THE SOUL OF THE WUB

by Philip K. Dick

This little essay was written by Philip K. Dick in 1980 as an introduction to a reprinting of his story "Beyond Lies the Wub" in an anthology called First Voyages (Knight, Greenberg, Olander, editors; New York: Avon Books, 1981). The text is taken from PKD's carbon, except for the title, which is new.

The idea I wanted to get down on paper had to do with the definition of "human." The dramatic way I trapped the idea was to present ourselves, the literal humans, and then an alien life form that exhibits the deeper traits that I associate with humanity: not a biped with an enlarged cortex – a forked radish that thinks, to paraphrase the old saying – but an organism that is human in terms of its soul.

I'm sorry if the word "soul" offends you, but I can think of no other term. Certainly, when I wrote the story "Beyond Lies the Wub" back in my youth in politically-active Berkeley, I myself would never have thought of the crucial ingredient in the wub being a soul; I was a fireball radical and atheist, and religion was totally foreign to me. However, even in those days (I was about twenty-two years old) I was casting about in an effort to contrast the truly human with what I was later to call the "android or reflex machine" that looks human but is not – the subject of the speech I gave in Vancouver in 1972–twenty years after "Beyond Lies the Wub" was published. The germ of the idea behind the speech lies in this my first published story. It has to do with empathy, or, as it was called in earlier times, caritas or agape.

In this story, empathy (on the part of the wub who looks like a big pig and has the feelings of a man) becomes an actual weapon for survival. Empathy is defined as the ability to put yourself in someone else's place. The wub does this even better than we ordinarily suppose could be done: its spiritual capacity is its literal salvation. The wub was my idea of a higher life form; it was then and it is now. On the other hand, Captain Franco (the name is deliberately based on General Franco of Spain, which is my concession in the story to political considerations) looks on other creatures in terms of sheer utility; they are objects to him, and he pays the ultimate price for this total failure of empathy. So I show empathy possessing a survival value; in terms of inter-species competition, empathy gives you the edge. Not a bad idea for a very early story by a very young person!

I liked the blurb that Planet Stories printed for "Beyond Lies the Wub." On the title page of the magazine they wrote:

Many men talk like philosophers and live like fools, proclaimed the slovenly wub, after death.

And ahead of the story proper they wrote:

The slovenly wub might well have said: Many men talk like philosophers and live like fools.

Reader reaction to the story was excellent, and Jack O'Sullivan, editor of Planet, wrote to tell me that in his opinion it was a very fine little story – whereupon he paid me something like fifteen dollars. It was my introduction to pulp payment rates.

Just a week ago while going through my closet I came across an ancient pulp magazine with ragged edges, its cover missing, its pages yellow ... wondering what it was I picked it up – and found that this ancient remnant, this artifact from another epoch, was indeed the July, 1952 issue of Planet Stories with my first published story in it. Profound emotions touched me as I gazed down at the illustration for "Wub"; it is a superb little illo, done by Vestal, and under it is written:

"The wub, sir," Peterson said. "It spoke!"

Well, here we are in the Eighties, twenty-eight years later, and the gentle wub still speaks. May he always speak ... and may other humans always listen.
I have a problem. I’ve told myself I won’t let the newsletter turn into a forum for an ongoing, tedious debate between myself and Gregg Rickman. I originally tried to discourage him from writing a response to my comments in the last issue about the emphasis in his biography on PKD’s alleged sexual abuse as a child—but the letter he eventually wrote was calm (I’d earlier received a hysterical, very hostile letter from a pal of his) and intelligent and seemed eminently worthy of inclusion in the newsletter, and you will find it leading off the letter column in this issue. There’s also a helpful, intriguing letter from David Keller on various related topics. And that was going to be, according to my plan, the end of the matter.

But it’s not gonna work. In a just universe, I think, Lawrence Sutin’s well-rounded, sensible, loving portrait of Philip K. Dick would have a greater impact on the world’s lasting sense of who Dick was than Gregg Rickman’s well-intended but badly skewed portrayal of artist-as-victim. But this is not necessarily a just universe, is it? I keep forgetting that.

We live in a culture of gossip. In such a culture, “truth” is what’s repeatable. What catches the attention. What sticks in the mind. Rickman, I know, is sincerely pursuing the truth as he perceives it. But the sensational nature of what he’s come up with may cause it to stick to Philip K. Dick’s reputation whether it has any basis in fact or not.

This was brought home to me forcefully and unpleasantly when I listened to Mark Burman’s 30-minute radio portrait of PKD, which the BBC World Service recently broadcast to its many millions of listeners. Rickman is heard from near the start of the broadcast, in an interview, talking about “Dick’s troubled life.” After telling the story of the death of Phil’s twin sister, he says: “The other major happening of his early childhood was his molestation, at the age of four; the evidence points to, it was his grandfather. So the situation was that his parents had broken up; his mother moved in, back with her parents; and a grand-dad who, I believe, had molested his mother and her two siblings as well, continued the pattern, as is frequently the case, with young Philip. This whole thing in Philip’s work about becoming an object, the whole concept of the tomb world, of being plunged down into a world of filth and decay, I think stem back to this instance in his life.”

This is shocking to me. If you read Rickman’s biography (To the High Castle), or just check the indexed references in that book to Dick’s maternal grandfather, E. G. Kindred (the primary material is on pp. 58-60), you’ll find that Rickman has no evidence of any kind—none whatsoever—that Mr. Kindred ever sexually molested anyone. His assumptions are based entirely on inductive reasoning. In the biography, this is clear (although the reader is swamped in a sea of authorial persuasion and repetition). On the radio, however, we only have the modifiers “the evidence points to” and “I believe.”

I know Rickman can’t be responsible for how an interview with him is edited and used on the air. And of course gossip very rapidly moves away from the realm of the direct quote and into the realm of assumed, believed, repeated “fact.” This is neatly demonstrated on the BBC show. First (following the above material) we are treated to a very dramatic reading of the scene from chapter two of MARY AND THE GIANT where Mary Anne’s father grabs her by the hair. Then the narrator, the voice of authority, informs us: “From a very early age Dick began suffering crippling bouts of agoraphobia, claustrophobia, eating disorders, and panic attacks, all very probably caused by sexual abuse.”

Later in the show, Burman states: “Dick’s failed relationships with women, and his drug addiction, might also have been caused by the psychological after-effects of his sexual abuse.” Notice that while there is still some slight room for doubt about exactly what made this man tick, there is no longer any doubt at all that he was sexually abused. Rickman’s hypothesis has become “fact.”

Think about it. What if you were Mr. Kindred, or if he were your parent, or grandparent? Maybe Rickman’s hypothesis is correct. Given the reported prevalence of childhood sexual abuse, it’s certainly possible. But maybe it’s not true at all.

And if in fact Phil wasn’t sexually abused, how do you suppose he would feel, if he knew this had become the “official” story (and explanation) of his life?

“Innocent until proven guilty.” Nice words. But do we really believe them? I don’t think most of us do. I think we think there are other issues that take precedence, that are more important.

The only “evidence” Rickman has that Philip K. Dick may have been sexually abused as a child is one person’s recollection of something PKD said to her on one occasion. The rest of it is assumptions based on symptoms, symptoms that certainly are open to other interpretations. For Sutin’s handling of the same material, see pages 25-26 of Divine Invasions. As Sutin points out, there is some contradiction between PKD’s telling Anne that he was molested, and his inability to recall any such event later when his therapist, Barry Spatz, who is the original source of the “childhood sexual abuse” theory of Dick’s life, tried to get him to talk about it. “Ultimately,” writes Sutin, “one can do no more than to raise the possibility [that there was a molestation of some kind]—and to duly note that eating and swallowing phobias remained with Phil, intermittently, throughout his life.”

But, obviously, Rickman has done more than raise the possibility. And what the BBC Omnibus segment demonstrates is that Rickman’s theory, in the hands of other writers, journalists, etc., can easily become what passes in our culture for fact. Information. Mark Burman has kindly sent me (and I do therefore feel bad about complaining, I really do, probably I’m too sensitive for this job), in addition to a tape of the BBC show, the manuscript of an article he’s written on PKD that he expects to have published by that prestigious newspaper The Guardian. In the course of his profile, Burman writes, “Gregg Rickman has spent eight years writing a biography of Dick and remains convinced that Dick was a victim of sexual abuse.” He quotes Rickman as above, with a slightly different edit: “The major happening in his childhood was his molestation at the age of four, the evidence points to his grandfather whom I believe had molested his mother and two siblings and, as is frequently the case, the pattern with young Philip.” Burman goes on, “The abuse would explain a great deal...” and refers again to the agoraphobia, globus hysteroi, suicide attempts etc.

Perhaps the piece will be edited, or won’t be published at all. Or perhaps it’s in print already. Then not only the millions who listen to BBC World Service but also the readers of The Guardian (and future semi-scholars checking into articles on PKD in respectable publications) will have the inside scoop. People will listen to the radio, read Burman and write their own articles. They’ll interview Rickman. Maybe they’ll even find Spatz and interview him again.

But will they in fact have the truth about Philip K. Dick, or E. G. Kindred?

I don’t know.

I find the whole thing quite depressing. I promise not to go over this yet again in future issues if I can possibly avoid it.

— Paul Williams
Death of a Citizen
by Tim Powers

[David Keller sent along this essay, which appeared opposite the editorial page of the Orange County Register, Sunday, October 8, 1989. I read it and decided that even though it has nothing to do with Phil Dick — other than that it's about his old neighborhood, and was written by a good friend of his — I wanted to run it in the newsletter. Phil would have been passionately enthusiastic about it, and it certainly vibrates with his concerns (see "The Lucky Dog Pet Store," or "Strange Memories of Death"). Anyway, I called Tim Powers, who gave his permission, with some surprise. The piece also appeared in the L.A. Times.]

A Santa Ana citizen was found dead of pneumonia on Fairmont Street on Monday, Sept. 25. His name was Keith Holmberg, but if you knew him you probably called him Stretch.

If you ever passed him on the street but didn't know him, you most likely thought, Yikes, there's one of The Homeless, and you ignored him or offered a dollar, depending on your philosophical stance. He wouldn't have taken the dollar, in any case.

Stretch made his entire living by digging aluminum cans and old car radiators out of various dumpsters around town. That's where you might have seen him, if you live or work anywhere between 20th and Civic Center in Santa Ana—he was the tall thin fellow with the baseball cap who pushed around a stripped-down baby carriage.

Ring a bell? He was born in New Jersey in 1932. He was a veteran, and had lost his last job because of circulatory problems and lung damage from exposure to asbestos. For 10 years he lived under an avocado tree that stood where the Orange County Register's new parking structure now stands, and then he moved into a 17th Street apartment with an elderly friend who is confined to a wheel chair.

As a taxpayer you never paid a penny toward his upkeep, but if you were fortunate enough to live in the area defined by his can-run, you found that he constantly brought you odds and ends, and interesting articles clipped from newspapers, and flowers for your wife. The nine children being cared for by a Hispanic woman on Lincoln Street will be wondering what happened to the old guy who bought them lollipops every day.

And if you had the time and a couple of beers on a Saturday afternoon, you'd find that he could humorously hold his own in conversations on any topic from Shakespeare to Steinbeck to current news.

A friend and I had the melancholy duty of driving around and delivering the news of Stretch's death to a number of his friends. Some live in nice houses and one sleeps behind a dumpster in an alley off Bush Street. Every one of them cried.

You read a lot of articles in the paper about this and that disadvantaged family, and, of course, you are free to come to your own decisions about whether or not they deserve the plight they're in, but Keith Holmberg, with his humor and independence and generosity and quintessential gentlemanliness, represented a kind of Forgotten Man in Orange County.

Supermarkets throw away tons of produce and cheese and sandwich meat and a hundred other sorts of food; it's wasting, or the date on the package was yesterday. Stretch and others like him can salvage it and eat it. But many supermarket employees will stand on the dock in sight of such people and routinely smash and break the food containers before tossing them into the trash bin. I've seen this done behind the Alpha Beta and Ralphs on 17th Street.

Stretch was disabled, and his big ambition was to get back some of the money he had put into Social Security during his decades of hard work on oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. My wife is a legal secretary, but, despite her skills at cutting through the red tape of bureaucracy, she had not managed to pry any money loose for him before he died.

On his cart, Stretch carried a plastic bag that he filled with aluminum cans to take to Bruce Metals & Salvage on 6th Street. One day in Orange a police officer stopped him, took an empty beer can from the bag, and gave Stretch a ticket for having an open container of alcohol.

And, like many others, he lost all his personal belongings when city workers were cracking down on people sleeping in parks, and were throwing away all the furniture and bedrolls and eyeglasses and false teeth they could find.

Stretch never took charity — he didn't need a Good Samaritan — but he would have had an easier time of it if Orange County didn't work so hard to crush the very sorts of hardworking poor that put the place on the map in the first place. Stretch just played the cards he was dealt, and somehow he was so good-natured that he never resented anything.

