



Welcome To “PKD OTAKU” Issue #15 (January 2006)

This time the new otaku came quiet early to my mailbox, as I remember already in September last year, means even not two months after the last issue. Sadly (for you, the reader, luckily not for me at the end) I had to go through love troubles and big changes of mind. And so you had to wait until the year had changed to read it. But I can tell you that it was worth waiting for as the “patient Patrick” gathered some fine and long and interesting texts for you. So far, may VALIS be with you...

Marc Oberst

Welcome to a new issue of PKD Otaku. This time out we have a very curious newspaper investigation into whether or not Phil really died in 1982. My mind says, “Of course he did. But my heart asks, “What if Phil was still alive?” Where would he be and what would he be doing. And what would he be writing? I cannot even imagine, though I know I would want to read it, whatever it was. But it’s just a dream...isn’t it? Also in this issue some original content from two good friends. Perry Kinman’s story is fiction but what about Marc’s tale? Fact or fiction or both or neither? Only Marc knows for sure and perhaps not even he is completely sure. We continue with the on-going series of book reviews as well. This is rather specialized in that I focus almost exclusively on reviews from science fiction magazines. There was a time when those were the only publications tracking Phil’s books. Now, of course, PKD is a brand name. You’ll find some recent mentions of him in the mainstream press listed below. But is it really Phil they are invoking or is it only the Philip K. Dick as filtered through the movies.

Patrick Clark

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**“Mystery Still Surrounds Death Of Local Sci-Fi Writer” by David Alcott (Tribune Staff Writer)
The Tribune [Oakland] August 28,1983: pp. D1- D2**

"...An industrial empire had collapse, carrying its operator and owner, Maury Applebaum, to his -- evidently voluntary death. *Evidently*. A good word, and a big word, like any word pertaining to death." -- *The Unteleported Man* by Philip K. Dick

Philip K. Dick, a science fiction writer whose life in the Eastbay produced a book that inspired the film "Bladerunner," died 18 months ago. But is he really dead?

His death at age 53 from an apparent stroke in a Santa Ana hospital was colored by "surrealistic" circumstances which later prompted his daughter, Laura Coelho, to wonder whether his death was a hoax.

She says she resolved the doubts in her mind -- "There's no question he is dead" -- but when his literary executor recently announced plans to publish Dick's novels posthumously, *The Tribune* began an investigation of his deathbed circumstances that raised more questions than answers.

The questions came up in four areas:

- His life and writing: Marked by genius, marred by frustration, riddled with hoaxes both literary and real, his life was climaxed with predictions of his death and hope he would finally break the typecast shackles of "science-fiction writer."

He had won national acclaim with one of the first of 35 novels, but publishers kept pushing him to produce science fiction when he had a more literary bent.

- His deathbed experience: Lasting 13 days under the protection of a jealous family and a secretive medical staff that withheld information from lovers, friends, the press and the public -- it is a mystery to this day.

His oldest child, Laura, who represented the family, closed his room to his five ex-wives, including her mother. Dick's father, long estranged, did not go to him.

During his first days in the hospital, Dick looked good despite the stroke's paralysis, and one doctor repeatedly told Coelho he would recover. But Dick mysteriously slipped not a coma overnight, and the doctors said his brain died. His family, confused and distraught, left him to die alone.

- His body: Who saw it? Who identified it? What was done with it? What does the death certificate say, and what do police think?

No one in the family says they saw his body. Who identified it remains unanswered, but only one nurse may have done so. Doctors or morticians didn't have to, and Dick was cremated quickly in an abrupt change of plan.

A Santa Ana police homicide investigator whose opinion was sought on the death certificate found the circumstances "very suspicious" and "possibly a hoax."

- His family and estate: What respects were paid to his remains? Where did his wealth go? What may his literary legacy gain? Who may profit?





Despite his deeply religious nature and Episcopal affiliation, Dick was given no funeral, only two memorial services that friends and former wives attended. No service was held in the Eastbay, where he grew up and published his first works.

Later, the father's family held a "graveside service" where his ashes were inurned in a joint plot with his twin sister, who died at birth, in Colorado.

His personal wealth, estimated at between \$500,000 and \$750,000, disappeared, and his family can't account what he did with it. He left to his estate several unpublished "mainstream" novels, a 5000,000-word masterwork in note form, and voluminous letters.

His family discounts the possibility of a death hoax: "He has a death certificate!" insists his father, Edgar, of Menlo Park. "It would never enter his mind."

But his daughter says she would like to have answers to questions about his hospitalization and death certificate, thus fueling suspicions and raising the possibility of a publicity 8-23-83 19:47 te [sic: typesetting error?] she administers may profit from the attention surrounding investigation of a possible hoax.

In fact, her agreement to speak publicly for the first time since his death came just after the estate was settled and two posthumous novels were put out for bid by publishers.

