

## PKD OTAKU #18

Everyone knows that the moment of vertigo in a Philip K Dick novel occurs not when one level of reality has been exposed as fake, but when the second level, the supposedly more real level, turns out to be inauthentic too. Dick's signature concept is not the notion that this or that reality is fake but the idea that *any reality whatsoever* is false.

-- "Ubik as petit objet a" K-Punk: October 25, 2005

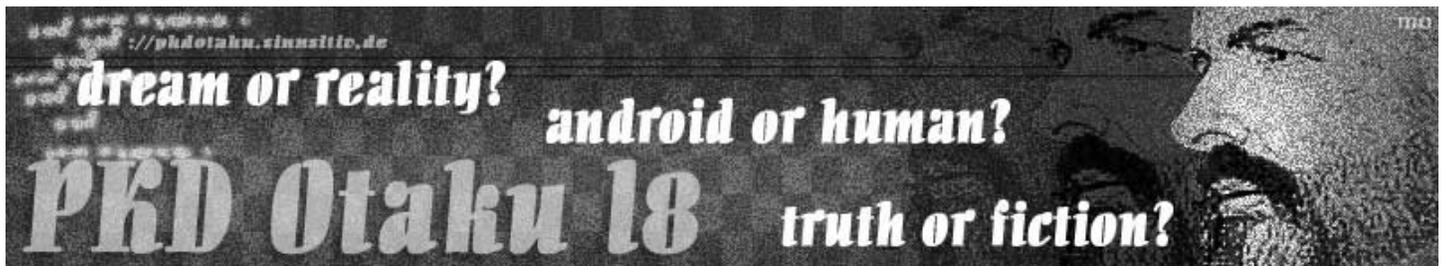
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### Some uncut PKD – Deleted section from the draft of *Deus Irae* Chapter 3

He saw a figure with impassive eyes, like those in late Medieval paintings, not lifeless but – totally tranquil. One hand was raised as a gesture toward him, the hand slightly extended forward so that it was available to be touched; he did not touch it however – just seeing it, knowing it was there: that was enough.

The figure was Christ.

So the gaff at the end of the long spear, that was not the only point of contact; it could be done through Christ without that agony. All he had to do was raise his own hand and reach; the figure would never move away, disappear or retreat or become insubstantial: he might lose sight of it, but it would remain; only his ability to see would dim.

It had stood there forever, like the Antagonist, would always; it was as if caught by a great Giotto or Fra Angelico paining – it had eternity about it, and if he did not reach now he would later, eventually; he would draw back not because he did not own the means to advance closer to it – or even to remain seeing it there from a distance – but *it*; it would not withdraw.

### Rudy Rucker on PKD

[Rudy was kind enough to let me reproduce this. By all mean check out is utterly cool blog at <http://www.rudyrucker.com/blog/>]

#### Monday, February 6, 2006: Phil Dick

I just finished reading a gripping, although somewhat depressing, biography of one of my literary heroes, recently reissued: *Divine Invasions: A Life of Philip K. Dick* (Carroll and Graf, 1989, 2005 New York), by Lawrence Sutin. A page-turner of a book, almost like a novel.

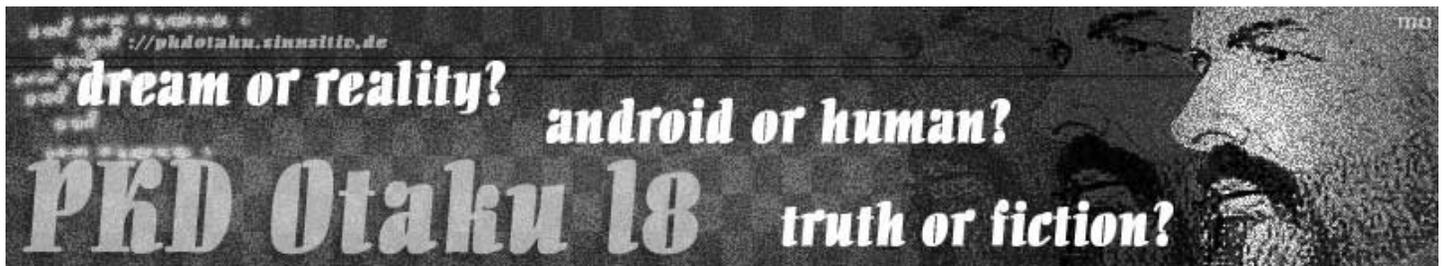
The depressing aspect has to do with how many character flaws and psychic disabilities Phil had. But the book has some nice quotes from Phil about his writing style. I'll page-number the quotes according to where they appear in the 2005 edition of *Divine Invasions*. I'll start with two quotes about what I've come to call transrealism.

"I want to write about the people I love and put them into a fictional world spun out of my own mind, not the world we actually have, because the world we actually have does not meet my standards." p. 4.

"And I always think, well, the ultimate surrealism ... is to take somebody that you knew, whose life-time ambition was to sell the largest television set that the store carried, and put him in a future utopia or dystopia, and pit him against this dystopia, or place him in a position of power." p. 54.

I think I'm becoming a bit less transreal as the years wear on. As a writer's craft grows (and his or her friends get older and less interesting), he or she perforce moves beyond simple character-to-friend identifications. It becomes more fragmented, you piece together fake people from shards.

In my current novel *Postsingular* I'm experimenting with Phil's multiple third-person viewpoint technique, where he switches, sometimes on the same page, from seeing through one person's eyes to another's. Speaking of *The Man in the High Castle*, biographer Lawrence Sutin puts it this way,



“The third-person voice is used throughout, but in an intimate, hovering matter, with characters shifted quickly into and out of prominence.” In a letter quoted in the bio, Phil says where picked up this technique.

