

The Philip K. Dick Festival, San Francisco State University, September 2012
--- Lord Running Clam ---

Coming in from Ganymede is always a bitch. The United Intermoonetary Flapple Company does not go directly to San Francisco and dropped me off in Denver instead. Not only that it dropped me off 2 hours early so I had 4 hours to kill at DIA. The fountain is no longer there so I couldn't go soak in it for a while to replenish my outer coating of slime. So after much wandering around I ended up in the 'smokers lounge' drinking \$5 Budweisers at noon and occasionally pouring one over my upper surface - just to stay damp, you know.

In my perambulations around the airport I'd spotted the bookstore and went inside. I immediately grabbed a *USA Today* to have something to soak up my excess drool on the trip to San Francisco for the Philip K. Dick Festival. Then, on a vague tropism I motated towards the back of the store and found the science fiction section. Not expecting much, I was surprised to see several editions of PKD's books there. These were mostly the Mariner editions and a Vintage edition or two. I spotted LIES, INC. in the new Mariner edition but did not buy it as I already had a copy of the Berkley edition of THE UNTELEPORTED MAN in my bag. I'd been reading this novel for a few days and brought it along to read over the festival if I had time. I figured THE UNTELEPORTED MAN should put me in the right frame of mind, weirdness-wise, for the fest. Which it did.

But what I did buy was a copy of the Vintage edition of DR. FUTURITY. I had an idea for this item at the PKD fest when Henri Wintz and I would make our presentation on our PKD bibliography, *PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS*, to the assembled fans. I hung the book in its plastic bag on the pull-up handle of my rolling luggage. I would later regret not purchasing the LIES, INC. because I would need it to write my review of THE UNTELEPORTED MAN for *PKD OTAKU*.

After a last beer and cigarette in the cozy gray atmosphere of the smoker's lounge I entered the Telpor at the security line and was scanned, disassembled, programmed and reassembled again all in a second or two and allowed to go to the boarding area and eventually on to the giant flapple that would take me to San Francisco. I had a window seat overlooking the right wing (I find its good to keep an eye on the wings, make sure they keep flapping). I unfurled my *USA Today* and began to read.

Whoosh! The flapple took off! I love flying, it's the hassle getting on and off that's a chore. I looked at the plains of Colorado swinging beneath me as we turned towards the mountains and San Francisco. My neighbor was a young oriental woman who did not want to talk much but played on her cellphone. I didn't have one of these and instead drooled on my newspaper. But as we neared our destination and I could see a large body of water below us, I asked her questions about the area and it turned out she lived in the East Bay somewhere. She told me that the water below wasn't the Pacific Ocean, as I'd guessed, but the San Francisco Bay. The geography of the area is still a mystery to me.

Once landed - always a nerve-wracking moment - I tried to remember Ted Hand's instructions of what to do and where to go so he could pick me up. Fortunately I'd written these down on a piece of paper before I left Ganymede. Unfortunately this got lost in the strip search at Denver when the TSA politely rooted around in my ass looking for contraband. So, I deflapped with my luggage and wondered where to go. At least I'd been smart enough to have only the one carry-on and now wouldn't have to go find the luggage disbursement machine. I trundled off to the right, in the same direction as everyone else.

I was extremely thankful that Ted had offered to pick me up. In a long email to him a couple weeks before the 'fest I'd told him of problems with environmental assimilation while on Earth which render me in some capacities, um, uncertain, yes, that's a good word, uncertain. I get lost. In parking lots, in restaurants, wherever. I have the depth perception of a clam. This disorientation caused by differences in gravitic fields and other factors between Earth and Ganymede. I'd told Henri of my disability and he'd recommended I take the BART to his place in El Cerrito. He'd sent me maps of the system and all I had to do is get on the BART at the airport, change somewhere or other, and get off at El Cerrito where he could pick me up after getting off work. Maps are good. I can find my way around with maps. The problem is getting from the flapple to the sidewalk. And from there to a BART station. I'd wondered what they look like: are they big and yellow with spikes on top? And having to get off one BART and onto another... well, this was sounding like it might be beyond me. I was sure to get lost and end up in San Quentin or somewhere I wouldn't normally want to go. So, I'd written Ted and laid my problem on him and he kindly offered to pick me up at the airport. He'd be driving a black VW Beetle and wearing a San Francisco Giants baseball hat. I, in turn, would wear a red Ohio State Buckeyes '7-Times National Champions' hat. We figured with all this sporting gear we'd easily recognize each other.

So, as I usually do when I find myself in unknown territory, I searched for a total stranger and asked her the one thing that stuck in my mind from Ted's instructions: "Where would I go if I got off a United flapple and I was supposed to meet someone at the place where cars pull up and pick people up?" This should get me specific directions, I thought. And it did! The woman pointed the way to the exit and I could indeed see cars driving by.

I went directly outside and thankfully lit up a cigarette. Anxiously I looked for black VW bugs but didn't see any. I slithered back and forth puffing my ciggy and about decided to go back inside and try the other side of the airport, figuring, like Denver, they would have two pickup sides. I stubbed my cigarette out on the 'No Smoking' sign and turned to go in. But just then I saw a black VW pull up in front of me. The driver was wearing a SF Giants hat! It was Ted! I'd made it with no worries. We shook dextral extremities, introduced ourselves and got in his car.

We chatted about this and that on the drive through that part of San Francisco. It's a strange town, lots of giant stacked 10-lane freeways everywhere. The locals like to gather in huge hordes in their cars on these scenic byways where they are content to cruise along at 30 miles per hour and wave good-naturedly to their similarly mobile neighbors.