Yet she says she broke her 19-month silence only because an ex-wife, Tessa Busby, went public recently with criticism of the estate.

She spoke to The Tribune about the last act of Dick's 30-year writing career, in which he finished a religious fantasy trilogy in June 1981 that exhausted him to the point he predicted his death. Ironically, at the same time he was given popular fame and fortune through a 15-year old potboiler, "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" made into "Bladerunner."

Hollywood's screenplay set the story about androids -- human-looking robots -- in Los Angeles, but Dick's actual setting was Oakland of the future, says Paul Williams, the literary executor.

The movie and the last three novels started paying off for Dick financially in 1977 after a life as a writer in near poverty. Yet he didn't take advantage of the wealth and instead began giving to religious charities.

"Phil made \$750,000 from his writing from 1977 on, and there is nothing to show for it," said another ex-wife and Coelho's mother, Anne Dick told The Tribune.

"He didn't at anything. He didn't buy any clothes. He gave a little to the Quakers and so on, but you wonder what happened to all that money because he didn't leave any."

Anne Dick agrees that the ironclad typecasting offers a motive for Dick to have hoaxed his death -- to start a new literary career under a new pseudonym. "That's an interesting theory, a very strong point," she says, "but I don't believe there was a hoax. I believe he is dead."

To Dick, death was the ultimate illusion and life was the ultimate reality. It was like truth and falsity, with the two constantly at war in the lives of his novels' characters.

His most famous death riddle was in his last book, "The Transmigration of Timothy Archer" (1982), a fictional account of the life and death of Dick's close friend and distant family relative, the late Episcopal Bishop James Pike of San Francisco.





Pike dies of exposure in an Israeli desert in 1969, but in Dick's novel Pike's spirit "migrates" to the mind of a mentally retarded young man. The central character, Angel Archer, who has to decide whether to believe the "migration" is modeled after Dick's daughter.

Coelho, a 23-year old Buick employee in Flint, Mich., told The Tribune:

"His last novel was the only one that scared me -- it raised hackles on my neck. But all his science fiction characters were taken from real life. His own life was like a science fiction story and his death paralleled some of the stories in his own novels."

When she revealed that no family member saw his body after he died, Coelho was asked if, somehow, the death could have been hoaxed.

With little surprise apparent in her voice, Coelho told The Tribune:

"I can see how you might think that. I even thought of it. That would be just like Dad... I can seem him doing something like that for the short-term, then coming out of the closet and laying his cards on the table."

Although there was no will or insurance and Dick was "unprepared for death" as Williams put it, Dick predicted his demise to more than one person several months in advance.

"He talked about death all the time, he felt he was going to die soon," Williams says. "He thought he had killed himself writing "Timothy Archer," that physically he had exhausted himself in a dangerous way."

Coelho says, "The only thing he said to me was about three to five months before he died. He said he wanted his estate divided equally among this [sic] three children."

Philip Kindred Dick was born in Chicago in December 1928, and his parents moved to Berkeley when he was a baby. He was graduated from Berkeley High School in 1946 and worked at a Berkeley record store for about five years.

His daughter says he attended UC-Berkeley for a year where he made straight A's but was thrown out for his anti-military attitude in the ROTC class.

Dick published his first science-fiction book, "Solar Lottery," in 1955. Anne Dick says by the time they met in 1958 and he moved to Point Reyes, he had written four mainstream novels which were being ignored by publishers.

He wrote "Man in the High Castle" at Point Reyes in 1961 and it won the Hugo Award for best sci-fi novel of the year in 1962.

Dick returned to the Eastbay in 1964 and wrote "Humpty Dumpty in Oakland," a mainstream novel never published but now being considered for posthumous publication. The book is about a working-class man whose trust in his friends makes him a victim of dishonesty.

That theme of fraud among friends was one of the themes of his novels. Others were his descriptions of God, often depicted as an extraterrestrial, the flip-of-the-coin link between truth and illusion, never-ending practical jokes and hoaxes, and drug-induced fantasies.

His fascination with exotic drugs produced descriptions of "deaths" that turned out to be something else, a fact Anne Dick acknowledged when told of Laura Coelho's suspicions.

"That's true, that's all true," she says. "You know I've been fooled by him many times before."





THE EARTH IS A WASTELAND ...

Strangled by the radioactive dust from War World Terminus, even toads and owls are extinct, and a living animal is the greatest luxury a man can possess.

Bounty hunter Rick Decard can earn enough money to buy a real sheep to replace his electric one -- if he can hunt down the renegade Androids, man-made men who have returned to earth from the Martian Colonies.

Decard has dealt with Androids before, but never with any so lethal as the hauntingly beautiful Nexus-6 Rachel, who lures him to bed and then asks: "Will you kill me in a way that won't hurt?"

