specifically mention a particular Philip K. Dick short story. In the academic underground of perversely proliferating essays and books devoted primarily to a few “high profile” favorite novels, like **VALIS**, **Ubik**, **A Scanner Darkly** and the misleadingly titled writer’s jour-

nal Phil kept, **Exegesis** (those that best help to morph him into some kind of PoMo Mystic or Gnostic Guru poster child), this is indeed a rare occurrence. That is, his short stories were, and are, nowhere near as “popular” as his novels for accruing publish-or-perish points.

Prior to this one of the few, and still best, essays devoted to Phil’s short stories is Anthony Wolk’s perceptive, relevant, incisive, and very well written in plain English, “The Sunstruck Forest,” published in *Foundation*, No. 18, January 1980.

Now, these quoted excerpts, admittedly taken out of context, are of course the writers own opinions, interpretations and subjective value judgments, as this essay will be. They are not empirical facts. There are, nonetheless, some “clue words” that appear more than once, like “dark side,” “reality,” and “metaphysical.” And the phrase “Maoism turned metaphysical nightmare” is intellectually fascinating if not quite frightening.

Which Philip K. Dick short story, then, might depict the dark side of metaphysical reality?

### PART THE FIRST

We meet Mr.Tung Chien on a street in downtown Hanoi, sometime after the U.S. has lost the Colossal Final War of National Liberation to the Chinese. There are, nonetheless, Pentagon remnants still in the Catskills of southeastern New York State, lingering resistance in Tennessee and a hardcore pocket holding out in western Oklahoma’s Red Hills. Chien is a government servant who attended Peking University and now works for the Postwar Ministry of Cultural Artifacts, a job which pays him four times a week in postwar inflationary bills, and gets characterized at one point in the story as “A minor officeholder in a meager ministry” (p. 210) [Note: all parenthetical references are to “**Faith of Our Fathers**,” in **The Collected Stories of Philip K. Dick, Vol. 5**, Citadel Twilight, 1992].

The government that employs him is a semi-technologically advanced totalitarian society with hover cars, vid-phones, jet-powered motorcycles, Sino-rockets, a monitoring device on each TV set, Secpol (Security Police), building wardens, indoctrination academies and the ‘98 war crimes trial in Zurich. To help further control and rule some eight billion comrades, and unbeknownst to them, LSD-25 is dumped into the drinking water reservoirs. All of this is led by a 120-year-old Absolute Benefactor of The People.

Chien finds himself “facing a legless peddler who



rode a little wooden cart and called shrilly to every passerby" (p. 197) advertising a wide array of herbal remedies to cure any malady. Chien tries to ignore the peddler, even telling him "Go to Hell." But, this peddler is a war veteran who lost his "pedal extremities at the battle for San Francisco," (ibid.) and Chien must buy from him.

Thus begins Philip K. Dick's short story "Faith Of Our Fathers," the manuscript for which reached the Scott Meredith Literary Agency on January 17, 1966, and was initially published in the Harlan Ellison edited **Dangerous Visions**, via Doubleday Science-Fiction Book Club, in 1967. In 1968 it was nominated for a Best Novelette Hugo Award but lost out to "Gonna Roll the Bones," by Fritz Leiber, also in **Dangerous Visions**. And the controversy about it also began at this time as to whether or not Philip K. Dick was on LSD when he wrote "Faith of Our Fathers."

Harlan Ellison implies, yes, Phil was on LSD. That is, "I asked for Phil Dick and got him. A story written about, and under the influence of (if possible), LSD...His experiments with LSD and other hallucinogens, plus stimulants of the amphetamine class, have borne such fruit as the story you are about to read, in every way a "dangerous" vision." ("Introduction," to "Faith of Our Fathers," in **Dangerous Visions**, 35th anniversary edition, Orion Books, 2011, pp. 199-200). In a February 1974 interview Phil states:

"That really is not true. First of all, you can't write anything when you're on acid. I did one page once while on an acid trip, but it was in Latin. Whole damn thing was in Latin and a little tiny bit in Sanskrit, and there's not much market for that." ["Vertex Interviews Philip K. Dick," by Arthur Byron Cover, *Vertex*, Vol. 1, no. 6, February 1974, p. 37]

Phil's preeminent biographer, Lawrence Sutin, decisively writes, "...in all editions of **Dangerous Visions** from 1975 on, there is an expanded "Afterword" in which Phil rebuts the acid-inspiration claim. It seems likely that Phil's 1975 denial is truthful and that the 1967 version sounded fun at the time" (**Divine Invasions: A Life Of Philip K. Dick**,

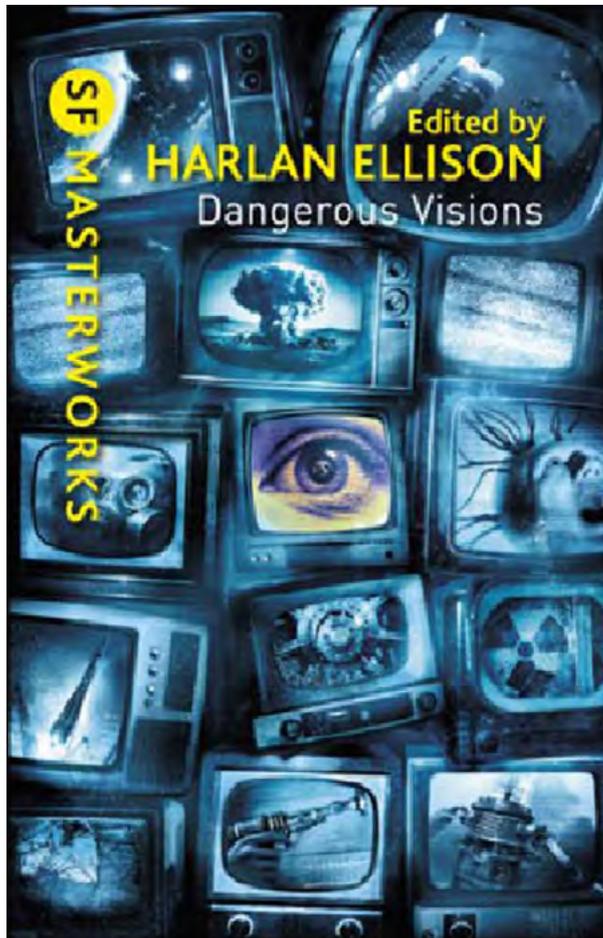
1989, p. 161). In the mentioned expanded Afterword, Phil includes this:

"In his introduction to "Faith of Our Fathers" Harlan gives the misleading impression that my story was written under the influence of LSD. This is not so. About all a person can write while on LSD, I have found, is his own short and involuntary obituary. What did influence this story was my desire to produce the most frightening vision I could imagine. Sometimes I think I did too well. I'm just glad this vision isn't true." (letter to Olga Vezeris, at Signet Books, 11-13-74, emphasis in original; **The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick**, 1974, vol. 3, p. 280)

This is not nearly as important, however, to gaining an understanding of "Faith of Our Fathers" as what Phil writes in the original "Afterword" to his story. Therein he explains: "God, as a topic in science fiction, when it appeared at all, used to be treated polemically, as in "Out Of The Silent Planet." But I prefer to treat it as intellectually exciting. What if, through psychedelic drugs, the religious experience become commonplace in the life of intellectuals? The old atheism, which seemed to many of us – including me – valid in terms of our experiences, or rather lack of experiences, would have to step momentarily aside. Science fiction, always probing what is about to be thought, become, must eventually tackle without preconceptions a future neo-mystical society in which theology constitutes a major force as in the medieval period." [cited in: **Pink Beam: A Philip K. Dick Companion**, by Lord RC, Ganymedean Slime Mold Pubs., 2006, p. 161]

There is a lot of multi-layered, interconnected philosophical, psychological, sociological and theistic meaning densely packed into this statement, concepts worthy of their own long essay, if not book length, study. For now I would note three in particular:

- The topic of god in SF as intellectually exciting
- What if, through psychedelic drugs, the religious experience becomes



commonplace in the life of intellectuals, and

- A future neo-mystical society in which theology constitutes a major force as in the medieval period

These can be contrasted with something Phil says in an October 1966 interview: “Religion ought never to show up in SF except from a sociological standpoint, as in *Gather, Darkness*. God per se, as a character, ruins a good SF story, and this is as true of my own stuff as anyone else’s.” (“Will The Atomic Bomb Ever Be Perfected, and If So, What Becomes of Robert Heinlein,” in **The Shifting Realities of Philip K. Dick**, 1995, p. 58)

The dichotomy for Phil between deity as topic in SF, as opposed to deity as character in SF is intriguing. That he finds the former, and not the latter, intellectually exciting is, however, quite understandable when we remember that he once wrote, in the so called **Exegesis**: “I am a fictionalizing philosopher, not a novelist.” (In **Pursuit of VALIS**, ed. Lawrence Sutin, 1991, p. 161) Please note, he did not write fictionalizing “gnostic,” nor fictionalizing “mystic,” nor fictionalizing “postmodernist,” but **philosopher**.