On the Bay Bridge

I took it all in, the docks, the big cranes which Ted told me served as the model for the *At-Ats* (?) in *Star Wars*, the bustling hugeness of it all, and then we were on the Bay Bridge, which I realized from Henri's maps, led into Oakland and Berkeley and El Cerrito. This bridge, Ted reminded me, is the one that collapsed back in 1989 or thereabouts during an earthquake. Many hapless commuters were crushed by falling concrete blocks and the whole thing was out of commission for years. Ted, I found out, is an instructor in ESL. He teaches foreigners how to speak English. He's also finishing his Master's Thesis in the Philosophy of Religion (I think) and lives near Henri. We talked of neo-Platonism and the EXEGESIS, of cars, guitars and the high price of gas. And before you know it we were in El Cerrito.



At Henri's house Ted parked the car. I had to be careful getting out though as there was a giant prickly cactus just outside the car door, fortunately this one had already eaten that day and didn't attack me. I noticed palm trees and large colorful flowers down the streets. The thought crossed my mind; I'm not on Ganymede anymore.

Henri came out to greet us with a big smile and led us inside. He introduced us to his charming wife, Hsu Ching, who is from Taiwan and had met Henri in graduate school in France. They are both scientific doctors in the field of Molecular Blobology (sorry, Henri, just had to put that in there!) and he works for a scientific instrument company in the area while she is a research scientist at UC Berkeley.

Henri broke out some beers and we relaxed in his living room talking about Philip K. Dick. Honestly, now, I cannot remember what we talked about. I remember Henri's two, possibly four, glass-fronted cabinets full of his PKD collection. I admired his complete 5-volume set of *THE COLLECTED STORIES OF PKD* in hardcover from Underwood-Miller Press. Above his desk was a gallery of paintings showing faux PKD covers in giant size. Soon all three of us were into his collection and editions popped off and onto his bookshelves. He had a big stack of our bibliography, *PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS* in hardcover and softcover around his desk and some boxes of books I'd sent including my *PINK BEAM* book. We'd be taking these to the conference for sale on Saturday.

Ted declined the offer of dinner and we said our farewells till the morrow. Many thanks for your kindness in lugging me around, Ted.

Henri and I then decided to drive into Berkeley and get something to eat. I was all excited to be in Berkeley, the birthplace of Hippie radicalism, and anticipated a lively jaunt through the area encountering itinerant artists and random bands of panhandling Deadheads. Perhaps the students would be out protesting! I thought. I could join them and we'd go burn a doobie or two and then go burn down the local branch of the BoA! Start a fucking riot. I was ready! But it soon dawned on me that I was out of phase with modern reality. Berkeley seemed to be hopping that Thursday evening in the same sense that the Pearl Street Mall in Boulder, Colorado hops on Thursday evenings: lots of sparsely occupied boutiques, restaurants and bars, and an occasional tippy coed. We found a little burger joint and went in and ate a burger and fries and discussed how we would make our bibliographic presentation to the fans when our turn came.

Then back home to Henri's for more PKD talk and soon off to bed. Tomorrow, Friday 21st, would be a busy day. Henri had promised to take me to local wetlands to do some bird-watching (my other hobby) and then we would tour the area and hook up with the PKD tour group at Moe's bookstore in the late afternoon. I'll write about that next. Gotta go putter about now.

Philip K. Dick Festival, Friday September 21st 2012, Bay Area and San Francisco.

A cup of coffee was on my mind first thing Friday morning. Henri had some already made when I got up and we sat at his counter chatting. I'm not sure if it was today that we signed copies of *PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS* to be mailed out to all the Kickstarters and others who had ordered the book (many thanks to you all) but I think it was. Henri stacked a big pile of books up and I commenced to sign them and then we sorted out which other books needed to go to David Gill's office at the university for convenient storage. I also had some other stuff left over from the 2010 PKD fest in Colorado: drawings, bracelets, booklets and PKD books, etc. that I wanted to take along.

During all this sorting of PKD stuff (I almost wrote 'snorting of PKD snuff') Henri mentioned that the Space Shuttle was doing its farewell tour in the Bay area and we might be able to see it around 9.30 when it would fly over El Cerrito. So I'm sitting there reading about the Giants kicking the Rockies ass in the paper about 9.15 when I hear this big trembling roar outside. I leaped up, grabbed my camera and dashed out Henri's back door. The roar was off to my right, I spun around searching the sky, but saw nothing before the sound faded away. Disconsolately I went back inside and told Henri that I'd missed the space shuttle. He, still surprised at my sudden antics, looked at me and said that wasn't the Space Shuttle that was the BART!

Geez... So that was the BART! Sounded like a mechanical dragon - or a Boeing 747 loaded with space shuttle power-diving to 1,000 ft over downtown El Cerrito. Well, hell, that's what I'd expected. I'd never been to San Francisco before; who knows what the hell goes on out there normally. But this BART, now, it's a suspicious device somewhat like the Telpor stations in *THE UNTELEPORTED MAN*. Once one enters in to it one can never be sure if one exited in one, two, three or more realities. Who knows where this obviously teutonically inspired BART system would deposit you in the end?

We finally loaded all the PKD stuff into Henri's Chrysler and I gathered up my binoculars, camera and Sibley field guide to western birds. It was a beautiful day. Henri had discovered a nearby open space; some tributary of the Bay with marshland and water and, hopefully lots of birds. Soon we were walking up this path close to the water's edge while the bicyclists and joggers traveled on the main path above us. To our left across the bay was a magnificent view of San Francisco with the Bay Bridge on the left and the Golden Gate Bridge on our right and the

city at architectural attention in the middle. I snapped lots of pictures but haven't edited them yet.