Me, I'm not so good-natured. I look at people being arrested in Orange County for being at a street corner at dawn to try to get a day's work; and I watch eminent domain being invoked to drive poor people out of their hard-earned houses; and I read about 5 a.m. intrusions into apartments in San Clemente to count the number of tenants; and I read the Costa Mesa mayor's contemptuous and contemptible opinion of the poor; and, sitting here on my porch with no longer any reason to watch for that approaching cart and lanky figure and broad wave and big grin, I find very, very much to resent.

Notes (Possibly Contaminated) on an "Information Virus"
by Philip K. Dick

[This is the text of a letter to "Brig," written April 15, 1981.]

Your letter is fascinating and greatly appreciated. Yes, to a degree I am familiar with William Burroughs' writing (e.g. The Ticket that Exploded); I am familiar with his theory of an information virus. And, in respect to that, the concep of latent information contamination of traffic. But in 1970, before I knew of Burroughs I noted a thinking dysfunction or occlusion in people involved with drugs; I deal with this in A SCANNER DARKLY. This dysfunction puzzled me. In some people it was gross, in others subtle. After research I came to the conclusion that these people were getting trace amounts of heavy metal in the drugs they used — which certainly collates with Burroughs. But later on I was not so sure that this was the explanation. I left the Bay Area where I was involved with the drug subculture and came down here to Southern California; down here I am totally outside the drug subculture and know no drug-users. Nonetheless I have seen what seems to be this same occlusion or dysfunction, although not to the same degree or extent. I have theorized that it is a mild schizophrenia in which there is impairment of the thinking function. I have long owned a copy of Language and Thought in Schizophrenia, collected papers, edited by J. S. Kassanin (University of California Press 1944) and have studied it repeatedly; it is a landmark in the analysis of schizophrenia (for example it contains John Benjamin's crucial essay "A Method for Distinguishing and Evaluating Formal Thinking Disorders in Schizophrenia," in which he puts forth his now widely-used proverb test. The book also contains an essay by Kurt Goldstein in which he contrasts the thinking dysfunction in schizophrenia with that found in organic brain damage. This is a topic that I feel is vital and extraordinary; we have a very widespread mental illness which we term "schizophrenia," but we do not know the cause; as I recall, the stats are: one in seven people are afflicted with it. That there is a dysfunction of the thinking in this disorder is something not appreciated until Kassanin's book; now it is taken for granted. It has become my belief that there is some kind of thinking dysfunction in most humans, which is another way of saying, I am of the opinion that we are all "schizophrenic" to some degree; only the degree varies. When this dysfunction is gross enough, it is then
possible to diagnose the presence of it, but in more attenuated forms (in my opinion at least) it goes unnoticed. I note it in myself. Hence Horselover Fat in VALIS is identified as insane. So if you superimpose a scanner Darksly and VALIS, you find me saying, there is some kind of ubiquitous thinking dysfunction which goes unnoticed especially by the persons themselves, and this is the horrifying part of it: somehow the self-monitoring circuit in the person is foiled by the very dysfunction it is supposed to monitor. Perhaps, then, the self-monitoring circuit is itself malfunctioning.

I cannot accept Burroughs' view that we have been invaded by an alien virus, an information virus, yet on the other hand I cannot readily dismiss this bizarre theory as mere paranoia on his part. I think he is onto something real and important, and that his statement is more good—far more good—than harm. He states the problem correctly, although perhaps his analysis of the cause is faulted; still, merely to be aware of the problem is to achieve a great deal. Now, I have been able to find accounts in ancient times of what seems to be a thinking or perceptual dysfunction or perhaps the thinking or perceptual dysfunction. It is connected with the widespread myth that man fell from some primordial state of bliss and integrity. There is a book dating from antiquity called The First Book of Adam and Eve; its source is Egyptian (date of origin uncertain). It describes in detail a "bright nature" that Adam and Eve had that God took away from them. In chapter XII verse 9 Adam says, "For, so long as we were in the garden we neither saw nor even knew what darkness was. I was not hidden from Eve, neither was she hidden from me, until now that she cannot see me; and no darkness came upon us, to separate us from each other." Verse 10: "But she and I were both in one bright light. I saw her and she saw me. Yet now since we came into this cave, darkness has come upon us, and parted us asunder, so that I do not see her, and she does not see me." In chapter XIII verse 5, God says, "But when he (Adam) transgressed My commandment, I deprived him of that bright nature, and he became dark." There is more. Adam and Eve originally could see objects a long distance off, but now can only see objects close to them. This correlates with the statement of John Calvin's that I quote in the tractate at the conclusion of VALIS, entry #40. In other words, there is some reason to suppose that if you grant a universal occlusion, there is some evidence that it dates from very early times. Burroughs may have indeed detected an "information virus" or something like an information virus, but my supposition is that, if you grant its existence, it is of long-standing. World mythology supports this. Not just Christian.

Where Burroughs and I sharply disagree is that my supposition is that if—an information life form exists (and this is indeed a bizarre and wild supposition), it is benign; it does not occlude us; on the contrary: it informs us (or perhaps it has no interest in doing either, but simply rides our own information traffic, using our media as a carrier; that is entirely possible). That I myself saw this living information in the spring of 1974 is not something I wish to claim; on the other hand, I will not deny it. The issue is important, vital, and also elusive; if you grant an occluding information virus, are you not then yourself occluded in your very analysis of it, as well as your perception of its existence? There is a paradox involved. I'm sure you can see that. And I try to deal with it in VALIS.

As to other matters; thank you for recommending the several books. The Third Policeman has been highly recommended to me, but I have not yet read it (I have indeed read The Tibetan Book of the Dead). It is not possible in this letter to go into much detail, but my current work-project is a novelization of the life and death of my dear friend Bishop James A. Pike; it is not science fiction. I must say in all candor that your letter constitutes one of the most interesting and rewarding that I have received. I hope you will stay in touch with me. I have read no Pynchon—paranoia makes me dreadfully suspicious; viz: I suspect paranoia, which is a paranoid reaction—but I understand he is very good. Your appraisal of the value of my writing is quite gratifying, and in view of your own high intelligence, as shown in your letter, and your broad knowledge, I deem it a unique compliment. It was very gracious of you to write to me; please do so again.
Editors' Letters to Philip K. Dick: 1960

[This is a follow-up to the selection of letters that we ran two years ago, in PKDS #17. The primary document here, Eleanor Dimoff's letter of 1/20/60, was replied to at length by PKD. Although Dick seems not to have kept carbons of his letters until 1964, this was an exception; his fascinating reply was published as a pamphlet that accompanied the first issue of this newsletter, and continues to be included when people purchase back issues #s 1-4.

Two of the novels Dimoff mentions, NICHOLAS AND THE HIGS and A TIME FOR GEORGE STAVROS, do not survive, as far as we know. There is no trace of them in PKD's papers at Fullerton, where he kept the manuscripts of his other early mainstream novels, nor in the papers that were in his apartment at the time of his death. It seems likely that his STAVROS novel served as a jumping-off point for HUMPTY DUMPTY IN OAKLAND, and perhaps he decided the earlier manuscript was redundant and discarded it.

[Dick did not travel to New York in 1960, despite his editor and agent's urging.]

---

Scott Meredith
580 Fifth Avenue
New York 36, N.Y.
December 18, 1959

Dear Phil:

I'm happy to say we have worked out the project deal for you with Harcourt, Brace on a novel. We asked for and got an advance of $1,000, half of which will be paid on signature of contract and half when the novel is completed and okayed.

Now, H-B is one of the best literary houses in the country, publishing some of the Names; and this is an excellent opportunity for us to make it big. It's going to take work on everyone's part. You'll be working with Eleanor Dimoff, who is presently reading through all of your novels before giving us a critique on the points which she feels give strength to your work, and those points which weaken.

I know that in the past you have argued criticisms from publishers—and from H-B—but this time we must really cooperate. This woman is going to put a lot of time and effort into studying your work, she'd like to discuss new-novel possibilities with you—and Harcourt, Brace is hoping that you'll be able to come East for a few days early next year to talk about all these things. I don't know how your financial situation will shape up by then, but I think it would be a good idea to meet with these people.

I know you'll have thoughts of your own on all this, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Until then, all the best.

Scott

---

Scott Meredith
January 21, 1960

Dear Phil:

I enclose herewith the letter from Eleanor Dimoff on your books and your work in general.

Go over it carefully, and give it a lot of thought. Then let me have an answering letter from you.

Oh, one point: Dimoff says on page 4 that they want to offer you a contract for a $500 advance. She means $500 on signature. The full advance will still be $1,000—the other $500 to be paid on acceptance of the full book.

All the best.

Scott

---

Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.
750 Third Avenue, New York 17, N.Y.
January 20, 1960

Philip K. Dick

c/o Scott Meredith
580 Fifth Avenue
New York 36, N.Y.

Dear Philip Dick,

We are all very pleased about the prospect of offering you a contract on a novel. As you undoubtedly know, the novels Scott Meredith has been kind enough to send us over the last few years have aroused an unusual amount of enthusiasm, and each time we returned one, we did so only regretfully.

I came to Harcourt relatively recently, and the first of your novels I read was 'Jack Isidore's' [it was submitted under Isidore's name rather than Dick's] CONFESSIONS OF A CRAP ARTIST. When we decided to offer you the contract, I was asked to read some of your earlier novels because I share the other editors' excitement about your writing, because I'm particularly interested in the Pacific coast (I spent four years at Stanford), and, most of all, because everyone hoped that if I read the novels all together, rather than over a period of years, I might see some general trends that would help you in the future. And we hoped that a fresh look would confirm our already high opinion of the originality and distinction of your writing. It did. I read four of your novels carefully: THE BROKEN BUBBLE OF THISBE HOLT, IN MILTON LUMKY TERRITORY, NICHOLAS AND THE HIGS, and A TIME FOR GEORGE STAVROS.

I'll start first with my impressions, not of the individual novels, but of my Image of a Phil Dick Novel. I'll be as candid as possible, as direct as I can be, in hopes that you'll bear in mind that all the points I raise have their roots in our very real enthusiasm for your writing and our high hopes that your next book will be the one to launch you on a long career as a published novelist. [This suggests she may have been unaware of his SF novels.] I'll say nothing about your fine style: that is your own, and in all the books I've seen, you've very nearly brought it to perfection. Every one of your novels is readable (a strange term but a complimentary one, meaning to me that they are written delightfully, unpretentiously, and with real professional ease).

My most immediate reaction to your work is that you have been writing around a novel; each manuscript, singly, gives us a glimpse into a very definite world—a lurid, frightening, and wholly real place populated by some of the zaniest and most familiar creatures I've encountered in a long time. I hope you stick to the Bay Area; you certainly manage to pinpoint its foibles. (I have a wild Rabelaisian friend in Palo Alto who persists in referring to the Bay as the "navel of the world" among other things. She'd be a real fan of your books, incidentally.) I feel that each of your novels is a part of something bigger and that you have the material for an important book about the 1950's, almost the sort of thing Fitzgerald did with the twenties in Gatsby.

It occurs to me that one of the tests of a really fertile novel is, in a sense, the material it throws away—the incidental touches that aren't important to the story but that build a scene or a viewpoint.
You do this sort of thing easily with such fine notions as the balloon-hunting dog. Thisbe’s bubble, that scurrilous tire-regrooving establishment, but all too often, it seemed to me, you made an essentially minor thing into the whole gimmick on which the plot turned. That’s, in part, the trouble with NICHOLAS AND THE HIGS, though the ideas of the tract, the pseudo-liver, and the prophet of doom are all wonderfully funny. Somehow I feel that after you’ve established your characters, the scheme they’re connected with begins to dominate and limit their personalities. The situations are so defined that they can only follow them to their logical conclusions, and, in doing so, fail to take on greater depth during the course of the book. This makes for a clear and organized, almost “neat,” novel, but I fear you’ll keep running up against those enraging words “slim” or “too thin.”

There’s another difficulty in the sort of thing you write: in making a character or a situation disagreeable or grotesque, you make the reader so fall out of sympathy with the whole thing or feel so shocked that he wants to recoil from your book as well as from what you are writing about. (I found this especially true of the bizarre adulteries in THISBE and in CONFESSIONS OF A CRAP ARTIST.) This problem is a terribly difficult one, and sometimes I think the only antidote is a main character to whom the reader is sympathetic or, at least, basically attuned. Gatsby, for instance, has his moments of real pathos, and even George Babbitt is not treated entirely coldly. Do you want the reader to sympathize with Jack? I did, until about the last third of the book when he became such a “nut” that I began to lose my enthusiasm for him. Perhaps I’m wrong, but I have the strong impression that you mean your “nuts” to have some underlying sanity, that you use the term a bit ironically, that your real lunatics are the people who take themselves seriously. But it seems to me that the sanity of your pseudo-nuts shows through too little or too late in your books.

You can probably gather from the examples I keep choosing
that Jack is a very real person to me. When I read GEORGE STAVROS I found myself thinking that Andrew is really the same person. Is he? And aren't Art and his wife in THISBE the younger prototypes of the young couple Fay breaks up? (This is the sort of thing that makes me feel you are writing around a big novel.)