"I Take Your Dick?" by Marc Oberst

It was one of those cold winterlike days still coming back in March. In your mind you are ready for spring, but the meridians you are living at do not support such ideas. So you are coming home from work, you feel tired and you are wet from the rain outside. You are late as you missed the last train home and your cellphone's batteries were too low to call a friend for help. Yes, these are the things usually happening the same bad day, when you would need some good wine and a friend because you have troubles at work. But life does not support such needs. At home you are alone too and the last bottle of wine falls out of your hands when you are going to open it.

It was one of those cold winterlike days I met Philip K. Dick. It was the time when I was still clean drugwise and also had not taken any kind of metaphysic powders before, as a close friend of mine would have called it. And I was young and had no mental illness detected so far if you have thought so by reading the first sentence of this paragraph.

I was sitting in my armchair, the tv turned on and the optional pizza on my knees, watching some series where you could see a Buster Friendly acting to public persons. There was nothing else interesting on the screen, so I was tied to this to pass the evening. But after finishing the pizza to the smallest piece, I could not hold on me and did some zapping and stopped at – could it be something else to make the clichés perfect? – some bad sci-fi movie (guess it was part three from a series) and while thinking about the next working day, I fell asleep.

Suddenly – of course suddenly – I woke up or thought to do so. On tv some game show was running, but as I was used to sleep in front of the tv, it was not the sound that woke me up. I felt strange, I felt different. Something had changed. Something in the world next to me. I could not see it, just feel that electrified atmosphere. I stretched my legs that hurt very badly and turned my head, to have a look out of the window to check if something is to be seen in the spots of the streetlights, and I noticed somebody sitting in my backside.





Boaaah, I was shocked. I was a man living on his own. I had no guests or friends staying here lately and I did not give a copy of my keys away. So it was more than magic if anybody got in. Of course I wondered, how could there be somebody? I could not move due to the fear. Water like iced rivers ran through my veins. What?

And it nearly killed me when I turned around and saw who it was sitting there in the couch on the wall I bought from the firm I was working at last week. I was just sitting, maybe about 10 minutes, just watching as it could not be true, my brain told me. 'It's seemingly only!' the rational site of my mind tried to tell me. 'Nothing more.' But then he opened his smiling mouth and started to speak.

"Ich bin tot, ich weiß", he said and he spoke with a perfect German tongue, something I did not recognise directly.

"You know you are dead, but you are here!" I stammered in very lame English.

"Sprich auf deutsch, dann ist es für uns beide einfacher", he told me with a deep calm voice. And so I continued trying to face the situation by talking German to Philip K. Dick because he told me that it would be easier for the both of us.

"Okay, in German... What..." I continued stammering.

"...am I doing here?" he replied. "I like to hire you. For something no estate can do."

"I accept. I would do anything for you, I mean the PKD-Guide I am working on is just the base of ideas I have connected to you, your life, ideas..."

"I know it, I like it, but you won't finish it" he interrupted. "But do not regret, pal!"

"Oh..."

"But I do not have much time, energy is low on this level of life you are living and for me it is still not so easy to get so low where I am now, you understand?" he whistled.

"Ah... yes." I was astonished.

"You now know exactly why I came here, I let the words grow in your mind, an easier way to communicate while doing this reality-bla-bla, hehe" he grinned at me.

"You are talking about the thing, that there will be movies based on your basic ideas of VALIS for example with your named or VALIS mentioned somewhere... but nothing official? And I would get to know about it. When it will happen? To tell the open-minded!"

"You already do, but you will remember at the right time!" he told wisely standing up and going to my refrigerator. "No wine, pal?"

"No, sorry!" I said with a blush response. "And you are also talking about your sons, the mystic ones looking the same as you appearing when I will be older. Like Palmer did?"

"Exactly!"

"So everything you wrote is true, or will be true! You showed us the path like other prophets did before. All even happened already, right?"

"In some way, yes! But that all is theoretical."

"But what..."

"None! Take it as it is. Perhaps this won't be our last time talking. You will get to know a way to get in contact with me, by a friend of you don't know today named Neal, but for now I have to go."

"Ehrm... Thanks!"

"I thank you for the patience and your will to help."





"I will do the job, fulfilling my fate."

"Just do the last one. And don't be angry with yourself if you miss a job, whatever it is, due to deciding to follow personal changes in your coming life. We both know this would be better for you. I won't be! But don't be envious of other persons doing these investigations for you. You understand that I will have to visit somebody else then to do this job. We always have the choice, pal!"

And with a smile and any single word more he vanished in a pink light coming from his heart blinding the whole world around us, my lone apartment. The last thing in my mind before I fell into a warm swoon was myself wondering: Wasn't today the day he died, fifteen years ago?