“In the forties I got into novels written around that time by students at the French Department of Tokyo University; these students had studied the French realistic novels (which I, too, had read) and the Japanese students redesigned the slice-of-life structure to produce a compact, more integrated form ... When I went to write *The Man In The High Castle* I asked myself, How would this novel have been written --- with what structure --- if Japan had won the war? Obviously, using the multiple viewpoint structure of those students...” p. 114.

Note that, if done ineptly, this technique leads to what’s denigratingly called “wandering viewpoint” --- a common flaw in the work of tyro writers. But Dick can make it work as does, for that matter, Thomas Pynchon. I’m a little scared of the technique, and usually use a chapter break or a \*\*\* section break to separate the switch between active character-views.

Another artistic trick of Phil’s that interests me is that you should fold together two plots into one book to have a really lively novel, a book that’s what I call unpredictable, gnarly, and class four. I read the following injunction of Phil’s years ago, and I often think of it when I’m planning a book. To make a book *cook*, you want two plots, not one.

“Every novel of mine is at least two novels superimposed. This is the origin, this is why they are full of loose ends, but also, it is impossible to predict the outcome, since there is no linear plot as such. It is two novels into a sort of 3-D novel.” p. 256

Phil was into the notion of having someone’s mind permeate all of reality; he does this in *Ubik* and in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*.

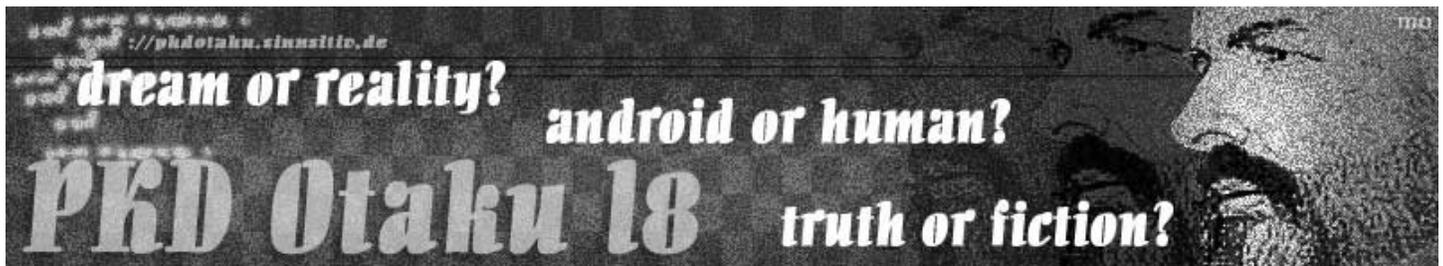
“So Runciter and *Ubik* equals *Palmer Eldritch* and *Chew-Z*. We have a human being transformed into a deity which is ubiquitous ... Salvific information penetrating through the ‘walls’ of our world by an entity with personality representing a life- and reality-supporting quasi-living force.” p. 154.

You might call it monistic panpsychism. I’m planning for a more pluralistic panpsychism in *Postsingular*. Although I guess there could be the underling cosmic minds of the three forces that I might call the Big Big, the Crooked Beetle, and Gaia.

The biography has some more background about the endlessly-discussed November, 1971, break-in at the house in San Rafael where Phil was living with speed-freaks. It could have been that one of Phil’s slushed housemates ripped him off. But he enjoyed spinning out a lot of alternate theories. My favorite: “Had certain ideas in his SF come too close to eliciting interest in his files? Also a disorientation drug (code name ‘*mello jello*’) had been stolen from the army, which was looking for leads to recover it.” p. 184. I love that drug name: Mello Jello. Right up there with merge, snap, quaak, sudocoke, ZZ-74, Substance D, Chew-Z and Can-D.

Phil transmuted the whole San Rafael experience into *A Scanner Darkly*, my all-time favorite of his books. I think it’s maybe the funniest book I’ve ever read, right up there with Burroughs’s *Yage Letters*. But it’s also tragic, which is what makes such a masterwork. It’s transreal to the max, although Phil in the afterword says, “I myself, I am not a character in the novel; I am the novel. So, though, was our entire nation at this time.” p. 201.

As for the pink light stuff after *Scanner Darkly*, I’ve never enjoyed that very much. To me, the novels begin to feel a little sober-sided, a little tendentious, and less multileveled and witty than before. It could have been that Phil was at some level putting us on. In one of his letters he imagines,



not without a certain grim satisfaction, the following reaction to *Valis*:

"Took drugs, saw God. BFD." p. 260.

With "BFD" of course standing for "big f\*cking deal". Like William Burroughs, Phil Dick had a pitch-perfect ear for street slang so real-sounding that it extrapolates well into the future. Hipsters are eternally still trying to be as far-out as Bill's junkies and Phil's heads.

All biographies end sadly. The tears of things. The human condition. The dark beauty of the death sentence we labor under.

Synchronistically enough, the day after I finished reading Phil's bio, my SF-writer friend Michael Bishop sent me a copy of his book *The Secret Ascension: Philip K. Dick is Dead, Alas* (Tor Books, 1989) --- which starts up with Phil being felled by a stroke at age 53 ... and with a new version of him leaving his body and coming to hang out in Bishop's home town in Georgia. A lot of SF writers ended up writing fictional things about Phil, so powerful was his influence.

In 1991, in the wake of getting the Philip K. Dick award for *Software*, and again for *Wetware*, I wrote an essay "Haunted by Philip K. Dick", alleging that I'd twice encountered his ghost. In this piece I was trying to sound a little badder and wacker than I really am. Phil knew all about striking a pose in his interviews. I was doing a Phil.

Looking over Phil's colorful, tumultuous bio, it's hard not to feel like something of a cautious bourgeois. I do prefer having a relatively stable life; I think it gives me more energy, and better control over my work. But something also whispers, "So far, and no further? Raise the stakes. Push it like Phil."