I haven't yet said one of the main things that occurs to me: that A TIME FOR GEORGE STAVROS seems to me the germ of an important novel. It's dangerous for an editor to "see things" in a book, things that may not "be there" to the author, but sometimes even a way-out suggestion sets an author off on another, and much better, path of his own choosing. So please treat this suggestion simply as an idea I thought might interest you. It seems to me that GEORGE STAVROS could be a very fine (and unmarketable) short novel. This was most of its readers' first reaction. But could it possibly be the basis for a "big" novel—one not necessarily long, but full-flavored and rich? It seems possible to me. For one thing, Stavros is a character one likes; for another, he is central to all the action. Andrew becomes important in the scene with his father, and it is his father's death that reconciles him and Mavis. I do wish you could use him in a new novel; he is a thoroughly real person to everyone who's read the book, and he is the ideal stand-off character who views with a fine sardonic wit all the foibles of the mixed-up generation he's managed to sire. This puts your lunatics in perspective.

I keep thinking, too, that Andrew could assume the proportions of Jack, who's immensely more attractive in a zany way. If only Andrew were not quite so pale (that particular scheme of his rings false to me), the conflict between him and his father would make a fine "situation" at any rate, I do think you might consider using a family such as the Stavros family as the focal point of a novel. You are so adept at bringing these people together that if you can only create as sympathetic a younger generation as older, you'll really have something. Lydia is a doll. There's a character one sees right through and yet likes in spite of her pretensions.

Again, this is just an idea, and it might not appeal to you at all. I hope it shows, though, why A TIME FOR GEORGE STAVROS has more to it, to my mind, than your other novels.

One final thing I'd like to mention: We all feel that your novels, with the exception of STAVROS, somehow taper off toward the ends. You seem to be building up to some sort of climax, and then it doesn't materialize. I kept anticipating really hilarious things (and yet the situations remained only bitterly amusing) or I felt that the end was going to be quite moving (and yet it grew more detached or, in the case of CONFESSIONS OF A CRAP ARTIST, appalling). I'm guessing that you don't really intend this to happen, so I thought you'd want to know the impression your readers here had at the ends of your books. Maybe you're being too disciplined and that's why the hilarity stays so subdued!

Maybe this anti-climactic effect is the result, in some cases, of your following several stories simultaneously, none of which is quite strong enough to dominate or pull together the others and reach a real high point. It might help if you toyed with the idea of keeping some of your characters as vignettes, as the flora (fauna?) of your bizarre landscape. You write so economically and so pointedly that you don't need to give everyone an independent adventure to make him interesting. Jerome Taubman, for instance, is magnificently drawn in the appearance he makes at the Stavros home, and when you follow his own activities, he actually loses flavor rather than gaining by the attention you give him.

In summary, you've got such a tremendously vital way of seeing things that it's hard to believe that one of your novels hasn't somehow let loose this vitality and emerged as a rich, rich book. I don't know when I've read books by a novelist who has so many perfectly fascinating ideas, such capacity for wild and wonderful humor, and such an eye for succinct characterization. There are long passages in each of your books that I'd hate to see lost. It is far easier to say where you think a piece of writing misses than to say why you admire one, and by the time you've read this far you may well think Eleanor Dimoff and Harcourt, Brace intolerable. If you do, please say so. But if some of what I've said makes sense to you, if you think we're not way off base about your writing, we feel certain that the arrangements we make will be a good thing indeed for both Philip Dick and Harcourt, Brace.

What we want to do is offer you a $500 advance on this yet-unborn novel, so that, with part of it, you can come to New York and meet us. It's nearly impossible to work with someone you don't know, and we hope that after you've met us, we'll all find that we have a sound base of agreement about your work and your future. You have got to write what you want in the way that seems right to you. We are a sounding board: our hope is that the impressions we bounce to you seem valid to you, that you feel they are the reactions your readers will or ought to have. We feel strongly that part of this has got to be done verbally; one's helpfulness is so limited by the necessarily short things one can say in a letter.

I'll be looking forward to hearing from you with great anticipation. Meanwhile, all best wishes.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Dimoff

P.S. How long have you lived around San Francisco? Point Reyes is on the ocean up in Marin isn't it? Have you been in the city lately? I keep getting reports that North Beach is practically ruined with all the hoopla that started a few years ago when I was there. My non-beat friends seem unhappy. I'd be very interested to know how you manage to write so much, so continually—can you write a lot of the time? Or are science fiction magazines as unlivable as books often are? Where did you learn so much about cars and other gizmos? A flood of questions is welling up, but perhaps I'd best wait till I hear how you feel about this letter.

* * *

Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.
750 Third Avenue, New York 17, N.Y.
July 14, 1960

Scott Meredith
580 Fifth Avenue
New York 36, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Meredith,

I find it is terribly difficult to comment on the new novel of Phil's that you sent. Again, Phil has written a novel that reads extremely well, that is, to me, better structurally than any of the four I read, but that leaves me feeling somewhat frustrated at the end—for reasons that are hard to pin down. I wish that THE MAN WHOSE TEETH WERE ALL EXACTLY ALIKE struck a new note for me, but it does seem to suffer from the same problems that have kept us from publishing Phil's earlier novels.

One thing interested me very much. In his letter Phil said that he seemed to have trouble with his woman characters, and that one of his readers had described his books as dealing with wicked women and good men. I hadn't been sharply aware of this, but it is certainly true of the novel—and both Sherri and Janet are real vixens. They seem to possess a sort of funny innocence that makes them do more harm than if they were deliberately evil. They're probably protected by a naivete that seems to make it impossible for them to see that they might in any way be hurting their husbands. I'm glad Phil sees this as a troublesome element in his novels. I think it's perhaps more important than any of us has realized. For one thing, we've all felt that at some point the relationships between Phil's couples become so crystalized into a nasty, inhuman quarrelling (or such a dead end) that somehow the characters become interesting only in a sort of clinical way. This, to me, has dire consequences for his novels. It makes the people and their affairs seem petty, at worst, and pale, at best. What causes this?

There is nothing basically unimportant about the situations or
the people Phil writes about. But there is something about the way he writes about them that makes them become meaningless. How does he feel about these people? How does he want his reader to feel about them? Contemptuous? I really doubt that. Compassionate? We do, at points. Phil has a real eye for the quirks in the human mind that make them do perfectly contradictory things that have a sort of logic about them. For instance, when Leo Runcible throws his friend (and his sale) out for being a bigot, and then turns around and chews out Walter for causing the whole thing, it's understandable, it's remarkably perceptual. Phil doesn't explain it, he just has it happen, and it makes sense. The trouble between Walter and Sherry doesn't work. Phil can explain these people, but there must be something in his view of them that I'm missing, because they become less and less interesting to me as they become more prominent in the novel, and as they do, the novel's importance shrinks.

I find this hard to explain; I can't see clearly just what is the matter, but surely it must lie in the way Phil looks on his people, what he intends them to appear, as humans, what they mean to him.

I hope this doesn't seem a devastating sort of criticism. This novel by no means changes my admiration for Phil's writing. I'm anxious to see the one he's working on, and I'm particularly eager to meet him soon. I wish I could shout hurrah for THE MAN WHOSE TEETH WERE ALL EXACTLY ALIKE. Since I can't, I'll say no more right now.

All very best wishes to you, and to Phil.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Dimoff

P.S. The manuscript is on its way under separate cover.

* *

[The next item is a letter from Harold Strauss at Knopf to Scott Meredith, rejecting CONFESSIONS OF A CRAP ARTIST (by Jack Isidore), but expressing interest in it if the author will revise it. Unfortunately the first page is missing. The brief second page is reproduced below, followed by Meredith's letter to Phil that accompanied his copy of the letter.]

I have written you at such length and in such detail because if J. Isidore either revises this manuscript, or is prepared to offer another, we would be most receptive, and in either case read the manuscript with sympathetic interest.

Meanwhile, many thanks for sending this manuscript to us, which we are returning to you separately.

Cordially,

Harold Strauss

* *

Scott Meredith
August 8, 1960

Dear Phil:

Enclosed herewith is a letter which I received from Knopf last week on CONFESSIONS OF A CRAP ARTIST. I had a talk with Harold Strauss, who is editor-in-chief at Knopf, about the possibilities of getting a project contract for you. Strauss told me today that he didn't think they could do it, that you were a new author so far as their list was concerned (I had told them who Isidore really was, and told him about the Harcourt-Brace deal)—but he was pretty sure that if you did revise the book along the lines of his letter the book would be okay for them, and we could then get a contract.

Strauss is quite interested in you and in the book—he very seldom writes letters in such detail—and I think a revise would be worthwhile. Can you squeeze it in while doing the H-B novel?

Please let me know.

All the best.

Scott

Scott Meredith
August 25, 1960

Dear Phil:

Thanks very much for your letter.

I understand that the H-B project is a very big and demanding job indeed, and I agree that you should give it your full attention until it's finished. But when it's done, I'll have to ask you to turn to CONFESSIONS OF A CRAP ARTIST for Knopf; their interest in this particular book is strong, and I can't stress too much how important this is to you.

Harold Strauss' comments are sound, and I know that a writer of your ability can find ways to supply what's missing in the present manuscript. You'll have to concentrate on it and study it objectively, as if it were someone else's work. You'll see things that can be done, and I'm sure that you can bring the novel off successfully for Knopf. This will be a tremendous step in your career.

This is really of great importance, but the H-B project is even more important and it has priority, of course. By all means give it your complete concentration, and we'll take up CONFESSIONS OF A CRAP ARTIST when the Harcourt book is finished.

I think you're worrying too much over the Harcourt project, Phil. You're working very hard on it, giving it your best, and it's going to be fine, I'm sure. Hold on to the first 200 pages, since you'd like to keep them there.

Good luck, and all the best.

Scott

P.S. We'll explore the possibility of THE MAN WHOSE TEETH WERE ALL EXACTLY ALIKE with Knopf, but it's at another house at the moment.

[HUMPTY DUMPTY IN OAKLAND] was apparently completed and sent to Scott Meredith sometime in the next few months. No record of its rejection by Harcourt or of other submissions remains. THE MAN WHOSE TEETH was received by the Scott Meredith Agency May 10, 1960. After Harcourt, it was submitted to Crown and then Dial (not Knopf); no other submissions were made. CONFESSIONS OF A CRAP ARTIST was never revised; it seems likely that this may have had an impact on Meredith's support for Dick's mainstream aspirations (which Meredith had supported and pursued patiently and energetically for years up to this point, far beyond the normal call of duty).

Interestingly, Meredith received from Dick an outline for a science fiction novel (no title) on April 27, 1960; it was sent to Pyramid, Ace, Ballantine, and Berkley, but nobody wanted it.

[The Agency's plot summary of A TIME FOR GEORGE STAVROS is reprinted on p. 295 of Divine Invasions.]

A final note of interest: in a letter to Meredith dated 1/4/60, in which he discusses his plans for the rewrite of VULCAN'S HAMMER (completed a month later), Dick mentions "my straight novel in progress, which now is complete in rough, running 340 pages; this must be extensively rewritten. I discover, to make it into anything. I have probably months of work on it." This must have been THE MAN WHOSE TEETH WERE ALL EXACTLY ALIKE. In which case the first book submitted to Harcourt under this "project" contract was plotted and largely written before Dick received Harcourt's letter offering guidance as to what they wanted]
Announcement. The major news regarding Philip K. Dick this time is elegantly simple, and joys. Lisa Renee Coelho, Phil's first grandchild, was born January 26th, 1990. She weighed eight pounds, two ounces at birth, with brown eyes and dark brown hair. PKD congratulates Lisa, and her parents, Laura and Joe Coelho.

More Movies? There has been a flurry of activity in PKD futures lately, specifically options on film rights to Phil Dick writings. Two particularly interesting deals have just been completed. One is for THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH, a novel John Lennon once wanted to film. The buyer is Vanguard Films, a New-York-based independent film company. Vanguard is a relatively new "project packager" that has development deals with Columbia Pictures, Act III Productions, and Touchstone Pictures for five film projects: Macdoodle Street (based on the cartoon novel), Staggerlee (New Orleans r&b musical), Seven Years in Tibet (drama), Gods, Gods, Gods (a farce about Greek and Roman gods visiting New York), and a gospel-based drama written by Nelson George. Script for THE THREE STIGMATA will be by Howard Rodman.

And Jerome Boivin, a young French director, and Jacques Audiard (who will co-write, with Boivin) have purchased rights to make a feature film of CONFESSIONS OF A CRAP ARTIST. Boivin's short film Café Plongeoir was nominated for an Oscar in 1983. His first full-length movie, Baxter (1988), cowritten with Audiard, from a novel by American Ken Greenhall, was very well received in France, and gives some indication that there may be a Dickian sensibility at work here. Elliott Stein of the Village Voice describes Baxter: "this story of a bull terrier, morally superior to its succession of masters (the last of whom is a horrid young wannabe skinhead fascist nerd), narrated in large part by the pooch itself, is mostly fascinating and laced with malicious humor." Aurélien Ferenczi's rave review in Le Quotidien de Paris, roughly translated, ends by saying, "It's this tone, unique, in total coherence with the constant originality of the subject, that makes a prize of Baxter. A film with a thesis, basically: to search for what's human in the animal is, at bottom, to ask what there is of the animal in us. Baxter does in sweetness, with the repeated illusion of objectivity. Just enough to make of the film a gigantic pie-in-the-face. First blow, blow of a master."