Now, we would be negligent if we didn’t ask, why does it take psychedelic drugs for a religious experience to become ordinary, unremarkable in the life of intellectuals? Does this mean that without psychedelics intellectuals can still have a religious experience but it becomes only a remarkable and unordinary one? And why just intellectuals? Would such intellectuals, perhaps the “social engineers,” be the ones in a neo-mystical society formulating and promulgating the Theology that’s become a major force? And how well would neo-mysticism get along with the study of faith? For that matter, what is neo-mysticism?

Our protagonist, Tung Chien, certainly doesn’t live in a neo-mystical society. In fact, the word “faith” is only mentioned once in the course of the story, fourteen pages in of the twenty-five total: “He thought: So virtually everyone has faith in me. Except myself; and certainly

not after this, the experience with the anti-hallucinatory snuff” (p. 210). This would be a “faith” different from the kind studied by Theology, that is belief and trust in, and loyalty to, a person (Chien), rather than belief in the traditional doctrines of a religion, said doctrines being what the discipline of Theology studies.

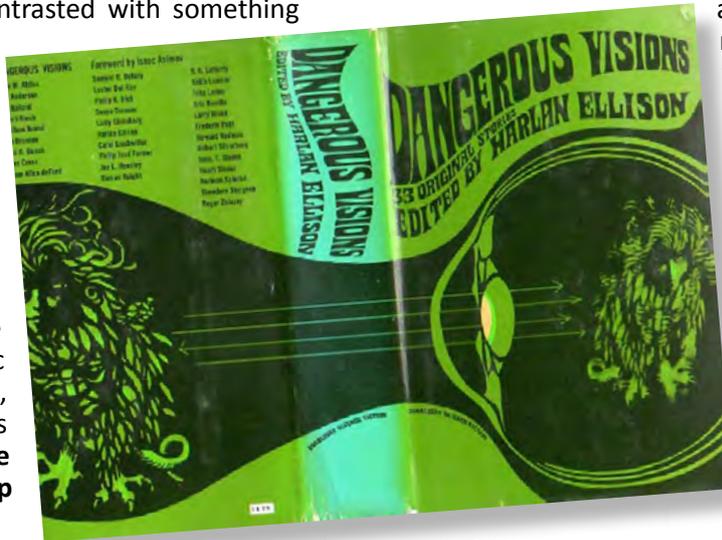
In a communistic, totalitarian society, replete with implied collectivistic vs. individualism social theories, Chien’s thought is a curious one. Just who does he include as “virtually everyone” at this point in the story? And why doesn’t he have “faith” in himself? He’s including, by inference, both the Absolute Benefactor and Tanya Lee, who see in him potential for a “career [which] could lead [him] all the way to the top” (p. 210). Only two people, then, comprise virtually everyone.

I mention this because of two other statements about Chien. In the first paragraph of the story we find: “... it was as if he were alone, and none of those on bicycles and scooters and jet-powered motorcycles remained,” (p. 197) and “It seemed odd to him, thinking of a they. Peculiar – but somehow correct” (emphasis in original, p. 206).

It would be almost too easy to attribute this to Chien living in a totalitarian society with its inherent ideologies of individualism and collectivism. He is, even though a government employee, subordinate to the social collectivity and group supremacy of the Communist state, and expected to comply with certain expectations of behavior, loyalty and solidarity. And while such coerciveness seems “odd to him,” he nonetheless finds it “somehow correct.”

Chien is suggestive of what David Riesman, in *The Lonely Crowd* (1950), terms an “other-directed” social type. That is, someone who is sensitive to the expectations and preferences of others, malleable and conforming. In chapter VII, Riesman writes:

“He [other-directed person] is often torn between the illusion that life should be easy, if he could only find the ways of proper adjustment to the group, and the half-buried feeling that it is not easy for



him.” (*The Lonely Crowd*, Yale University Press, 2001, p. 160.)

Chien is, however, more reminiscent of, and relevant to, Hannah Arendt’s *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951). In chapter twelve she writes:

“Normal men don’t know that everything is possible, refuse to believe their eyes and ears in the face of the monstrous, just as the mass men did not trust theirs in the face of a normal reality in which no place was left for them.” (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Harvest Books, 1973, pp. 436-437)

Note the word “illusion” in Riesman’s quote and then the phrase “normal reality” in the Arendt one. More to the point, in a 5-19-72 letter, Philip K. Dick writes: “Nothing is true and everything is true. Nothing can be communicated and there is nothing to communicate. Or maybe everything, ultimately, can be communicated. The sane man does not know that anything is possible, Hannah Arndt [sic] said once in a book on the totalitarian state.” (**The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick, 1972-1973**, Underwood-Miller, 1993, p. 35)

As pertinent as this seems, I would argue it’s not quite what Phil is getting at regards Chien’s situation in “**Faith of Our Fathers.**” It is much more likely that his evident philosophical interest in the concept of *idios kosmos* vs. *koinos kosmos* is what Chien is experiencing. This notion is derived from the Diels-Kranz fragment B89 of Heraclitus. Dr. Ludwig Binswanger, whose work Phil was familiar with, explains it as:

“...man, in contrast to animal, has his own world as well as an objective one which is common to all. This was known already to Heraclitus, who said that in the state of wakefulness we all have a common world, while in our sleep, as in passion, emotional states, sensuous lust, and drunkenness, each of us turns away from the common world toward his own. That common world – and Heraclitus recognized this, too – is one of phronesis, or rational deliberation and thinking.” (“*The Existential Analysis School of Thought*,” in *Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology*, Touchstone Books, 1958, pp. 196-197)

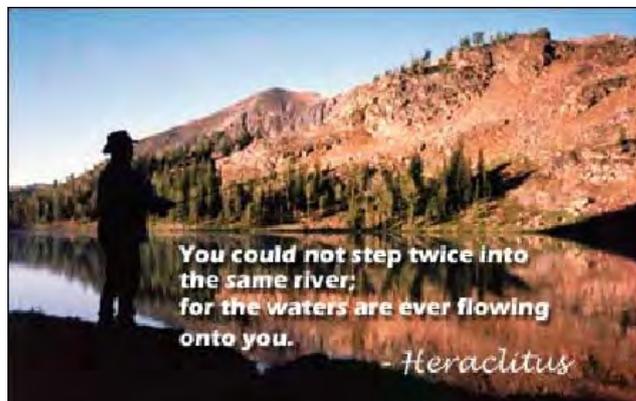
The latter phrase is mentioned as early as in a 5-22-64 let-

ter. Five years later he gives a more expansive explanation in a 6-8-69 letter to Bruce Gillespie. Therein Phil writes:

“The point is this: if a person’s idios kosmos begins to break down, he is exposed to the archetypal or transcendental forces of the koinos kosmos, and if the time comes that he lives only in the koinos kosmos he is exposed to powers too great for him to handle...In other words, we must have our idios kosmoses to stay sane; reality has to filter through, carefully controlled by the mechanisms by which our brains operate.” (**The Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick, 1938-1971**, Underwood, 1996, p 264)

Then, in a 1-29-75 letter to Malcolm Edwards, Phil states:

“...there can be shared idios kosmos-es, giving the impression of illusion of a koinos kosmos. (The latter have the aspect of authenticity, the former not, however many people share it.) What comes to my mind in this regard would be when a tyrannical state so manages the news and so manipulates the ideas and thoughts of its citizens, shutting out facts from their purview entirely, that together they collectively share a sort of ersatz koinos kosmos....” (**The Exegesis of Philip K. Dick**, 2011, p. 65)



The latter part of this quote could well have been written with “**Faith of Our Fathers**” in mind. Its potential importance is exemplified by something Tanya Lee says to Chien: “What we did not know, of course, was this – a *variety* of authentic experiences; that makes no sense, rationally. It’s the hallucination which should differ from person to person, and the reality experi-

ence which should be ubiquitous – it’s all turned around... Twelve mutually exclusive hallucinations – that would be easily understood. But not one hallucination and twelve realities.” (p. 209, emphasis in original)

To try and resolve this, Tanya, and the underground movement she’s part of, have a plan. Remember the legless peddler who sold Chien a “herbal remedy” packet? It turns out he was there on purpose, to confront Chien, and make sure he got this particular “small grey envelope” (p. 203). Its contents are actually Stelazine – an anti-psychotic medication that changes the actions of chemicals in the brain – and meant to counteract what’s been put into the water supply. And having taken it Chien

should be able to view the Absolute Benefactor on TV as he really is.