He was a Romantic artist, a doomed poet, a master stylist, an SF hero.

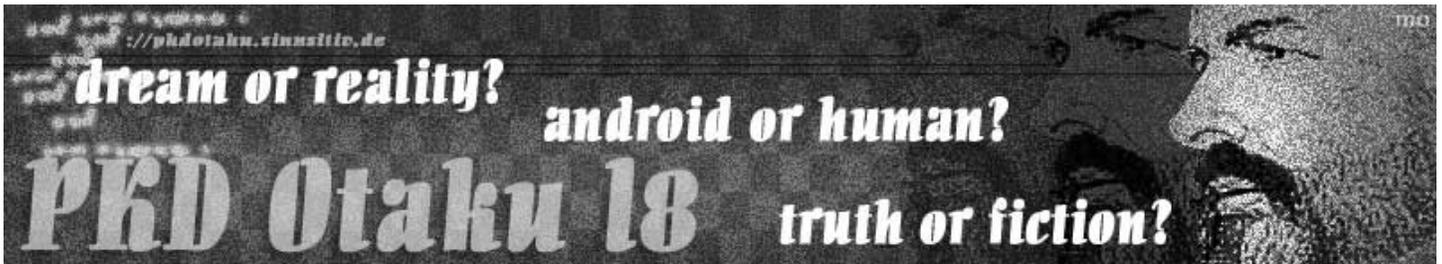
I love you, Phil.

### **Movies: Scanner Darkly: Tuesday, July 25, 2006**

We saw the movie of Phil Dick's *A Scanner Darkly* as soon as we got back to CA. I'd really looked forward to it, I was jumping out of my skin to see it. I think of *Scanner* as the best-ever stoner humor novel --- well, on this front, William J. Craddock's *Be Not Content* is at the same level. And *Scanner* is more than that, too, in fact for me, it was a big inspiration in forming my ideas about how to write SF in a fresh way, it set me to thinking about a "transreal" way to fuse autobiographical beatnik-like literature and science fiction. One edition of *Scanner* had a blurb on it describing the book as "transcendental biography," which was probably the reason I coined the word transreal. I first read the book at Seacon in Brighton, like 1979, and I was laughing so hard I almost forgot my suitcase on the train platform.

But as a movie, I dunno, it didn't work as well as I'd expected. Maybe I was expecting too much. Robert Downey Jr. is wonderful, and most of the dialogue is lifted straight out of the book (which I pretty much know by heart, having read it three or four times), which is nice. Although it's really a funny novel when you read it, on screen it didn't come off as comical as I remember it seeming. They didn't punch the lines as hard as they could have, I think. And when you read, you can reread and muse and savor the wit.

I'm of two minds about the animation. It's slick and pretty, but you get more information out of a real face than an abstraction of a face; like the close-ups of Keanu were somewhat blank and I bet in photo he'd look more tortured and deeper, not that Keanu does look that deep. Certainly some



Downey twinkles were lost. And the scramble-suit gimmick started hurting my eyes. Way too much of that, which was really quite minor in the book. Sometimes the animation was just right though, making the scene like a Robert Bechtle painting. The freeway scene looked just right, so California.

Really it is such a sad story, as well as being funny. Reading it I always "hear" mournful oboes in the background.

As discussed in his bio, Phil was living alone in a trashed little packing-box of house with big jars of little dexedrine pills letting street kids crash at his place during the time that the novel is transreally about. He did go into treatment at one point, although, as the novel makes clear, he didn't like it there.

Even with the best talent and intentions, it's not really possible to have an intimate book wearing the necessarily monumental carapace of a movie. But I want to go see it again soon. It'll be good on DVD too, because then you can turn on the subtitles. Watching it, I was anxious that the audience wasn't fully picking up all the great little turns of phrase. I was laughing louder than anyone near me at Downey's lines, kind of wanting to encourage people to love *Scanner* enough. When the lights came up the kid next to me gave me a look. "Want to score some D?" I asked him.

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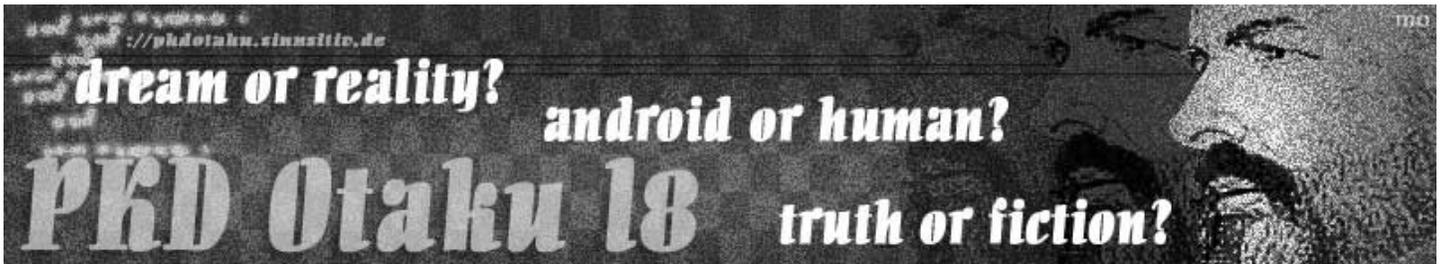
### Truly, Madly, 'Darkly' By Rob Nelson

[Of the dozens of movie reviews I liked this one the best.]