It was one of those cold winterlike days, three years later, when I wrote down some notes about what I experienced in this night. Due to unknown reasons for me I always started to shake when I turned on the computer willing to write down my memories. And it took four more years and a couple of months to make a floating text out of those notes in fear that can be published in any way. So do not ask me for further details, I am finished with this topic.

Now I do not shake anymore when I am reading these lines or when I remember this night. I left this apartment the next week, after I occupied the one of an ex-lover because I could not stay in this house any longer. And as he knew it, my personal life changed a lot into a happy direction. I experienced a lot of things from this world and from somewhere else. I felt love and loss. I found back to my roots. I learnt to forgive my enemies. But sadly I lost the track to the secrets of the coming Dicks. Though I am sure we all will get to know about them, somebody else will decide for the job instead of me.

I might have forgotten some details due to the shock. And I might have figured out some deeper meaning he did not tell me directly. But believe me, it is as true as I can remember it for you wholesale. I take your dick!

WHAT plucked Joe Chip from the year 1992 and sent him spinning crazily back through time to the 1930s and a world that had never heard of psis and precogs and anti-precogs and chill half-life?

HOW could Joe's former boss, the late, great Gene Runciter, scrawl ominous messages on washroom mirrors -- after he had been killed in a Lunar bomb-blast?

WHY was Joe's beautiful and wayward mistress Pat Conley, with her awesome power of time control, trapped with Joe in a living nightmare she should have been able to end -- if anyone could?

UBIK was the answer -- and it meant the difference between life and death...





“The Emotional Rescue of Daniel Megaboom” by Perry Kinman

Jack Elwood’s alarm went off. He groaned and stirred, and by degrees assembled himself into an acceptable image of a working man. The aroma of coffee welcomed him into the kitchen. Not ersatz mind you, real coffee made from real beans grown in real soil from who-knows where, but somewhere real. Somewhere on a map.

Dan Megaboom, the office sim, finished frying scrambled eggs and slid them on a plate with bacon, and set it on the table. Fresh orange juice. Checkered table-cloth.

Jack smiled. The perks of his job!

Jack Elwood at his desk in CIA headquarters west. His eyes eagerly scanning the 3d holodisplay for data. His fingers flying over the keyboards making the display undulate and swarm with colors and words. Around him the din of the office. Voices: Spanish, Chinese, Martian and Hindi flow around him in a restless ocean of noise.

Jack, not finding what he’s looking for, reaches for the vidphone. ‘Dan? Get over here!’ In his ear a tinny ‘Yes, sir.’ Presently Dan strides up in his best Harding Bro’s pin stripe suit.

My name is Daniel Megaboom. I am a CIA agent. I work out of the San Francisco office under Jack Elwood. I’ve been an agent for almost a year now. The work is interesting. More so than my previous job as a teacher at San Jose State, but I do get tired of the operators butting into my adaptive computations. They think they run things, but I think I’m getting the hang of it way past their puney cognitive skills.

There’re more reports and desk work than the old TV shows portray, but it’s still a good job to be in.

It does have its danger . In this relatively short time I have four scars to prove it. My right shoulder is stiff in the mornings. It’s where I got lasered on a raid on an underground andy chop shop. And the three inch scar on my belly aches when it rains. I was exceedingly lucky on that one. A bit to the left and I wouldn’t be here today. I don’t remember much about it. I was walking down a dark hall and then I blacked out. The report says an andy we were chasing was embedded in the wall. It had burrowed in there to hide. Just holes for its eyes and laser showing. Five agents died there. Enough of that, I don’t want to think about it now.

Jake pointed. ‘See any patterns here Dan?’ Dan squinted. He didn’t have to, he had better than perfect eyesight. He did it because he was programmed to. ‘No sir. Nothing.’ Jake slumped back in his chair. ‘There’s got to be something.’ Just then the phone rang. It was Jake’s big boss. ‘Send Dan over.’ Jake nodded and told Dan.

“Dan!” Jack called from the living room. “Bring me another beer.” Four empty bottles lay by his chair, and one under it. Jack was too caught up in the latest movie that had just come out to know or care.





Presently Dan strode smartly in holding an ice-cold Singha. He wore a pink apron with yellow smiley faces on it over his impeccable Harding Brothers suit, gray pinstripe. Holding the bottle out with both hands he bowed, "Sir." Jack, without taking his eyes from the TV screen, grabbed the bottle and took a swig.

"Pull up a chair Dan. Check this show out."

"But sir, I'm not finished with the dishes yet—" Jack began.

"Who cares. This is the movie I was telling you about yesterday. The one based on that book by Philip K. Dick. Remember? The one about drugs?"

Dan's head swiveled. A full 360 towards the screen. His way of showing annoyance. Everyone hated it. But, that's why he did it.

So, Dan went down the long room to the genuine veneer oak wall where the big boss' offices were. The secretary stood. She had platinum breasts that sent off sparks when they jiggled and touched. "Go on in, he's waiting."