When Chien does finally take the black granules, in the form of snuff, something happens to the “wide, unlined, healthy features” of the Absolute Benefactor on the TV screen:

“The face dwindled away, disappeared. The sound ceased. He faced an emptiness, a vacuum. The screen, white and black, confronted him and from the speaker a faint his sounded.... Then, by degrees, an image once more formed and established itself. It was not the Leader. Not the Absolute Benefactor of the people, in point of fact not a human figure at all. He faced a dead mechanical construct, made of solid state circuits, of swiveling pseudopodia, lenses, and a squawk-box. And the box began, in a droning din, to harangue him.” (p. 205)

Soon after Tanya asks him what he saw, Chien replies, “A machine.” (p. 207) She indicates others have seen what he did. They “call it the Clunker” (ibid.). The apparition, or manifestation, is one of twelve categories, to include the Gulper, Bird and Climbing Tube. And each has a particular investigative/discussion group associated with it, Chien’s

being Group Red. Tanya also informs him that what is in the drinking water is “not the ones used during the war; not the disorienting ones [LSD-25], but a synthetic quasi-ergot derivative called Detrox-3.” (ibid.)

This is yet another of Philip K. Dick’s inventive drugs to go along with Can-D, Chew-Z and Substance D. It also brings us back to Phil’s questioning “what if” connection between psychedelic drugs causing commonplace religious experience, his describing himself as a “fictionalizing philosopher,” and the affects of such a drug on Chien’s

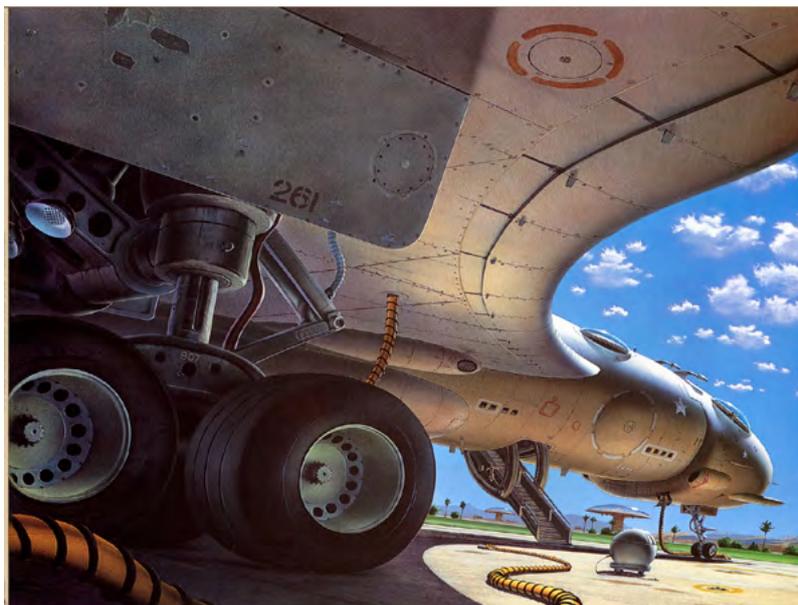
personal world (idios kosmos) interacting/perceiving his common world (koinos kosmos).

Does Detrox-3 indeed break down Chien’s idios kosmos (personal reality) enough that he’s confronted by the transcendental

forces of the Absolute Benefactor in a common reality?

As, however, one of Phil’s favorite quotes, from Act 2 of Gilbert and Sullivan’s 1878 operetta, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, states: “Things are seldom what they seem / Skim milk masquerades as cream.” When Chien, the following day, gets invited to “appear for dinner at the Yangtze River Ranch next Thursday night” (p. 212) to personally meet the Absolute Benefactor, little does he suspect what things he’s going to see. [FCB, 7/12]

TO BE CONTINUED AND COLOPHONED IN THE NEXT ISSUE



Wraparound Cover for 'We Can Remember it For You Wholesale': Volume 5, Collected Stories' which contains 'Faith of Our Fathers' Illustration by Chris Moore <http://www.chrismooreillustration.co.uk/>



## Lifting the Veil

### Allegro's Mushroom by Tessa B. Dick

ASIN: B0070PV8QI \$3.99 available through Amazon.com / eBook, (approx. 100 pages)

Trade Pbk: ISBN: 978-1470125080

Book review by ej "jami" Morgan

© July 2012

Official book description:

"Critical examination of John Allegro's book *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross*, a review of etymologies of words in the scriptures leading to the conclusion that the early Christians and Jews used an hallucinogenic drug. Allegro, one of the original Dead Sea scrolls scholars, was considered a rebel and combatant by scholars of his time. The book on the mushroom fascinated science fiction writer Philip K. Dick (*Bladerunner*, *Minority Report*, *Adjustment Bureau*). This critique of the mushroom book also explores Gnosticism, as well as pagan cults of the ancient world."

Phil relied on and referred to John Allegro's books, both his *Dead Sea Scrolls* commentary and *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross*. I read some of both years ago (when first drafting my AKS novel) hoping to gain deeper insights into the Anokhi mushroom concept that Phil postulated in **The Transmigration of Timothy Archer** (TTOTA.) I recall feeling a bit confused by Allegro's various theories, but I had read Phil's fictional versions first. I was thrilled when Tessa released her eBook (now in paperback also) called **Allegro's Mushroom**—sort of a long book review and analysis of Allegro's work. So this is my review of her review, so to speak.

But first, to whet your appetite, especially those who may not know the controversial references from TTOTA (Chapter Six.) This exchange begins with Kirsten who is telling Angel about Archer's "findings":

"They [Dead Sea Scroll translators] haven't really published the important part. About the mushroom. They're keeping that secret for as long as they can. How-

ever—" "What mushroom?" "The anokhi." I said, incredulous, "The anokhi is a mushroom?"

Phil writes that the Zadokite's grew the mushrooms in caves and continues, "They made mushroom bread out of it. They made a broth from it and drank the broth; ate the bread, drank the broth. That's where the two species of the Host come from, the body and the blood."

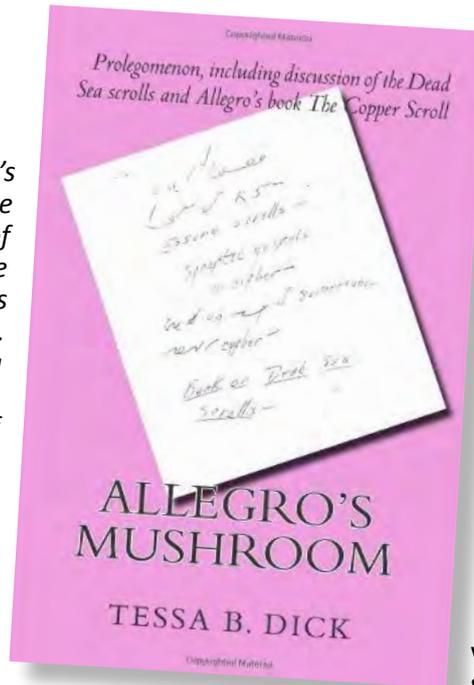
This is all in around the famous line, "Then Jesus was a dope dealer?" (again, in Chapter Six.): She [Kirsten] nodded. "The Twelve, the disciples, were—this is the theory—smuggling the anokhi into Jerusalem and they got caught. This just confirms what John Allegro figured out ... if you happened to see his book. He's one of the greatest scholars vis-à-vis Near Eastern languages ... he was the official translator of the Qumran scrolls."

Tessa opens with a general overview of her take on Allegro's theories. The real sticking point for her is when Allegro goes so far as to theorize that Jesus was a mushroom (at times), yet in other sections of his book (she says) Allegro claims the early Christians used the mushroom recipes in rituals to SEE and commune with Christ in heaven.

I asked Tessa why she chose to write about this subject now:

"What I learned in college was how to write term papers, and **Allegro's Mushroom** is my term paper about Phil's relationship to John Allegro's book. Although I read the book at the same time, it took me another decade to develop the same fascination that Phil had with it. By that time, *The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross* had disappeared. It was rare and out of print. Thanks to the recent release of a paperback edition, I was finally able to get my own copy.

I suspect that Allegro knew that his thesis was outrageous and not fully supported by the evidence. It is more his revenge on the Dead Sea Scrolls team that kicked him out for disagreeing with Catholic doctrine than a scholarly examination of the ancient texts. However, it does contain some valuable gems. I try to ferret them out



## "Then Jesus was a dope dealer?"

in my book *Allegro's Mushroom*."

