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PKDOTAKUZZZ

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A new issue of PKD OTAKU – and in record time for a change. That you are reading this today is almost entirely the result of jami morgan, Frank Bertrand and John Fairchild. Yes, yes, Marc and Patrick had a hand in this as well but jami, Frank and John did the heavy lifting. It has always been our wish for many voices, not just our own, fill these pages. Philip K. Dick is an individual and a subject that only benefits from diverse perspectives and opinions -- and insights, rants, arguments, discoveries, wild concepts, close readings, broad views, and, most importantly, personal experiences. We couldn't be more pleased how well this issue demonstrates that wish and thank our contributors from the bottom of our hearts. Valis be with you! So enjoy this issue and please, please join the PKD conversation here at OTAKU or at one of the many internet sites dedicated to keeping the dialog flowing.

-- The PKD OTAKU Team

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<http://pkdotaku.gezeitenreiter.de>

“An Interview With Philip K. Dick” by Yves Breux and Francis Luxereau

From the 2ème Festival International de la SF de Metz, Metz, France, September 19-25, 1977. Transcribed, edited, annotated and with afterword by Frank C. Bertrand.

Note: Ellipsis indicates undecipherable words.



PKD during Metz interview

Q: *Situation d'écrivain en France et comparaison avec les USA?*
[What is the situation of the writer in the USA as compared with the writer in France?]

PKD: Comparison between the two? Between my position as a writer in America and my position as a writer in France? I'd be very happy to discuss that.

The position which writers such as myself hold in America are, those positions are very lowly. Science Fiction is considered to be something for adolescents, for just high school kids, and for disturbed people in general in America. And the publishers will buy a novel which must meet rigid moral standards, the standards which libraries have, which has to do with sex and violence and so forth. So we're limited in our writing to books which have no sex, no violence, and no deep ideas. Just something of an adventure kind of nature, what we call Space Opera, which are just Westerns set in the future.

This is a strong pressure on us. The field, science fiction, is just a genre there, ranked at the level of nurse romance publications. We are considered at the bottom rung. Now, it's not as bad today as it was a few years ago, because recently the academic community has discovered us. And there are scholarly articles being written in America about science fiction. And also, science fiction novels are being used in courses at universities and high schools and colleges. In fact, one of my novels is used even in a course in "The Modern Novel," not just in "The Science Fiction Novel," but as an example of the modern novel. But that's rare. And the general attitude is still highly prejudicial in America.

Now, I started out as a pulp writer doing stories for pulp magazines. And I never imagined myself to have any importance. So, I was not dismayed by this attitude. I just took it for granted. I had been a clerk in a store and I was used to having people yell at me, telling me what to do. And so to find myself a writer, and be yelled at and told what to do did not surprise me.

But then I discovered that in Europe, especially in France, science fiction was taken seriously. And the science fiction writer was not regarded as something on the level of a janitor. And my delight was enormous. And my amazement was enormous. And my agent was quite pleased. And I began to meet people from France who had come over and would visit with me. A gentleman who is doing his dissertation on a novel of mine came to visit me. And I was, I was simply amazed. I could not imagine anyone taking science fiction seriously.

Now, as far as my own work went. I had written what I considered to be serious novels. But they never received any popularity in America. The largest number of sales of any novel of mine was *Solar Lottery* [1955, first published novel, published in altered form in UK as *World Of Chance*], which sold something over three hundred thousand copies. *Man In The High Castle* [1962], which I won the Hugo Award for [1963], sold almost, well by now, three hundred thousand copies. But by and large the average American science fiction novel sells about forty to fifty thousand copies, which in a country the size of the United States, is very small portion of the reading public.

Now, there are exceptions, of course, like *The Andromeda Strain* [1969, by Michael Crichton, movie version in 1971], which became best sellers. But these are always highly promoted by the publisher. And usually involves very simplistic ideas, such as the disease from outer space. Ideas that are archaic. They're no longer really interesting ideas.

They're something H.G. Wells [Herbert George Wells (1866-1946)] wrote about, or could have written about. And I would say that the greatest stimulus to me as a serious writer has been the French reaction to my writing which began somewhere between 1964 and 1968.

It was in 1964 that Éditions OPTA [French publishing house, founded in 1933, specializing in SF and crime fiction] first approached me and stated that they wanted to publish all of my novels, they said. And from their correspondence I could tell they had a quite different attitude toward my writing and core science fiction in general. So I was stimulated to do a much more serious type of novels, just knowing that eventually it would receive a more serious audience.

But in America it was common, for instance I remember when I purchased my first published story. Somebody said to me, "Do you read that kind of stuff?" And I said, "Madame, I not only read it, I write it." And people would say to me, "Well, why don't you write something serious? Why do you write science fiction? Write something serious." ...

Nevertheless, I did as well as I could. I wrote the most profound, most imaginative novels I could and just ... it out into the world and hope it would eventually receive an audience. But there is a considerable difference in French interest in science fiction and the American interest. And I appreciate the French interest enormously. And in fact it would be impossible for me to have continued my career without the help the French public has given to me.

Q: *Votre popularite en France vient-elle de notre culture, le romantisme, etc.?* [Has your increasing popularity in France come from our culture, romanticism, etc.?)

PKD: There is a major flaw in America which does not appear to exist in France and that is the American people are basically anti-intellectual. They're not interested in novels of ideas and science fiction is essentially a field of ideas. And the anti-intellectualism of America, Americans, prohibits their interest in imaginative ideas, in intellectual concepts.

But there's another facet as regards my particular works, say compared to other science fiction writers. I grew up in Berkeley [city on east shore of San Francisco Bay in northern California; PKD lived in or near there for some 20 years]. And my education was not limited at all to reading other science fictions novels preceding my own, such as Van Vogt [A.E. Van Vogt (1912-2000)], or Heinlein [Robert A. Heinlein (1907-1988)]; people of that time like Padgett [Lewis Padgett, pen-name for Henry Kuttner & C.L. Moore] and so on, Bradbury [Ray Bradbury, born 8-22-1920]. But I read, because University City was still there, Stendhal [pen-name for Marie-Henri Beyle (1783-1842)], Balzac [Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850)], Proust [Marcel Proust (1871-1922)], and the Russian novelists influenced by the French, people like Tourgouniev [in this interview PKD gives the French pronunciation for Ivan Sergeyeovich Turgenev (1818-1883)]. And I even read Japanese novels, modern Japanese novels, novelists who were influenced by the French realistic writers.

And I think one reason that I've been popular in France is because the slice of life realistic novel that I write is essentially based on the 19th century French realistic novels. For instance, if I were to name my favorite novels, I would name *Madame Bovary* [1856, by Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880)] and Stendhal's *The Red And The Black* [1830, *Le Rouge et le Noir*]. Those would be my two favorite novels. Or Tourgouniev's *Peres et Fiels* [PKD gives the French title for **Отцы и дети** (1862)– *Fathers and Sons*]. And in a sense I was learning about the novel not from English prose novels but from French prose novels.

So it makes sense, perhaps, that my writing would be well received in France. A novel of mine, such as *The Simulacra* [1964 novel], for example, which contains maybe fifteen to sixteen major characters is definitely derived from such French writers as Balzac. I think this applies more to me than to other American science fiction writers. In fact I think that it's a great flaw in American science fiction writers, and their readers, that they are insulated from the great literature of the world, the Russian novels, the French novels, the English novels, and the great American novels. In other words, it's a closed loop.

An American science fiction writer is usually someone who's been a science fiction fan, and has read only science fiction novels. And so when he goes to write science fiction, he bases it solely on prior science fiction. But because I was fortunate enough to live in Berkeley, which is probably as much an intellectual center as you'd find anywhere in the world, I was not limited as my other friends who write science fiction are.

Q: *Avez vous ete beaucoup sollicite depuis votre arrivee en France?* [Have you had many requests since your arrival in France?]

PKD: Well, I had been told, you know, by my agent and by French fans that I would probably encounter publishers and editors that had brought out my books. I'm quite aware of how many books of mine are in print in France, and how many editions, because I receive detailed reports from my agent. And I knew that, in France especially, say in contrast to later in Germany or England, there would be a greater interest in my writing by people in the business, people in the industry, rather than merely fans, readers.

Q: *Votre definition – votre gout de la vie – dans le siecle aux USA?* [How would you define your “taste of life” in the USA this century?]

PKD: Well, my relationship the United States has always been a very bad one. It has always seemed to me that I was about to be arrested by American police for some obscure reason. And perhaps that's because of reading Kafka's *The Trial* [German: *Der Process*, first published in 1925, by Franz Kafka (1883-1924); in a 5-4-73 letter PKD writes: “The middle initial in my name stands for Kindred, my mother's maiden name. Kafka would be more apt, perhaps...”]. That book influenced me very much, where someone is arrested for a crime, and he is never told what crime he has committed.

And in Berkeley we were very radical. There is a Bob Dylan song, let's see, he said, whatever it was you were doing you don't know what it was, but the police say you're doing it again; something like that [this probably refers to Dylan's 1965 song, “Subterranean Homesick Blues,” wherein the first stanza includes: “Look out kid / It's somethin' you did / God knows when / But you're doin' it again.”] I always had that feeling. And it was a symbol of my alienation from my own country's culture. I mean, they didn't read my books and I didn't like them. I didn't feel any affinity and relatedness to my neighbors and the population in general.

I remember one time my fear of the police was so great that whenever I saw a parked police car, and I was driving along, I would ask my wife to stop our car and I would surrender to the police on the spot, to whatever crime they wanted to accuse me of. My fears became greater during the Nixon administration [37th US President, 1953-1961] because at that time there really was some basis for people like me to worry. After Nixon was deposed my fears went away completely, and I have a sense now that the United States is a permissive and tolerant nation.