Slipped into the summer movie season like acid in your Happy Meal, Richard Linklater's *A Scanner Darkly* is a blockbuster of counterprogramming. No matter that the dude from *The Matrix* is its star—or would be, if he weren't half-hidden under a thick swath of digital paint. Linklater's return to *Waking Life*'s surreally pulsing world of rotoscope animation—and his flashback to Philip K. Dick's like-titled drug dystopia of the late '70s—is a prefab cult flick pitched to a drastically underserved group of filmgoers: stoners, depressives, bookworms, conspiracy theorists, movie critics, and various other head-scratching freaks for whom the promise of Hollywood action sounds more like a threat. What a breath of fresh air this stifling, claustrophobic, boldly uningratiating vision of an American subculture's last gasp imparts to its contrarian core audience.

Printed in 1977, the year of *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters*, Dick's counterculture postmortem—which culminates in a list of drug-related casualties, including the author himself—is hardly escapist sci-fi or even sci-fi at all. That futuristic scramble suit, however metaphorically vivid, mainly served as a means for the author to slide his semi-autobiographical *Fear and Loathing in Orange County* past the publisher at the start of the Just Say No age.

Not just a drug movie but a deliberate buzz-kill of sorts, the animation smuggles its unfashionably melancholy take on pushers and addicts under cover of the animated trifle—at the expense of approval by those who'd prefer it to be purely psychedelic, another cool distraction, more roller-coaster ride than bad trip. No euphoric "holy moments" in this faithful adaptation of Philip K. Dick's like-titled sci-fi dystopia: Indeed, its lead character might be the most fractured protagonist ever



to grace an American movie. An undercover narcotics officer and hopeless addict, both cop and copout, Bob Arctor, a.k.a. Agent Fred (Keanu Reeves, plus computers), is forced to conceal his true self (whatever that is) under a hi-tech "scramble suit"--a kind of kaleidoscopic body-hologram that morphs at split-second intervals to reveal portions of men, women, and children of every variety. His corporate/government masters admiringly refer to their digitized puppet as a "vague blur"; we might call him an *unreliable narrator*, except that the world he's surveilling--controlled by a shadow cabal of Halliburtonian proportions--is more spun than he is. As Dick himself was very well aware, even paranoids have enemies--and only a paranoid, perhaps, can see them clearly. What a breath of fresh air this stifling, claustrophobic, boldly uningratiating vision of an American subculture's last gasp imparts to its contrarian core audience.

### A brief look at two novels By Andre Welling

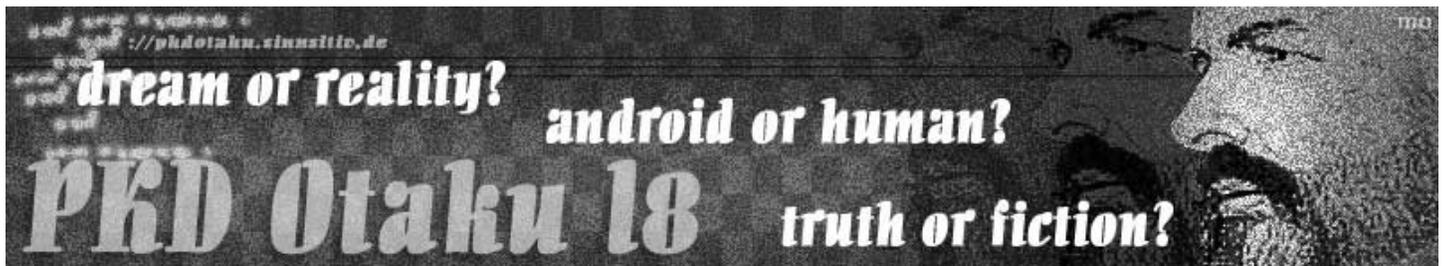
I have e-bayed COUNTER-CLOCK WORLD mainly because you made me aware that this could be one of very few Dick novels (or all except the odd stuff like GATHER and THISBE) that I still haven't read in the original. I must have overlooked that when getting all the originals. So. Today it arrived from New Zealand. A 'new' Dick read, some novel I haven't read two or three times at least. A fresh Dick read where I don't know how it 'ends'.

As to that novel, it again doesn't seem to work with me and that's why the counter-clockwork doesn't run. In COUNTER-CLOCK WORLD the anti-time field seems only to affect bodies of living things, not the physical world of cause-and-effect at large. So history isn't reversed truthfully. People don't walk in reverse and people don't speak in reverse.

Old-born might be killed again for good. That reverse flow of bodily functions in an otherwise 'open' world of contingent action is a funny concept but you have to stick to it. If the people 'disgorge' their breakfast daily, pumping orange juice and coffee (back) into cups and glasses - shouldn't they 'eat' their shit, too? Reincorporate their (or any other excrement) to keep the circulation in balance? And if it isn't their own excrement which might be hard to require in a world where (physical processes outside biology aren't reversed) - how to make orange juice or the other historically correct stuff from it? How to \*reshape\* it by chewing if human motion isn't reversed at all?

They feed on Sogum which seems to be outside the reversion process. But their cigarettes grew longer when they smoke 'em. In this world it must be possible to smoke cigarettes that grow longer and shorter while you smoke them. Reversed cigarettes where you collect a butt and revive it and normal cigarettes that you light up and consume (like suckin' Sogum or burning any other stuff and inhaling). Etc. That strikes me as flaw not as feature, the concept is violated. You cannot reproduce 'lamb chop' and 'toast' if your whole locomotion isn't reversed too (and even then you couldn't reconnect the filaments of flesh and wheat protein without the help of a more general entropy gradient reversal process) but then you would speak and think reversed too, and history would just be played back in reverse which is clearly not happening in COUNTER-CLOCK WORLD. No broken things reassemble in your hands, you might even be killed on your way to the ('handy') womb.