Tessa basically goes chapter by chapter through Allegro's book describing how he arrived as his interpretations of biblical translations from Greek, Arabic, Aramaic, and how they relate to the much earlier cuneiform clay tablets of the Sumerians.

While most of the book is devoted to Allegro's theories about the Amanita muscaria mushroom, there is not one reference to Phil's use of the term anokhi as a mushroom. I found this odd since this book is Tessa's take on "Phil's relationship to Allegro's theories." It would have been interesting to hear, if she knows, why Phil chose to twist the Hebrew term of anochi (I Am) into a the name of mushroom. Although it's pretty obvious, actually, IF we accept Phil's own fictionalized version:

"Allegro figured out that the early Christians were a secret mushroom cult; he deduced it from internal evidence in the New Testament. And he found a fresco or wall-painting ... anyhow, a picture of early Christians with a huge amanita muscaria mushroom—"Amanita muscaria," I [Angel] corrected. (and just a paragraph, or two later in TToTA)

"Is there actually an anokhi mushroom?" I said. I knew something about mushrooms; before I married Jeff, I had gone with an amateur mycologist. "Well, there probably was, but nobody today knows what it would be. So far, in the Zadokite Documents, there's no description. No way to tell which one it was or if it still exists."

In Chapter Four (of Tessa's book) we learn that Allegro did believe the Eucharist ritual was literally eating the body of Christ (the mushroom) which clearly influenced Phil's TToTA story line about Bishop Archer's (aka Pike's) beliefs.

"I find Terrence McKenna's ideas about mind-altering substances fascinating. If you lift the veil, as he claimed to do with DMT, you find the world inhabited by "self-replicating elf machines". They are all around us, going about their daily lives, but we are not aware of them unless we alter our consciousness. DMT is produced in our brains, but not in the quantities that South American shamen consume. This fits in with Phil's story "**Faith of Our Fathers**", which was first published in Dangerous Visions. Phil suspected that LSD, rather than causing us to hallucinate, might actually lift the veil and show us the true reality."

I'm not sure I came to any "True Reality" from **Allegro's Mushroom** or Allegro's writing. However, Allegro's interpretations of biblical terms provides even more evidence, IMHO, for alien seeding theories. Rather than seeing a Father "penis in the sky ejaculating its life-giving rain" to grow Jesus mushrooms, I still think early Romans saw alien "Father" gods and the Sons of Thunder (as Allegro interprets the term "Bomerges") which sounds like Ezekial's firey Chariots. And, by now you know what I think the chariots were ;) If not, then may I suggest some Zecharia Sitchin or Von Daniken.



## IMPORTANT APPEAL:

For complicated reasons, Tessa Dick (Phil's wife 1973-1977) is close to becoming homeless and needs your support and help.

If you feel you can help her in any way, please send her something via her paypal account:

[tuffy777@gmail.com](mailto:tuffy777@gmail.com)

Thank you.

Phil and Tessa circa 1974

## The Creation of Precious Artifacts

by Henri Wintz

© June 2012

The year 2012 is a PKD anniversary year in many respects\*. It has been 30 years since PKD moved on to an alternate reality, 50 years ago **THE MAN IN THE**

**HIGH CASTLE** won the Hugo award, thirty years ago, Blade Runner hit the silver screens and Daniel Levack's **PKD: A Philip K. Dick Bibliography** was published by Underwood- Miller. Hence, it seems appropriate that three major Dickian events take place this year. One is the Philip K. Dick festival planned in SF in September which, based on the tentative schedule, has grown into a sizable scholarly conference under David's Gill authority. Another event will be a PKD movie festival in New-York city in November, but the first marking event of this year is the publication by Dave Hyde and Henri Wintz of **Precious Artifacts, A Philip K. Dick Bibliography, 1955-2012, US and UK Editions.**

**Precious Artifacts** is the result of a long-distance collaboration between two long-time PKD fans each topping several decades of interest in PKD and both avid readers and collectors of PKD books. David's own extensive historical and bibliographic research on PKD was published in **Pink Beam: A Philip K. Dick Companion** (Lulu Press 2007) and on his website the PKD Web. My own bibliographic project, the Philip K. Dick Bookshelf, has grown in to a major online reference for PKD book collectors over the past 12 years and boasts hundred of pages of bibliographic information.

The first mention of the book project was made in

February 2010, when Dave told me that there was "something serious" he wanted to discuss with me. I had to wait until after the PKD Festival to find out about his idea of a worldwide, multivolume, PKD bibliography project. In November he laid out his idea in more details, and the project took off the ground in January 2011 focusing on the English language editions. Within a month a project

plan was drafted, an initial layout was created, and the grueling collection of bibliographic references started. This was by far the most tedious part, and it took until the end of September of that year to fill 9000 cells of a spreadsheet with bits of bibliographic information spread over 600 rows. It then took another few months of design and editorial work before **Precious Artifacts** was available on Amazon on June 23, 2012, thanks to the magic of print-on-demand publishing.

With more than 600 illustrations, **Precious Artifacts** is quite unique, very attractive and very pleasant to browse. Since I have a copy of the book a rarely check my own website anymore, I find I more convenient to flip the pages of the book when I need information about a book. The bibliography covers almost 60 years of PKD publication history with close to 600 editions referenced. Detailed bibliographic

information is provided for each book, including cover price of the various reprints, name of cover artist and of course a full-color image of the book cover. Historical information about date of writing and submission to PKD's literary agency is provided for most of the books. For example, you'll find out that **GOODMEMBER ARNIE KNOOTT OF MARS** is a manuscript that was submitted by PKD to his agent in October 1962, and it was published



Cover Design of Precious Artifacts by Nick Buchanan

as (thanks to the work of a discerning editor!) **MARTIAN TIME-SLIP** by Ballantine books in 1964.

**Precious Artifacts** covers every edition of every PKD book published since the first Ace edition of **SOLAR LOTTERY** in 1955 to the most recent Mariner (in the US) and Phoenix editions (in the UK). It is rich in details for the collector. For example, seven variants of a single edition of the **THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE** are described as well as two variants of the more recent **VOICES FROM THE STREET**. Some of the books listed are quite rare and have been seen by very few. Such is the case for a British edition of **The PRESERVING MACHINE** that was published under the title **THE PHILIP K DICK OMNIBUS** by Gollanz in 1971. The book was withdrawn from circulation and pulped shortly after its release in 1971, because the title was already in use by Sidgwick and Jackson.

The bibliography is peppered with snippets of information on various aspects of the books of PKD: publishers' history (many of them do not exist anymore), editors, cover artists as well on the value of books and other fun information. A complete and detailed guide provides precious information to the collector on the value of each book. For those who wonder what a colophon or a remainder is, or why foxing on a page might a problem,

they'll find the glossary of bibliographic terms very useful. A well-informed essay addresses the art (and cost) of collecting signed books, whether they are association copies or books with tipped in signatures.

This book is the first of what will be a series of book covering other countries of the world. Needless to say that this first volume was probably the easiest! Collecting information in foreign languages will not be painless but it will be exciting to discover cover art from around the world.

The title **PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS**, borrowed from a 1964 PKD story published in the **Golden Man** (1980), was coined on Christmas day of 2011. It is a statement of what printed book will likely be in a not very distant future: artifacts of the past. With the digital world expanding its grip on the publishing industry at an exponential rate it is slowly becoming the norm to read books on a tablet or a computer screen rather than on a paper. This bibliography itself may well end up being an artifact of the past too. Paradoxically, it has never been easier to publish and sell paper books as it is today, and we are here to testify for this.

<http://www.philipkdickfans.com/2012/07/20/precious-artifacts-published/>

\* And it is the 10th anniversary of PKD OTAKU!



Image borrowed from Brian Nation - with thanks www.boppin.com

# Precious Artifacts (a look inside!)



**Writing and publishing history of the novel**

**SF8. Dr Futurity**

The Pawn was a novelette that Dick wrote in 1953. In late 1958 or early 1959, Don Wollheim contacted PKD about an expansion of "Time Pawn" to novel length. Reluctantly, one senses, PKD agreed. DR. FUTURITY, backed with SLAVERS OF SPACE by John Brunner, was published in February 1960 by Ace Books, as one half of an Ace Double. In England, the novel was published in A PKD OMNIBUS from Sligwick & Jackson in 1970 (now a rarity) and in SCIENCE FICTION SPECIAL #7, an omnibus edition in hardcover from Sligwick & Jackson in 1973. Also of interest to collectors is the Ace Double edition of 1972 that contains DR. FUTURITY backed with THE UNTELEPORTED MAN.