The first bird was easy to spot: a Snowy egret, and others soon followed. It was like opening the field guide to the section on large waders: I spotted a bird I'd never seen before, a Whimbrel among the Long-billed curlews, Willets and Marbled godwits. So Henri and I are happily plodding up the path, me snapping pix of birds at full zoom and Henri readying his videocam for what would be the big surprise of the day. The Space Shuttle! We hadn't missed it after all. There it was over the far side of the bay. I watched it with my binoculars and snapped pix while Henri got his cameras going too. This big gleaming white double-elephant sized piece of history flew gracefully over San Francisco and curved away at the Golden Gate Bridge, followed by its lone dark escort, an F18 Hornet. All around us a sudden assembly of photographers were babbling excitedly and we joined in. Thanks for the surprise, Henri.



Long-billed curlew

We continued a little further on our trek to as close as we could get to the seagulls standing on a muddy promontory. Seagulls are a birding challenge because they all practically look the same: gray and white. Sometimes they're brown. Some are bigger than others with different colored legs and patterns on their beaks. I identified Ring-billed, Western and Herring gulls - the common ones. Once we returned to the car I tallied what I'd seen. Twelve species and an Elegant tern to add to the Whimbrel on my life list. I was content.

Invigorated by our 2-hour jaunt in the wilderness of El Cerrito, Henri and I went in search of food. First, though, he took me to a busy intersection where someone had spray painted UBIK in curlicue letters on some large yellow traffic barrels stacked by the road, one letter per four barrels. We dodged the traffic and took more snapshots, laughing at the absurdity of it. Apparently, though, there was another Dickhead graffitist out there somewhere as on the next stop of our adventure - a supermarket parking lot - someone had sprayed VALIS in a different style on a parking barrier. The local authorities believe it is the work of Aramchek.

We weren't sure of what we wanted to eat until a word floated up from the depths of my brain: In... In... In-And-Out Burger. I gasped it out and to my complete surprise Henri produced one in just a minute down the road!

We ordered food and took it outside to eat on a small table. Pigeons and sparrows were gleaning scraps from the ground. I tossed pieces of French fry to them and laughed as the birds snatched them up. But when this overly plump specimen of *Columba livia* crash-landed on the table and tried to snatch Henri's entire burger he'd had enough and slapped the beast sideways!

It flipped backwards with a squawk and a puff of feathers right on to the plate of the giant Mexican dude the next table over! To say he was surprised would be the least of it. He was so shocked that he gaped open-mouthed at the pigeon, which blinked a couple times, grabbed a French fry and flew off! We all three looked at each other in astonishment and immediately started babbling in our native languages: Mexican, French and English. But soon all was smiles and we returned to our lunches.

After lunch we drove around sightseeing. I cannot recall the names of the places only the hills and the shapes and pastel colors of the houses. The odd, weather-beaten buildings and sense of the sea. Some famous street names popped up: Shattuck, Telegraph - I seem to remember going up and down Telegraph a lot for some reason.

The first actual place I remember stopping was the Another Change of Hobbit bookstore on the edge of Berkeley. I love bookstores and this one didn't disappoint. Henri had brought a copy of *PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS* with him with the idea of getting the bookstores to order copies and put them on sale. While he made his pitch to the owner I wandered around and spotted a couple of Philip K. Dick books. I can't remember now what they all were but I snatched up the only remaining copy of *NICK AND THE GLIMMUNG* in the first British edition, brand new for cover price of \$35. Then we chatted with the owner, who looked like Tommy Chong, and he was all aware of the PKD festival. But he could not attend as he had to keep the store open. Looked promising for a spot to sell our book, though.

Then more driving around to another famous bookstore... Dark Harvest, I think, where we spent some time looking around and discussing various books and authors as we came across them. Here is where I found a hardcover edition of *IN MILTON LUMKY TERRITORY* for \$8! It was in the sale bin out on the sidewalk. We again talked to the manager about our book and PKD with more positive response.

Somewhere in this busy day we also went by a house that Dick had lived in on I think it was Francisco Street. It was now a large yellow house with a spiky palm tree out front. I took a photo of Henri sitting on the low wall out front and he took one of me. I looked around at the landscape, thinking, Phil saw these rolling hills and these faded houses, walked around these streets. What would it be like to live here? I had no idea.



Henri Wintz at 1126 Francisco St.

We visited a couple more bookstores, the last one being Moe's. I'm not sure exactly where this is but it's very close to the infamous People's Park, the place where the people gather to air their democratic protests against the system and smoke lots of grass. Henri parked besides the park on a quiet road and we walked through it to Moe's. A few people, some looking homeless, some dusty flower children, lounged around while we walked by them. The park didn't seem very big, area-wise, no more than a few acres. Somehow I'd envisioned it being much larger, large enough to hold the vanguard of a youth revolution, large enough to bear its own name.



People's Park sign

Moe's was a bookstore all a-jumble like the others. Here, though, the categorization had gone all to hell. I found PKD books in four or five different places. They could use an army of clerks at Moe's just keeping the stuff organized. I picked up the hardcover graphic novel of *A SCANNER DARKLY* here and another book, I forget the title, but for sure something by PKD. We knew Rudy Rucker would be at the PKD Festival and I recommended his 'Software' tetralogy to Henri as being some of the best science fiction he could read. Henri duly bought a copy and another book besides. I looked for Rucker's "The Hacker And The Ants", a favorite of mine, but did not find it. Again we showed *PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS* to the store manager and collected business cards for follow-up on Moe's stocking the book. We asked if the PKD fans had shown up yet - it was getting late afternoon - and the clerk said they'd been and gone. This turned out to be untrue as Henri was on the cellphone to Ted Hand wondering where they were. They were just down the road. We walked to the corner and bumped into a semi-large clump of Dickheads there all trying to cross the road. The melee of hollering and greetings and laughter only blocked traffic for a little while, though, and we congregated on the corner making introductions and, for me, meeting friends from the Colorado fest, like Frank Hollander (he who wrote the 'Collector's

Guide' in *PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS*) and David Gill, this year's festival host, writer of the Total Dickhead Blog, Professor at SFSU, and brainiac. Henri and I made ourselves known to all and we all headed to Moe's.