Two exciting prospects. Meanwhile another French director (and well-regarded scenewriter), Didier Haudepin, is seeking to purchase rights to another PKD mainstream novel, PUTTERING ABOUT IN A SMALL LAND. Premise of the film: "Coming of age of a man despite his incredulity, through lucid women, at an age when precisely he would think he'd already become an adult."

Also in negotiation: World Film Services, a New York film financier that would probably work with Island Pictures, is seeking rights to make a feature film of CLANS OF THE ALPHANE MOON. And most recently, there has been an inquiry from a major Hollywood production company regarding A SCANNER DARKLY.

Many films are optioned, of course, and few are made. Nothing is known of the progress (or lack thereof) of TIME OUT OF JOINT, in development at Warner, except that we've learned that Sam Hamm's collaborator on the script is Mike Duncan. But all this deal-making is at least an indication that there is a growing awareness (in Hollywood, New York, and Paris, anyway) of the extraordinary collection of great stories and timely, breakthrough ideas ("properties") to be found in the novels and stories of Philip K. Dick.

Meanwhile, Total Recall opens June 1st. You may expect a flood of press starting any day now. Any prevues or reviews with PKD-related content or that are otherwise of interest, please do clip or copy and mail 'em in. This is a $50-60 million dollar film (they're now telling the press $40 mil for fear of backlash), and it will get a major push. The Fliers Anthony paperback will be out in May from Avon. The $2.95 DC comic, written by Elliot S. Maggin and drawn by Tom Lyle, ships May 30th. The film was reportedly directed by Ron Cobb of Aliens (my favorite political cartoonist when I was a hippie), and co-stars — along with Schwarzenegger — Rachel Ticotin, Ronny Cox, Michael Ironside, and Sharon Stone. And in an official press-release-type quote, director Paul Verhoeven ("a Ph.D. in mathematics and physics") suggests the PKD origins of the film may still be detectible: 'The picture's uneasy undercurrent — is the protagonist psychotic, or are his perceptions valid? — will undermine the audience's own sense of what's real and what's fantasy. The film probes the very nature of reality.'

We'll see.

New Books. SOLAR LOTTERY, Philip K. Dick's first published novel, is back in print in the United States in a $3.95 mass market paperback from Collier Nucleus Books, the new Macmillan imprint (edited by Jim Frenkel) which last year reissued EYE IN THE SKY.

The big news is the recent release in trade paperback ($12.95) of THE COLLECTED STORIES OF PHILIP K. DICK, Volume One: THE SHORT HAPPY LIFE OF THE BROWN OXFORD. This is an extremely satisfying event. The text is exactly the same as the hardcover, except that as a result of the extensive voluntary work of a reader, Chris Zailer, Underwood-Miller was able to correct 50-75 minor typographical errors per volume before providing the type to Citadel Twilight (the sort of dedication to quality you will never find among today's corporate publishers). The paper and binding are excellent, and the type is actually slightly larger than in the original hardcover, and highly readable. The cover art is silly but the design is good, and it ends up being a handsome book in spite of itself. I don't care for the title change, but since the emphasis on the cover (and spine) is on THE COLLECTED STORIES OF PHILIP K. DICK rather than on the volume title, it doesn't have much impact. (Many readers will wonder why the words BEYOND LIES THE WUB appear on the page following the introductions and before the main text—oops.)

Anyway, it's great to know that these stories are available now in stores all over the U.S., and will probably stay available. Citadel Twilight will be releasing the other four volumes as well, over the next few years. Story notes indicating when the stories were written, and incorporating PKD's notes from THE BEST OF AND THE GOLDEN MAN, are included in the back of each volume. A terrific book. (After you see Total Recall, read "Paycheck" and see if you agree with me that it would make a good basis for a sequel.) Incidentally, if you order this paperback by mail through the ad in this newsletter, PKDS will earn about $5 for each book sold (it's a "per inquiry" ad). On the other hand, your local bookstore won't hit you for the postage. Whatever.

Underwood-Miller has not yet decided whether to do a third hardcover printing of THE COLLECTED STORIES.

The other new PKD volume in the U.S. this year is the omnibus edition called THE VALIS TRILOGY (Book of the Month Club, hardcover, $13.95; Quality Paperback Book Club, trade paperback $7.95, April 1991). The book has sold well, and the Club plans a similar 3-in-1 volume for another of my favorite authors, Theodore Sturgeon. I haven't seen the hardcover; the paperback
is well made, with a clever wraparound cover (featuring pink light, a baby, a split PK, and a mushroom in a bishop's headpiece). Inside things are a little funky, with three different book designs and typefaces because each book (VALIS, THE DIVINE INVASION, THE TRANSMIGRATION OF TIMOTHY ARCHER) has been shot from its original hardcover edition (in the case of VALIS, the 1987 Kersoima edition). Kim Stanley Robinson's excellent afterword from the Kersoima VALIS is made to serve (fairly well) as an afterword to the trilogy as a whole. None of these books, incidentally, is otherwise in print in the U.S., and this edition can only be obtained through the respective book clubs (or try a used book store, or trade with a friend who belongs to one of the clubs). The back cover blurb identifies FLOW MY TEARS as "an antidrug novel," for some reason. The writeup in the QPBC bulletin says, "Once seen as a cult figure, the late Philip K. Dick... is now recognized as one of the 20th century's most influential writers of science fiction... Drawn in part from his turbulent life, Dick's last three novels brilliantly mix realism and science fiction. In VALIS, a transcendentally rational mind invades the brain of Horselover Fat; in THE DIVINE INVASION, the son of God puzzles over his existence; and in THE TRANSMIGRATION OF TIMOTHY ARCHER, a lawyer turned cleric zealously (and paradoxically) pursues salvation through reason. THE VALIS TRILOGY is the culmination of a lifetime's fierce struggle for wholeness as an artist," writes Kim Stanley Robinson in his afterword. "Well, that's not exactly what he said, but okay. Andy Watson points out that by a nice coincidence, the same issue of the QPBC bulletin offers The Nag Hammadi Library in an exclusive paperback edition.

Forthcoming. THE SELECTED LETTERS OF PHILIP K. DICK: 1974, the first of six volumes (the others are 1938-71, 1972-73, 1975-76, 1977-79, and 1980-82, with the post-'74 volumes probably seeing print before the two earlier ones), is nearing publication from Underwood-Miller – September 1990 seems a good possibility. "If I'm not a reincarnation of Grace Slick then who am I? And why in mid-March did I acquire paranormal powers of the most noble kind, much like Spinoza had, plus much more? (I'm kidding.) (I'm not kidding.) (Neither is true.) (Both are true)." — PKD, December 9, 1974

Don Herron is editor of the SELECTED LETTERS; Art Spiegelman, Tim Powers, Dennis Etchison, and William Gibson will be among the introducers of the individual volumes (who will do 1974 is not yet certain). The 1974 volume will run about 181,000 words – comparable to a volume of the COLLECTED STORIES. It'll be clothbound, with a jacket by Ilene Meyer, and a price of $39.95. There will also be 250 numbered copies in linen slipcase signed by editor and introducer, at $60; and 26 lettered copies will be quarter bound in leather with linen slipcase with a PKD signature tipped in: $200. "Please forgive me for rattling on to you along the same dim lines, but I tried to tell all this to the checkers at Trader Joe's, the foodstore where we shop, and they cancelled my check-cashing privilege." — PKD, July 19, 1974

I have some qualms about 1974 being the first volume, as it was a particularly, uh, intense year for Phil, and along with a lot of brilliant (and, often, very funny) writing, the book also contains some of his most convoluted and regrettable epistles, including a long one-sided correspondence with the F.B.I., hinted at in RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH, which even granted it's the effort of a very scared man to protect himself against what he imagines to be the State's overwhelming suspicion of him, is highly bizarre and more than a little shameful. But, warts and all, SL. '74 will be a tremendously exciting and rewarding reading experience for all of us. I wouldn't be surprised if there turn out to be readers (as is the case with Anais Nin's diaries) who believe the letters to be as central to PKD's literary achievement as his fiction. "In all fairness to your mother, no mother ever let their kid grow up. (Fathers too.) Parents have a vested interest in keeping their kids

The Book No Philip K. Dick Fan Should Be Without

The Collected Stories of Philip K. Dick, Volume 1:
The Short Happy Life of the Brown Oxford
by Philip K. Dick
25 exciting tales--many previously unpublished!
"Traces the development of one of SF's most eccentric and articulate minds. Highly recommended." — Library Journal

"This is a publishing event." — Publishers Weekly

To launch Citadel Twilight, a dramatic new series of books that are part science fiction, part mystery, part fantasy, Carol Publishing is proud to present The Collected Stories of Philip K. Dick.

Volume 1 of this collection includes all of Dick's earliest short and medium-length fiction—much of it previously unpublished—from the years 1952-1955. These include Beyond Lies the Wub, The Short Happy Life of the Brown Oxford, The Variable Man, and 22 other exciting tales.

"A useful acquisition for any serious SF library or collection." — Kirkus
"The collected stories of Philip K. Dick is awe-inspiring." — Washington Post
"More than anyone else in the field, Mr. Dick really puts you inside people's minds." — Wall Street Journal

Paperback, 432 pages, only $12.95

To order, call 1-800-447-BOOK (MasterCard or Visa) or write to: Carol Publishing Group, 120 Enterprise Avenue, Dept. PKD, Secaucus, NJ 07094. Please include $2 postage and handling per book.
Other Awards. NOW WAIT FOR LAST YEAR shared the 1989 Gigamesh Award for Best SF Novel (for works first appearing in Spanish in 1988) with George R.R. Martin's Tuf Voyaging and Jack Vance's The Demon Princes. There was also a special award given to Ediciones Acor for its publication of PUTTING ABOUT IN A SMALL LAND. Tim Powers' Anubis Gates was one of two winners in the Best Fantasy Novel category.

The 1989 Readercon Small Press Award for Best Reissue went to Kerosina Press for their edition of VALIS.

Geoff Ryman (who once wrote and performed in a stageplay of TIMOTHY ARCHER) won the 1990 Arthur C. Clarke Award for best sf novel of the year published in Britain, for The Child Garden. The same book is a candidate for the 1990 British SF Association Award for Best Novel, as is Kim Stanley Robinson's Gold Coast. Michael Bishop had two works nominated for the 1990 Townsend Prize for the best fiction of the past year by a Georgia writer: Unicorn Mountain, and "Apartheid, Superstrings, and Mordecai Thubana." And Cyberpunk America by Takayuki Tatsumi won the 1988 American Studies Book Prize.

PKDS members nominated for Nebula Awards this year include Bishop, Robert Silverberg, and Bruce Sterling, and John Kessel claims he's gonna subscribe real soon now. PKDSers on the Hugo ballot include Silverberg and Sterling again, Ursula K. Le Guin, David Hartwell and Eileen Gunn.

The Locus 1989 Recommended Reading List includes eight entries under biography, three of them about PKD (Rickman, Sutin, and THE DARK-HAIRED GIRL). MARY AND THE GIANT managed to show up at #4 on the Locus trade paperback bestseller list for 12/89; Sutin's Divine Invasions was #10 on the 5/90 hardcover list.

PKD International. Gollancz in the U.K. has just published the fourth volume of the COLLECTED STORIES (THE DAYS OF PERRY PAT), along with a new edition of MARTIAN TIME-SLIP. These are hardcovers; the UK trade paperbacks of the COLLECTED STORIES are starting to appear from Grafton/Paladin, volume one (BEYOND LIES THE WUB) in May, and volume two (SECOND VARIETY) in July.

Century/Legend will issue Piers Anthony's Total Recall novelization in August; and, in the same month, they will publish WE CAN REMEMBER IT FOR YOU WHOLESALE: THE BEST OF PHILIP K. DICK (I'm not sure whether this is THE PRESERVING MACHINE or a whole new selection). Legend has acquired DR BLOODMONEY and SOLAR LOTTERY.

I've just received a lovely French paperback edition of NICK AND THE GLIMMUNG, published by Folio Junior/Gallimard, translated by Mona de Pracontal. This is 4 1/4 x 7 pocket book, with the Paul Demeyer illustrations from the original U.K. edition, but with a delightful new cover by Serge Bloch. Very nice.

Also received: LE PERE TRUQUE, second in the Christian Bourgois Editeur series of paperback collections of previously-published PKD stories. The quote on the back is by Evelyn Peiffer, who says (again I'm translating barbarically from the French), "It is by the evidence P.K. Dick who has known with the most lack of moderation, the most daring, how to show this interpenetration of reason and of the irrational, of memory and of the immediate, of the outside and of the inside; who has known admirably, with an electrifying violence, how to fill all the holes in our presence in the world, the discontinuity of our consciousness, the entanglement with the words of others; it's Dick who has known how to make sense of the troubling fact that reality does not exist unless seized by a consciousness, and that this consciousness is not trustworthy, and that it too can act, even unknown to it, upon the so-called reality. Since Descartes and Kant, one has doubted. With Dick, one is terrorized."