**Information about book value for collectors**

American Editions

1. Ace (pb), 1960, 136 pp., back with SLAVERS OF SPACE by John Brunner.
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3. Berkley (pb), 1984, 153 pp., \$2.50, cover art by Verhulst, ISBN 0-425-07106-5.
4. Vintage (t/b), Aug. 2005, 176 pp., \$11.95, cover art by Heidi North, ISBN 1-4000-3009-0.

British Editions

5. In A PHILIP K. DICK OMNIBUS, Sligwick and Jackson (hc), 1970, 422 pp., £1.95, ISBN 0-283-46450-0, contains SF8, SF19 and SF29. Bound in blue paper boards with silver lettering on the spine. No date on the title page. This omnibus edition copyright (c) 1970 by Sligwick and Jackson Limited on the copyright page.
6. In SCIENCE FICTION SPECIAL #7, Sligwick and Jackson (hc), 1973, 447-428 pp., ISBN 0-283-97941-0, contains SF8, SF19 and SF29, contains the Murray Lehner Omnibus and the Philip Dick Omnibus.
7. Methuen (pb), 1978, 157 pp., 80p., ISBN 0-413-36540-9.
8. Magnum (pb), 1979, 157 pp., 85p., cover art by Chris Moore, ISBN 0-417-04610-3.
9. In THREE EARLY NOVELS, Gollancz (t/b), 2000, 422 pp., £7.99, ISBN 1-85196-912-0. Contains SF8, SF24 and SF36.

**Color pictures of all editions on same spread as bibliographic references**

Science Fiction Novels — 31



2. Ace 1960



3. Berkley 1984



4. Vintage 2005



5. Sligwick and Jackson 1970



6. Sligwick and Jackson 1973



7. Methuen 1978



8. Magnum 1979



9. Gollancz 2000

**Unique numbering system**

**Detailed bibliographic information of all US and UK editions: Publisher, book format, month and year of publication, number of pages, cover price, ISBN, cover artist, and other useful information when available.**

**Information about publishers, editors and key editors**

**Pictures can be easily identified by number, publisher and year of publication**

**Ace Doubles**  
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I hope by now everyone is aware of the Philip K. Dick Festival set to take place in San Francisco on September 22-23. David Gill, PKD scholar and guiding light behind the Total Dickhead blog at <http://totaldickhead.blogspot.com/> is organizing a fantastic conference to celebrate and investigate our favorite author. Dave explains it best:

Philip K. Dick is arguably one of the most important writers of the 21st century. Dick's uncanny prescience not only foretold of our current surveillance technology and color-coded terror, but additionally captured the narcissism and psychological withdrawal that defines the early part of this new century. Considered at the time of his death to be little more than a genre writer, Dick's burgeoning literary reputation was kindled by a handful of fans and scholars. With his recent canonization in the prestigious Library of America and the 2011 publication of Dick's esoteric religious notes, *The Exegesis*, now is the time to examine Dick's influence and how he became such an important literary figure. The Bay Area, home to Dick for the majority of his lifetime, is also the perfect location for the event, allowing fans and scholars to step into Dick's own past and retrace his steps in this vibrant city by the bay. Sept 22-23, 2012 will be a weekend long celebration and examination

of Dick's life and work.

The schedule of speakers at this event is amazing: Jonathan Letham and the Exegesis team kick things off and are followed by a host of writers, editors, academics, friends of Phil, filmmakers and fans including our own Dave Hyde.

PKD Otaku check in with David Gill to see how things were moving along...

***September 22nd is coming up fast. How are you holding up?***

I'm holding up pretty well, surprisingly. Both Ted Hand (PKD and Religion blogspot at <http://pkdreligion.blogspot.com/>) as well as Chris Mays a librarian at San Francisco State University have been helping me a lot. So far the planning has involved lots of pizza and a few fun Saturday nights. I imagine it will get a little more hectic as the fest approaches, but I tend to be pretty laid back, and I kinda hope the fest is gonna be laid back too. We had such a



great time in Colorado two years ago. I hope we can recapture that amazing fan vibe.

***The tentative schedule and recent updates list a very impressive set of speakers and a wide range of topics. What were the mechanics of bringing the speakers together? Did you have a wish list?***

Lethem was the big fish. I talked to him first and basically let him pick the weekend. I feel like Lethem's contributions to Dick's legacy are undeniable, but I also knew that he would be a draw for the Fest. Again, my intent is to recapture the amazing vibe we felt in Colorado, so the key, in my mind, was to have a good mixture of serious academic study (Umberto Rossi and Laurence Rickels) with the biographical and fan stuff (PKD friends Grania Davis and William Sarill). I'm hoping the fest really has something to offer everyone.

***I was totally amazed to see that Phil's old friend (and "religious co-founder") William Sarill will attend. How did you find him?***

William actually found me, through my blog. He's a super interesting guy who knew Phil pretty well. Together they riffed a lot of ideas for **A Maze of Death** and Phil was impressed by William's understanding of physics etc. I think he'll add a lot to the fest.

***Interesting that the Colorado festival and the San Francisco festival have a lot of connection and continuation. You, Erik Davis, Sam Umland and, of course, David Hyde all spoke at the Colorado event.***

Yeah, I was really inspired by the Colorado Festival. I mean I left that gathering with great friends and a lot of additional insight into PKD. The nice thing there was that it was as much about us, the fans, as it was about PKD. David Hyde did an amazing job; I've got some big shoes to fill. I hope I can recreate that vibe, and broaden our little circle of fans, as San Francisco is more convenient for many Dick-heads than Colorado.

***What's with the Blade Runner Belly Dance?***

About a week after I announced the fest, I got an email from a belly dancer explaining she had developed a Blade Runner themed dance and would be interested in seeing it at the fest.

***Will transcripts or recordings be available post-festival?***

We hope to film each of the talks and panels and have these available to watch on the web.

***Do you have a sense where Philip K. Dick studies in the broadest sense might be going next? We have the Exegesis; more movies are coming out; there are more and more books about Phil are being published. Do you see any unexplored avenues waiting to be investigated?***

Who knows what the future holds? But I'll tell you, I was just at a conference at UC Davis for the Association for the Study of Esotericism and presented on Dick. I was joined by Erik Davis and Ted Hand (blogger of the PKD + Religion site) and based on their talks it's becoming increasingly clear to me that the Exegesis is not "endless theorizing" but is in many places fairly conventional Christian theology. As such it may not prove to be particularly relevant or popular, but I predict that over time Dick's religious visions and **The Exegesis** may come to seem slightly less crazy. So there's LOTS of scholarship surrounding those questions still to be done. Of course I think the interesting things are the novels, and there's still a lot to be gleaned from them. I hope the mainstream novels, and some of the "under-rated" novels get renewed attention. I'm thinking specifically here about **Crack in Space** but that's just me.

We are living in a PKD novel though in a very real sense: now our realities are often mutually exclusive, as if say you are a regular watcher of Fox News and I read The New York Times, our realities have, to a very real extent, ruptured, leaving us isolated in our own subjective reality. This is where Dick was truly prescient, and I hope we can away from the whole "Dick predicted robots" business.

***What if people want to learn more about this "festival"?***

We have a website: <http://www.philipkdickfestival.com/>

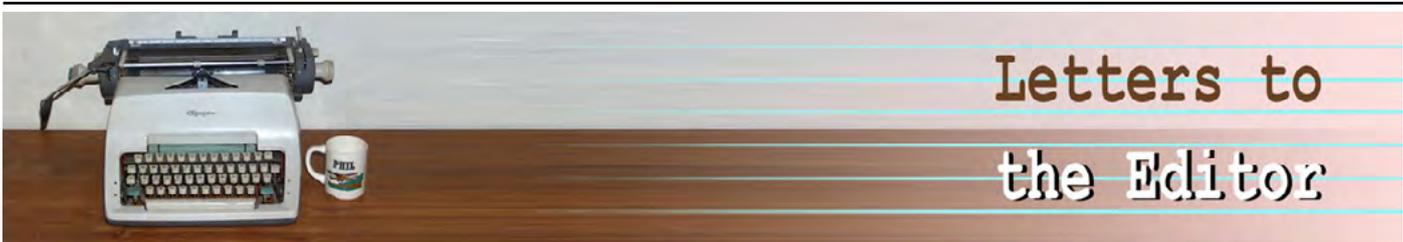
We have a tentative schedule of events: <http://www.philipkdickfestival.com/2012-philip-k-dick-festival/tentative-schedule/>

One of the cool things we'll be doing, on the Friday before the Fest (Sept 21) is we'll be taking a walking tour of Phil's old neighborhood in Berkeley, specifically the record store where Phil worked as a teen, the Francisco St house Phil shared with Kleo, and others. So if you're planning on attending, remember the Friday events.