As far as my reputation in the United States, I don't expect ever to have any reputation in the United States except, well, the police once told me that I was a crusader, and they had no use for crusaders. But unfortunately they didn't tell me what I was crusading for. I was afraid to ask, “But what was I a crusader for?”

And they told me that if I did not get out of the county I would be shot in the back, or worse, some night. And I merely took their advice. I left the United States and went to Canada for a while. But I never found out what I was crusading for. It may have had something to do with my writing. It may have had something to do with my lifestyle, or a combination of both. But I was too afraid of the police to ask what it was that I was doing.

This attitude of mine shows up in my recent novel *A Scanner Darkly* [1977, BSFA award winner, film adaptation 2006], where a narcotics agent winds up reporting on himself, turning over information on himself to his higher ups. The paranoia of the Nixon period was so great, by the government, and also by the counter-culture, the Berkeley people. Anybody like me who grew up and was part of the Berkeley counter-culture became a marked man during the Nixon administration.

It is impossible to tell how much of our fears were justified. I mean, there were illegal entries, my house was broken into, my files were blown open, my papers were stolen. We never found out who did it. My attorney said it was the government. There was no doubt that it was the government. But what they were looking for I don't know. What they thought I was doing, I don't know. I don't even know if it was the government. But there were many such illegal entries.

And an experience like that tend to make you very paranoid, that you are suspected of some crime. But, like in Kafka's *The Trial*, they never told me what it was I had done. They just told me I was a crusader, and they didn't have any need for crusaders. And the fact that I was an intellectual writer only made me more suspicious in their eyes.

You've got to take into account that in the United States to be an intellectual, to be a writer, it to wear a sign on your back saying I'm an enemy of the state. I mean, it is something that is hard to understand, I think. There is such an anti-intellectual attitude in America. It's incredible the suspicion the authorities have of what they use to call eggheads...

Well, they use to call intellectuals eggheads. It was a term of derision. And the term originated in Nazi Germany. Most people don't know that. I happen to know this because I did a lot of research into Nazi Germany for my novel *The Man In The High Castle*. The term egghead is used by the *Sturmabteilung*, the SA [In this interview PKD gives the German word for "storm detachment," usually translated as "storm troop[ers]," a Nazi Party paramilitary organization]. It referred to the fact that when they beat up people who were defenseless, their skull cracked so readily against the pavement that the term egghead was evolved by the *Sturmabteilung*, and that term was carried over into the United States without any knowledge of its origin. However, the fact that that is the origin of the term egghead, which is the term for American intellectuals, that origin tells a great deal about the kind of people who would use such a term.

Q: *Connaissez vous cette image qui vous a precede ici?* [Are you aware of the image which has preceded you here, paranoid, drug-addicted, etc.?)

PKD: I lost that kind of apprehension abruptly in 1974 when the Nixon administration ceased to exist. I doubt if the paranoia was irrational, considering the government that the United States had. Had my paranoia been irrational it probably would have persisted after the Nixon government was deposed. But in March of 1974 the government program of spying on dissident, anti-war intellectuals, the so-called COINTELPRO [Counter Intelligence Program, a series of often illegal, covert FBI projects, 1956-1971], was abandoned. And in March of '74 my so-called paranoia disappeared completely. I felt a lifting of the oppression, the sense that there was a watching police agency which was monitoring our activities. I felt that sense lift, in March of '74, and it never returned.

In March of '74 the CIA operation CHAOS [a domestic espionage project established in 1967], which was to harass, disrupt and keep surveillance on American dissidents was officially abandoned. So the kind of paranoia which Michel Demuth [author of: "S.F. Americaine vingt-quatre heures sous l'occiput: interview de Dick et Spinrad." *Actuel*, September, 1974, pp. 26-30] noted, which was real, was based on the fact that we were harassed, we were under surveillance. We really were. There was no doubt about it whatsoever. I've seen my CIA file. I've seen my FBI file under The Freedom Of Information Act [signed into law by President Johnson 7-4-1966]. I was legally allowed to see both files. The CIA opened my mail. The FBI had a file on me. I've seen both. I no longer have the sense of the police activity.

It depends a little on what you mean by paranoia. If you mean a psychotic conviction that you are being persecuted, which is not in accord with reality, I don't think I had that. But, boy, I sure thought the cops were watching everything I did. And I was correct. I was tipped off by the criminal underground that my house was being watched. The license plate numbers of every car that stopped in front of my house was taken. And these were not part of my imagination, these were actual events.

Anyone who visited me, their license plate number was written down by the people next door. And I was told that the house was being watched, and eventually that my house would be hit, my files would be opened, my papers would be taken, and so it came to pass.

As I said in the *Rolling Stone* article ["The Most Brilliant Sci-Fi Mind On Any Planet," by Paul Williams, 11-6-1975] on me, when I came home and found my house consisting of nothing but rubble, ruins, chaos, broken windows, smashed doorknobs, blown open files, I said, "Thank God, I'm not crazy. I have real enemies." It's a tremendous relief to discover that somebody really is after me.

Afterword:

Note: This interview is transcribed from a three-part filmed interview, 21:32 minutes in length, that Philip K. Dick gave while attending the *2ème Festival International de la Sf de Metz*, and broadcast by Canal Jimmy, a satellite digital TV channel in France and Italy. It has been available on YouTube, labeled as "Philip K. Dick rare interview in France," for some time. Parts of it were incorporated into the 1994 BBC documentary, "A Day In The Afterlife Of Philip K. Dick." A French version, done by Gilles Gouillet, is titled "Philip K. Dick. Metz, Sept. 77, Interview," and available at:

http://www.noosphere.com/heberg/le_paradick/itw_m77.html. That version is what appeared in *PKD Otaku* No. 1. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time this PKD interview has appeared transcribed into English from the TV broadcast, with annotations and the additional material below. I would like to here publicly thank Philippe Hupp for answering my many questions and verifying certain information.

The *2ème Festival International de la SF* was organized by Philippe Hupp. In a 1996 interview at his Paris apartment with Benedict Maurer and Jerome Schmidt, Philippe says:

“I launched my festival in Metz in 1976, and the first year I managed to bring Theodore Sturgeon, a fabulous author who has gradually fallen into oblivion since. I remember asking the book publishers to bring [Philip K.] Dick. But I was discouraged at the outset. I was told that Dick never moved, not even within California. Everyone told me it was a nice idea, but it would not be accomplished.

“I then traveled to California in 1977 to meet with him directly. He had just published a book with Roger Zelazny, titled *Deus Irae*. My invitation was therefore for them both. I saw him at his home in Santa Ana, a suburb of Los Angeles. He lived in a Hispanic-style complex, bristling with surveillance cameras and gates. He had a small two-room place and lived entirely in the dark. He invited me to an Italian restaurant where there was considerable discussion and heavy drinking. Dick’s character was very nice, maybe a little out of touch, but very lovable.

“A lengthy exchange of correspondence ensued with Zelazny and me until the day when Dick came out of the old DC-10 at the small airport in Luxembourg. I could not believe it, because nobody really imagined that it could happen. Dick, himself, was astounded. In one of his book prefaces, he said it was one of the best weeks of his life. He was recognized, surrounded and pampered....

“He came almost as a messiah...He had a conference...and prepared audio for validation before his speech live at Metz. The published one is actually much shorter because Dick had finally deleted some passages, for fear of appearing too cryptic. The speech was amazing and, unfortunately, the spoken translation was poor. When you read the text today, we see that it is almost a little romance.” [source: <http://www.chronicart.com/dick/ev4.php3>]

Francis Lourbet has written in an Internet message dated 3/27/2001:

“You ask me to talk about Dick. My relations with him were limited to the dinner [Francis had dinner with Dick and P. Hupp at the Festival de Metz 77]. I remember him sitting in front of me, not very tall, but broad-shouldered, Olympian face above the beard. He wore a shirt wide open on his chest, adorned with a large wooden cross hanging from a ribbon or string. His girlfriend at the time was small, brown and nearly emaciated who didn’t say much. It is true that, at the convention in question, Dick addressed the public in terms that surprised them. The text has been published elsewhere, if I remember correctly, in one of the short story collections Denoël published. Paranoia, always lurking behind Dick, was given free expression to. It remains to know whether he had it completely wrong, and if, for example, his death was quite natural. For if this man was a nervous great, he was nonetheless built like a truck, and besides, he always took much less than claimed by his hallucinogenic legend.” [source: <http://listes.sf.pagesperso-range.fr/scientifictif/revelations2.html>]

***A Kindred Spirit* Interview continued with jami Morgan and JPC**

In Otaku #21 I interview ej “jami” Morgan, author of *A Kindred Spirit* (aka AKS.) We covered how she came to the PKD Festival and held the Intergalactic Release of her novel featuring PKD. We continue the conversation here.

JPC: So, jami, what has been happening with *A Kindred Spirit* since we last spoke?

EJM: Thank you, Patrick, for allowing me to be part of Otaku again. I’m happy to announce to Phil fans who haven’t heard, that AKS is an eBook now, or homeopape, as I love saying. The eBook announcement was part of a feature in our local alternative paper in Albuquerque, (the *Alibi*), as a tie-in of sorts with reaction to *The Adjustment Bureau* movie. The *Alibi* arts/lit writer is also a Dickhead. On the cover of the paper it read “Dickhead interviews another Dickhead” and he opened with some Phil facts, including my comparison of the Kindle to a homeopape. *A Kindred Spirit* is available for the [Kindle reader on Amazon.com](#), and even more recently is available [on iTunes as an iBook](#), and a generic version is distributed through Ingram for Nooks, Sony’s eReader and other devices. The nice thing about either format is that you can get the first couple of chapters as free samples. And, the trade paperback went through another round of edits to clean up remaining typos and a couple of factual corrections (like using the term Native American which really was not popular in 1982.)