Dan averted his eyes from the pyrotechnic display, but he still saw.
In he went.

Big Boss sat smoking a cigar. The room was cloudy with smoke, the far wall invisible. "Hissss!!" He had fangs.

"Dan! I want you to get over to Paramount Studios. There's someone I want you to interview." Dan looked puzzled.

"Pose as a cheap Hollywood reporter." Dan looked more puzzled.

"Get him to talk. About anything. As much as possible."

"Room 679B. Go!!" His fangs grew longer and his eyes reddened.

What fun! What fun! Sparks emitted from the waiting room. The secretary was on the move.

Dan hit the prop closet, getting a worn hat, a chewed pencil and a pad of legal paper. Wrinkled and water stained of course. Looking around Dan decided on one last item, a cig. For his lips. Egyptian. The contrast between the suit and the hat was major.

Wondering what exactly he was supposed to find out, and from who, he left the building. He hailed a communications car and hopped in. The robot driver made polite conversation on the way.

"I, Dan, remember playing on swings with my best friend Sam. We swung as high as we could and bailed out, arms flying. That brief moment suspended in air. I was addicted to it. The rise, the lightness, the suspension of time and movement, the view from higher up, the air in my face. We swung till long after the sun had set and we couldn't see the ground. I smile when I think about those days."

The robot driver nodded. It had similar memories of its own.

"Around me my friends and colleagues at the agency grow balder and grayer. I, however, don't change a bit." His smile grew harder.





The guard at the gate waved him through without checking. They must have given up. Dan joined a heard of mole crickets heading in. They passed clones of John Wayne and Jason Taverner lounging by a building taking a break. A wub lumbered by conversing with Descartes.. Both wore flaming orange clown wigs and gear.

A model of the Taj Mahal.

Building B.

Dan entered, walked down a short hall to room 679. The door was painted green. Dan looked up and down the hall, took a drag, and knocked. No answer. Dan knocked again. A fantasy began to roll on his neurobox. The Big Boss' secretary sneaking into his bed. They tear each others clothes off and mate, like lightning mates with tall pines and power poles. The sparks from her breasts set the sheets on fire, and they roll through the flames—

The door opened.

Dan looks in. It's dark. In a shaft of light stands a little man. He's too little for comfort. He makes little movement. He wears a robe and his ears are big and stick out. Dan enters and walks forward. He draws near.

“ ‘Scuse me. I’m Ernie, from the Mazatlan Molotov, the movie mag—

The little man jumped.

He soared up through the rafters, kicked off the wall and floated down to land in front of Dan/Ernie. And he spoke. “Help you I can...Yes!! Mmmm? His skin was green and wrinkled. He was bald. He looked like he’d crawled out of a cave after thirty years in the dark.

Dan/Ernie hesitated. He hadn’t expected this.

“Ah..... who are you?”

The little man’s eyes opened wide. “This embarrassing is!!”

“Your name. A simple question. What’s your name?” Dan/Ernie winced. Sounded so paranoid. He felt the jamboree was starting without him and the zombies were hungry.

“This a mockery is! Everyone knows who I am. You be no different.”

Dan breathed in, “Look, I’m just asking.”

“Clear your mind of questions..... then you will know.” The little man screwed his face up. As if he had some kind of power coming out of his face.

Dan/Ernie, who rarely if ever got impatient, got impatient. He narrowed his eyes, biting on the cig. He felt anger boiling up. Why wouldn’t this little weirdo answer a simple question. Why did he have to—





“Anger, fear, aggression. The dark side is.” The little green man waved his hand and something clicked in Dan/Ernie’s head. A relay shorted. A synaptic misfire occurred and occurred and occurred.

Dan/Ernie saw white.

A white wall with no depth or height.

It dazzled and glowed.

“Feel it. Concentrate...” The little man’s voice entered the white world. “Soon, certain are you....”

Like a slide show of Paul Klee paintings at high speed, images flashed across Dan’s memory banks. Close ups, closer ups. Atomic grains in brush strokes revealed gaps where worlds ricocheted. Blurred figures. Kandinskys gave way to Miros and Pollocks. Wiggley movements reached out and pushed him along. Clouds sailed. A Morris sucked him in and he found himself walking up the stairs of Tassel House.....

And then Dan knew.

He turned and ran out of the building. His hat rolled away over the paper and pencil and cig he’d dropped. He ran past the props and fake people who posed and reposed. Out into the street. He flagged a pedicab. There was thunder in the sky as he made his way through the city to Jack’s house. Rain as he went in.

He sat in the dark kitchen.
The sky inched down.
Slowly, surely, inevitably.
Invisible in the darkness

Dan the man sat in the kitchen
At the table, his head in his hands
He was still as the fridge

Rain and thunder now
The sky so low it was almost inside his head.
In the dark kitchen

Relays whirred and clicked
Washed around inside the round head of Dan
The storm outside was now inside.