Roger J. Johns, Jr., came up with the answer to my query last issue: PORTRAÎT DE L'ARTISTE EN JEUNE FOU, published under the same imprint (Christian Bourgois, Domaine Etranger series, with the curious trademark "10/18") as the above book, is indeed a retitled mass market paperback reprint of CONFESSIONS D'UN BARJO (that is, CRAP ARTIST). He
even sent along a color xerox of the cover. The back cover copy is not as glorious as the quote on LE PERE TRUQUE—in fact it’s rather pedestrian, but it does offer a number of riddles, particularly the first line: “Forerunner of such works as ROBOT BLUES and THE BUILDER OF CATHEDRALS, this novel is a veritable critique of ‘practical thinking,’ U.S.A. 1972 version, revised and corrected.” Um. Well, the book was written in 1959, as the blurbist would know if he read the first sentence of my introduction (included in this reprint). But he/she could’ve been confused by the publication/copyright date of 1975. But then why call it a forerunner of DO ANDROIDS DREAM and GALACTIC POT-HEALER? (A side riddle: I knew about ROBOT BLUES, and I figured THE BUILDER OF CATHEDRALS could only be GPH. But a look in Levack showed that GALACTIC POT-HEALER was published in France as MANQUE DE POT! (Lack of pot, very funny, yes?) Levack only goes through ’80 and Payne/Benjamin doesn’t cover translations, but fortunately I thought of the Denoel PKD Special, which reveals that indeed when GPH was published a second time in France, by Presses-Pocket in 1980, it was “retratud sous le titre actuel,” LE GUERISSEUR DE CATHEDRALES. Splendid. But how did they know that THE BUILDER OF CATHEDRALS is the book’s actual title? I mean, it definitely could be. But if so, Pierre-Paul Durastanti’s onto something that’s escaped me and Rickman, among others.) I digress. “Revised and corrected” is weird, but because the adjectives are feminine we know it’s la raison, the thinking, that’s referred to, not le roman, the novel. Phew. The sudden appearance of a revised and corrected CONFESSIONS really would give me pause. I think then this leaves only the question of WHAT 1972 version, revised and corrected? This is the sort of question that can only be properly addressed in the course of a long evening in Paris or Lyon, in good company and with several fine bottles of wine. As for how Phil so brilliantly anticipated it and precriticized it, back in ’59, I think that is the subject for another novel.

Oh yeah. One more thing. What makes CONFESSIONS a forerunner of ANDROIDS is presumably Monsieur Isidore, but next issue’s prize goes to whomever can figure out the connection between CONFESSIONS and GALACTIC POT-HEALER. Make my day.

Moving right along, Orjan Gerhardsson at Bakkah publishers in Sweden kindly sent along a copy of their brand new translation of COUNTER-CLOCK WORLD (BALKANGESKOCKANS VARLD). They seem to be a literary rather than s/f publisher, anyway Mr. Gerhardsson subscribed to PKDS and expressed an interest in publishing more of Dick’s novels. A note in this book suggests it is at least the sixth PKD book to be translated into Swedish.

Tony Jermain writes, “The Philip K. Dick boom seems to be starting in Finland! The second Finnish translation of Dick’s novels (the first was EYE IN THE SKY ten years ago) PALKKIONMETSASTAJA (BLADE RUNNER) came out from Jalava Publishing at the end of 1989. It’s not yet sure how well it sells but the publisher has already almost promised that THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE will come out this fall. Also another publisher called WSOY is doing a Dick book then. It’s a short story collection which I’ve chosen here in Finland. There have been rumors that two other publishers are very interested in Dick. It’s not very normal in Finland that many publishers translate books from the same author. . . . It also so happens that we [the fanzine Tahtivaltaaja] are doing our second Philip K. Dick number just now, three years after the first. It will have some articles, more reviews, news, and of course a story by Dick—“Rautavaara’s Case” (I’m sure you know that Rautavaara is a Finnish name).” She includes a copy of PALKKIONMETSASTAJA—thank you!—which is dedicated to Tim ja Serena Powersille, rakkaimmille ystävilleni.

Pavel Polacek writes from Czechoslovakia, “Allow me to send you a copy of THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE [Velka Edice/Laser, paper, 1989]. This is a club edition, printed in slight number. I hope this novel which was the first club translation of PKD will be the last. New age certainly will assure plenty of PKD’s books in my country. There are a line of translators here.

The next book, called PHILIP K. DICK [paper, staplebound, 1989], published by Laser, is an introduction to the work of PKD. It contains a few stories ["The Eyes Have It," "War Game," "Colony," "Beyond Lies the Wub," " Foster, You’re Dead!", "Frozen Journey"] and a foreword where Jan Hlavicka acquaints with the life and work of PKD and 14 of his novels that are in the author’s library.

“Thanks for your excellent magazine. Keep your life. I must say (like the people said in our Revolution), ‘This is the right one.’”

Hidetoki Akiyama, ever faithful, sends the new Segonska edition of GAME-PLAYERS ("I love THE GAME-PLAYERS OF TITAN, because it’s one of Dickish Dick"). This came out in March, on the heels of A MAZE OF DEATH in December (translated by Hiroo Yamagata), NOW WAIT FOR LAST YEAR in September, and THE ZAP GUN in January. Even the Segonska is reissuing a new Dick novel (perhaps many of these were previously done by Sanrio? But some at least are new translations) every three months. When will such a thing happen in America? (We’re working on it.)

And Shigeki Kimura sends a copy of his company (Atelier Peyotl’s) brand new Japanese edition of Gregg Rickman’s THE LAST TESTAMENT. It’s extremely handsome—take off the dust jacket and it looks like a bible—and looks huge (381 pages). Mr. Kimura says, “There are so many non-familiar terms and phrases for ordinary Japanese readers in it. So Mr. Abe [Hidenori Abe, the translator] made vast notes about peoples, terms, events.” Gregg has also written a new preface for the Japanese edition. An impressive book.

New Interview. Starlog, an American magazine aimed at viewers of science fiction films, included a previously unpublished interview with PKD in its January 1990 issue (#150). This was conducted January 10 and 25, 1982, by Doris E. Sauter (a close friend of Phil’s, and for years his next-door neighbor) and Gwen Lee. The magazine indicates that the segments published are a quarter of the total edited transcript, that another excerpt will be published in a future issue, and that Sauter and Lee are looking for a publisher to put out the entire conversation as a book.

The first 2/3rds of this excerpt is a discussion of Blade Runner. Phil had recently seen about 20 minutes of the forthcoming film (without soundtrack), and is extremely enthusiastic ("the opening is simply stupendous! I have no idea how they did the soundtrack: it’s simply unbelievable") He sees the movie as appealing to the “information junkie” in each of us: “when people see the film, they’re going to see much more information than they can absorb and they really will want to come back, because information is a stimulus to the brain, and the brain loves to be stimulated.”

He mentions that three different endings have been shot (regarding the Deckard-as-android version, John Fairchild points out that there’s a moment in Deckard’s apartment where he walks behind Rachel and his eyes glint red, like Rachel’s and the owl’s in an earlier scene). He says the movie and the book reinforce each other, which I think has certainly proven to be true. He says that the idea that “a guy could be an android and not know it” is one of the few original ideas he ever contributed to science fiction, citing his 1953 story “Imposter.” I disagree of course (he contributed hundreds), but I realize he’s talking about plot ideas, from say a 1940’s perspective of what sf is. He acknowledges how much Sean Young looks like the Rachel he had in his mind.

The rest of the interview is about the interaction between his actual life and his fictional characters, about his awe at his (recent) creation of Angel Archer, and his despair when her voice stopped because he’d finished writing the novel. The pain was so great at losing that woman as my friend that after I sent the manuscript off, I discovered that I was hemorrhaging, gastro-intestinal bleeding. I was literally physically sick from the shock of saying goodbye to Angel Archer.

Thanks to Michael Rapoport for sending a copy of this. If you want to order the magazine, it’s $5.00 plus $1.50 postage from
Starlog Back Issues, 475 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. Issue #150. They also still have copies of #55, with a 1981 PKD-on-Bladerunner interview ($6. plus postage).


The USA Today piece by novelist Gregory Feeley is mostly a summary of Dick's life with the focus on the literary/sf split in his career. It should interest some new readers in the "beleaguered but indefatigable" PKD, though it has faint praise for the biographies, calling both "uncritical and often naive...they make unseemly excuses for their subject, especially with regard to Dick's abominable treatment of his successive wives." Feeley ends by calling Phil "an American original: a tormented figure spurned by the literary establishment who created from the dross of commercial fiction a peculiar art of his own." Mmm...

Peter Nicholls, editor of The Science Fiction Encyclopedia, focuses on biographer-bashing in his Sunday Book World piece for the Washington Post. Of Sutin's book, he says, "It is a very decent sort of life summary, though its subject, as so often in biographies, comes to seem more monstrous than the biographer seems to be aware." Nicholls' own description of the Dick he "knew": "he was pretty scary... In later life Dick was, at least, a prophet, and talking with prophets is a great deal more unnerving than reading their prophecies in the privacy of one's home." Rickman comes in for particular criticism from Nicholls; he finds his book "humorless," and like me, is upset by the poorly documented suggestion that Dick was shaped by sexual abuse: "Rickman's most astonishing suggestion I regard as disgraceful, and in my country (Australia), where you can libel the dead, no doubt worthy of a lawsuit. Rickman... has worked backwards from Dick's adult personality, and on the basis of gib psychiatric talk had decided that Dick must have been abused to turn into the sort of person he became. This is irresponsible, unconvincing, and no solid evidence is cited for the existence of any abuse at all, let alone the identification of the grandfather as the likeliest candidate for molester." Nicholls' advice, predictably, is that you skip the biographies and read the novels.

Jim Bencivenga's review of Divine Invasions in the Christian Science Monitor is extremely enthusiastic, calling the book "a major accomplishment. A good biography, like a good case, must have both a strong prosecution and a strong defense. That [Sutin's] book offers both is a verdict any critic would hand down." The case he refers to is Sutin's thesis that Dick deserves recognition as one of the 20th century's most original and imaginative writers. Bencivenga also tells us that readers of the biography "will find a childlike psyche insinuating itself between the pages, calling them as if they were the character Joe Fernwright in the 1966 PKD novel GALACTIC POT-HEALER."

The San Francisco Chronicle review by Michael Berry is most memorable for the newspaper's lifting the back jacket photo of Sutin and captioning it "Philip K. Dick." The headline is "Bay Area's Wizard of Science Fiction"; Berry gives the basics of PKD's life, and says, "Sutin approaches his subject with the correct mix of empathy and skepticism. He takes care to show Dick's paranoia, selfishness and irresponsibility, as well as his wit, charm and keen intelligence. He also refrains from leaping to any spurious conclusions about the central mysteries of Dick's life... In Europe and Japan, Dick is regarded as a major American writer. This new biography takes a large step toward earning Dick that same respect in his native country."

Marshall Fine's feature/review in the Gannet Westchester Newspapers, based on an interview with Sutin, is a well-written portrait of both biographer and subject. And it gives Fine the satisfaction of saying in print that "the average American reader doesn't know Dick." We learn that Sutin's next book (not including editing SELECTIONS FROM THE EXEGESIS, now in progress) will be a biography of Aleister Crowley. Sutin is quoted
on PKD: "I was surprised by the depth of his spiritual passions. He was utterly obsessed with the big question—what is reality?—like no other writer. It was a burning flame in his everyday life. I was also surprised by the vehemence of his hatred for the women in his life. He mourned the death of his infant sister and hated his mother all his life. That played a role in every love relationship he ever had with a woman. Yet, through all the personal turmoil, he made a living as a writer for 31 years."

D. Scott Apel in the Robert Anton Wilson newsletter *Trajectories* says of *Divine Invasions*, "It is difficult to praise this book highly enough." Sheryl Mylan in the *Houston Post* also praises the book but comments that "Sutin seems to believe, too uncritically, that Dick's hallucinations were divine visions." I found this comment interesting: "He shows us a man who fell in love almost compulsively and who could hardly bear to be without a woman. Dick was extremely demanding of each of his women. She had to be not only muse but also nursemaid to his many physical and emotional afflictions, from fear of eating in public to seizures and agoraphobia. She always had to be nearby to listen to the product of his latest marathon writing session and then be willing to disappear until the next summons."

*Publishers Weekly* says DI is a "remarkably candid biography." *Kirkus* calls it "engrossing, generous, balanced." Art Spiegelman, author of *Maus*, says, "What Franz Kafka was to the first half of the 20th century, Phil Dick is to the second half. With Larry Sutin's *Divine Invasions*, Phil Dick has found his Max Brod . . . ."

*The High Castle*, published by a small press, did not get as many reviews. It has its passionate fans, however: Andrew Andrews writes in *True Reviews*: "This is the finest biography ever written." PKDSer Ken Huyé writes in to say, "Got Vol. 1 of Rickman's bio the other day and consumed it. Gregg deserves kudos for a very respectable piece of research/analysis/exposition." A *Booklist* (American Library Association) review I haven't seen says both biographies are "recommended without reservation for general collections."