I actually did reread SCANNER in advance of the infamous movie anime flick. I never understood how smoking and eating worked while wearing a scramble suit. How does it look like from the outside when you penetrate your body? I thought some of the humour was somewhat forced as in



that scene when Fred three times fast-forwards the holotape to escape stupid random dopers reasoning only to catch the 'same' thread. Yeah, well stoner talk is elliptical but that was too much, sitcom stuff. the scene when the chick merges into Donna and back is a real black hole in this novel, it does not make 'sense' like the Walker's appearance after they all 'woke up' in MAZE. The way donna, not bob, turns out to be the real rogue undercover super-narc is very delightful, she empties her clip into a coke truck just for some emotional relief, Dirty Harry would be so proud! And how Bob's demise is only some side-plot in them bagging Barris; preparing a burnt-out wreck with dormant snooper potential for a planned infiltration mission.

But there is not much talk on the peculiarities of Death, how it is different from smack or pot. People need it and get mellow when they 'drop tabs'. But you cannot get a grip on its special turn on.

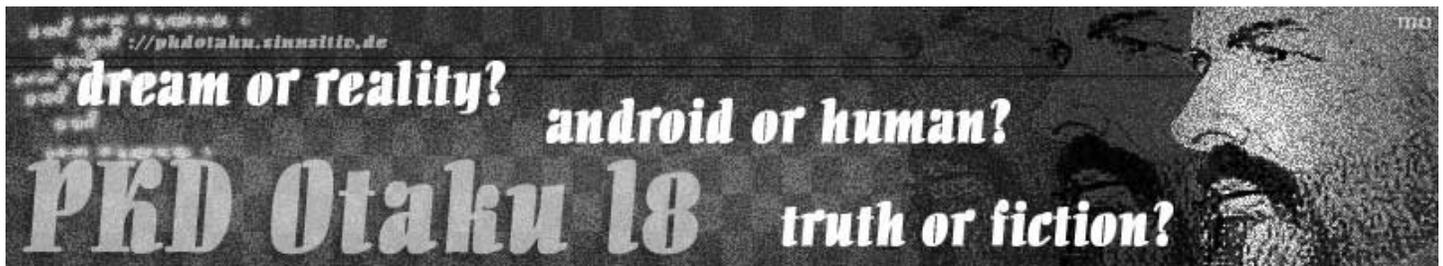
### PKD & Me part 2 By Patrick

I never met or saw Phil during his lifetime. I was living in the Midwest all that time and Phil rarely left California. I had no way of contacting him but, in truth, I think the idea never crossed my mind. I knew him simply as an author I liked very much. Most of the stories about his personal life never came to my attention and of course most of his nonfiction works were unavailable. I didn't hear Phil's voice until the PKDS tape of his interview with Paul Williams became available in the late 1980s.

What really brought him into focus as a person for me, not just as a name on a book, was Paul Williams' famous *Rolling Stone* article in 1974. That completely astounded me. I still have the original photocopy of that article I made at the university library 30 years ago. It was at that point that I became somewhat fanatical about Phil. I hunted down his uncollected short stories in old pulp SF magazines; unearthed the novels I still hadn't read yet in used bookstores (this was long before the PKD renaissance and most of Phil's earlier works were out of print); then began looking for his few published letters, mostly in obscure SF fanzines. I turned some close friends of mine onto Phil and we used to sit around and discuss him in those late-night, stoned conversations that went on for hours, rock music playing in the background in beat-up student apartments. After I moved to Cincinnati I had some fabulous luck. A friend who worked in a second-hand bookstore had gone to an estate sale and purchased a gigantic science fiction collection. I was able to buy from him a dozen pulp magazines with old Phil short fiction and anthologies with Phil's stories.

I vividly remember finding the first paperback edition of *Valis* when I was visiting my parents one winter weekend. That would have been in February 1981. My car had broken down weeks before and I couldn't afford to get it fixed so I was busing back and forth to visit home. I found the book at a local newsstand -- I knew about it from an interview Phil had done in a fanzine some years before -- and I was really excited to see it at last. There hadn't been a new Philip K. Dick novel since *A Scanner Darkly* in 1977. I devoured the book on the long three-hour bus ride home. Cold and dark and lonely on that winter night, just a pool of light from the overhead reading lamp in my stiff bus seat. By the time we pulled into Cincinnati it was nearly midnight. I had finished the book and I really believe my life was different as a result. Or the world was different. Or both.

And I remember learning about Phil's death. My brother, Tim, saw his obituary in *Time* magazine. He called me up and broke the news to me. I had had no idea. I was shocked, deeply



saddened, like a part of me had been pulled out of existence. I don't believe that anyone's death had hit me so hard before. (Back then I was fairly unfamiliar with death; alas, no longer.) Not long after that Paul Williams started the Philip K. Dick Society and it became possible to learn much more about Phil and in a way it brought him back to life.

This is not really a memoir, of course, since I never really met Phil. But for all of that he was an extremely important part of my life. Every once in awhile I do regret never having gone out to California to meet him. I don't know if that would have been possible, as I had no idea how to contact him. I didn't know anyone who knew how to reach him and probably I would have been too shy to even make the attempt. And maybe it's doesn't really matter. What matters is I read his works. Isn't that where Phil lives today

### **Dropping some tabs and zoning out By elric sourpenny the YOUNGER**

Phil's face looming in the sky obscuring the sun, his booming voice strikes dead a third of the birds and dogs. Not the cats. The cats rejoice upon His second coming and gather, lead by Pinky standing upright on her hindlegs. Miracles happen. Cat time is warped-reversed: They rise from the dead and lively tabby cats reassemble from roadkill heaps.