Also, we're trying to get a deal on a block of rooms at the Days Inn, so let me know ([dcgill@sfsu.edu](mailto:dcgill@sfsu.edu)) if you're interested in staying there.

I'm starting to get really excited about this, and I'm looking forward to meeting many of you Dick-heads!

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## What Is And What Should Never Be

Dear Patrick,  
 I would be remiss, chagrined, and deleterious if I didn't take this opportunity to CONGRATULATE you on reaching the 25th issue anniversary of **PKD Otaku!!** In this age of the technologically quick-and-convenient, dumbing down of our populace, 5 minutes of fame, and 15 secondsound bites, that you have somehow managed to keep on editing and producing such high quality issues of **PKD Otaku** is truly remarkable. For this you should get much more recognition than you do, and be favorably compared with the early pioneers of open minded, non cliquish PKD serconzine explication, such as Bruce Gillespie, Uwe Anton and his eminence, Sir Lord Running Clam. (I still have trouble picturing a clam running!)The only quibble I have is the lack of an extensive, vigorous, contentious "Letters to the Editor" (known as LOCs in fanspeak) section in each issue.

In doing so you are one of the few voices in the wilderness that dare to challenge the status quo, albeit in obfuscatory books, essays and/or articles that mightily attempt to make Philip K. Dick into a glamorous PoMo, Mystic and/or Gnostic poster-child. Such attempts should **not** go unchallenged. He was, and is, none of these. Phil was much more intellectually interested in Philosophy, Psychology and German culture. And these were all "intellectual tools" in his *Intellectual Toolbox* to help him fabricate possible answers to his two salient themes: What is Reality, What is human-ness. As he once wrote in the so called Exegesis. "I am a fictionalizing philosopher." That is, and this continues to get overlooked, misinterpreted and downright misrepresented, he did **NOT** write fictionalizing "PoMo," nor "mystic," nor "gnostic."

Such an unfortunate situation reminds me of something Phil once wrote in a long letter, dated 4-25-62, to Tony Boucher, his first "writing instructor:"

*"I had never realized that you can't be a nice guy,*

*in that you can't please everyone; you have to antagonize someone, and often powerful someones, if you're going to exist in what Romans knew to be the only world worth fighting about: the social (i.e. interpersonal) world."*

So I, for one (and I may damn well be the only one), continue to view **PKD Otaku** as a bright, devil's advocate beacon in a vast wasteland of proliferating would be PKD experts, pundits and ubiquitous bloggers. And I can only hope that you will continue in future issues to not give any kind of unquestioning allegiance to, but instead ask very hard questions about, those who find cute and clever ways to make Philip K. Dick's fiction say what they want it to in support of their particular stylish Gnostic or mystic flavor of the month. It would also be important to give more attention to his essays, interviews and extant letters and how they can help us to understand his short stories and novels. It needs to be emphasized as well that he wrote much more than VALIS and the so called Exegesis, the two "favs" of the denizens of the dilapidated ivory towers scattered about our land, other lands and perhaps even the dark side of the moon.

I would argue that his first published short story, "**Beyond Lies the Wub,**" along with the novels **The Man Who Japed** and **Time Out Of Joint** are far more pivotal to understanding Philip K. Dick's oeuvre than either **VALIS** or the so called **Exegesis**. As for the latter mentioned work, I pretty much agree with your thoughtful and well written "Editorial" in the last issue of **PKD Otaku**. I'm also not convinced it was meant for publication, nor some kind of exegesis, but a journal of notes, as he was in the habit of keeping throughout his writing career. That only parts of the Exegesis are now published, after he died, says more about those doing the choosing, and making money off of it, than it does about Phil.

Yours in kipple,

**Frank C. Bertrand**



Phil, Packaged Graphic © 2012 Nick Buchanan

## It's New! It's Fun! - It's the Exegesis!!!

Dear Patrick,  
Regarding the editorial in **PKD Otaku #24**: I think it is fine. Meandering yes, but basically it covers how the **EXEGESIS** is not for everyone, not even for 'us' most of the time, but that it is good that it is there as it is the 'white elephant' showing that PKD's reality-wrecking was no game or literary trick, but for real. And we should not hold PKD accountable when it bores or exhausts us because he did not publish it. That the **EXEGESIS** was advertised like some fun new novel by PKD was part of the Hollywood-fueled PKD bullshitting industry and that of course backfired ("Shit's unreadable, man, he \*was\* a lunatic!").

I am not so sure that the description of PKD as lunatic outsider is so new. This could have been applied in the 70s (when talking in France he definitely came across as such) but was superseded by the 'sage for the 21st century'. Many people wonder what's real nowadays but few see ancient Rome shining through - so there's two PKDs to be commodified whereby the latter one is a hard sell. So we should be fine with the **EXEGESIS** fading from mainstream scrutiny because that was a misunderstanding anyway. It's like the **THE SUN** judging an edition of Ludwig Wittgenstein's more arcane journal notes.

So I agree with the flow of this editorial. And it's nice to see the **EXEGESIS** as wild card 'from God' or whatever messes with those synapses. Nice also Swanwick's description of Phil as messy drama queen. This is also something coming out nicely in the letters - which sometimes came back unopened to him because some people already dreaded PKD letters with their "aberrant visions of truth" and wildly flexible accounts of "what happened". Only the last sentence (The **EXEGESIS** is the "wild card from God" come back to life.) I do not fully grasp. Back to life - was it dead? Because it is now readily available it is as if this card is now in stock in any game of PKD sense making. Everyone can now draw this joker, it is on all the tables (even the Marxist ones) or up in anyone's sleeve.

Best, André

## Is this the way to Armillary?

In Lord Running Clam's article in **OTAKU 24** on definitions, he quotes the faux definition of **VALIS** at the beginning of the book: "*Characterized by quasi-consciousness, purpose, intelligence, growth, and an armillary coherence.*"

Armillary coherence, indeed.

We've got a term crying out for a definition within a made-up definition. Photos of armillary spheres are easily found in a search. But armillary coherence? The word armillary seems to be linked to sphere. It is difficult to find just armillary. (From medieval Latin *armilla*, bracelet, iron ring. Comes from Latin *armus*-- shoulder.)

So... given what we know about **VALIS**-- and what we don't know-- what is the meaning of the term within the definition? In addition, it would not seem to fit in with the

later **MMSK**, macrometasomacosmos. Black Iron Prison might be the closest term Phil used elsewhere, but it doesn't match this aspect of the definition.

Looking at this from another direction, something with a tight, constrained construction that was logically connected would not need 10,000 pages of exegesis to figure out what it is, you'd think. It doesn't seem like a joke, and yet it is very difficult to take seriously. We've got four out of five terms in that sentence that match what we know of Phil's writing, and one out of five that...what?

John Fairchild

On the same page with Ray Bradbury

## On the same page with Ray Bradbury

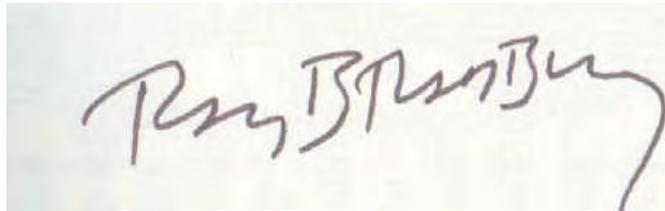
Dear Patrick,  
In the fall of 1999, Ray Bradbury passed through Albuquerque on his way to speak at the 50th anniversary of Los Alamos National Labs. He also did a book signing session at one of our local indie book stores, Page One. So many fans showed up that the store did a drawing and set up groups of fifty at a time. I was fortunate to be in the second group (the second of eight groups for a total

of 400 people), and catch Mr. Bradbury while he was still fairly energetic.

I watched him signing books very fast, without much chit chat, but decided to take a chance when I reached him (with three of my most collectible editions) to ask him a question. While he was signing, I asked if he knew Philip K. Dick. Bradbury stopped mid-signature, leaned back and rubbed his chin. I can still see him in this posture with his thick black glasses and long white hair swept back. He put down the pen, folded his arms over his chest and belly, and said, *"I didn't know Phil Dick personally, but we did have a drink in a bar about a year before he died. We were there for a science fiction convention (I must admit I can't tell you if he said which Con, or where. I remember his posture and a twinkle in Bradbury's eye. Luckily I scribbled what he said on a piece of paper later that day and stuck it in the 1958 DoubleDay paperback.) "Phil didn't go to a lot of Cons, but he was excited that Hollywood had taken an interest in one of his novels. The one that became Blade Runner."* I remember him shaking

his head, adding. *"Very sad, I thought, that he didn't live to actually see the movie."*

With that he leaned forward, finished signing the paperback, and handed them to me. He smiled, a kind of flat line smile, nodded and that was that. One of the book store clerks seemed impressed he had given me the extra minute of time.