And Kevin Parent sends along a column by Jacquin Sanders from the April 5, 1990 *St. Petersburg Times*, and says, "This clipping might not be so significant, but the fact that it was sent to me by my 70 year old mother-in-law says something! To think that she didn't believe I read 'that stuff' at one time. I finally convinced her to read HIGH CASTLE. She liked it, and asked me for more . . . ." Actually, it's a remarkable clipping. Sanders starts, "Finally, eight years after his death, my old friend Phil Dick is world-famous."

"I spent a lot of time with him during two months in the 1950s and never saw him again."

"In those days, Philip K. Dick was gawky and funny and resembled the All-American boy, which he was not. He loved to stay up all night talking, and he could talk about anything. He had no college degrees but read Kant and Hegel and physics textbooks for amusement. He was writing full-length novels in three or four weeks, one after the other."

"He was 25, looked 17, and already into the second of his five marriages. He lived in Berkeley, Calif., in the smallest house I have ever seen. It was only 8 feet wide, though two stories high. He wrote novels in the movie room on the ground floor . . . . He wrote as if there were no other writers in the world, and if he didn't finish what he was writing and get on to another, there would be no more books, ever, for anyone!"

"He was never a part of his world; he was always out ahead of it. His fears were premature, bizarre; they would help compose the bleak picture of the future in his novels."

"He wouldn't go to movies when I knew him because he was afraid of marauding youth gangs. Every couple of weeks he would shop for a new trunk because he didn't trust doctors to treat his hernia."

"Mainly we would talk shop. He had published a half-dozen novels and many short stories, all in the science fiction category. I had published only one novel, but it came out in hardback and he overvalued it for that reason."

"He would glare off into space. Just once he wanted to see a book of his in hardback. 'I want it so much!'"

"And he would make a promise, or was it a threat? When he had said all he needed to say in science fiction, then he would write a real novel."

Sanders goes on to describe the rest of Phil's career, and his successes since his death, closing by saying, "Finally there is a Philip K. Dick Society Newsletter and a fine new biography, *Divine Invasions* by Lawrence Sutin."

"It is in hardback."

**Media Attention: PKD, the Play.** Following up on last issue's report, the reviews of the one-man show *Philip K. Dick* (scripted and directed by John Dowie, played by John Joyce) are in, and they're mixed. *Time Out*, who gave it such a great preview, blasted it (different writer) the following week: "morbidly moribund, dull and flat." *The Guardian*, on the other hand, called it "A compelling piece of work." *The Times* liked Joyce but said the play "builds far too partially portrait." *City Limits* found it "never compromised or cynical." *The Independent* said "It is a sympathetic, touching portrait, and Joyce's engaging performance fleshes it out skillfully." *What's On* said, "The major flaw is that it focuses almost entirely upon the man and informs only tangentially of his work." *The Ex Newspaper* raved, "Another actor might not have been convincing in this rant against an unfreeing God. John Joyce obviously calls upon his own experience to great effect and John Dowie adds his mastery of understated comedy and overwhelming paranoia. Together, they bring Dick to life."

*Geoff Ryman*, *Writing The Intermediate Reptile*, said, "I wanted to interrupt, to say please go back, I want to talk about that. The danger with any monologue is the unbroken flow . . . ."

The show ran for about two weeks; attendance was poor, partly because of location. Dowie has further plans for the play, and we'll keep you posted. Meanwhile John Joyce writes that he's looking for opportunities to give readings of the Metz speech, "If You Find This World Bad, You Should See Some of the Others": "I find that not only do I understand it but I really tune to it and would like to share that with others."

**Miscellany.** Okay, here we go. First, Southern Illinois University Press is publishing a non-fiction Norman Spinrad collection in August, *Science Fiction in the Real World*, which will include a long essay (previously unpublished, I think) on Philip K. Dick. Intriguing.

Lawrence Sutin's *Divine Invasions* will be published in the U.K. by Paladin, as a trade paperback. No publication date has been announced.

Erik Davis, who has written about PKD for the *Village Voice* and *Gnosis*, will give a talk on "Philip K. Dick & Postmodern Gnosis" at the New York Open Center, December 7th, at 7:30; $12. He's gonna talk about ancient gnosticism, then technological postmodernism, and finally will argue that PKD is "the preeminent postmodern gnostic. His writings are pulp culture Sufi tales . . . ." etc. I dunno. This will be part of a series that will also include a talk by Jay Kinney, editor of *Gnosis* and designer of the PKDS logo, definitely a winner Eligibility and Meeting.

*The Trouble with Dick*, about the writer Dick Kendred's troubles with women and his runaway imagination (the name is in tribute, but the character ain't PKD), is now in the video stores. This via Scott Apel, who also sent an employment ad from Valisys Corporation, "one of the leading companies in the growing computer integrated manufacturing industry. Valisys software provides the capability to share dimensions . . . ." No kidding. They're looking for applications engineers.

Bhob Stewart warns that *Total Recall* software is on its way.

Daniel Deranleau passes on word that Gary Lee Connor, songwriter/guitarist for the Screaming Trees, is a big fan of PKD. They record for SST, are into hellbent psychedelia or something like that, I'd probably like 'em."

*(please jump to page 20)*
What do we mean when we call a work 'Dickian'? The novels of Philip K. Dick show the influence of science fiction published in the '40s and '50s. From Frederik Pohl and Cyril Kornbluth, Dick borrowed a satirical, dystopian near-future setting. From A.E. Van Vogt a predilection for reality disjunctions. From Robert Heinlein a measure of solipsism and paranoia. Yet searching the works of these authors for a reading experience that is essentially 'Dickian' is frustrating. Similarly, many of the newer writers in sf— I'm thinking of K.W. Jeter, Rudy Rucker, and Tim Powers, among others—profess an admiration for Dick's work, and often employ 'Dickian' elements in their work. But the 'Dickian' effect is rarely, if ever, central; these writers are, quite appropriately, busy with their own themes and motifs.

There are, however, instances of fiction that is more fundamentally 'Dickian'; works that, rather than evoking Dick's milieu, reproduce— in many cases unknowingly— the distinctly disruptive effect of a novel by Dick.

Let me describe a novel I've just read. The book's main character is, without his knowledge, murdered in the first chapter. He proceeds to enter a bizarre and shadowy version of the world he previously inhabited, and experiences there a bewildering array of 'impossible' events. He spends most of the novel in pursuit of an elusive policeman, who is supposed to possess the ability to free the protagonist from his dismay and confusion. Mysterious signs of this policeman are everywhere. At the end of the novel the protagonist learns he is dead— only to have this awareness immediately stripped from him. The novel ends with our character right back where we first found him: newly murdered, and about to undergo the events of the novel we've just finished reading.

The novel I've described is called The Third Policeman, and it was written in 1940 by an Irish journalist who published fiction under the name Flann O'Brien. The novel, though I can't do it justice in this short space, is uproariously funny, linguistically brilliant, and, to my mind, highly 'Dickian.' Specifically, it's a sibling to UBIK and A MAZE OF DEATH. It also conveys a strong flavor of Lewis Carroll, which is a thread I'll pick up again in a moment.

Now, the chances of Dick having read Policeman (and not mentioning it anywhere) are very slim. It's almost certainly an instance of parallel development. What's remarkable is how perfectly distilled the 'Dickian effect' is in O'Brien's novel. Freed of 'Dickian' trappings (the so-called 'junk' elements that Stanislaw Lem identified) The Third Policeman is nonetheless unmistakably a 'Dickian' work. This is not to say anything against, for example, talking robot taxicabs. I'm personally fond of talking robot taxicabs. The crucial point (a point which Dick himself proves in — to take one instance — THE TRANSMIGRATION OF TIMOTHY ARCHER) is that talking robot taxicabs aren't strictly necessary.

Memories of Amnesia is a novel by a writer named Lawrence Shainberg. Though it was written in 1988, it too is a highly 'Dickian' novel which displays (and probably possesses) no direct influence of the writer Philip K. Dick. Again, the futuristic settings and artifacts familiar to Dick's readers, and to science fiction readers in general, are absent. In the case of Memories of Amnesia even the 'Dickian' plotline, still available in The Third Policeman, is missing. Nonetheless, the 'Dickian' essence survives.

Philip K. Dick perceived reality as a paradoxical, distorted, and even dysfunctional thing, and he sought, through his writings, a variety of possible explanations: political, religious, philosophical, psychological, even pharmacological. One of the very few he didn't consider was a neurological explanation. (Since his death biographers have to some extent explored that possibility for him; indeed, the proposed diagnosis of Temporal Lobe Epilepsy— see PKDS #20; also Sutin's Divine Invasions — is a fascinating lens through which to consider his life and, to a lesser extent, his work.) Lawrence Shainberg, previously the author of Brain Surgeon: An Intimate View of His World, has in Memories of Amnesia relentlessly explored 'Dickian' themes in the fascinating and rich language of neurology.

The novel is the first-person account of a neurosurgeon who begins to experience symptoms of brain damage: in the middle of delicate surgery he bursts out singing "Oh, Susannah." What's more, he experiences his symptoms as an exhilarating taste of freedom from the constraints of rationality. The narrator is simultaneously doctor and patient— much like A scanner darkly's Bob Arctor, who is both drug abuser and nar— and the distinctions between illness and health, sanity and madness, illusion and reality, quickly blur. The result is a deliciously unsettling excursion. The introspective, insistently questioning, and highly self-absorbed texture of this narrative bears an extraordinary resemblance to VALIS and radio free albatross in particular. Perhaps needless to say, the novel ends on a note of almost unbearably unresolved tension.

Shainberg, like O'Brien, has been compared to Lewis Carroll. (Shainberg makes the connection explicit by quoting Alice in Wonderland as an epigraph.) Further, both Borges and Pirandello, two of the 'great' writers commonly cited as relevant to a consideration of Dick, are frequently compared to Carroll. Certainly, baseline adjectives like 'dreamlike,' 'menacing,' and 'surreal' apply equally to Dick and Carroll. Yet, in searching the indexes of the various biographical and critical works on Dick, I failed to find a single reference to Lewis Carroll.

Two questions, then: might Lewis Carroll be an important and unrecognized common denominator for some of the themes and techniques manifested in the novels of Dick? And might an inquiry into what we experience as 'Dickian' begin not with a survey of American science fiction of the '40s and '50s, but rather with an exploration of the history of 'strangeness' (or 'cognitive estrangement') in fiction?

Jonathan Lethem

The Third Policeman by Flann O'Brien is available as a $7.95 trade paperback from NAL.
Memories of Amnesia by Lawrence Shainberg is available as a $3.95 mass market paperback from Ivy Books.

AVAILABLE AGAIN!

PKDS Newsletter #9/10: "90 Minutes With Philip K. Dick" — a cassette — PKD in conversation with Paul Williams (unpublished 1974 material) on one side; PKD alone talking into his tape recorder on the other side (notes for a novel, Exegesis speculations — also 1974).

$10. postpaid — sent first class (by air if you're overseas). Order from PKDS, Box 611, Glen Ellen, CA 95442.
Gregg Rickman (San Francisco, California):

Thank you for the nice things you [Paul Williams] said about my Phil Dick biography in PKDS #22/23. Your criticism, that my argument "that Dick was sexually molested as a child is unconvincing, and the author’s heavy emphasis on this point tends to muddy rather than clarify the reader’s sense of Dick as a child (and as an adult)" has been echoed, as you probably know, by other reviews of To the High Castle, friendly and unfriendly ones alike. I’ll respond to your recent letter to me here. When I asked you to give me your reasons for disputing the molestation diagnosis, you wrote:

“I don’t say I disbelieve a molestation occurred, I say the argument is unconvincing – a subtle difference of emphasis, perhaps, but the point is that while it could well have occurred I don’t think you have strong evidence, which in turn creates a problem when you place so much emphasis on this. The items you list [in THC chapter six] are backwards reasoning and can’t be considered proof – you can’t only go on symptoms, although they may point a direction. Anne’s story [that Phil told Anne Dick he had been molested] is significant and believable, but it is her recollection of what Phil told her, and that is not set in cement, same as what Phil told you or me or anyone – because Phil was not always reliable, especially in conversation. You say so yourself. Phil told me that Hoover Institute said that amphetamines have no effect on him. That doesn’t make it true, however. And it is a little odd that Phil didn’t talk about the molestation, directly or indirectly, elsewhere, since he was so free with his autobiographical remarks. But I don’t intend to try to disprove the point – it certainly could have happened, although what ‘it’ was is also very unclear. A hand on the knee or a violent rape or –? But my main disagreement with your book is not regarding whether it happened, it’s the emphasis, the importance you place on it … I do feel it skews your book away from points that might be more important, particularly his relationship with his mother.”

Here’s the reasoning I used to make the argument for Phil being an abused child:

1) Phil said he was molested. (Directly to Anne, and implicitly to Tessa Dick.)