Policemen vanish. As does addiction. Without traces. Finally the giant Prox colony ship "Floating Dead God IX" -- two third of the moon's mass --- navigated by Nurwogord Snox Ghajwali landed smoothly, taking out large parts of Oceania, USA and Mexico, causing a worldwide giant tsunami and a spread of monster hurricanes. After seven days, the floods and storms cease and the dust veil rips open for a welcome glimpse at the strangely distant and bluish sun for the ragged survivors. "INFINITY, TRY AGAIN!" cries the giant bearded head amiably and opens his mouth, spilling out a constant swarm of mainly black electric kittens, "Davids" holding out olive twigs, Walkers-on-Earth with sticks and hoods, and a few evolutionized, upright-going sheep-men with huge, bulging foreheads, obviously leading the invasion. Friendly? Hostile? We will soon find out. Maybe they can contribute to the layouts or have a kung fu of printer maintenance or pot healing that is much better than ours. maybe they collect diner menus of the eighties.

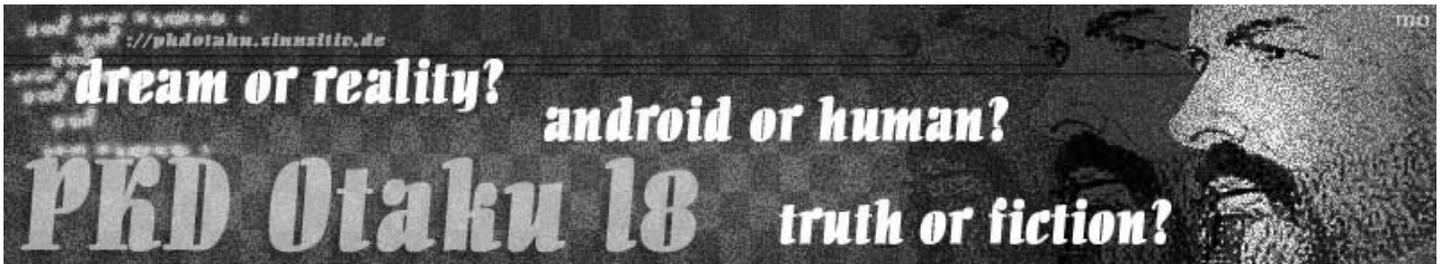
have you seen this:

"Agent Dick. How America's most famous SciFi writer toppled communism and saved the world from Alien invasion in his spare time, using only household materials (and so can you!)"

by Samael Birnboom, M.D. Miskatonic University Press 2006 (contains DVD-ROM with interactive "Dr Smile" transcripts and rundowns.)

I think we should have a book exposing that all plot ideas and outlines of his works were actually handed over to him, in quarterly frequency, in a Taco Bell outfit in Oakland, by always the same small wheezing guy in a trench coat, top hat and rubber boots, that might not even have been human.

Dick was an Alien robot self-destructing after seeing 'the owl in daylight' and having successfully accomplished his mission goal of uploading the meme of ontological brokenness into our cognosphere.



a musical note by marc

lately – relatively, that is in my case more than half a year ago – I downloaded some goa and some trance mixes from a nice french website named [trance4ever](http://trance4ever.free.fr). the goa I use to hear while washing my dishes besides for dancing purposes, the trance stuff gives me good vibes for late night working sessions. and while listening a very ambient and chilling mix called “solar genius” made by stef i could hear some familiar sounds...

“that’s... yes?!?” it has been the voices of roy and tyrell while a track of my most famous polish trancegroup “aural planet” filled the air. if you like to listen to it on your own, goto <http://trance4ever.free.fr> and maybe you will find some more.

## Book Reviews

### ***Solar Lottery***

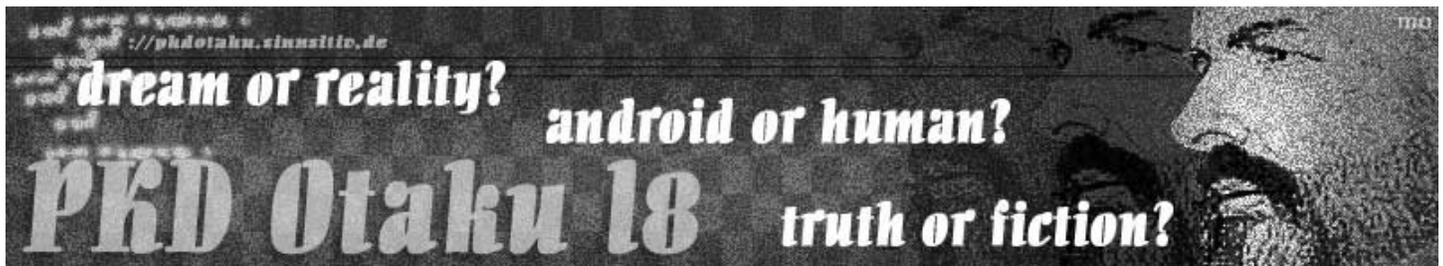
**R.G. Meadley & M. John Harrison: *New Worlds* November 1968, p. 61**

*Solar Lottery* (Ace, 50 cents), Philip K. Dick’s first novel, recently re-released, purports to be based on Heisenberg’s theory of random-selection and Von Neuman’s games-theory; but in a welter of banal floridity and inept voyeurism it degenerates into a turgid and tensionless space opera. The action of the story centres round a Besterian game of beat-the-telepath and a race to locate the illusive tenth planet of the solar system. There are moments of second-hand ingenuity, but the supposed theoretic base of the novel is treated only as an importunate detail, and the overall effect is of an author as dreary and despondent as the universe he describes. It ends with an uplifting if unoriginal dissertation on the as yet unfulfilled but soon otherwise promise of Man. The whole imitative chipboard drama fades out to the strains of The Star Spangled Banner... The book is a useful indication of just how far Dick has progressed in the thirteen years since its first publication, ad little else.