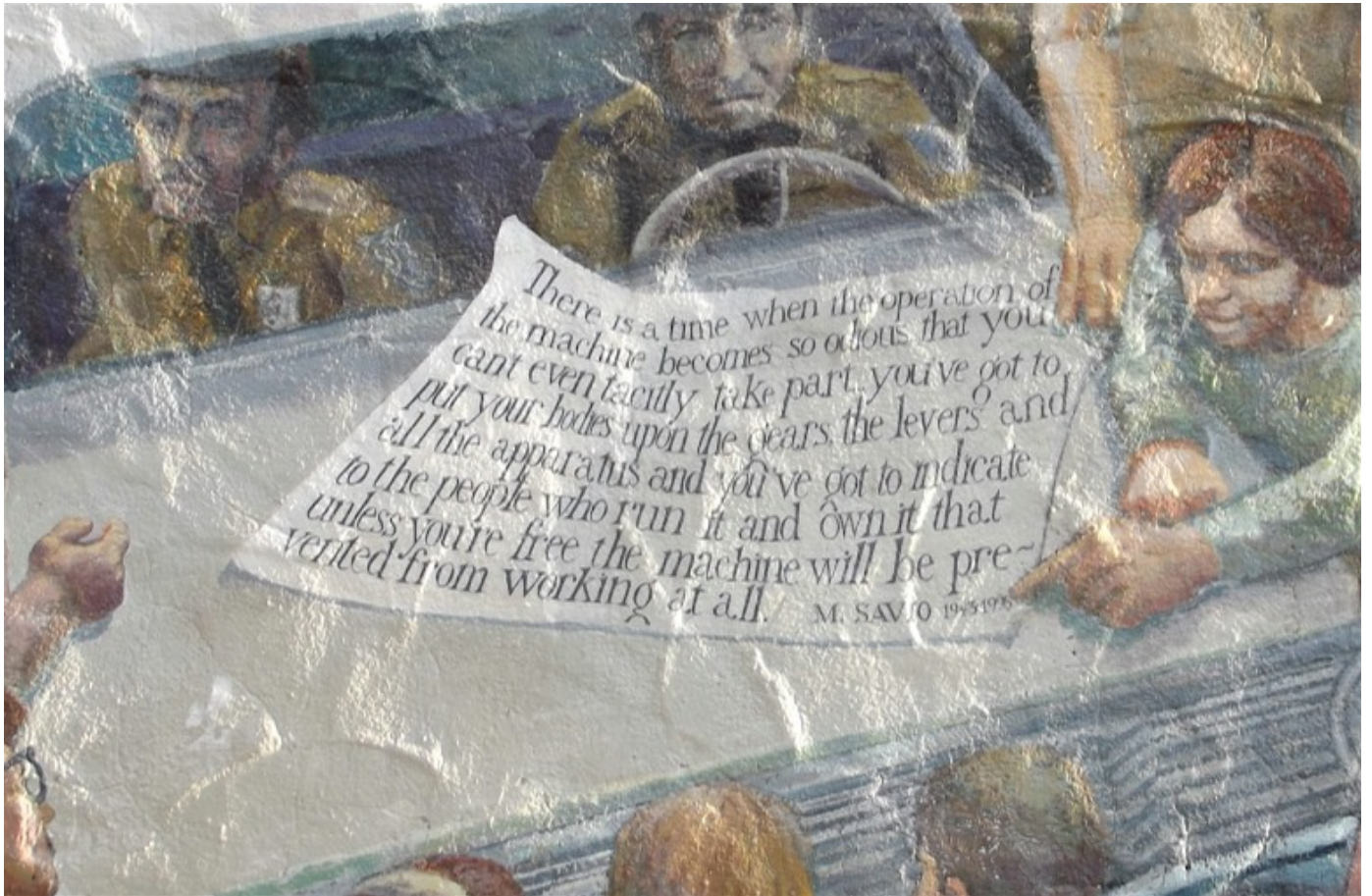
I don't know whether the clerks and customers of Moe's were put out by this sudden influx of about twenty-five Dickheads congregating in clumps and talking about books. Here inside the bookstore I met Peter de Jong who was taking photographs of all and sundry and would do the same throughout the festival. And James Burton a UK writer who would later give a talk at the conference. Who else... Umberto Rossi, of course! All the way from Rome to grace us with his ebullient presence and ideas on PKD. And there was Aaron Turetsky Sr., minus son Chip, whom I'd met in Colorado. Now I saw why it was that the canny staff of Moe's had stacked the PKD books in several places: so the expected flock of PKD fans wouldn't clog the whole science fiction department. Ted Hand and I were discussing some issue of PKDism and scanning the books at the same time. I spotted an old UK Arrow edition of Dennis Wheatley's *To The Devil A Daughter*. This a novel I had read as a youth about black magicians and the eternal struggle between good and evil expressed in terms of The Order of the Golden Dawn. It was made into a movie circa 1970 by Hammer Films if my memory serves me right. So Ted bought this book, as he's interested in esotericism and the Qabalah.