JPC: What are your feelings about e-books? Is it really the future of publishing? Does it make a difference to you, as a writer, to have you work appear as a bunch of electrons on a screen as opposed to a traditional ink-on-paper artifact?

EJM: I do think “ink-on-paper” books will become artifacts, much as vinyl records have. Collectors will treasure them, but consumers are quickly turning to smaller, portable devices for music, video, and both audio and electronic versions of books. I think multi-media books are really the next wave. The homeopape is becoming a reality. Tablet computers and smart phones are here, with millions of sales now. X-Y-Z generations, or early adopters, just don’t want to be bothered with carrying around CDs, much less records and hard-copy books. Books will be a blend of web, documentary clips, and audio. I’m not saying it’s good or bad, but it is the trend. I’m glad to be writing at this time when I was able to produce both an actual book, and eBook, and hopefully even a multi-media version of *A Kindred Spirit*. Several years ago I envisioned the ability to click on a link and watch a short clip of Phil. I would have included that already, but the legal issues, surrounding existing content, remain a concern.

To return to the composition of AKS, did the book evolve much from the early version to the final publication? Were there dead-ends? Unused material? What was the creative process like?

I always compared the writing of this novel to assembling a puzzle. I had pieces scattered everywhere. Bits of ideas about what Phil would do in certain situations, or how he would try to interact with Niki and prompt her. And I always had a cryptic concept of how to incorporate phrases—“PKDisms”—his book and story titles, and Phil’s key beliefs in the story. Layering. Even Niki’s name was a take-off on Nicholas Brady (*Radio Free Albemuth*), which I started to read before I read *VALIS*. Perceval, Niki’s surname, came to me when I saw how taken Phil was with *Parsifal*, the fool’s journey. I remember thinking Fragment 25 was going to be a key concept. In the end, I don’t even think I used that, but I got most of the main Exegesis theories in there. Over time, pieces came together, began to fit. I would get excited when an insight would come, like the Anokhi as a sacred mushroom ritual. That solved a problem I had wrestled with for a long time. What was Pike really digging for in the Jerusalem wilderness and trying to convey to Phil that would tie-in all those disparate Exegesis theories?

And, then, there’s the issue of what happened to Paul Williams and how it relates to my novel. I had met him, first just by contacting him for some PKD research questions. We developed a friendship and then I actually worked with him in 1999/2000. He was willing to help me edit the book and perhaps publish it through Entwistle. I was still working my government “day job” then and my writing was moving slowly. I was mostly serving as a sounding board for Paul’s final works, which I mention in the next section. Anyway, when his health deteriorated around 2005, I just shelved the whole idea of AKS. I didn’t pull the book out again until the fall of 2009. I decided I had to finish it as both homage to Phil and gift to Paul.

Any possibility of a sequel? At least the further adventures of Niki Perceval if not Phil?

I don't see another fictional story, or that type of sequel. After more than ten years of thinking about Niki and Phil, I'm pretty burnt out on that story. I am, however, working on a non-fiction follow-up to AKS. Readers and friends had a lot of questions about topics and concepts used in the story. So, I'm experimenting with a format where I devote a chapter to various subjects like Zen (as mindfulness practice), Shamanism (including thoughts on Castaneda), ancient aliens and how religion may have evolved from Sirius contact, and who knows, maybe even a chapter on Gnosticism with some Phil philosophy thrown in.

Interview with Tessa Dick by jami morgan

What struck me while reading Otaku Issue #21 was how none of us, not even Patrick with his wonderful "PKD and Me" festival talk, nor Frank Bertrand and his letters, actually met Phil. That seems crazy. This is our ongoing fan 'zine and it seems we MUST try to reach out to those who knew Phil to truly keep his memory alive. So, I propose that for each future issue we get at least one comment, morsel, or brief interview with someone who knew Phil. To that end, let's start with someone who knew him VERY well – his fifth and final wife, Leslie "Tessa" Busby Dick. I've had the pleasure of communicating with her on Facebook recently and she graciously agreed to answer a few questions.

EJM: I wonder, Tessa, if first you'd like to respond to some of the comments and theories posted in the last issue of Otaku. Patrick made the point that maybe the Exegesis and all the scholarly analysis isn't what we should focus on. He suggested we should look to Phil's novels, since after all, that is what Phil wrote and wanted to share with us. Do you agree?

TBD: First, thank you very much for writing. Phil wrote his *Exegesis* as a scholarly paper, not for general consumption. Furthermore, many of the notes that have been included really do not belong in the finished work. He repeated material in different sections at different times in an attempt to refine and organize his thoughts. Second, much of that material is not original, but simply a re-statement of Gnostic thought. One of Phil's main sources was the work of John Allegro, who shocked the community of Biblical scholars by claiming that the early Christians worshiped a mushroom (*The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross*). Phil also read everything about the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Library that he could get his hands on. His close personal friendship with Bishop Pike (*If This Be Heresy* and *The Other Side*) also had a strong influence on the *Exegesis*. Finally, at the end Phil came under the influence of Benjamin Creme's group and talked about the Maitreya who would be coming soon.

Phil's novels already contain the seeds of his *Exegesis* in a much more easily digestible form. *UBIK* and *A Maze of Death* come to mind, along with his early novel *The Unteleported Man*. The controlling theme of Phil's work was always that some evil forces were deluding us, creating a world of illusion to keep us working for their benefit, as in his novel *The Penultimate Truth*.

EJM: You just referred to the *Exegesis* as a "scholarly work." I thought of the *Exegesis* as more of a journal—Phil's private musings – for his own his own analysis, not for general consumption.

TBD: Phil was hanging out with college professors, so he wanted to publish scholarly papers and a scholarly book, in the areas of religion and philosophy. Phil's visionary experience of 1973 was nothing new. In fact, he had brief paranormal experiences throughout his life, beginning in early childhood, which he incorporated into his fiction. If he had lived to finish his *Exegesis*, he would have pared it down to a manageable size with a clear thesis supported by the evidence. As it stands today, it is merely a stack of notes, outlines and rough drafts.

EJM: What about the Trust coming out with volumes of it (2011/2012?) How do you feel about that?

TBD: Yes, they are releasing parts of the *Exegesis*—expected to run about 6 volumes—unfortunately, they are not going to edit it as Phil would have done; mostly collating, not really editing, is what I heard. In other words, nothing will be deleted or cleaned up.

EJM: Bertrand riffs quite a bit in his Otaku #21 letters about the image that is being projected of Phil these days -- whether it's the New Yorker reviews, or the movies. How do you feel when you hear the constant refrain about how "phildickian" this or that is? What does it mean to you, phildickian?

TBD: The media seem to be forming a cartoon version of Philip K. Dick that has little to do with his real identity. They make him out to be a cross between Charlie Sheen and Tom Cruise, instead of the unique person that he really was. The main thing that people need to remember about Phil is that he had many questions and few answers. His work consists of a search for answers. The movies often feature Phil's name and the title of his story, with nothing of his content. I must admit, however, that I enjoy watching them. Even dogs like *Screamers* and *Second Variety* (both of which were based on his short story "Second Variety") have something to like. *Blade Runner* captures Phil's dark vision for the future, while *Total Recall* captures his sense of humor, but I still haven't seen a movie that embraces both.

EJM: And you are writing another book now? About Phil or is this your memoir that you mentioned?

TBD: My memoir *Philip K. Dick: Remembering Firebright* explores Phil's 1973 visions and his work on *A Scanner Darkly*. I try to paint a picture of what happened without embellishment. In my forthcoming book, *Tessa B. Dick: My Life on the Edge of Reality*, I tell the story of my own

life as it led up to my willingness to believe in his visions. That work is difficult because my childhood years were filled with pain and terror, but the story must be told. Phil left it to others to tell the story of his life, but I choose to tell my own story in my own way. My new book, which will be released in April, includes my life with Phil and the tragedy of his early death.

It will be listed on Amazon, Barnes & Noble and other Internet book stores.

[Final thought from me, EJM:] So, even though I wasn't sure that Phil would have published the Exegesis at all, or as a "scholarly work", I didn't press the point any further with Tessa. I figured, who am I to argue? Total Dickhead David Gill might want to comment on the "collating" /non-editing part, as I believe he's involved in the project. There's a bit more on the Exegesis during the subsequent segment(s), with the other folks who knew Phil.

Tessa Dick on Paranormal Radio by jami morgan

While I was emailing back and forth with Tessa in February, she slipped on ice and "cracked her skull" as she called it. After going to the doctor she found out she had a concussion and actually did fracture her skull, as well as a couple of ribs. We took a break from the interview while she was healing, but she told me she was scheduled to appear on a webcast called Paranormal Radio. She said she would be covering some of the same topics: PKD, Gnosticism and the nature of reality. She told me it would be with British writer Anthony Peake, author of *Daemon*. I decided to listen and share some of that as a tie-in. The program is called The Church of Mabus Radio Show, created by Jeffery Pritchett. I must say for Phil fans of the VALIS/Pink Beam/Exegesis sort, this is worth a listen. It was certainly a stroll down memory lane for me, as almost every topic they covered is also one I fictionalized in *A Kindred Spirit* (my novel.) Anthony Peake enjoyed their discussion so much it became a "Tessa-thon" as he invited her to continue the next day on his web TV show, the Peake Experience.