2) Phil answers positively to virtually every diagnostic question used by professionals to determine the existence and ascertain the effects of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) on adults. Elementary probability theory tells us why this matters. It’s pure inductive logic – the probability of a positive diagnosis increases as the positive (non-synonymous, a priori independent) item responses increases.

I could add 3) the fact that the abuse diagnosis has been accepted as credible by many (though not all) of the people who knew Phil well, including Barry Spatz, Phil’s last psychiatrist. Spatz told me he thought Phil was a CSA victim, based on working with him as a trained therapist – not a personal friend.

You object “that Phil didn’t talk about the molestation, directly or indirectly, elsewhere, since he was so free with his autobiographical remarks.” As Larry Sutin points out in his biography of Phil, Phil didn’t speak directly of things that we know that he did, but that he was ashamed of, such as (to use Larry’s example) the commitment/medication episode with Anne. The fact of having been molested burdens the child with a great deal of guilt; the fact that Phil made no direct reference to the molestation in either his published interviews and memoirs, or in his letters and private writings, is actually to be expected, given the guilt, repression, and even amnesia associated with CSA’s effects.

So far as indirect references go I went into some detail about them in THC. The material I cited from EYE IN THE SKY and MARY AND THE GIANT is just the tip of the iceberg. I’ve gone on to work out a very coherent analysis of some of Phil’s most difficult works (PALMER ELDritch, UBIK) based on Dick’s real life tomb world experiences, which my readers will eventually be favored with. As I said in THC, Phil Dick’s work is one vast autobiography. What he didn’t speak of directly, he spoke of in code.

Your most telling criticism is that Phil, as witness, even to his own life, cannot be trusted. “Phil was not always reliable, especially in conversation.” My argument is that Phil’s veracity or lack thereof comes from the molestation, the amnesiac self-protecting cloud of lies and half-truths which surrounds the adult abuse survivor. My belief is now (as I’ll get into in Firebright [the planned second volume of Rickman’s biography]) that Phil molested Anne to be honest (pace Barry Spatz’s comments to me in THC) but simply, frequently, didn’t remember what he’d said. I think this is a primary reason Phil so carefully kept carbons of the letters he wrote. Not that he always read them – there’s a sequence of letters to Sherry Gottlieb written in the early ‘70s in which he misattributes something to her he’d written, in an earlier letter, himself. There are many other instances of this sort of thing in his writing and his life (the “two-faced” quality which put off Ted White among others). There’s one in my own experience with him. When I interviewed Phil in ‘81 I told him THE ZAP GUN seemed like a self-parody to me; when we discussed the book again he brought up the “self-parody” idea (which he didn’t like) and attributed it to a writer he was then irritated at.

Phil gained nothing from these forays but an odd reputation; his “lies,” I think, were rather for personal gain nor malicious, but simply represent an existential flailing for survival.

But as to the crucial story, that of the molestation – Phil’s most extravagant stories came in several versions. This story came once, unembellished. Anne tells me now that he did not tell her that a neighbor had been the culprit, but that that was her own assumption, with which she embellished her report. He just simply told her that he’d been “sexually assaulted as a young boy.” This is a revision from what she wrote in her unpublished memoir, from which Lawrence Sutin and I both quote. As you say, this demonstrates that memories aren’t set in concrete, but I find it inconceivable that the core of her story is false. Given the tremendous stigma that has attached to abuse victims until very recently, what motivation would Phil have for simply making up a story like that? He told her this after the commitment/drugging episode, by way of exculpation I think, but this is not the kind of story anyone would make up as an excuse in such a case.

Anne’s revision to her story, incidentally, gives further point to the theory I put forth in THC (which Peter Nicholls, in the Washington Post, particularly objected to) that Phil’s grandfather E. G. Kindred, and not a “neighbor” or someone outside the family, was Phil’s probable molester. This was already pointed to by the dynamics of most abuse cases, taking place as they do within dysfunctional families; and by other evidence as well (Phil’s story that the old man had whipped him). It also deals with one of your secondary objections, that Phil’s tortured relationship with his mother was more important to him than the putative molestation.
My belief now is that the rage that colored Phil's dealings with his mother stemmed primarily from his feeling that Dorothy had put him "in harm's way" by taking him to live at his grandfather's house. (I'm not too clinical—I thought I made it clear in THC that Phil's molester, whoever he was, forced the boy to orally copulate him; this is implied by the gagging reflex Phil had developed by his stay at the boarding school. [For which I did provide an alternate explanation, Phil's own. By the way, Divine Invasions brings up some supporting evidence I missed vis-a-vis Phil becoming, at this age, suicidal. Now what would make a five-year-old suicidal?])

You write that your primary objection to my book is not the abuse theory, but the emphasis I place on it. To that I can only say that given the effect early childhood trauma has, demonstrably, on people, and given the likelihood that Phil was molested (or even the barest possibility that he was), I felt I had to follow up that information with as full an exploration of what that abuse might mean as I could manage.

In this regard you might want to check out Louise DeSalvo's recent book, Virginia Woolf: The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse in Her Life and Work. It's a brilliant book, and in the new material I'm sticking in the Last Testament reissue I mean to analyse how her approach to similar material differs from and parallels my own. CSA happens, and when it happens it resonates through someone's life like an underground fault line.

As you know, Phil Dick, the human being, has gotten a lot of criticism recently, in reviews of THE DARK-HAIRED GIRL and of the two biographies, in the Washington Post, USA Today, and elsewhere. There'll be a new round of shocks awaiting readers of the collected letters (together, of course, with many positive surprises). "The condemnation Phil faces, over his treatment of some of the women in his life, for instance, or his anti-Communist paranoia, can and should be transformed into saddened understanding of the agonizing difficulties Phil struggled with all of his life—as a direct result of his childhood traumas. Some of the compensations he came up with were lousy, to be sure. But some of those compensations—like his novels—were valid ones, and contain much we can still learn from."

This understanding can only happen if I can make clear to readers just what those traumas, and their effects, were. That's what my books are trying to do. You conclude your review of "the two biographies of Philip K. Dick" by saying, "We [meaning you, me and Lawrence Sutin] don't want the answers, any more than Phil did. . . . We want to go on exploring the questions." I forget what I said in the past to imply this, Paul, but this is what I think now: I think Phil desperately sought the answers, all of his life. The pleasures he got from his search were the best compensation he could come up with. I too want the answers, and I'm taking as long as I am to finish the biography in my attempts to find them. It would be a disservice to the Philip K. Dick I knew—that brave spirit—to do otherwise.

David Keller (Santa Ana, California): To the High Castle by Gregg Rickman is an excellent, fascinating book by the best PKD biographer I have read. However, I do not believe he conclusively establishes CSA [childhood sexual abuse] or that his "checklist" constitutes a valid test for CSA. While earning my B.A. in psychology I spent four semesters studying experimental design, statistics for the behavioral sciences, and psychological testing, and my belief is based on my understanding of technical aspects related to test validity and design.

I think it is an error to concentrate on one or two factors as the source of PKD's problems or of his nature. I believe any accurate diagnosis would start out along the lines of, "The patient presents a mixed picture of..." I do not suggest ruling out CSA as a factor, but believe Rickman gives it too much weight—particularly considering the number of traumatic or disturbing events and conditions affecting his life, as recorded in this biography—and makes an unwarranted assumption throughout most of the book that it was fact rather than possibility. Something he doesn't seem to give proper weight to is that anorexia is a common response to stress of any kind, and PKD started life with a feeding problem that may have set a trend for his future life or been related to some genetic trait. At any rate, it was an "eating" problem that predated the period when CSA was suspected.

Concepts that a "weak" or absent father in early childhood increases the probability of a male becoming homosexual (p. 53, "What reason could there have been for his parents to be afraid of his becoming homosexual, if they did not fear he'd been molested?") go back a long time. The divorce of PKD's parents may have created fears about this "spontaneously" or because of some psychological theory that was subscribed to by the therapist he saw at age six. The association between boarding schools and homosexuality could also have created such fears. Additionally, there may have been something in the family history that would cause Dorothy to worry about homosexuality (indeed, when "bad blood" was a common expression, homosexuality, epilepsy, mental illness, suicide, and alcoholism in the family were among the commonest conditions it referred to).

I was very interested by the information in the book about panic disorder, related problems, and medication/drugs. One thing that stands out in my mind is how many items on Rickman's list could serve as indicators of whether a person had taken certain types of medications, including tri-cyclics and phenothiazines, which he says PKD did take at various times.

Some comments: "Poor response to phenothiazines" (p. 55). When phenothiazines or other major (anti-psychotic) tranquilizers are used inappropriately, as they often are, a "poor" response should be considered a normal response which indicates a lack of psychiatric illness, or indicates anything at all about the patient/victim. Fairly common side effects include disorientation (including "x3": person, place, and time), hallucinations, false memories, loss of coordination (which can result in cuts and bruises or even fatal accidents), and loss of memory (particularly failure to remember periods of time while the person is under the influence of the drug), flattening of affect, drowsiness/loss of consciousness, and depersonalization.

I've personally had an experience with Buspar (which was not even an appropriate medication for the diagnosis) where I decided to walk downstairs and do something in the living room when I finished showering, and I had a perfect image in my mind of exactly where everything upstairs and downstairs was. When I got out of the shower I realized I lived in an apartment with no upstairs and as far as I can recall I've never been in the house I thought I was living in. Such an experience could be much more harmful if it did not involve something that could be immediately tested for accuracy of perception/orientation.

One thing about tri-cyclics that might not be apparent from the descriptions in PDR and other such references is that the "bedside stranger" is a common adverse effect. It occurs in night terrors and other sleep disturbance problems, some of which are matters of waking up in a profoundly altered mental state that lasts for minutes to hours after waking. Such a state may be as unusual and wakeful as one induced by a large dose of LSD, although the nature will be different, and the person may not recognize it as a post-drug state.

It is also worth noting that doctors are often careless about drug incompatibility—both in prescribing incompatible drugs simultaneously and in failing to determine precisely what over-the-counter or other drugs a patient may be taking. Rickman's biography suggests PKD was taking incompatible drugs at various times. Incompatibilities, interactions, and side effects may be relevant to the famous 1974 experience. (PKD may not always have been an accurate source of information to his doctors, as he doesn't seem always to have realized the full components of some drugs. For example, he has referred to drugs as amphetamines but mentioned a brand name that was actually an amphetamine-barbiturate combination such as Dexamyl. This could also be of special significance if his liver really did metabolize/detox amphetamines extremely rapidly, since it might
mean he was actually "downed out" to some extent at times when he thought he was wired.)

If I recall correctly PKD had asthma as a child. It might be significant to know if he took broncho-dilators (probably containing ephedrine or benzphetamine as primary components) and/or antihistamines, which can produce anorexia, hallucinations, sleep disturbances, disorientation, impairment of coordination, and other adverse effects.

I'm inclined to suspect much of PKD's misuse of drugs (I don't consider illegal use, per se, as misuse) was due to ignorance or bad judgment within the medical community rather than bad judgment on his part. By "misuse" I intend to include the failure to use appropriate drugs as well as the use of inappropriate drugs.

From 1980 to 1985 and January 1988 to the present I have received excellent, effective treatment for panic disorder, anorexia, and depression (except for a period in 1982 when I stupidly neglected to stick to my medication schedule, took lots of antihistamines for an allergy, and got insufficient sleep because I was too intensely involved in historical research). The break in treatment was due to difficulty in finding a replacement after my psychiatrist closed his private practice; the medication that works for me (and research indicates it is the most effective medication for most people with panic disorders) is not advertised for long term use and it is hard to get it prescribed as a "maintenance" drug.

I had not suspected, before reading To the High Castle (pp. 19, 47, 50), that PKD had panic disorder or anorexia, but there are many images and concepts in his writing that could have derived from panic disorder experiences (or from medication experiences). On three or four occasions I explained concepts from his novels to physicians to describe what I was experiencing, because those concepts expressed what I was feeling more accurately than standard medical terms.

I want to stress my belief that Philip K. Dick might be alive today if he had received effective treatment for panic disorder. The general difficulty in getting proper treatment results in many people's premature deaths. Prior to returning to an effective "maintenance" medication treatment I was experiencing up to eight hours a day of severe panic attacks in addition to ceaseless anxiety and milder, briefer attacks. Symptoms of these attacks included tachycardia, a feeling that my heart was about to burst, flushing, various symptoms suggestive of elevated blood pressure, anorexia, and weight loss. I firmly believe the cumulative effects of such symptoms over PKD's lifetime contributed to his early death (i.e., the cardiovascular effects of panic disorder combined with PKD's heart/circulatory system problems).

[Keller sent a follow-up letter asking me to make it clear that this letter was not intended as a review of Gregg's book as a whole: "Such a review would be far more positive. Also, neither I nor Rickman mean to suggest PKD was a great writer because of the problems he had, only that he was influenced by them."]