Mike Winder was in the store too, a man familiar to me from the PKD Fan Group on Facebook but now I actually got to meet him! He looked like a pirate with dark beard and flashing eyes. Can't remember what we talked about. And Kyle from Philadelphia, and Ben from Australia. And David Gill next to Laurence Rickels who'd teleported in from Berlin. Generally I'll not describe the physical appearance of the fans I met but Dr. Laurence Rickels is an exception. He's a tall, imposing figure built large but with his physicality weakened, probably due to too many hours poring over obscure tomes and writing about them. Wearing all black with a shoulder bag, completely bald head and black-rimmed glasses he, of all those academic Dickheads I met at the fest, was one you felt you had to call Doctor. I kept messing it up, though, on the few occasions I talked to him, calling him Dr. Lupov, or forgetting his name and coming out with just Doctor. His presentation at the university the next day was a highlight of the event, but I'll get to that later.

And at this point I can see my friend, Frank Bertrand, who couldn't make it to San Francisco, recoiling in horror, and hear his voice whispering in my inner ear: *don't let them get to you, Dave, don't let them get to you!* Frank has a problem with the academic treatment of Philip K. Dick and I might too. But I'll get into that elsewhere.

Frank Hollander was in deep conversation with someone - as seemed to be the case over the whole festival. We rarely get a chance to talk, it seems, though I fondly recall our meeting in The Last Shot bar in Black Hawk, Colorado at the 2010 PKD fest. Indeed, there were many fans scattered about the store and buying books. I found the Jonathan Lethem section and selected his novel *Amnesia Moon*. The prices were good in Moe's and some nice editions were discounted. Finally, we stumbled out the door - a slow process because, what do you get when you get a bunch of Dickheads all trying to get out a door at the same time together? You get a bunch of Dickheads in a door!

Once all outside David Gill led us across the street and up the nearest road, which led to the other side of People's Park opposite where Henri had parked his car. By the park was a Mexican restaurant with a finely executed mural on its outside wall. It was too big for me to take photos of the whole thing but I got a nice close-up of a revolutionary saying by the restaurant's door. Wish I could remember the name of the place...



We all piled inside and started pulling tables together and scraping seats. I sat down at the end of the table near the door, as I knew that I'd have to scuttle outside for a smoke now and then. There was nothing special about this restaurant, a lot of Mexicans sitting around watching the Seattle Seahawks play someone on the TV. The waitress came around and I ordered a Corona and a burrito.

Many of the fans had departed at Moe's but on my right at the table were Kyle from Philly who was studying at Temple University and across from me James Burton, and Ben from Australia. Ben was here with his buddy Chris Rudge but Chris was not at this meal and I wouldn't meet him till much later and I also managed to miss his talk on PKD and Drugs. Next to me was Mike Winder. Beyond that Henri was chatting with Frank Hollander and the rest of the fans spread out to David Gill and Umberto at the end. I could not hear much beyond my immediate neighbors so spent much of the time talking with Kyle, Ben and Mike - and Stefan Schlensag who'd shown up all the way from Germany to tell us about the big PKD festival happening about now in Dortmund.

I don't eat much Mexican food but would recommend the burritos in this place. The thing was huge and I could only eat half of it. Ben from Oz ordered something green that took up half the table and emitted tendrils that snuck beneath the surface and wrapped around our legs, and pulled! I cut myself free but Stefan was not so lucky as I didn't see him after that. Paraworld Blue on a dinner plate; the frugging Mazdasts!

Outside it was getting dark and two musicians had set up on the sidewalk. A guy dressed in full leather including facemask played air drums to the beat coming from a boom box. His partner stood by, dressed in sketchy black hoodie, and videotaped his buddy using a small

videocam on a tripod. I didn't recognize the music but it sounded like heavy metal. The drummer was on time with his invisible sticks and knew all the words. I tossed them some cash.



I was pleased to meet all these PKD fans and to have nice chats with those next to me. As usual, I wish we could've circulated more and I could've talked to David Gill, our genial host, and Umberto and Dr. Rickels and that tall dude who I finally met but cannot for the life of me remember his name, though I'd recognize him anywhere. Charles?

A fine meal among instant good friends; I'd expected no other, Philip K. Dick fans are, if nothing else, an empathetic lot, we realise that even considering the mess we're all in and we're only made out of dust, after all, that we're all in it together.

Once we said our farewells at the restaurant, Henri volunteered to take Dr. Rickels and Umberto Rossi to their places of rest for the night. I think they were staying at SFSU's International Center. We had to go find Laura Entwisle at the Days Inn Motel somewhere near the university anyway and it gave us a chance to chat. I was in the back seat with Umberto and Dr. Rickels in front with Henri. I can't recall our conversation; mostly I talked with Umberto while Henri engaged Dr. Rickels. I thought it was amusing: these three PhD brainiacs and one Ganymedeian slime mold cruising through the nighttime streets of San Francisco! "Whither goest though, America, in thy shiny car in the night?"

After we dropped the international stars off we made our way to the Days Inn. It was dark and deserted. We banged on the concierge's desk and when he showed up we asked if Laura was there. Yes! She was in room 101 (Isn't that the same room number Winston Smith was sent to in 1984?). It was just around the corner. So Henri and I knocked on the door and after a minute it opened and there was Laura's smiling face.

We hugged and I introduced Henri to Laura and we went inside. We sat around chatting and it was good to see her again. I'd met her in Colorado at the 2010 fest (where her driving skills bombing around in the mountains came in useful) and knew she had a lot of health problems, like me. All those pills all those doctors give us are no good, the only thing that seems to help is medical marijuana. Both Laura and I are registered patients and I was glad to share a joint with her while we talked. Henri no longer smokes pot but joined in our conversation about PKD and acid. I remember saying that PKD is like LSD: once you've been hit the world is never the same again. I think my reading in THE UNTELEPORTED MAN may've influenced me in this. But it's true anyway.