I made several pages of notes, but I will only hit a few highlights here. The links are still active and you can listen if it interests you. I highly recommend listening with Win Media Player using the Alchemy visualization for the program open.

Mabus Show: <http://paranormalradionetwork.org/2011/03/13/the-church-of-mabus-tessa-b-dick--anthony-peake-phillip-k-dick-immortalis-spiritus-tribute.aspx>

Peake Experience: <http://www.screencast.com/users/AeonByte/folders/AEON%20BYTE/media/85136f20-b292-4537-a3d4-faba38c3f8b2>

They began by discussing Phil's earliest interest in writing and his story Roog. Tessa compared "the Adjustment Team" story with Unteleported Man. On the Peake Experience program, the following day, Tessa discussed Phil's alter-ego

Teddy. She thought this might be related to a sexual abuse incident Phil suffered around age five or six by a teacher. (I don't think she said male or female on the program.) She referred to an incident with a school teacher that was incorporated in *Man Whose Teeth Were All Exactly Alike*. Later this was corrected by a listener/friend who said that was *In Milton Lumky Territory*.

After discussing the circumstances of Phil's death, they hit all the "odd" topics: Bishop Pike, Gnostic beliefs, the break-in (of course), that Schopenhauer was one of Phil's faves, and even how Peake felt he had some "connection" to Phil because of the character name "Anarch Peak" in *Counter-Clock World*. Anthony Peake would have been a young child when Phil wrote the novel involving future spiritual leader Anarch Peak. "Did he somehow see a future me?" Peake wondered aloud during the program.

That kind of statement can seem odd indeed, if it wasn't for the fact this has happened to many people, over an incredible span of time. One person who had so many experiences with Phil in real life and "other dimensions" is D. Scott Apel (*Philip K. Dick: The Dream Connection*.) I won't say much about him here, because I did a lengthy interview with Scott in the late 1990s that was supposed to run in Issue #8 of *Radio Free PKD*. Sadly, there was no Issue #8—Greg Lee stopped printing the 'zine after Issue #7. But Patrick is including my Apel interview in this issue of Otaku.

Scott thought Phil communicated with him in the dream time and I had similar experiences—Phil dreams. In all I had four intense, prophetic dreams involving Phil while writing my novel, including the one about how the AKS book title came to be. I described that one in the last issue. I also had a dream where Phil showed me a book (at the Marina del Rey Community Center—which I researched at the time and found several places that used that name. Paul Williams could not confirm a specific center that Phil might have frequented by that name, maybe some of the readers can add to that.) Anyway, I reached for the book, in the dream, but Phil told me it was too soon to reveal it. As with the AKS dream, the intensity of hearing Phil speak to me, startled me and I woke up, but I was left feeling it was my novel that he was holding and I knew the story "must be told."

*

Finally, I want to close with bit more about Paul Williams. Paul was certainly someone who knew Phil very well. As most of you know, he served as Literary Executor for Philip K. Dick for ten years from 1983 to 1993. I can't interview Paul now because of his head injury and subsequent early onset of dementia, but I can share an audio clip from a previous interview.

Contrary to the message on his web page, Paul was still writing and publishing as late as 2004, nearly ten years after the bike accident. He published the third volume in his Dylan performing artist series, *Mind Out of Time*, in 2004. He actually wrote Chapter Zero of that book in 2000. I remember when he finished the introduction and read it to me.

I was privileged to be working with him a bit that year when he also completed and published *The 20th Century's Greatest Hits* © October 2000. Hit #9 (of his Century's Top 40) is PKD's *Martian Time-Slip*. Paul was appalled that I had not read it. "What makes that one so special that you chose it out of all of Phil's novels as one of the Century's Greatest Hits?" I asked him. In the reprimanding tone that I knew him for in those days, Paul replied, "Well, if you had read it you would have an idea." He softened his response a bit on tape. Here is an audio clip from an interview I did with Paul in the spring of 2000, before the "Greatest Hits" book came out.

Paul Williams audio: <http://soundcloud.com/zenwoman/paulwilliams-1/s-8zQFo>

Paul said that after speaking with thousands of PKD fans over the years, it is a truism that regardless of which novel you read first, if Phil's voice speaks to you, you will probably return and perhaps read what Paul calls the entire "PKD Meta-Novel"—the body of Phil's work. He believes any novel you randomly select is a fine starting place, but called MTS one of Phil's "best realized efforts to examine the powerful topics of schizophrenia, autism and time displacement." In *The 20th Century's Greatest Hits*, Paul referred to a quote, "things are seldom what they seem*" as being the theme of Phil's over-arching, meta-novel.

Finally, I want to close with the fact that Paul was adamant that the Exegesis should not be published in its entirety. He said that after he and Lawrence Sutin poured over the stacks of papers and notes that comprised the Exegesis, they did not feel that much more than what was published in *Pursuit of VALIS* (Sutin's book, © 1991, The Estate) should be published.

I was one of the ones clamoring for release of the Exegesis at that time (around Y2K), but Paul urged me not to get involved in the petitions for release because the material was "incoherent and repetitive." Tessa echoes that sentiment in my recent emails with her. The Trust, however, will have the final say.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share some of these insights with other Phil fans.

*** jami aka ej Morgan, author of *A Kindred Spirit* (the AKS novel)

Note: In the Spring of 2000, Paul Williams took me on tours of what we called PKD Southland (including Cameo Lane in Fullerton where the pink beam was seen.) We discussed my then super drafty novel. It had just been titled *A Kindred Spirit*, as a result of the dream (described in Otaku 21.) It was a result of the dream(s) that Paul gave me the quote that I use on the back cover of my novel: "I really do believe Phil is aiding you from the spirit world." I wrote an early review of *The 20th Century Greatest Hits* for an online literary magazine and also posted it on Amazon.com. The review is still there.

*WS Gilbert 1878 musical drama "Pinafore"— the entire quote is: "Things are seldom what they seem, skim milk masquerades as cream."

Late Night Thoughts, While Listening To Opera? by Frank C. Bertrand

I have deliberately made the title an interrogative because I really don't like opera. There, I've said it. I don't get it. It's sung at a loud volume, in a high pitch, and usually in a foreign language. I really don't get it. But I should add that I do like the overture music for opera and am a big fan of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, which I was initially exposed to during high school. The drama club at Central High School in Manchester, N.H., when I was there, did an annual production of one of Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas. I very much enjoyed their British humor via a combination of spoken dialogue and musical numbers.

And it just so happens that Philip K. Dick has more than once made allusion to Gilbert and Sullivan's H.M.S. Pinafore (1878), specifically from near the beginning of Act II, wherein during a duet between Buttercup and the Captain of the Pinafore, Buttercup sings:

"Things are seldom what they seem,
Skim milk masquerades as cream;
Highlows pass as patent leathers;
Jackdaws strut in peacock's feathers."

As I have written in other essays "things are seldom what they seem" is an apt, albeit brief, explicative critical overview of most of PKD's short stories and novels. We would all do well to keep it very much in mind when we read, re-read and engage in discussion, dialogue, and/or debate about his fiction!

This is not, however, the only musical allusion Philip K. Dick has made. If we attentively read his collected letters, we soon learn that he was a big fan of opera, and operatic allusions are indeed sprinkled here and there in PKD's fiction. There is one in particular that has been perplexing my late night thoughts. It's to be found in *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?* (1968) – (Note: PKD has put the title in the interrogative. Does the novel itself answer the

title's question? Think about whom, if anyone, in the novel wants to own an "electric sheep" to the extent that they would dream about it.)

Near the beginning of chapter nine Rick Deckard is at the "enormous whale-belly of steel and stone carved out to form the long-enduring old " War Memorial Opera House (this exists, at: 301 Van Ness Avenue San Francisco, CA 94102; and, as John Fairchild writes in PKD Otaku, No. 8: "...the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art was literally next door to the Opera House when Phil was alive."), wherein a "slightly miscontrived rehearsal" is taking place. As Deckard goes in he:

"...recognized the music: Mozart's The Magic Flute, the first act in its final scenes. The Moor slaves – in other words the chorus – had taken up their song a bar too soon and this had nullified the simple rhythm of the magic bells.
What a pleasure; he loved The Magic Flute."

That PKD would choose to allude to this particular opera is not improbable. In a 5/22/1964 letter to the British SF writer and critic, James Blish, he writes "...all I want to do is find a way to this woman down the coast, who is married to a real nice guy and we listen to the Magic Flute together..." (Selected Letters of Philip K. Dick, Vol. 1 (1996), p. 74). Then, in a 2/27/1967 letter he writes about some of his "...rare tapes such as Bruno Walter's [1876-1962; protégé of Mahler] performance of Mozart's Magic Flute..." (ibid., p. 201); this is perhaps a reference to Walter's June 14, 1928 concert with the Paris Mozart Festival Orchestra. What does appear somewhat unlikely is that a "bounty hunter," and all the connotative implications of that label, would recognize and love The Magic Flute. But things are seldom, as we continue to note, what they seem in a PKD novel; nor are they for Mozart and The Magic Flute.

Mozart was born (in Salzburg, Austria 1/27/1756) Johann Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Amadeus Gottlieb Mozart. Good thing they didn't use business cards in 1791 (the last year of his life), which is when he composed The Magic Flute (Die Zauberflöte), an opera in two acts to a libretto by the German actor-singer, theater director, and entrepreneur Emanuel Schikaneder (1751-1812). It's in the popular form of a Singspiel (equivalent to the French Opera Comique), which includes both spoken dialogue and singing. The premier was in Vienna on September 30, 1791 at 7 PM in the Freihaus-Theater auf der Wieden, with Mozart conducting the orchestra and Schikaneder acting the role of Papageno. Twenty performances were given in Vienna during the first month.

While Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was director of the Weimar Court Theater (1791-1816), The Magic Flute was presented eighty-two times. In fact, he liked it so much Goethe started to write a sequel in 1795 titled Die Zauberflöte zweiter Teil, but it was left unfinished due to difficulty in finding a suitable composer for the music. The first production of The Magic Flute in America took place in Philadelphia on March 7, 1832. Much more recently:

"...in 1987 the Swedish Folkopera offered Edinburgh Festival visitors a science fiction Magic Flute (in Claes Fellborn's staging), with Sarastro a scheming baddie in a space laboratory, in due course blown up when Papageno tinkers with the controls." (W.A. Mozart Die Zauberflöte, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991, p. 172)

As for Mozart's opera itself, P.G. Baker incisively writes:

"What we are really confronted with in The Magic Flute is a deliberate reshaping on the part of Schikaneder and Mozart of traditional folk lore and fantastische Geschichte into an entirely new form. Between them they stood a fairy-tale on its end and left to posterity one of the most enigmatic, though fascinating, operas ever written." ('Night Into Day': Patterns Of Symbolism in Mozart's The Magic Flute. University of Toronto Quarterly 49, no. 2, 1979, p. 95)

And enigmatic it certainly is, a loose mixture of traditional fairy-tales themes, Masonic elements, Enlightenment philosophy, folklore, political allegory, and heroic quest legend.

Why then does Philip K. Dick make a prominent allusion to it in chapter nine of *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep*? The ostensible answer has to do with one of PKD's two salient themes, what is a human being (human-ness). Deckard is at the War Memorial Opera House on January 3, 2021 in search of a Nexus-6 android. Her name is Luba Luft and she's singing the part of Pamina in *The Magic Flute*.

Miss Luft is one of a group of eight Nexus-6 androids that escaped from a settlement near New New York on Mars, and are now living in northern California. She is described as "An opera singer allegedly from Germany. At present attached to the San Francisco Opera Company" (ch. 8). Upon hearing her sing Deckard "...found himself surprised at the quality of her voice; it rated with that of the best, even that of notables in his collection of historic tapes" (ch. 9). After the rehearsal, when he is able to talk with her in her dressing room, Deckard tells Miss Luft, "You compare favorably to Schwarzkopf" (ibid.) [allusion to Dame Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (1915-2006; photo at left); German born soprano who first sang opera in America in October 1955 with, yes, the San Francisco Opera Company. Her official debut was at The Royal Opera House, on January 16, 1948 as, yes, Pamina in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*]. Then, more ominously, he notes:

"Her tone held cold reserve – and that other cold, which he had encountered in so many androids. Always the same; great intellect, ability to accomplish much, but also this. He deplored it. And yet, without it, he could not track them down." (ch. 9)

This is foreshadowed earlier in the novel when John Isidore notices about Pris Stratton, another of the escaped Nexus-6 androids, that:

"...something else had begun to emerge from her. Something more strange. And, he thought, more deplorable. A coldness. Like, he thought, a breath from the vacuum between inhabited worlds, in fact from nowhere. It was not what she did or said but what she did not do or say." (ch. 12, emphasis in original)

Later, when Deckard is trying to work out the "distinction between authentic living humans and humanoid constructs" (ch. 12), he thinks he has discerned a difference:

"Empathy toward an artificial construct? He asked himself. Something that only pretends to be alive? But Luba Luft had seemed genuinely alive; it had not worn the aspect of a simulation." (ibid., emphasis in original)

Note, Deckard refers to Luba Luft as "it," not she, even though it seemed genuinely alive, whereas Isidore refers to Pris Stratton as she.

As usual, in a Philip K. Dick novel, all this generates more questions than answers. What do "aspect of a simulation" and "genuinely alive" mean as a distinction between humanoid constructs and authentic living humans? Why use Mozart, *The Magic Flute*, and Pamina to specifically represent this distinction?

Judith Eckelmeyer aptly writes, "The answer must in part be that the contemporary mind seeks to resolve the questions raised by the confusion and obscurity it experiences in this work. In part, there is also something about the opera which makes it a kind of puzzle or toy..." (Introduction to *The Magic Flute: 1791 Libretto* by Emanuel Schikaneder, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1979, pp. x-xi).

The truly perplexing and enigmatic part, however, is the Pamina/Luba Luft juxtaposition. Princess Pamina is the daughter of the Queen of the Night. Miss Luft was "created" at a Rosen Association "parent autofactory" on Mars (ch. 3). Pamina is kidnapped and held captive by the high priest Sarastro in his palace. She attempts to escape but fails, caught by the Moor Monostatos, chief of the temple slaves. Miss Luft escapes from Mars to Earth and assumes the role of an opera singer but is tracked down by the bounty hunter Deckard. Pamina is eventually rescued by Prince Tamino, with the help of Papageno, the Queen of the Night's birdcatcher. Miss Luft is shot with a laser-tube by Phil Resch, not Deckard, in the Art Museum (next door to the Opera House) elevator (ch. 12).

More to the point, Deb Richard writes that:

“In the character of Pamina, we find a surprisingly modern, liberated woman who embodies not only the traditional virtues associated with the fairytales and theatricals of the eighteenth century, but also possesses many admirable attributes admired and sought after by women of today.... Clever, loyal, honest compassionate, demonstrative, brave, and steadfast.” (“What’s a Christian to do with *The Magic Flute*? Masons, Mysticism, and Misogyny in Mozart’s Last Opera,” pgs. 13-16. Accessed 3/25/2010, at: www3.dbu.edu/naugle/pdf/Magic_Flute.pdf)

The correspondences between Pamina and Luba Luft, therefore, are more tenuous than salient, and don’t give us a decisive answer, unless we choose to focus on the concept of empathy “toward an artificial construct,” and the ontological implications of “pretends to be alive” versus “seemed genuinely alive.”

PKD: TDC – A Second Take on Scott Apel’s *Dream Connection*

By Jamelle Morgan (aka RFPKD New Mexico correspondent)

Never underestimate the “Phil factor.” And if you wonder what that means, D. Scott Apel’s *Philip K. Dick: The Dream Connection* is as good a place as any to dive in for a big dose. For instance, just as Editor Gregg Lee and I were discussing pulling the 1987 book out of mothballs and taking another look at it, Scott announced he is re-releasing the book as a trade paperback this spring. That’s synchronicity.

Who among us has not thought of a favorite PKD book, and had it turn up at a used book store? But, the more you dig in and learn about Phil’s real-life experiences, the freakier the Phil factor gets. Synchronicity becomes deeper and more Dickian. Scott found out first hand – with both real Phil and post-Phil encounters – and those accounts are the essence of *The Dream Connection*.

EJM: Some RFPKD [*Radio Free PKD*] subscribers read your book when it first came out, and serious Dickheads may recall that you were a contributor to the original PKDS newsletter. Others will discover you and TDC in this second release. So, let’s start by going back to those early days in 1977 when you first met Phil. You were just a kid then, right?

DSA: Well, I was 25, just out of college and my friend Kevin Briggs and I had been working on a book project called *Approaching Sci Fi Authors* for a couple of years. To put the time frame in perspective, this was pre-Star Wars; a time when sci-fi was still pretty much a cult interest. We were sending out letters and lining up interviews with several authors who lived in or near the California Bay area. So, one day I come home and my Mom (I was living at my parents’ house at this time) said your friend Phil called. I said, “Who? I don’t have a friend Phil.” Mom said, “He just said, ‘Tell Scott his friend Phil Dick called.’” Of course, I was blown away. We still had some trouble getting the interview set up, because he tried to back out a couple of times. But his girlfriend at the time, Joan Simpson, helped convince him. I remember she told us it would be the best thing for him right now, since he had been brooding and melancholy and was having trouble writing at the time. Anyway, he finally agreed to let us come to his home in Sonoma and do the interview. It turned into a 2-day session with us staying overnight at his house. I described the whole experience in detail in the book.

EJM: You intended to just ask basic questions about how he wrote his science fiction, but this led into an entirely different area when Phil began talking about his experiences with psychic phenomenon, something you didn’t anticipate when you set up the meeting, right?

DSA: First of all, we didn't anticipate the enormous length at which he wanted to talk about these things. Secondly, we never anticipated the enormous depth at which he wanted to approach some of these subjects. Science fiction and literature became just a jumping off point to talk about religion and philosophy. With most of the other writers [interviewed for the project] we were lucky to get an hour interview. With the really good ones, like Ted Sturgeon and Norman Spinrad, we were doing 2 hour interviews just because they had so much to say. But Phil, by comparison, had four times as much to say. Sturgeon was pretty well tapped out after the two hours, but with Phil we had over eight hours on tape. And we just decided that was the place to stop because it became obvious we could do a whole damn book just on Phi. So, yes, we certainly were taken by surprise by the depth at which he wanted to discuss the material.

EJM: You were interviewing him in 1977 and Phil's life-altering event occurred in February/March 1974. The incident he called the "2-3-74" event. So, all of this was pretty fresh at the time, right?

DSA: Exactly. In fact, the interview in *The Dream Connection* is THE most complete and most in depth description of those experiences that has ever been published anywhere. He may have had longer conversations with closer friends of his, like Paul Williams, but as far as what's lasted on paper and anyone who wants to understand those experiences and doesn't read TDC isn't getting the full story. I'm very proud of that fact. That this most controversial part of the man's life is the part we took most seriously, seriously enough to print it in its entirety.