He suddenly got up and left the house.

He found a vidphone and called the Big Boss' office. The secretary answered amidst the sparks. Dan was silent. He looked at her. Deep into her eyes. She looked back. They stared at each other, and then it was her turn to know. She cut the connection and grabbed her coat and vanilla cigars. She could hear her boss hissing behind his door as she left. Some of the carpet that was on fire was quickly put out by the roving office bots.

Dan met her at Loony Lukes. They walked down the rows of cheap nosers. Most were dented and scratched. Luke came out with his poopla in tow. The poopla ran toward them and exploded. Luke got a shocked look on his face. The couple apparently didn't notice.

"We'd like this brown noser," they said in unison. The price in the window was 20,000 pops.

"A fine choice! A fine choice!" Luke rubbed his hands.

The woman, who had sparks coming out of her coat, dug in her chrome purse. And, among the drugs and make-up she pulled the pops out, like magic. The man pulled more from his pocket. There was something in the air between them, passion, Luke decided.

Luke passed them the key and took their pops. In the distance sirens could be heard. The man and the woman, Dan and Daphney, hopped in, and the brown noser shot into the sky. Heading in the general direction of Mars. Luke smiled.

Three years later: Jake is watching TV at home.

A commercial comes on for cucumbers.

"If it's Megaboom it's megagood!" A chorus of dancing andy pleasure models shout "Megaboom Martian Cucumbers!" The TV shows wide open fields of Mars. A farmer peacefully plowing his field, his platinum breasted wife coasts up in her get-a-bout and gives him fresh cold water to drink. "Megaboom Cucumbers!" "Megaboom!" "Cool Cool Cumpers!"

Then the Bunny Hentman Show resumed.

Something, Jake thought, was vaguely familiar.

Martian monkeys clambered over stone walls. Clinging to vines. Some wore glasses. One was actually a man. Well, the shape of a man, yet, more agile than the monkeys. They reached low boughs and proceeded to hang out. Some screeching went on. Dan scratched his head.

Rain in big drops began to fall. Some monkeys scampered deeper under the trees. One sparking platinum breasted one stayed on the wall. Dan swung down to the wall and sat full in the downpour with the other. Dan, in his Harding Bro.s suit. Dan Megaboom. Dan the Man and Daphney.

What more need be said?





SOLAR LOTTERY, a first novel by one of the most striking young magazine writers, creates a strange and fascinating civilization for the year 2203, a culture based upon Heisenberg's ideas of randomness and Von Neumann's Games Theory, with such logical developments as public office by lottery and formal overt assassination.

Against this background two plots develop, one of an ambitious effort to rediscover our sun's once-glimpsed tenth planet... The body of the book is as elaborately exciting as vintage Van Vogt -- with an added touch of C.M. Kornbluth's social satire." - **New York Herald Tribune**

**"What A Clever Dick" by Sean O'Hagan
The Observer Sunday June 12, 2005**

Often, people claim to remember past lives; Philip K Dick once told an audience of admirers in France, where he was considered a literary genius: "I claim to remember a different, very different present life." The notion that he lived two separate and simultaneous existences, one conscious, the other glimpsed in moments of disorienting revelation akin to LSD flashbacks, was only one of many delusions that beset him in his relatively short, tortuous life. His first novel was called *Time Out of Joint*, and its title, in retrospect, seems self-fulfilling

Like JG Ballard's, Dick's reputation rests on the creation of dystopian fictions that foresaw a world something like the one we now live in, a world of conspiracy theories, clones, untrammelled consumerism, viral terrorism and virtual reality. His most widely known story, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, crossed into the mainstream via Hollywood, where it was retitled as *Blade Runner* by director Ridley Scott and given a happy ending wherein Harrison Ford, a surviving human, rides off into the nuclear sunset with his android lover.

When the movie money started rolling in, Dick, who had survived four marriages and a prolonged bout of amphetamine psychosis, was almost at the end of his tether. He emerged from one of his many spells in rehab, convinced that a spirit guide was responsible for his late financial good fortune, and began giving the money away to Christian-run charities.

Like L Ron Hubbard, the science-fiction writer who founded the Church of Scientology, Dick's life sometimes seemed to out-weird even his fictions, while his obsessions and neuroses found their way into stories that redefined the genre.

Emmanuel Carrère has written what he calls "a very peculiar book, a kind of imaginative biography which purports to depict the life of Philip K Dick from the inside". Sometimes, it appears almost novelistic in its rendering of Dick's thoughts, its re-creation of his love affairs and its litany of anecdotes concerning his pharmaceutically fuelled lifestyle in the late Sixties and early Seventies.