It was getting late and we had to drive to El Cerrito yet so we said goodnight to Laura and would see her tomorrow.



Bay Bridge going north

It was deep night now but Henri had a little portable GPS system that we ultimately relied on. I say ultimately, because whenever we tried to use it over the weekend it always sent us the wrong way on 19th Street so we ended up going south on the I280 instead of North. Anyway, I had to take this device from Henri before he ran us into a wall and act as navigator. I twisted this thing around until the arrow pointed in the direction we were going and then had to figure out what streets we were on. Meanwhile the thing is talking to us "recalculating', recalculating'" But, ultimately, it got us going the right way on I-280 and towards El Cerrito. Once there we unloaded our bags of books and then... oblivion until Saturday morning and the PKD Festival proper.

Next: Saturday Sep 22, 2012. At the PKD Festival.

Philip K. Dick Festival, Saturday Sept 22nd 2012, San Francisco. The Fans.

Up early this morning so Henri and I could get to the fest on time for the opening ceremonies scheduled for 9.45 at the Humanities Theatre on SFSU campus. I wanted to stop by Radio Shack or somewhere similar and get a portable audio recorder to record the speeches so I could listen to them at leisure later. So we left early and found a K-Mart for a nice little recorder with several hundred hours capacity. I figured that should be adequate, as even all these professorial Dickheads couldn't go on that long.

Don't recall the drive much; Henri's GPS system in its fritzed up way got us there eventually. At the campus we had to park the car in some maze-like underground parking lot and stuff money - dollar bills, it wanted six - to leave the car there. Then walked up a long flight of stairs to where we all eventually congregated. I think this was the Humanities building.

As Henri and I walked up the quadrangle we could see people walking ahead of us and spotted the *Café Rosso* to our left. Just as we came to the double glass doors of the main entrance, I noticed a man affixing a nametag to his shirt. I naturally read his name and it was Greg Lee! Could it be!? After all these years here was my friendly competitor in the PKD zine biz; publisher of *Radio Free PKD* the same time I was publishing *For Dickheads Only!* We used to have these great email conversations. I Told Henri, "Hey, man, that's Greg Lee." And I called over to him, "Hey, Greg Lee, is that you? Lord Running Clam here, I can't believe it's you!" or some such similarly excitable chatter. Now, for several years Greg has been awfully hard to get hold of as he's always off in the Orient somewhere on business and to actually meet him just out of the blue and to see him in the pink, well, you could've knocked me down with a feather! Henri met Greg and we went inside the building for the first time.

Right in front of us people milled around a setup of folding tables covered with nametags and books and papers and staffed by a trio of grinning graduate students. These students and their friends were always friendly and happy to do all the errands and tasks asked of them by others and me throughout the weekend. I can recall only the name of one girl, Aileen, a girl who stuck in my mind because she is a student of Professor Gill's and he told me she was the only one who was a PKD fan before taking his classes. Behind them, circling the periphery, as it were, was a large man who looked like a professional wrestler of the old school, like The Ox, keeping an eye on things. This was Chris Mays, Chief Librarian at the college, I met him later and he was as helpful as the students in getting things done. Even though he could've squashed me on a couple occasions, he didn't, thanks Chris!

So I get my name tag and clip it on and by the time I look up Henri has disappeared; I later learned he'd went to move the car to a closer spot so we could unload more books. I immediately went in search of coffee. There was an urn in a classroom just down the corridor but the coffee wasn't ready yet. The students were swarming over the problem and promised it would be ready soon. In the corridor signs with the festival logo and arrows directed us to the various rooms. The main room was the big theatre, which had a sloping floor, stage with screen and rows of seats; I estimate the place could hold 150 people. The estimate of the number of attendees at our fest has been given as 130, and that seemed about right to me, maybe more as it was a packed house. That's a lot of PKD fans all in one place together; it's a wonder that in our sublime PKDness we didn't beam on up into the infinite pink.

I spotted who could only be Kitty Gainer over by the professional looking videocam. I went over and introduced myself and we hugged and chatted. Kitty came all the way from South Carolina to record our event. She's originally from Germany and still has a slight accent. I showed her my new audio recorder and she turned it on and said "1, 2, 3, 4... I don't see any

levels." We didn't know if it worked or not and it wasn't until much later that I was able to check it out, and it did. So that's the first recording of the PKD festival on my digital recorder. I have lots more. Leaving Kitty to her AV setup I went back to the coffee room and now the coffee was ready. I chatted with the students there for a bit and then back to the main auditorium.

In my search for coffee I had managed to miss the very opening remarks by David Gill but just as I sat down I heard him mention my name! I was a bit startled as he acknowledged me for starting the PKD festivals in Colorado two years ago. Thanks David, as I said then, we got it up and flapping in the mountains. Now with this successful San Francisco affair it looks like we're off the ground for good. Credit goes to you and your aides and San Francisco State University entirely for the hard work and organization of this event. We all had a great time.



David Gill

So David is talking and I'm looking around and spot Perry Kinman a few rows over. Perry is probably the biggest Dickhead in Japan. I had corresponded with him for many years and we'd finally met (along with our mutual friend Patrick Clark, publisher of *PKD OTAKU*) at the Colorado fest. Tami and I picked him up at the Denver airport then and took him to our house where he helped us in our final preparations. He'd brought all kinds of PKD stuff with him, Japanese editions, cinema magazines, and copies of his zine *Rouzeleweave*, a hand-written compilation of all the drug references Perry could find in the novels and stories of Philip K. Dick. So if you wanted to look up, say, 'thorazine,' then Perry's index will direct you to every occurrence of the word in PKD's fiction. It was at 3 volumes in 2010 but in 2012 it is up to 5. I'd hook up with Perry later at lunch.