EJM: And it certainly is controversial, because many of his original hard-core fans are really uncomfortable with his later works and believe he had some kind of physical or biological episode or that he was even insane. There's the whole gamut of how people react to that part of his life. But, in TDC you came away feeling he was quite sane.

DSA: Oh yeah. There is no question about it in my mind. And, I can make a claim like that if only because I have a degree in psychology and I've worked in mental asylums. They train you to tell the difference between people who are sane, people who are insane and people who are acting insane. Phil was not in any way crazy. There may be some biological explanation for some of his experiences; you know a brain embolism or over-medication. I'm not a medical doctor. But, I do know the man was absolutely sincere in his belief that he had an experience that was in some way outside the realm of normality. He did his best to describe it and devoted most of the rest of his life of his life trying to put it in some kind of perspective and context.

Now, if you turn to a book like *Cosmic Consciousness* by [Richard] Bucke, I believe his name is, a classic in the field, he writes descriptions of any number of people who claim to have had some kind of unusual experiences. They're pretty much all the same and they're very much like Phil's. They all feel they've had some type of revelations. Now whether they're medical or chemical, physical or spiritual, or all of the above – nobody knows exactly what that stuff is, yet the experiences all have similar characteristics. I'd say Phil is just another one. He had the gates of perception open, given whatever cause and for whatever reason. But, it certainly was not something that should be considered insane. It may be the next step in human evolution to get people of their minds and into the cosmic consciousness.

EJM: Phil ranged all over the place, not only in his conversations with you but also in the Exegesis and in *VALIS*, trying to decide if his experiences were extra-terrestrial or contact with some disembodied entity.

DSA: Yes, was it a disembodied spirit, was it his own reincarnation memories, was it totally drug-induced, was it aliens contact him – this was a man with an enormous imagination. So, when he came up with a theory he tried to match it to the facts, because he did have some kind of scientific training. He would think of a theory and then he'd compare it to the facts and eventually discard most of it, which I think maybe a lot of people who read about Phil's later life fail to understand. He was approaching all this stuff in a very scientific manner by applying his theories to the data and then discarding most of it as irrational. I like to think of it as entertaining an idea. He wasn't convinced that aliens were affecting his mind or that Russians were transmitting works of art into his head. That was a theory. The way he tested a theory was to try it out – wear it like a suit of clothes for awhile and see how comfortable it was. Eventually the flaws

would appear. In fact, he used the clothing metaphor. He would find a loose thread and pull on it until the entire suit came apart. Then he'd discard that and get a new set of clothes.

EJM: You devote about 75 pages to the interview that took place and then conclude with an Afterward on the conspiracy-cloaked Russian Xerox Missive. In it Phil, or actually Joan (his then-girlfriend) referred to that particular theory as the “really important part.” Can you explain what that was all about?

DSA: (pause) No, I really couldn't. (long laughter from both of us.) That was just another piece of data in the hopper. Who knows what that was all about? I couldn't even begin to explain it. [NOTE: Paul Williams does delve into the Xerox Missive extensively in his book *Only Apparently Real* for anyone who wants to further explore that point.]

EJM: And, what state was VALIS in at the time of your interview with Phil?

DSA: Well, that's a complicated subject, but it is all spelled out in great detail in TDC. He had written a book called Valisystem A which I believe became, in part, *Radio Free Albemuth*. By the time he released VALIS, his thinking had changed so radically that the two books appeared to be completely different. At the time we interviewed him, he had finished Valisystem A, but wasn't happy with it. He knew there was more to it, but didn't know what and he wanted to take it in a different direction, but wasn't sure where.

According to Russ Galen, Phil's agent for many years, Phil told Russ that it was our interview that helped unlock his creativity and made him think in different directions, and actually enabled him to throw it aside and start from scratch and rewrite VALIS.

EJM: Wow, now that's heavy. (pause) That really brings up the issue about David and Kevin and your feelings that at least in part, you and Kevin Briggs were incorporated into David and Kevin of VALIS.

DSA: There's a couple of lines right out of our interview with him that comes right out of the mouths of David and Kevin in VALIS. Plus, most of the exploits in VALIS took place in Sonoma. Kevin [Briggs] called me and said, “Guess what! We're characters in the book.” Then I read it and it was very clear to me that he did use us as characters. And, then I talked to Phil – I called him on the phone – and I said, hey, I know how you work, that you use real life people. And I know how you combine people occasionally into characters in your fiction, but I want to know is this David in VALIS actually David Scott Apel? And, is this Kevin really Kevin C. Briggs. And he said, “Sure are.” So, I got it directly from him that these characters were at least partially based on us. Now, Tim Powers and Kevin Jeter have also claimed that the characters are based on them. And I know they're the more famous ones – the better and longer term friends of Phil's than Kevin and I were. Yet, when I asked Phil about it, he was confirming that he at least used us in part, combining me and Tim Powers into David and Jeter and Briggs into Kevin.

You know, I hate to make a big deal out of this. I don't want to sound like one of those people who is waving their hands for attention, yelling “Me, Me.” I just want people to know the real story. Because I'm sure at the time, even Jeter and Powers didn't know the whole story. That's all. And, I'm very proud to be associated in Phil's mind with Tim Powers. He's an enormous talent. We've since exchanged letters and it's a point of honor for me that Phil would connect us in that manner.

EJM: Ok, let's discuss what you call Phase Two – the second section of the book – dealing with dream telepathy. Do you recall who first mentioned the topic? Did Phil mention dream telepathy or did you?

DSA: No, I think I did, because a good friend of mine wrote a book called *Dream Telepathy* and we wanted to know if Phil had read that. Actually, Phil mentioned the concept and I said what you're talking about sounds like the same thing

in the book by Alan Vaughan where he covered experiments by several scientists who actually transmit and receive material in the dream state. So, it was something Phil was definitely aware of.

EJM: I bring it up because it's crucial to the next phase of what happens in your book, AFTER Phil dies.

DSA: Well, any condensation of those experiences runs the risk of sounding crazy. Which is why I took the time and the effort to detail the entire range of experiences in the book. Any kind of summary here will make it sound like something from the psychic friends network or a bad movie, some psycho-thriller made for cable TV. But, yes, a year or so after Phil died I began having dreams about him and about subjects he had talked about. And, as someone who had been keeping a journal of dreams for over 20 years, I paid a great deal of attention to them. I was able to identify them as very different from any other type of dream I had ever had and therefore paid even more attention to them. They all seem to revolve around these ideas of Phil communicating with me. So, you know, I'm fairly open-minded, and decided, OK, I'll entertain the idea. But, what really made my mind up to even pursue this was the tremendous number of "synchronicities" that started to cluster around Phil Dick related activity. I couldn't ignore the links between what was happening inside my mind and outside in my own environment. So, at the risk of looking like a fool—something I excel at—I decided Phil had some kind of message that he wanted to get through. So let's just go ahead and take the next step and try to find a medium— which for some people is perhaps a contradiction in terms. But, since I knew Alan Vaughn who wrote the book *Dream Telepathy*, I contacted him and set up meetings with a number of different mediums and eventually I got some decent evidential data.

[Note: Now, I won't attempt to cover this vast amount of "evidential data" here. That is Phase 3 and takes up nearly half of the book. That's for you to fully explore, if interested, in *Philip K. Dick: The Dream Connection*. What I can say is that just as Scott believes Phil was completely sane and rational, I found Scott to be quite convincing, incredibly honest and sincere—both in the book and during this interview— discussing his experiences with mediums and attempts to contact Phil on the other side. And Scott wondered aloud about why so many people had similar experiences.]

DSA: You know, I thought it was very interesting that after Phil died, others wrote about Phil making contacts... [Michael] Bishop, [Richard] Lupoff...was this same psychosis affecting them? Maybe because he WAS making a big splash in a psychic pond and ripples were going out to his friends. I just happened to be close enough to get doused. Others were far enough away to just see the ripples.

EJM: And now looking back on it, what do you think the message was?

DSA: He wanted his friends to know he was OK, that he loved them and here's some evidence that there is life after death. In some sense the whole story, in true Phil Dick fashion, transcended even the idea of interesting experiences, he wanted to come back and prove his philosophy, the stuff he spent his adult life writing about. In some sense, it's like a footnote to say: "By the way, I'm back and I was right."

[Note: I first read TDC in 1997 while engaged in my own series of Dickian synchronicities—"meaningful coincidences" as Scott described them. It was truly weird since I was working on a concept for my own novel which deals with Phil making contact from the hereafter [*A Kindred Spirit*]. When I started writing it, I had no idea so many others had tackled the topic of Phil "coming back." Of course, I was just learning how pervasive the Phil factor is. TDC includes an essay by Ray Nelson, co-author with PKD on *The Ganymede Takeover*, in which Phil visits him in the dream state urging him to write a sequel to *The Man in the High Castle*, based on notes they once developed in a writer's group. Just good essay material? Nelson later confirmed to Scott that he started working on the sequel because the experience with Phil was "so real." I've since learned that Paul Williams, former literary executor for Phil's estate and founder of the PKD Society (and rock historian extraordinaire), experienced untold synchronicities, at the least, and at times actual feelings of contact with Phil, during the years he spent on the PKD project. I mentioned some of this to Scott during our conversation.]