### ***The World Jones Made***

**James Cawthorn: *New Worlds* February 1969**

Jones, to quote from Philip K. Dick’s **The World Jones Made** (Sidgwick & Jackson, 18s), is “...a man with is eyes in the present and his body in the past.” In the post-World War Three America of some decades hence, Jones alone knows what the future holds and knows it with absolute certainty – for twelve months ahead. Relativism is the doctrine of the day, a reaction against the absolutist rulers supposedly responsible for the deaths of millions in past war; Relativism does not tolerate the imposition of one person’s ideas and standards upon others. The society bred of war (and functioning remarkably well after being blasted with hydrogen bombs and assorted biological weapons) encourages such a doctrine, for a vast increase in genetic freaks has made the terms “normal” and “abnormal” largely meaningless. For Jones, however, there are no choices and no illusion of free will. His strange gift of foresight also includes the knowledge that his future cannot be altered. He sees the arrival of the drifters, titanic spores floating through space, and knows their



implications long before the government broadcasts the news. It seems the universe takes no account of doctrines, however idealistic...

**The World Jones Made** is an uneven book, perhaps weakest where Dick gives specific examples of Jones's minute-by-minute experiences of the future, for it is extremely difficult to imagine how anyone can cope with two complete and *different* sets of sensory data simultaneously. At one point it appears that he sees only a partial vision of future events, while at another it is asserted that his experience is total; his memory of things to come is unsparingly complete, so that the act of living through them becomes a wearisome recapitulation – and yet, he does not always remember details. Oddly enough, the novel survives such inconsistencies.

### ***Eye In the Sky***

**Robert McCary: *San Francisco Chronicle* September 22, 1957 p. 25**

There is, somewhere in the Bay Area, a writer named Philip K. Dick. I do not know him, but I visualize an intense young man hunched over a typewriter, typing at transgalactic speed. It's the only way he could produce books at the rate he does. "Solar Lottery" was good. "The World that Jones Made" was bad. "The Man Who Japed" was erratic.

But his **Eye in the Sky** is excellent. It is another story of alternative universes, but much better than most. If Dick had Heinlein's command of technique, "Eye in the Sky" might be a better book than "The Door Into Summer." As it is it rates a good second.

### ***Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?***

**Gerald Bishop: *Vector* no. 53 Spring/Summer 1969 p. 19**

During World War Terminus an unspecified radioactive dust descends on Earth, and the animal population slowly dies off, one species at a time. By 1992 only a small number of species remain.

After the war, most of Earth's population emigrated to other planets. On emigrating they are given an android built to their own special requirements. The job of Rick Decard, lead character, is to destroy androids that have escaped from the colonized planets and returned to Earth.

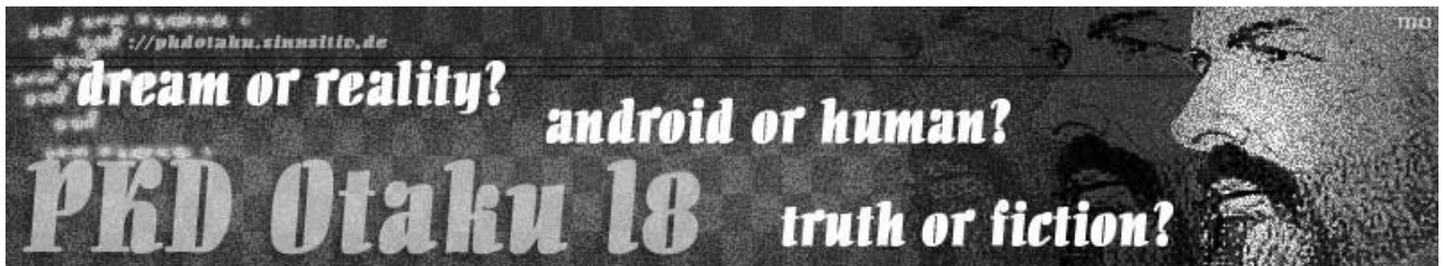
This has some interesting ideas, such as religion based on the life of Wilbur Mercer, a supposed immortal; and also the idea of the 'mood organ.'

### ***Galactic Pot-healer***

**Michael Kenward: "Peddling Pot." *Vector* no. 55 Spring 1970 p. 15**

*Galactic Pot-healer*, by Philip K. Dick, (Berkley 60 cents) is not another story about the drug scene. It is about Joe Fernwright, an unemployed mender of ceramic pots. He gets involved with the Glimmung and ends up joining a project to raise a cathedral from the watery depths of Plowman's Planet.

But the adventure is not the most important event in the life of the pot healer. Far more important to Joe Ferenwright is his search for a meaningful life, away from the overcrowding and the war vet's dole in Cleveland-no-longer-Ohio in the year 2046.



**“In the afternoon, we drove over to Fullerton to see Philip K. Dick”  
*The New Yorker* February 3, 1975**

Philip K. Dick lives in an apartment full of books and records and photographs with his wife, Tessa; his small son, Christopher; and two cats, Harvey Wallbanger and Sasha. He is jolly and tubby and bearded. His books, which are hilarious, are popular in France, because the French think they are about how grim everything is. Dick showed us a French newspaper pie about him – the subtitles we “L’Acide,” “Le Suicide,” “Le Chaos,” “Les Machines,” “La Societe Totalitaire,” “La Paranoia.” Dick has just finished a book about Tim Leary and the LSD crowd, and what happened to them.