David Gill went through the plan of events and I noticed that we were self-contained with coffee, bathrooms, and places to eat. The break-out sessions would be held in classrooms on the 1st and 4th floors and the main events and panels in the big auditorium. *RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH* Movie at 9pm.

He then introduced the first speaker of the day, Greg Rickman, well known to Philip K. Dick fans as author of one of the prime biographies of our favorite writer.



Greg Rickman

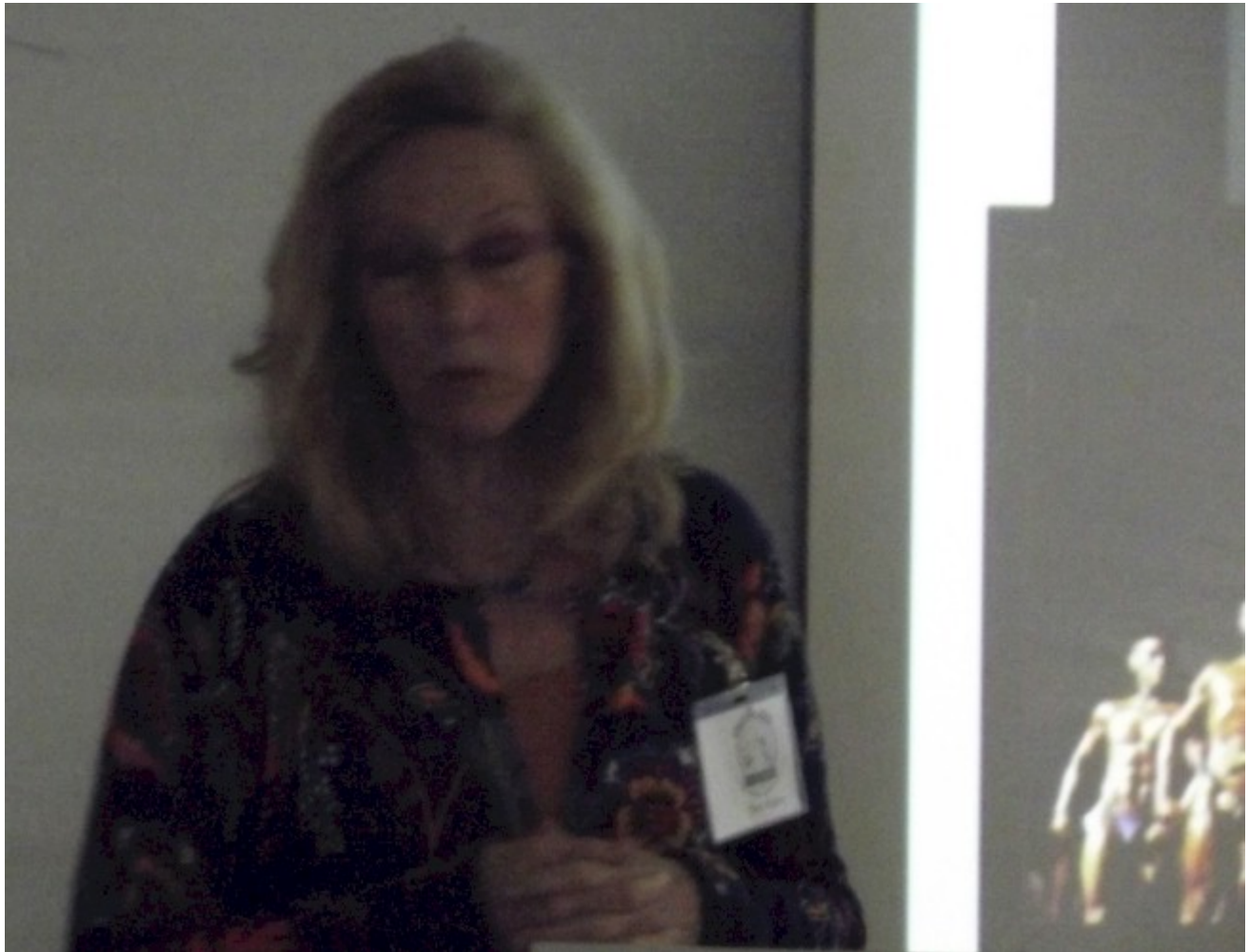
Big cheers and here's Greg Rickman. He talked about Doestayevsky and Dick, compared *THE COSMIC PUPPETS* to *The Idiot*, and discussed the transition from hand-made goods to mass produced junk, noting that this came about with advertising and television. The influence of such capitalist forces in the 50s is evident in such PKD short stories as "Sales Pitch" and "Pay For The Printer." Rickman expanded on this idea in relation to *THE MAN WHO JAPED* with further references to *The Idiot*. He mentioned other Dick novels too, *THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE* and *VALIS*. His speech was quite short and then he took questions.

Umberto, I think it was, asked about something but my recorder didn't catch the question and then I, thinking about Nick Buchanan's interest in *THE COSMIC PUPPETS*, asked Greg Rickman what he thought the place of this novel was in PKD's canon, compared to *VALIS*, *THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE*, *UBIK* and other 'major' PKD novels? He liked *THE COSMIC PUPPETS* very well and recounted its publishing history - it wasn't reprinted until 1983 because Don Wollheim "forgot about it." He noted that themes in *THE COSMIC PUPPETS* reappear in PKD's later work, like *VALIS*, and called it "A major Philip K. Dick novel of the Fifties." I suppose we must be satisfied with that, realizing, as true fans of PKD, that the canon begins with everything he wrote and then append everybody else to the bottom of the list. So even if *THE COSMIC PUPPETS* was the *worse* PKD novel (which award surely should go to *DR. FUTURITY*) it would still be in the top 50 of all-time great novels.