Jonathan Lethem (Berkeley, California):

Here in Berkeley the University owns a building — formerly a dormitory — called Barrington Hall, which at some point in the sixties was given over to a loose collective of students including squating hippies, and has even since been a source of continuous controversy, a thorn in UC's paw comparable to People's Park. Barrington is accused by its neighbors of housing over-loud rock bands, bomb-tossing anarchists, dealers and users of smack, crack and ice, etc., and has almost always been one offense away from being reclaimed and converted into something less offensive to the community. But Berkeleyans are self-consciously protective of countercultural talismans, and Barrington held on until just this year, when the school finally wrested back control.

The building is very noticeable, even when quiet. It's covered with layers of gorgeous graffiti, and the windows are filled with draperies. And now something new has appeared on the boarded-up entrance: large block lettering, easily visible from half a block away, reading AMWEB... the name on the futuristic apartment complex Manfred Steiner sees wavering into reality in the desert in MARTIAN TIME-SLIP.

Leah Lail (New York, NY):

I read Phil Dick books, and cry, and wish to god I could have known the man with such insight into human nature—or at least my nature. I always choose a character for myself and cast the book entirely as I read. I know his work will be made into films, and I know that sooner or later I'll be a part of bringing it to others. Right now I can still play Rachel in THE BROKEN BUBBLE (which is my new Favorite work — but I say that after every single PKD book I read), because I never get cast as anyone over 19. But if I don't get to do it soon, I'll have to wait until I can play Pat. I wonder if PKD ever realized the change in his women from age 20 to 25? The young girls are strong, yet innocent, alluring, smart, virginal, yet experienced. The "women" are generally jaded, hard, stupid, dependent, frigid, demanding. I wonder if he ever realized that it was probably their experiences with men that made them that way?

[PW: I think the young girls in Phil's books are so different from the women because Phil was immature in his relations with women, like lots of other men. He writes about "girls" from a place of empathy and (male) admiration and attraction; he easily idealizes them. He loves the way they look, the way they talk, he feels (and communicates) keenly their vitalizing force.

When he's writing about women the attraction is still there, but it is dissolved quickly by his anger and mistrust, which doesn't have to do with his actual experiences with his wives I think so much as with the fact that he never let go of his anger at his mother. The "girl" doesn't remind him of his mother (instead she's his idealized lost twin sister), but the "woman" does.

You ask, Did he realize it was probably their experiences with men that made them that way? I'd say he probably didn't, because he never seemed to acknowledge his father's role in creating his and his mother's situation. And Phil was himself (in my opinion) very much the kind of man who wears a woman down with the gap between his empathy for her when he sees her at a distance and his lack of empathy for her once a close relationship has been established. And what makes his woman characters whatever way they are is the author's way of looking at them — I mean he couldn't necessarily see through the woman's defenses and fears to see her beauty as a person, as he could with the "girl," because of his own demons. One exception to this is Liz, in PUTTERING ABOUT, and the "woman" does. whereas the delightful Angel Archer of TRANSMIGRATION could still be considered a girl archetype in some ways.]
Malcolm Warren (Brattleboro, Vermont):

I was disappointed to read the following quote in a previously unpublished PKD interview in the latest Starlog:

"There's also a Blade Runner comic book from Marvel."

PKD: "My agent called me up and said, 'Hey, Phil, I can get you ten percent of the gross on the comic book version of your novel.' I regard it as a very serious novel—I mean it deals with the problem of the sacredness of life and the value of life, so I said, 'If I'm going to get 10% of the comic book rights, I must have 100% of the suppository rights.' I mean, 'comic book version of my novel'? It's like telling Leo Tolstoy, 'Mr. Tolstoy? Would you like me to tell you about the comic book version of your book War and Peace?""

Dick expresses here the common stereotype that comics are inherently trivial, low-brow, and schlocky. He feared that his novel would be trivialized by the very fact of being adapted to comics.

If Dick had lived to see the actual comic, I can't believe he would have been too displeased with it. While it was no masterpiece, it did turn out to be a creditable version of the movie story (not the novel). Writer Archie Goodwin and artist Al Williamson (an EC alumnus who adapted Bradbury to the comics in the fifties) were faithful to the screenplay and captured the futuristic Noir mood more than adequately, and the comic was packaged and marketed for an adult audience. It certainly didn't deserve to be compared to a suppository sight unseen.

Dick was a genius who labored in financial hardship and obscurity for over twenty years, having been relegated to an arbitrarily bounded literary ghetto because of the popular prejudice that SF (his natural element) was low culture. He should have known, more than anyone, how unfair such prejudices are.

David Kleist (Bethlehem, Pennsylvania):

Perhaps I am alone in believing that Phil Dick's best work may be his realist novels, not the SF. In all honesty, the hair on the back of my neck rises in astounded admiration not when reality breaks down once again in a UBIK or a THREE STIGMATA—it rises when I read the scene in BROKEN BUBBLE where two of the main characters are sleeping together (separated by blankets) for the first time since their divorce and the woman says, "This is nice!"; and when the male character in CRAP ARTIST can't bring himself to buy the Kotex, even after getting drunk; and when the woman in PUTTERING ABOUT walks in on her husband, whom she's caught in the act of adultery. In all his writing, from the earliest short stories forward, Dick was a psychological realist; and I think he was a truly great writer because of his utterly unerring sensitivity and honesty with respect to often unacknowledged and unexpressed psychological realities. If you are acutely honest, intelligent, and loving, then you can capture your perceptions endurably in beautiful prose.

I think Phil's obsession with the "What is reality?" question springs directly from his profound recognition of things as they really are, coupled with his equally profound recognition that most human beings are morally adrift, morally askew, doing not what is right but what is expedient (or interesting in an otherwise boring life), inflicting incredible suffering on themselves and others through weakness, timidity, blindness, ignorance, incompleteness. Thus Phil's "What is reality?" question is not primarily ontological or epistemological; it is primarily ethical.

Again and again in Dick's work, the problem of right action in an imperfect world presents itself significantly. What matters is not so much being demonstrably correct in one's actions, but having the courage to try to do what is right amid overwhelmingly inchoate and unhealthy circumstances.

Greg Lee (Laguna Hills, California):

I'd be interested in your feelings (as literary executor) about recent Supreme Court rulings such as this. [He encloses a clipping from the Los Angeles Times, 2/21/90, about the U.S. Supreme Court letting stand a lower court decision that biographers and historians may not use unpublished letters, manuscripts, diaries and other works without the permission of the writers or their heirs.] I recall your column in the latest newsletter about the SELECTED LETTERS being "selected" because of living persons, etc. Perhaps you could discuss your position/philosophy on the availability of PKD's papers as the years go by.

[PW: I think the Supreme Court decision is terrible, because it effectively reduces freedom of expression. It means one cannot quote from letters, diary notes etc. or possibly even public speeches when one is writing biography or history or criticism or contemporary commentary. Ultimately you could send around a letter accusing me of something and I wouldn't be able to quote your letter publicly to defend myself unless I had your permission! Truth, in other words, becomes a private property issue. What the person said belongs to him or to his/her heirs, and access to it at any length can be controlled by them not because of privacy but because they have property rights therein. This is a big step backwards.

I'm not alone in feeling outraged about this, and there is talk of trying to put legislation through Congress to correct the matter.

[As far as the Dick Estate goes, there are other issues. If it were up to me, and it isn't entirely—my position as literary executor is ultimately an advisory one, although in practice I can and do grant permission to biographers to quote letters etc.—I would allow more or less complete access to all of Dick's papers to any scholar or biographer or interested reader. Indeed, I have done so. I would also like to be able to allow for the quoting of Dick's letters and papers, except when the nature of the use is specifically commercial, in which case the Estate deserves to be paid its proper share, and to have right of refusal. But there is another limiting factor, and it has to do with the possibility that certain writings, particularly certain letters or diary entries, may be unpublishable at present for legal or ethical reasons (or both).

[If the Estate feels that publication of a letter or other document would invade a person's privacy or possibly be damaging to their reputation or would propagate an untruth, etc., then we must refuse permission for that material to be published. There are also cases where we may not feel there is a legitimate ethical issue, and yet there is still a legal danger: someone could sue, it could cost the heirs time, hassle, money. In those cases too if you are representing people you must err on the side of caution, keep them out of trouble, in the context of the legalistic culture we live in, whether one agrees with its philosophies or not.

[Ultimately—meaning after all the persons talked about in these materials are dead and gone—I see no reason why there should be any limitations on publication of what Phil has written.]
Elvis Costello has taken Phil's name in vain again, this time on his liner notes to the U.K. Girls, Girls, Girls compilation: "With the storm clouds down beneath the tops of the tallest buildings, Tokyo DID seem like the setting for a particularly brutal science fiction story (perhaps something by Philip K. Dick) ..." (John Boonstra noticed this one.)

Lyle Hopwood found an oddity in Monica Furlong's book Zen Effects — The Life of Alan Watts (Houghton Mifflin, 1986). Page 201: "Mark [his son] remembers with pleasure a visit by Watts to New York when Watts took him to visit friends at the Chelsea Hotel [circa 1971]. Up in the penthouse suite of the hotel they played a wicked game on the passersby with a tiny laser beam device that they shone down upon the baffled people below. 'There was this wino,' Mark remembers, 'who was convinced he had seen Jesus.'

Bryan Cholfin of Broken Mirrors Press is working on bringing out an American edition of Uwe's book's collection of stories using PKD as a character or otherwise written under his influence. (See PKDS 18.) I'm not sure whether the original German edition (from Heyne) has actually appeared yet.

Gregg Rickman writes, "Readers who paid for, but have not received, To the High Castle, should get in touch with my publisher's new troubleshooter, Bill Denardo, Fragments West, 5144 E. Killdee St., Long Beach, CA 90808 (new address). We got back about five preordered volumes as undeliverable due to change of address. ... I've received some wonderful letters commenting on my work and would like to get more. I've lost at least one fan's return address so if you didn't hear back from me please try again."

The Los Angeles Weekly ran a special Year of the Snake issue 1/5/90 which included a two-page spread (without explanation or commentary) called "The List 1980-1989." #1 (of 100) is "The Message," Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five (single, 1982). #2 is Once Upon a Time in America, Sergio Leone film (film, 1984). #5 is THE TRANSMIGRATION OF TIMOTHY ARCHER. This issue also included an essay entitled "Year of the Snake," by artist editor (and novelist) Steve Erickson, which describes the events of the last decade. It turns out to be an alternate history, in which Carter won in 1980, etc., and includes a discussion of an influential, unpublished 1989 novel about a world in which Reagan won in '80. But, as in Grasshopper, the world described is not our world either ... he wasn't reelected in '84. Thanks to Ron Drummond for sharing this.

Gregg Rickman notes some pages from Science Fiction on Radio by Meade & Penny Frierson, listing 28 "Exploring Tomorrow" broadcasts and their "trading titles," used by collectors and by businesses who sell tapes of such shows (usually the title was not given on the show). "War Game" is known as "Made in Avack"; "The Man Who Fell/""Recall Mechanism" is known as "Dreams." The third PKD-written show, "The Final Defense," has no counterpart among the shows described here. Possibly it's not in circulation, or is unidentified as part of another series. Ainsworth also notes that the new Sci-Fi Radio NPR series has broadcast their adaptation of "Impostor"; he calls it "very suspenseful, gripping." (See PKDS 22/23 for more information.)

Ray Faraday Nelson, pai of PKD's from the mid-60s and coauthor of THE GAME MEDE TAKEOVER, has a new novel out called DOORS AND WINDOWS, which Booker calls "a taut historical mystery novel by a master of the genre ... engrossing and imaginative." It's available for $12.05 including postage from Strawberry Hill Press, 2594 - 15th Ave, San Francisco, CA 94127. And John Farchild points out a PKD reference in Nelson's 1978 novel The Revolt of the Unemployables, p. 77: "Why would anyone want to make a machine in the shape of a man? It's inefficient! The shape of a machine is determined by its function, and there's only one function that demands the use of machines that look like men. That's fooling people! Philip K. Dick realized that, but he was the only one."

John also spotted the inclusion of THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDritch in Stephen Jones & Kim Newman's critical anthology Horror: 100 Best Books (Xanadu U.K., Carroll & Graf U.S., 1988). The essay on 3 STIGMATA is by Ted Williams, author of Taitchaser's Song. Tim Powers' The Anubis Gates also made the list (essay by John Clute), and THE COSMIC PUPPETS shows up on the Recommended Reading list.

Larry Bank, 1360 SW 82nd Terrace #525, Plantation FL 33324 is interested in contacting PKDS members interested in trading reading copies of Phil's books. Greg Lee, 16 Pineoak, Laguna Hills, CA 92656 — (714) 837-4812 (days) — would like to hear from Orange County PKDSers interested in an informal get-together.

There's lots more, including a report on the VALIS Opera in Japan. It was not a full performance after all, but another mini-staging, as half of Machover's Hyperinstruments Concert; Mason, Azema, Felty, King and Runswick were there and sang and acted; Roy Kaufman designed and directed the performance (Jan. 28-31, Tokyo). Hitotoki Akiyama writes, "it had beautiful colors, simple images, and technique of hanging screens which expressed present & past, confusion, and madness. The core of the story was Phil's dream." He saw it twice and loved it, but I have to cut him and all of this short due to time and space. See you next time ...