One chapter, entitled 'Freaks', is made up of such recollections, each one beginning with the phrase, "Another time ... ", as in: "Another time, someone got the idea of painting all the windows in Phil's house black ... ", or: "Another time, a girl who had lived with them for a week went into a coma during a bad acid trip."





The effect here is conversational, almost throwaway, intentionally so, though to what end I am not altogether sure. Perhaps Carrère wants us to experience the myth of Philip K Dick, the terminal stoner, the way he experienced it, in a wealth of remembered anecdotes, hazy and cumulative.

More ominously, there is nothing here in the way of an index or footnotes, none of the usual evidence of deep research that gives a biography the solid stamp of authority. And though Dick was the subject of several marathon interview sessions, most notably by *Rolling Stone* magazine journalist Paul Williams, and, towards the end of his life, by science fiction critic Charles Platt, we seldom hear his voice or see his words appear directly on the page.

For all that, though, *I Am Alive and You Are Dead* is an intriguing read, well paced and packed with evidence of Dick's eccentricity, which was of the obsessive and neurotic kind, and must have made him impossible to be around for any length of time.

As a troubled and pampered child, constantly packed off to psychiatrists of dubious provenance by his fawning mother, Dick submerged himself in the stories of HP Lovecraft, the most coldly pessimistic of all fantasy writers.

In 1954, two years before Don Seigel's Cold War parable, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, arguably the first modern sci-fi movie, he wrote a short story in which a boy is convinced that his father has been incinerated and replaced by an alien impostor. All his greatest fictions were prescient in their countenancing of the deep, unconscious collective fears of an essentially puritanical America which was, and remains, profoundly ill at ease with the speed of scientific progress.

Ultimately, Dick was a great writer despite himself and his methodology, which involved ingesting a gargantuan amount of amphetamines and working maniacally on a novel until it was finished. Perhaps because of his sustained drug abuse, he lived, as Carrère puts it, in a state of perpetual fear. He was afraid of the FBI, who visited his house more than once, and of abduction by aliens, a fate he saw as inevitable.

Towards the end of his life, alone and reclusive in a ranch house in southern California, he sat in the dark, listening for hours to the Grateful Dead and devotional classical music, hallucinating about swirling pink mists out of which emerged angry creatures with three eyes. It was as though his work had invaded his life and his fictional creations his mind.

Willfully unpredictable to the end, Dick received Christian last rites on his death bed after a stroke. He was buried underneath a gravestone that had borne his name for the entire 53 years of his life, his parents having assumed that he would soon follow his malnourished three-week-old twin sister into the earth. But he survived, and the 50 novels published in his lifetime are but a fraction of the work he left behind.

Carrère's labour of love is as good a place as any to start trying to understand the enigma of Philip K Dick, one of the few postwar novelists who deserves the title 'visionary'.





“Book Reviews” by P. Schuyler-Miller

Eye In the Sky

P. Schuyler-Miller, *Astounding Science Fiction*: January 1958 pp. 143-44

If you want a frolic in the style of the old *Unknown*, one of the most fertile imaginations and nimbly fingered typewriters in the business has done it again. More far-fetched gimmicks have been presented as sober science fiction, but Mr. Dick makes no claims.

Something goes wrong during the testing of a giant new bevatron, and a group of on-lookers suddenly find themselves in a most peculiar world. They are, as might be expected, a highly assorted lot: Jack Hamilton, fired because his wife is accused of communist leanings; McFeyffe, the security agent who has dug up the "evidence" used against her; A Negro guide who can't use his degree in physics because "we" just don't have good jobs for his kind; a clubwoman and her little boy; a retired general; a career woman.

The first -- and best -- part of the book deals with the group's misadventures in the utterly illogical world in which they find themselves run by the vaguely Moslem disciples of the Second Bab, with the Eye of the highly personal, highly capricious One True God peering vengefully down out of a heaven which Hamilton and McFeyffe presently visit via umbrella. Little by little they work out the logic behind the illogic: they are living in the distorted, psychotic mental world of the first of them to become conscious. They finally corner him and knock him out...to find themselves in still another, ultra-neat, ultra-puritanical dream world. And so it goes.

The fun gets a little thin after a while, but it's fun if you can take an element of unreason in your reason.

The Variable Man

P. Schuyler-Miller, *Astounding Science Fiction*: September 1958 pp. 154-55

You can take it as axiomatic -- unless you object to a strong element of fantasy -- that the name Philip K. Dick on a PB makes it worth every one of the thirty-five cents you spend on it. In fact, the book is likely to be worth more -- now, and as an investment -- than \$3.00 hard-back volumes by better known writers.