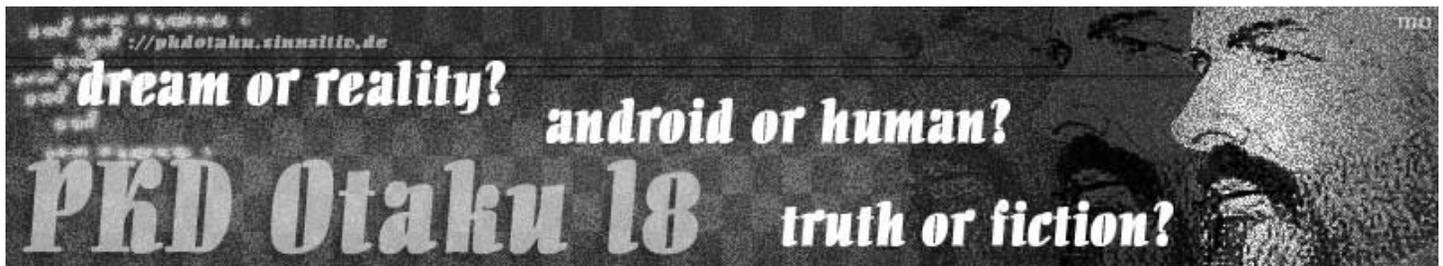
We had stopped in to make a short call of homage and wound up talking along for hours, drinking wine, and Tessa going out for Chinese food, and then talking about cosmologies until it was almost time for our plane back to N.Y. The apartment also contains a two-foot-high metal rocket ship on a wooden base –this is the Hugo award, the highest awards in science fiction. The plaque is missing, though, because Dick once used it to break up a fight. “It grabs good,” he says. As for the cosmologies, this is what emerged from our discussions: cosmologies all seem to be based upon repetition – you know, first the universe expands, then it contracts, then it expands again, etc. – but maybe that is not so. Maybe this whole expansion business that the universe is currently embarked upon is going to happen only once. That would mean that every day really is a new day, right? Also, maybe it’s not true that Einstein was smarter than Newton. Maybe Newton’s laws accurately described the universe as it then existed. But since then it’s expanded and gotten more complicated, and can be accurately described only by Einstein physics. Which will eventually become outdated, maybe.

**Don't be a hero By John Patterson  
*The Guardian* April 21, 2007**

Why did Philip K Dick have to die so young? If he were alive now, he could be living high on the hog, making a real fortune by suing the adapters of his works for making such a complete mess of them. For example, had Dick not popped his astronaut booties back in 1982, he might have taken the money he earned for selling his stories *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and “We Can Remember It For You Wholesale,” which provided the basis for *Blade Runner* and *Total Recall*, respectively (and which, as blueprints of the essential Dick mindset, aren't at all bad), and hired lawyers to legally throttle the makers of *Paycheck* (a rotten day for John Woo), *Impostor* (Gary Fleder), *Screamers* (Christian Duguay), *Vanilla Sky* (from *Ubik*, via *Abre Los Ojos*, and directed by the inexcusable Cameron Crowe) and *Next* (from cross-dressing action-hack Lee Tamahori).

Or perhaps Dick might simply have handed off his winnings to Richard Linklater and told him, “Go ahead son, *A Scanner Darkly* was just great: now go and do *The Man InThe High Castle* and *Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said*.” He might, on the other hand, choose a gentler tack and use his self-proclaimed powers of prestidigitation and communion with higher beings to dispense really valuable career advice to the likes of Nicolas Cage, Julianne Moore and Jessica Biel, none of whom distinguishes themselves in *Next*, the latest big-screen abortion to derive from one of Dick's works.

He might have been the man to sit Nicolas Cage down - probably with a largish bottle and a coffee table covered in expensive, paranoia-inducing pharmacological treats - and demand to know if Cage honestly expected the second half of his career to unfold with the same lazy, by-the-numbers



ease as the first half. He might have asked Cage if he really thought the powers that be would let him get away with another two decades of intermittent decent performances like, say, *Leaving Las Vegas*, surrounded by heavy servings of the same old action-hero crap like he's been doling out recently.

In the past year alone Cage has given us *The Wicker Man*, in all its mind-bending awfulness, the unwatchable farrago of *Ghost Rider*, and now *Next*, punctuated by his only amusing role in years in one of *Grindhouse*'s fake movie trailers. (We might legitimately ask what we might do had we been provided similar service by, say, our stockbrokers or investment analysts.) Dick might have been the guy to shame Cage out of his laziness by waving in his face the DVD boxes for *Gone In Sixty Seconds*, *National Treasure* or *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, and warning him that he faced turning 60 one day, making endless ridiculous movies in front of blue screens while clutching to his sagging breast yet another hottie several decades his junior like, well, Jessica Biel?

But perhaps that is exactly how Cage plans to live out his career. If so, could you let me and Philip K Dick off this bus right now?

**Views of the future from a long-dead writer By Nora Young**  
*Globe & Mail 21/04/07*

If Dick's work were simply prescient about the darker technological features of our lives today – about surveillance, self-medicating drug culture and our increasingly technological sense of identity – it would make stimulating reading enough. His insight into the manipulative quality of language foreshadows the corrosiveness of our own era of relentless media and political spin, and the prison of technocratic reasoning. But the power of his work goes deeper than that. Dick's worlds, where nothing is as it seems, mirror what it can feel like to live in a rootless, postmodern society, that Matrix-like feeling that, at the core of this technoscape, we aren't really grounded in anything deeply meaningful.

The thorny issue that arises in Dick's stories is what it means to be authentic when the world around us is radically ungrounded like this. Dick's persistent questions -- who am I really, and what do I believe independent of the shifting sands of society? -- feels like our own collective existential crisis, you know, that one we have in between bouts of compulsive shopping.

**A protest against the utter inhumanity of the machine intelligence! By Joe Chip**

“One of these days . . . people like me will rise up and overthrow you, and the end of tyranny by the homeostatic machine will have arrived. The days of human values and compassion and simple warmth will return, and when that happens someone like myself who has gone through an ordeal and who genuinely needs hot coffee to pick him up and keep him functioning when he has to function will get the hot coffee whether he happens to have a poscred readily available or not.”