I wrote that much in one of my notebooks where I kept notes for my novel. It took quite a bit of searching to find the notes. I also searched the internet for any references to Phil and Bradbury. I found a piece on the official PKD site—a 1980 interview with Phil from the Denver Clarion. Phil also mentions having a drink with Bradbury, but makes it sound as if it might have been a more routine event. Phil told the interviewers that Bradbury didn't seem to think he got enough compensation for the movie deal. (You can read the 1980 Clarion interview on the PKD site.)

ej "jami" Morgan





# Notes & Comments

Philip K. Dick read Dr Adder in manuscript and for years advocated it; and it is clear why. Though the novel clearly prefigures the under-soil airlessness of the best of urban cyberpunk, it even more clearly serves as a bridge between the defiant reality-testing paranoia of Dick's characters and the doomed real politicking of the surrendered souls who dwell in the post-1984 urban sprawls. - **John Clute**

The most illuminating passages from PKD can be copied onto parchment, sealed inside clay pots, buried inside caves about to be consumed by a desert and left to mature for about 2000 years.

If discovered twenty centuries from now his writings will be seen less as 'science fiction' and more as a human history (dashed with quaint tech) of the turbulent 20th century, when we killed 100 million of our own in wars, trashed the planet, cloned and improved our species and began the slow process of populating the solar system.

In all seriousness, the first tenet of a PKD-based religion would be "No matter what you believe, the truth is infinitely stranger." The second tenet would be "If it was true yesterday, it might not be true today." - **Darryl Mason**

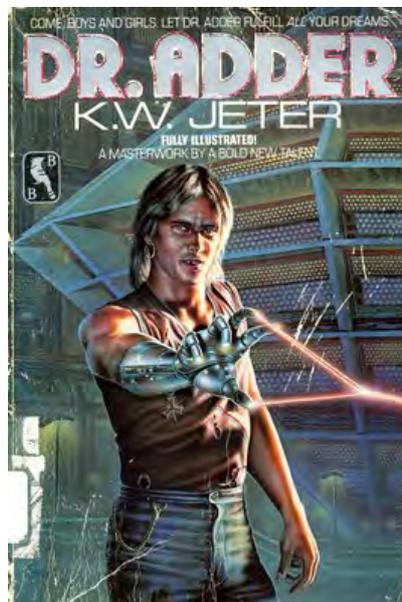
"You know, to be thirteen years old and get your brain plugged directly into Philip K. Dick's brain!" - **William Gibson reflecting on how mind-blowing it was reading science fiction as a kid**

Dick was a schizophrenic. Dick was a paranoid. Dick is one of the ten best American writers of the 20th century, which is saying a lot. Dick was a kind of Kafka steeped in LSD and rage. Dick talks to us, in The Man in the High Castle, in what would become his trademark way, about how mutable reality can be and therefore how mutable history can be. Dick is Thoreau plus the death of the American dream. Dick writes, at times, like a prisoner, because ethically and aesthetically he really is a prisoner. Dick is the one who, in Ubik, comes closest to capturing the human consciousness or fragments of consciousness in the context of their setting; the correspondence between what he tells and the structure of what's told is more brilliant than similar experiments conducted by

Pynchon or DeLillo. - **Roberto Bolaño**

Dick's theology, though not quite orthodox, is not noticeably more odd or problematic than that of Julian of Norwich, Catherine of Siena or St John of the Cross. - **Andrew Mckie**

His career did indeed takeoff after his death, and this fact is not coincidental. A dead PKD is a manageable commodity, where alive he was a loose canon. He remembered (and published) versions of business and personal relationships wildly at variance with what actually happened. He denounced people the FBI. He appeared at friends' homes high on drugs or maybe aberrant visions of the truth, and made terrible scenes. In short, he was uncannily like the heroine of George Bernard Shaw's Saint Joan, a wild card from God, someone whose business it was to trash the status quo, somebody who has a better purpose for your life than the smug quotidian ends to which you have put it. Somebody you don't really want back. - **Michael Swanwick**



"Dick is our poet of the simulacrum in his strongest work, exploring that concept before Jean Baudrillard even knew how to spell it. If you can make a perfect replicant of a human -- so runs the essential

Dick plot -- how can you say that your replicant is now, tout court, human? It is a serious problem. It bothered the hell out of Rene Descartes and John Locke but gave Mary Shelley and E.T.A. Hoffmann some terrific ideas for stories." - **Frank McConnell**

## Phil on stage and screen

"800 Words: The Transmigration of Philip K. Dick" Live Girls! Theater through Nov 17.

At the end of Philip K. Dick's life, he skittered around his apartment like a cockroach with a mean speed habit, and, having already built his literary career on paranoia, he started fearing everything, including the air he breathed. At the beginning of 800 Words, Dick (Shawn Belyea) seems genially laid-back, like the Dude from The Big Lebowski with an even longer history of LSD abuse. Things are almost too placid.

Once Dick starts talking to his cat (a puppet charmingly controlled and voiced by Megan Ahiers) and she suggests that he might not be “the most reliable of narrators,” it becomes obvious the play’s structured like a PKD novel—things appear pleasant before falling apart in a glorious mindfuck. Stanislaw Lem (Nik Perleros, selflessly supporting Belyea) may be a KGB spy trying to get Dick to incorporate Marxist propaganda in his novels, Dick’s driving instructor (Perleros again) could be an FBI agent after his secrets, and God may or may not have burgled his apartment.

Belyea grows into the role masterfully as Dick bounces through time, repeatedly losing his wife (Holly Arsenault, blessedly not overplaying the shrill ex-wife card) and falling asleep on top of his desk like Snoopy on his doghouse. The story becomes a conspiracy theorist’s wonderland, the set pretty much has a mental breakdown and cracks open, and the talking cat gets the respect it rightfully deserves. It should satisfy fans of Philip K. Dick—and I mean “Ubik is one of the best sci-fi novels ever,” not “I kind of liked Paycheck except for that douchey Ben Affleck”—and it serves as a good introduction for the rest of us. It’s probably as close to the happy chaos of reading a Dick novel as the stage will ever see.

The Nervous Breakdown of Philip K. Dick, Judy Bee; 21 min. A darkly comic, hallucinogenic account of the horrific psychological fragmentation and complete mental collapse of the highly regarded American novelist/sci-fi genius whose work provided the basis for Ridley Scott’s classic film, BLADE RUNNER. Set in Berkeley in 1968 against a backdrop of worn-out radical chic, shrill Nixonian totalitarianism and hippie psychedelica, this film is a dizzy detective story about a man in search of his own sanity. With Lisa Zane (“Roar”).

### Three Stigmata:

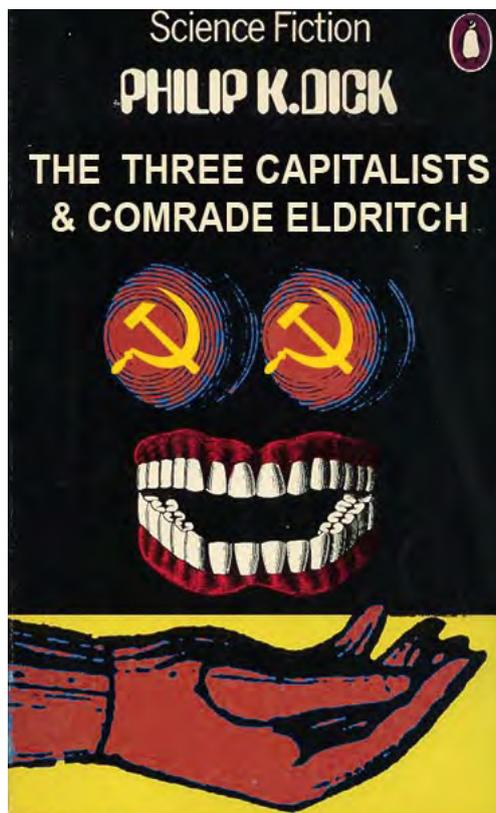
The next gig is a Polish avant-garde troupe plays “the three stigmata of palmer eldritch” at a theatre festival in Berlin. Almost no info on the web except the attached German program info I shot from the downloadable program pdf.

Not much in the text. the director is a self-described ‘theatre-DJ’ and ‘mental scratcher’ and the text says he ‘deciphers’ Dick’ text as an ironical view on today’s Capitalism which strikes me as bullshit because who needs to decipher Phil’s full-blown ironical, sarcastic and all-out hilarious view on yesterday’s, today’s and even tomorrow’s Capitalism! And they write that Dick’s novel is a ‘vision of consumer society escaping the plight of “real problems” by and into organized hallucinations’ which is not untrue but a weak point, to say the least.