This is Dick's first American collection of short fiction. England recognized him first, with "A Handful of Darkness," two years ago. It contains four novelettes and/or short stories and the title story, a "novel" by present magazine standards, but only eighty-six pages long. Most memorable of the lot is the grisly picture of the end of the long war of East and West when "our" vicious, deadly, self-perpetuating killer-robots turn on alliving things. This is "Second Variety." Almost the same theme becomes a completely different story in "Autofac," in which men are struggling to shut down the automatic factories that are stripping the planet of every last resource to supply unneeded commodities for a war-riven race.





The two other shorter stories are also variants of one theme: the hold that psi powers can gain over a civilization. In "Minority Report" precognitives are used by a crime prevention police to detect would-be criminals before they can act. But what if the head of the police finds himself marked down by his own machinery? "A World of Talent," the fourth story, could have stood further development. We're taken to a colonial world run by an utterly weird collection of psi-powerful mutants, jealous of each other and of the normal people back on Earth who would stamp out their variant kind. There is a little boy who hunts strangeness in dark corners -- a monster who can span space between the worlds -- a malignant telepath -- a jealously precognitive wife. Any or all of them could have been a full length book.

The title story is more conservative and more formally SF in theme and treatment. Two hundred years from now a dictatorially united Mankind is trying to break out of the solar system through the encircling space navy of the Centaurian empire. Monster computers cast up the odds for and against every proposed move -- and a clumsy experiment brings up a "variable" man from 913. He is an odd-jobs man who can do "anything" -- the ultimate in non-specialization, with an intuitive knowledge of how things go together and what they should do. And the machines can't figure him into the matrix with regimented humanity, so that makes the predictions run wild. It's a Van Vogtian theme, better handled than Van Vogt has done in a long time. And it's pure Dick. That's good.

The Game-Players of Titan

P. Schuyler-Miller, *Analog*: August 1964 pp. 85-86

It's by no means another "Man in the High Tower," [sic] and it has almost as many wheels within wheels as van Vogt at his most complicated, but it hangs together better than most of that gentleman's "classics."

Red China and the United States have clobbered each other, and the sluglike vugs of Titan have moved in to take over the shreds of human civilization. Most of the survivors are sterile, and there are very few of them in any case, so the conquering vugs have introduced the Game -- their own high passion, and apparently that of the surviving United States.

Never fully described, the Game seems to be something like Monopoly-for-real, with elements of poker with a marked deck. By the whims of the Game or the failure of a bluff, men and women are married and unmarried, cities and states change hands. "Luck" means the ability to conceive children as a result of these pairings. Telepaths, precognates and other psi-potent men and women add to the complications -- and so, it develops, does the fact that some of them are disguised vugs. Pete Garden, a most unheroic hero with suicidal tendencies turns out to be the pivot around whom all this starts to spin until the centrifugal forces pulls it apart.

I had fun, but I'm not nominating it for a "Best of 1964."





Some Recent (And Not So Recent) PKD References In The Press

It reads like pure crackpottery, with the author exhibiting paranoia at a level qualifying him for Alphan Clan membership.

--Ian Simmons, review of Rene's *NASA Mooned America!*, *Fortean Times* Feb/Mar 1996

The scariest thing about Philip K. Dick is that he's always relevant.

--Peter Keough, *Boston Phoenix*, Jan. 10-17, 2002

The mixture of surreal urgency and cynical despair makes Dick's work germane to every age, and especially so during Republican administrations.

--Peter Keough, *Boston Phoenix*, June 20-27, 2002

Maybe we're not at the Philip K. Dick level of technology yet.

--Maureen Dowd, "Hiding Breast Bombs." *International Herald Tribune* Nov. 26, 2004

For this, the shrewdest and leanest entry in the burgeoning subgenre of Philip K. Dick-style noir...

--Matt Wilder, review of *The Machinist*, [Twin Cities] *City Pages* December 8, 2004

When, in one of the movie's few good plot twists, an injured Smith reveals a robotic arm, *I, Robot* could've turned brilliant by making its robo-phobic hero a cyborg himself. But that kind of paranoid Philip K. Dick reversal may have to wait another 31 years.

--Brian Miller, review of "*I, Robot* DVD," *Seattle Weekly* Dec. 8-14, 2004.

Who but Charlie Kaufman could have moved the boundary posts of screwball romantic comedy-what Stanley Cavell calls the "genre of remarriage" -- by plunking it down in the universe of Philip K. Dick?

--David Edelstein, review of *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Village Voice*, December 29, 2004.

This surveillance state is not a futuristic place conjured in a Philip K. Dick novel. It is post-9/11 America, as described in this unnerving book an America where citizens' "right to be let alone," as Justice Louis Brandeis of the Supreme Court once put it, is imperiled, where more and more components of our daily lives are routinely monitored, recorded and analyzed.

--Michiko Kakutani, review of Robert O'Harrow Jr. *No Place To Hide*, *International Herald Tribune* February 10, 2005. pg. 9.