DSA: Now, what you're saying about you and Paul Williams and other people, that's what I'm talking about. Synchronicity is not unusual among writers or among creative people. It's actually quite common in the creative fields. What IS unusual is that so many people who knew Phil, or were fans of Phil, have these experiences clustered around Phil Dick material. Most writers, when they experience synchronicity, think it's a sign that they're on the right track, discovering meaning somehow and doing what they should be doing. But, what interests me is how many people, who are fans of Phil, have experiences like this related directly to Phil Dick material. It's another step beyond just synchronicity. It's the added Phildickian element and the real sense that life is becoming like a Phil Dick novel. You know, am I dealing with Palmer Eldritch? In Phil's afterlife is he a benign interfering god or like Palmer Eldritch who is going to haunt me for the rest of my friggin' life?

[Note: Scott says the experiences stopped once he published the book in 1987 and he felt closure to that ten-year period of his life. He went on to other projects, writing nearly 600 video and movie reviews for the *San Jose Mercury News*, writing plays and even appearing in some Killer B movies he became notorious for reviewing. So, why re-visit the book and the strange PKD experiences now?]

DSA: A whole new generation of readers are discovering Phil on their own or thorough the Internet. The first time I published the book it was truly a labor of love, my tribute to the man—Philip K. Dick and I didn't care if I made a dime of profit. This time my motives are a bit more mercenary—I would like to make some money.

I've started up this new web-based independent small press publishing business. In addition to the Phil Dick book, I'm offering *Chaos and Beyond*, an anthology of Robert Anton Wilson material, my own *Killer B's* video guide, and a real Phildickian science fiction comic novel called *MFU*, which I think is one of the funniest damn things I have ever read. And, finally, I do intend to publish that collection of interviews with the science fiction authors. There is so much brilliant material from the writers, material that should not be lost or forgotten. So, for now, I just hope to get my small press off the ground and make a success of it.

[This interview was originally written in 1999 for Greg Lee's 'zine *Radio Free PKD*. Scott Apel did republish TDC as a trade paperback in July of 1999. Jami tried to get in contact with him to find out what he is doing these days, but had no luck with his old Impermanent Press, nor by contacting the *San Jose Mercury News*. A Facebook page for Scott Apel is not active, only a Wikipedia reprint (fan page) and "poking it" did not work, jami said. If anyone has current contact info on Apel, let us know.

ej "jami" Morgan, now a full-time writer with her own small press, ZiaLink Ink, was formerly a television anchor and journalist and also a government "flack" (spokesperson.) She released her novel *A Kindred Spirit* at the first Philip K. Dick Festival in Colorado in 2010. She too is feeling some closure with the Phil factor, she says, now that her story has been told.]

Philip K. Dick: Exhilaration and Terror of the Postmodern – An Informal Review by John Fairchild

Regarding *Philip K. Dick: Exhilaration and Terror of the Postmodern* by Christopher Palmer—I couldn't get very far into it.

I first read Chapter 7 due to its title—"Eating and Being Eaten: Dangerous Deities and Depleted Consumers". I'm not sure what, if anything, I got out of it. This chapter discusses the novels only, with the exception of one four-line mention of "Rautavaara's Case", and that entry only spoke of cultural relativity.

No mention, in the chapter or the index, of "The Story to End All Stories for Harlan Ellison's Anthology *Dangerous Visions*", where a female character eats God, which would seem to be a major omission. No mention of the

short story “Novelty Act”, where the character Ian envisions Mrs. Thibodeaux devouring both him and another male character (figuratively). In both these stories you’ve got female characters devouring male characters, assuming God is a male in the Ellison story. “Faith of Our Fathers” only shows up in a footnote and not in this context.

I started to read Chapter 1, “Philip K. Dick and the Postmodern” and just couldn’t finish it. He makes statements like “Today we live in the epoch of the postmodern, and are subject to the condition of postmodernity.” Really? I don’t think we’d get much agreement on that one. At least in the circles in which I travel.

Maybe if someone cared about the subject of postmodernism it would strike one as a better book. The subject hit academia after I graduated, and I can’t claim to understand it or care about it. I can’t see how it’s important and no one has ever shown me that it is.

The index is a mess. A large number of the entries are alphabetized under Dick, which appears to be normal currently. But then you have words such as madness being found under *Martian Time Slip*, which itself is found in the Dick section. You wind up always looking in two different places in the index. You have to. The word Eucharist (Palmer doesn’t capitalize the word, although dictionaries do) is not found in any section of the index even though it is used several times in Chapter 7. Very sloppy.

When I first saw this book I wondered how it could have been around since 2003 and not have made a bigger impact on the PKD world. Now I see why.

NOTES & COMMENTS

“Best Science Fiction Short Stories edited by Philip K Dick” by Patrick

Of course Phil never edited an anthology of science fiction stories. But he did have ideas as to what some of the best stories were. I found the list below in an old notebook I was paging through.

Rog Philips	“Rat in the Skull”
James Blish	“A Work of Art”
Ray Nelson	“Turn Off the Sky”
Robert Gilbert	[unidentified but quite possibly “Rocks and Rilk”]
Anthony Boucher	[unidentified; Phil calls it “the story about the robot and the miracle in the cave”]
Robert Heinlein	“Up By His Bootstraps”
Lewis Padgett	“Time Locker”
Harry Bates	“Alas All Thinking”
P. Schuyler Miller	“As Never Was”
A.E. van Vogt	“The Recruiting Station”
Cyril Kornbluth	“The Little Black Bag”
A.E. van Vogt	“The Ghost”

[Titles from “Will the Atomic Bomb Ever Be Perfected;” letter to James Blish June 7, 1964; letter fragment, addressee unknown, dated September 13, 1973; no citation for “Turn Off the Sky” though.]

“...which they ate with a runcible spoon” by John Fairchild

The children’s poem “The Owl and the Pussycat” by Edward Lear contains the line “...which they ate with a runcible spoon.” This was a nonsense spoon invented by Lear and a definition was later given to the word.

The name Leo Runcible from *The Man Whose Teeth Were All Exactly Alike* just had to have come from this poem. I don’t remember seeing a connection between these two before. We do know that Phil was an avid reader as a child and he would almost certainly come across this poem. I’ve been unable to find any other earlier reference elsewhere.

Random quotes compiled by Patrick

[More from that old notebook: I found the following quotations I had copied down, God knows when. Thought I'd include them here for the hell of it.]

When I do a novel, I am "there," within that world, among its people, involved in its idiosyncratic customs, etc. I am not thinking about it; I am participating... Like they say, my books don't signify anything; they simply are. (Letter to Terry Carr: November 20, 1964)

The love of money is the root of all evil. The scent of possible big money is the root of all manic insanity. (Letter to Andy ___: May 21, 1968)

Someday I'm going to get my article published: I'm going to prove that *Finnegan's Wake* is an information pool based on computer memory systems that didn't exist until a century after James Joyce's era; that Joyce was plugged into a cosmic consciousness from which he derived the inspiration for his entire corpus of work. I'll be famous forever. (*Divine Invasions*: chapter 1)

Dick's main characters are engaged in a battle not only for their lives, but also to save the basic categories of existence. They are doomed to failure in advance. (Stanislaw Lem, *Microworlds*: pp. 79-80)

Divorce should be listed in REVELATIONS as one of the tribulations of the Last Days along with fire, famine, plague and flood. The five horsemen, not four. I can just see the horseman titled "divorce;" he is holding in his arms a great scroll reading SPOUSAL AND CHILD SUPPORT COURT ORDER, and he is grinning to bet hell. (Letter to Charles Platt: December 4, 1978)

Every time I try to care about a spiritual matter I have to bust my ass earning more money. (Found among the 1975-76 letters)

I received in the mail Richard Nixon's autograph which I wrote and asked for a year ago. Turns out his autographs are fakes; he has machines which mimic his signature. There is a Phil Dick s-f story there somewhere. (Letter to Russell Galen: August 22, 1979)

In many ways, Phil Dick is to psychedelics and science fiction what William Burroughs is to hard drugs and mainstream literature. (From a *Qui* magazine review of *Flow My Tears*, the Policeman Said quoted by Phil in a letter to Sharon Jarvis: January 12, 1976)

I've always feared that someday one of my novels would come out with my name as Philip K. Duck on the cover or title page. (Letter to Ralph Vicinanza: May 4, 1976)

Yes, there is a basic satire and humor throughout my writing. Like Abraham Lincoln, I have to see the funny side of life, the pataphysical side, or otherwise the tragedy, the many little sorrows, become too much for me. (Quoted in *Psychotic* fanzine circa late 1967-68)

Author Profile, circa 1972, from an Ace Book edition of *Vulcan's Hammer*:

PHILIP K. DICK is one of the more unusual talents among science-fiction writers. Anthony Boucher characterizes his work as showing "a fertile speculative mind...plus the chilling symbolism of absolute nightmare." A resident of Berkeley, California, he divides his time between his writing and his enthusiasm for recorded music. His short stories have appeared in all the leading magazines.

Christien Gagnier 3/27/97

“...I must mention Dick’s pessimism as well. While America was set to conquer space and be the first to put a man on the moon, Dick was painting bleak pictures of the future; of terrible existences on the outer planets, on boredom and drug addiction, of little flying cameras following you everywhere, of complete environmental degradation of the earth, of huge multi-national corporations ruling our existence...”

Alesandro Jodorowsky on Dune:

“I wanted to do a movie that would give the people who took LSD at that time the hallucinations that you get with that drug, but without hallucinating. I did not want LSD to be taken, I wanted to fabricate the drug’s effects.” (Jodorowsky needs to write and direct *UBIK*. Like that will ever happen.)