## ‘Dick is our poet of the simulacrum’

A Berlin paper wrote accordingly that it was a crude and neomarxist rendering and downgrading of Dick’s fill-blown cross-merging of “metaphysical battle and bad acid trip” merely showing how churches and drug dealers compete and the play made-up with day-glo neo-capitalist new-rich yuppie props of the nineties. Palmer Eldritch comes with a green laser halo. The critic did not like it.

Die Seltsame Welt Des Mr. Jones: “... a visionary parable on 21 century reality, Jones ...creates a ‘strange world’ founded on terror, bureaucracy and the rapturous countering of the menace ‘from outside.’” --



Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, 1998 stage version of adapted and directed by Edward Einhorn, at the Untitled Theater Company #61 in New York City. “Bring Me the Head of Philip K Dick” BBC Radio Play 2009

Gregory Whitehead’s dark, surreal and satirical drama, set in contemporary America, centres on a deadly futuristic weapon in the shape of the android head of science-fiction writer Philip K Dick. Invented by a shadowy research unit inside the Pentagon, the head - which believes it actually is Dick himself - is wreaking havoc on society and must be stopped before it finds its body.

### Screamers: The Hunting (2009)

“Inspired by a short story by visionary author Philip K.

Dick" - Only if he was on a bad acid trip when he wrote the story.

CiTIZEN KiNO presents "Electric Sheep Revisited"

Wednesday, March 7th at Theater xKapelle, Boxhagenstr. 99 – Berlin, 21:00h, 5€ 120 minutes

[ Added Note: Great 'after-party' concert downstairs at Knochenbox w/ Budzillus ]

...  
CiTIZEN KiNO is a LIVE mix of Theater, Film and The Net which sets the stage for you to take over the controls in the media sanitorium ! Dr. Podinski, an anarcho-projectionist and psycho-media syndicalist from the XLterrestrials laboratories, slices open a gaping hole in the screen for entering or exiting, as you wish! Tonight's program "Electric Sheep Revisited" begins with a virtual autopsy of Ridley Scott Inc., your own Replicant Memories, the festering Hollywood Operating System ... and a little glimpse of the celebrity sausage-making at this year's Berlinale Festival and Talent Campus.

ESR takes its cue/name from Philip K. Dick's 1968 sci-fi novel "Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep", better known as its Hollywood product(ion) – Blade Runner ( 1982). "The book was so much better!"- cliché doesn't even begin to describe all the prophetic genius left on the cutting room floor ! With current events like Fukushima, the BP Gulf oil spill, drone military technologies, the darkly shifting landscapes of digital culture, plastic eroticism and corporate takeovers at every corner of our lives, PKDs relevance to our crisis-ridden society today has only multiplied exponentially. We revisit his now iconic dystopian tale(s) of warning as our starting point to address a civilization immersed in an endless labyrinth of bad media, troubling technologies, invasive power games, etc. And we propose a few tactical exits, social upgrades, and/or cultural re-embodiments!"

...  
Some background:  
"Cyberspace, not so long ago, was a specific elsewhere, one we visited periodically, peering into it from the famil-

iar physical world. Now cyberspace has everted. Turned itself inside out. Colonized the physical. Making Google a central and evolving structural unit not only of the architecture of cyberspace, but

of the world. This is the sort of thing that empires and nation-states did, before. But empires and nation-states weren't organs of global human perception. They had their many eyes, certainly, but they didn't constitute a single multiplex eye for the entire human species." **W. Gibson in the NYTimes**

For a long time, Gibson has been unable to propose any oppositional sci-fi vision, he's just been along for the colonial rides, and perhaps merely eeking out a pop-consultant career for corporate-ruled dystopianisms. XLterrestrials will investigate what it would mean to, in the words of Brian Holmes, "Escape The Overcode" ! Or... to detourn the multiplex !

...  
"In these times of an over-mediated and deep-fried society, it is no longer possible to cut through the fog of the information war. It is far too

late to pull the child out of a circus lion's flatscreen jaws. Only as a fully unlicensed brain-clown-surgeon w/ an exploding surrealist brush can one again become a true Actor in the epic present!" **Dr. Podinski**, XLt analyst.

All the Electric Sheep are unplugged, and the authentic dreams reconnected!

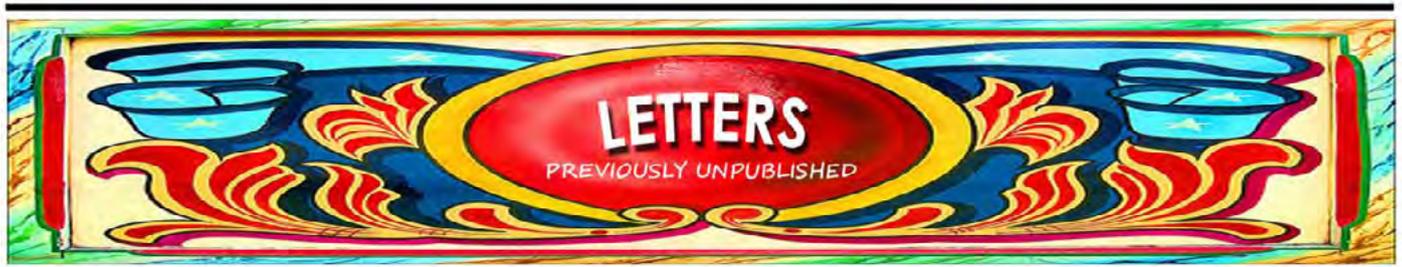
A conversation between Paul Jones and the PKD android at Nextfest 2005:

JONES: Where are we now?

PHIL: (*looking around the room*): We appear to be in my living room. (*Pause.*) It could be a simulacrum though (*pause*) but why would the authorities bother?

From How to Build an Android: The True Story of Philip K. Dick's Robotic Resurrection by David F. Dufty (2012).





PKD-Otaku is enjoyed all over the globe. Over the years, we have received letters from all kinds of characters. Sometimes space does not allow their publication. Here are some of the ones we were not able to publish previously.

**'There should be a Quiz page. I'd be willing to write one for you if you like?'**

- Reese Verrick

**'Is it some kind of underground magazine?'**

- Nicholas St. James

**'Read it while you still can. At the moment it is a real quality 'zine, but who knows how long these things last.'**

- Joe Chip

**'PKD-OTAKU NEEDS STRONGER EDITORIAL CONTROL; THE LEFT HAND DOESN'T KNOW WHAT THE RIGHT HAND IS DOING.'**

- ROBERT ARCTOR

**'It's really annoying, they keep changing the articles with every new issue. It should stay the same and it needs more gubble gubble.'**

- Manfred Steiner

- Manfred Steiner

**'IS THERE A SISTER MAGAZINE?'**

- BILL KELLER

**'I didn't find God in the Prox system. I found something better - PKD:Otaku. God promises eternal life. This 'Chew-zine' delivers it.'**

**'It's just a piece of Paper with words on it.'**

- Ragle Gumm

**'It looks good now but give it a year...I know how these things pan out.'**

- Floyd Jones

**'A most unsavoury piece of trash. Such filth should be banned and taken off the shelves immediately. It is only on the internet to entice the young. We should all pray for its immediate removal.'**

- Mrs Pritchett

**'PKD-Otaku is the genuine article, and because it is free I can still save up for that sheep I want.'**

- Rick Deckard

**'I was dying to read it - I really dig it.'**

- Officer Joe Tinblane

**'A Good Homeopape, but it lacks the Rushmore Effect.'**

- Pete Garden

**'Nothing is familiar to me. I mean it looks like Otaku, it has all the right pages, but underneath it I can see the real Otaku trying to come through.'**

- Ted Barton

**'It lost a News section, then gained another article. I think it should be regulated by Morec. Maybe it's just me?'**

- Allen Purcell

**'There is much wabi here.'**

- Robert Childan

**'I write letters to PKD-Otaku, but they just ignore me and treat me like some kind of nobody.'**

- Jason Taverner

**'I was disappointed that there was no gardening section. I was looking for information on succulents.'**

- Seth Morley

**'Transcendant!'**

- Horselover Fat

**'I suspect PKD-Otaku has been involved with pre-crime.'**

- Commissioner Anderton

**If you enjoy PKD Otaku,  
why not show your  
appreciation with an email?**

**A short letter to the editor**

**An article**

**A question**

**A book review**

**A thought**

**An exploration of Phil's ideas**

**[pkdotaku@gmail.com](mailto:pkdotaku@gmail.com)**

**You might be in the next issue!**