“Jared Loughner's World of Illusion ... and Ours.” by Jack Shafer. *Slate*: Jan. 13, 2011

The Matrix, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, and Inception. As long as we're using Jared Lee Loughner's tastes in philosophy and literature to probe his psyche—and I'm not saying we shouldn't—let's scrutinized our own tastes, too. I'm not suggesting a Mailerian equivalence between Loughner and the average man, so stop composing that irate e-mail to me right now. But Loughner's obsession with alternative realities, his idea that the universe is malleable and a function of an individual's will, is mirrored almost everywhere we look in pop culture.

According to a *Mother Jones* piece by Nick Baumann, Loughner believed in "lucid dreaming," namely that "conscious dreams are an alternative reality that a person can inhabit and control." That may sound like the currency of the insane, but it's the stuff of our most popular entertainments. Lucid dreaming served as the foundation for the fifth-best grossing movie of 2010, *Inception*.

Today's *Washington Post* calls reality-bending novelist Philip K. Dick—the author of such classics as *Time Out of Joint* and *Ubik*—Loughner's favorite writer. While Dick produced most of his short stories and novels for the pulp press, he has recently been acknowledged as a master of literature by the Library of America, which has published three volumes of his work. In Dick's fiction, characters are trapped and liberated as the realities around them melt, buckle, and turn inside out. He defined reality in a 1978 essay as "that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away" but characteristically amended the thought several paragraphs later, writing, "If you can control the meaning of words, you can control the people who must use the words."

An erudite overview of Dick's published in the *New Republic* in 1993 captures the writer's oeuvre. "To enter a novel by Philip K. Dick is to enter a zone of disappearing worlds, nested hallucinations and impossible time-loops," Alexander Star writes. "Dick systematically blurs the boundaries between mind and matter, between storms in the psyche and crises of the atmosphere. The coiling search to set things right is doubled and redoubled and doubled again. Dick never met a story that ended or a regression that was finite."

If Jared Loughner was living out the Dickian philosophy to a schizophrenic extreme, so, it appears, did Dick. "Phil was not crazy by any standard I would dare apply," writes biographer Lawrence Sutin in *Divine Invasions: A Life of Philip K. Dick*, citing his interviews with a psychiatrist and a psychologist who saw Dick during two difficult periods in his life. But Dick told his third wife, Anne Dick, that he had been diagnosed with schizophrenia when in high school. It was a very hot topic with the writer. "Phil was hypochondriacal about his mental condition," Anne said. When she was admitted to a psychiatric facility for assessment, Dick speculated that he was mentally ill, perhaps schizophrenic, and that he should be hospitalized, Sutin writes.

In one letter quoted by Sutin, Dick grumbles about how his wild behaviors had earned him the reputation "of an advanced schizophrenic who believed everyone was plotting against him." Dick self-medicated on drugs for most of his adult life, even trying a vitamin regimen, to beat his self-diagnosis of schizophrenia. He embraced the teaching of Swiss psychoanalyst Ludwig Binswanger, who, Star writes, "believed that schizophrenia involved a disturbance in the patient's

orientation toward time." He had religious visions, claimed that his mind had been invaded by a "transcendently rational mind" and believed he had been possessed by the prophet Elijah.

Again, I'm not equating Loughner and Dick but trying to establish how Dick harnessed the schizophrenic's worldview of mirror-worlds, parallel universes, and scirms behind scirms behind scirms to power his fiction. In Dick's world, the schizophrenic response to the world is not just normal; it is heroic—and doubly heroic when the protagonist breaks through the reality barriers that have marginalized him.

Thanks to Dick, pop culture caught up with schizophrenia and, thanks to Dick's followers, surpassed it. In Dick's world, the paranoid view the almost always the wisest one to embrace. Elements of Philip K. Dick can be found in such recent movies as *The Matrix*, in which a dreamer who is being fed upon by machines is awoken to fight and destroy them in a cyber realm. In *Dark City*, another dreaming protagonist discovers and combats the super intelligent observers who experiment on hundreds of thousands of people by periodically erasing their memories and reconfiguring the simulacrum of a 1950s Chicagoish city as they sleep. Hollywood has turned other Dick works into reality-bending movies, including *Total Recall*, *Minority Report*, and *A Scanner Darkly*. According to IMDB, a remake of *Total Recall* is in preproduction.

What is the TV show *Lost* but a six-season treatise on what is real and what is illusion, who is mad and who is sane, and what the limits of logic and faith are? In the *Harry Potter* series, the young wizard discovers a parallel world hidden to normal humans in which an evil power seeks to destroy and enslave the inhabitants of both worlds. Other movies in which reality is faked, augmented, and otherwise altered include *The Truman Show*, *The Game*, and *Avatar*, in which even the crippled can walk again. And I'm not even including the hundreds of movies in which ghosts take us into their realms or any of the physicists who speculate that our world is just a projection of some higher, multi-dimensional universe.

According to the *Post*, Loughner especially loved the movie *Waking Life*, which chronicles one man's adventures in the dream pool, as he walks "in and out of dreams, exploring ideas about the fleeting nature of identity."

Dreaming your way to a magical space was already a hackneyed notion by the time Dick started writing in the 1950s. Alice dreams her way into Wonderland, Dorothy's unconscious mind transports her into Oz, and the Peter Pan transports Wendy and her brothers to Never Land as they prepare to settle down for a night's sleep. In all three stories, the young heroes struggle against the sometimes tempting, sometimes frightening alternative reality until they break free and return home. So satisfying were these tales that their audiences demanded—and were given—sequels in which Alice, Dorothy, and Wendy all return to their other, truer dimensions and were tested again.

Everybody shares Loughner's appetite for life in another dimension where they can be in control. One difference between Loughner and the man in the streets is that the man in the street can easily distinguish between the imagined and the real—something Loughner appears to have struggled with. When our minds occupy alternative realities, we know it's only a movie, only a book, only a philosophical tract, or only a flask of physicists' moonshine. When we visit alternative realities, our grips on this reality grow firmer. When Loughner goes there, I suspect he strips a few mental threads and loses his hold on our world.

What's it like to live on the leading edge of paranoia? From his perspective, what does his 6-by-6 cell look like? Is it a collapsing cube or does it stretch beyond the infinite?

An interoffice audio-memo...

Dear Phil,

I've been reading through your Exegesis lately even though doing so directly contradicts a speech I gave not long ago wherein I insist that only your fiction is important. I still believe that is true and I am pleased to see that you agree with me insomuch as some sizable chunk of the Exegesis has you exploring your own fiction looking for clues. This leaves aside, naturally, the whole question as to whether or not the Exegesis itself is fiction. Or, perhaps whether your fiction is actually real.

I wonder about this issue based on a number of comments you make in the Exegesis.

My God, my life – which is to say my 2-74/3-74 experience is exactly like the plot of any one of ten of my novels or stories. Even down to the fake memories & identity. I'm a protagonist from one of PKD's books.

Hmm. So which came first, Phil, the life of PKD or the books of PKD? I have no idea myself, really, and I'm not sure you did, either. Then there's this:

Ah! In *UBIK* locating the Ubik messages in cheap commercials was absolutely right on. I couldn't have "guessed" more accurately. It is obvious that the real author of *UBIK* was Ubik. It is a self proving novel; i.e., it couldn't have come into existence unless it were true.

Wow! Now in this case the question is which came first, Ubik or Philip K. Dick? Or, rather, did you write *UBIK* or did Ubik write you? It seems like you want to split the difference when you suggest:

...& no wonder I saw how my 3-74 experience resembled *UBIK*! 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).

Maybe so, Phil. Weirder things happened in the Sixties and Seventies though your actual experience with psychedelics was, by your own account, somewhat limited. I knew people back then who were doing acid every week and they couldn't begin to think of the stuff you dreamed up. Something more must be going on than simple hallucinogens. Have you considered the possibility that you, Philip K. Dick, are a fictional character created in the mind of some "other" (God...a computer...some acidhead in Saint Louis)? Were you created to write all those books for who-knows-what reason?

I ask this because I saw a play about your life last year called "800 Words." You play yourself...well, an actor plays you but he is so good I just sort of accepted the idea that he *was* you. The play, of course, is "fiction" only it's based on "real" events in your life and there is a part where the playwright herself (actually another actor) comes on stage and explains what is going on. You really get into the idea...I mean the actor playing you really gets into the idea but since *you* are the actor it must actually be *you* that digs it and, well, I'm in the audience watching all of this and thinking, "Damn! This is just like being in a PKD novel!"

"My writing deals with hallucinated worlds, intoxicating & deluding drugs, & psychosis." You wrote that in 1978. Man, you ought to see 2011. I don't think you would like the 21st Century, Phil. It's the age of terrorists and simulacra. Way too many of your themes have come home to roost and not the good ones. Killer robots? Check. Bizarre new drugs? Check. Ubiquitous surveillance? News clowns? Synthetic politicians? Check, check and check. Simulated reality? Oh, yeah. Lots and lots of simulated reality; one for each person. You thought that those fake worlds would be imposed upon us by outside forces for sinister purposes. Here in 2011 we voluntarily embrace these false realities, knowing they are false and not caring. I wonder if you ever considered that the inhabitants of that nice, quiet, Fifties suburb in *Time Out of Joint* were actually quite content to be there, blissfully occluded, and how angry and depressed they would be when the cold hard truth of the real world was pushed in their faces.

You know it's been twenty-nine years since you moved on. And, maybe more importantly, twenty-nine years since *Blade Runner* opened. "More importantly," I'm sorry to say, because while you are now a sort of cultural icon (that must have come as a surprise) it has less to do with your books than it does someone else's movie "based" on your books – and, for the most part, not much "based" at all. You're a celebrity but really a simulacrum celebrity. You deserve better but such is fame in the 21st Century.

Anyway, hope you are well wherever you are these days. Take care of yourself.

Regards,
Patrick