Someone asked how he, Greg Rickman, had first encountered Philip K. Dick and Greg told us the story which we will be able to see on the videotape when Kitty Gainer gets it done shortly if not already. Then it was time for a quick break before going off to the separate classroom sessions.

I went and got more coffee and wandered outside where I bumped into the girl with the pink hair and Stefan Schlensag. After a quick cigarette and chat I went up to the 4th floor to see Dore Ripley's presentation on PKD comix artists, a tough decision made on the spur of the moment as I wanted to see Dr. Charles Reid's talk on PKD's role in modern physics and computer science too.

Dore Ripley's presentation, complete with slideshow, was about comic interpretations of PKD's stories, particularly with reference to the *noir* aspects. I wanted to see this talk because I've been wondering about the comic book adaptations of *BLADE RUNNER* and *A SCANNER DARKLY* and the short story "The Electric Ant." I'd even bought the *A SCANNER DARKLY* comic novelization at Moe's the other day. My little recorder began making strange clicking noises on playback so I missed the details of her speech when I listened to it later, but it will be on video eventually!



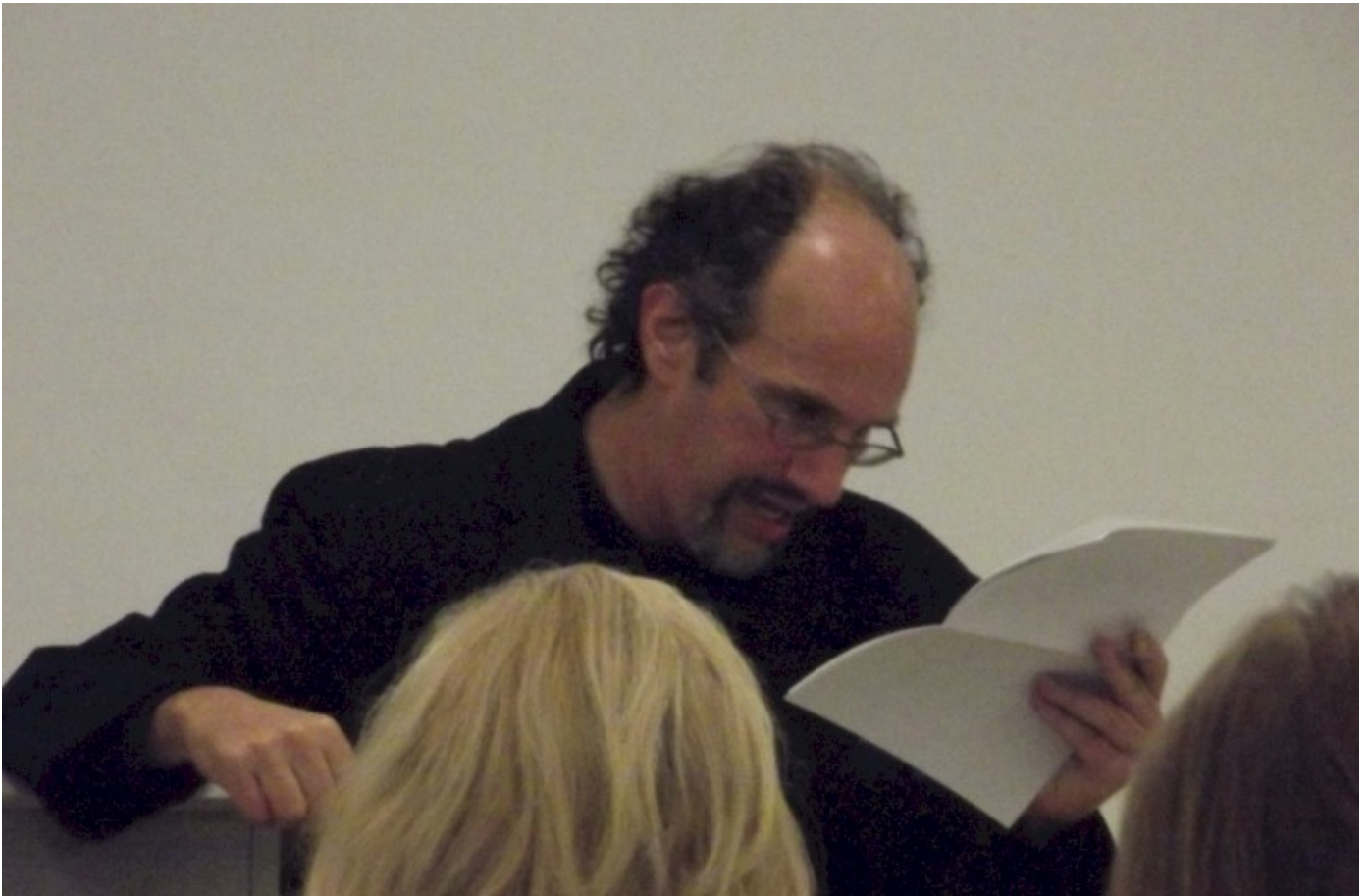
Dore Ripley

She talked about different artists, I recall the name of Tony Parker, and illustrated *noir* points with samples of the artwork shown on the screen. I liked it that some of the illustrations from *DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP?* were of buildings and places that I'd seen

some of when Henri drove me around San Francisco over the weekend. I don't know about all this comic art and interpretations of Dick's stories, from what I've seen it descends from *BLADE RUNNER* more than the stories themselves. I don't think PKD was a *noir* writer. I can appreciate the different style, though, and am looking forward to reading my new *A SCANNER DARKLY* hardcover comic book.

Then a quick dash downstairs for a smoke and then back up again for the next talk by Brad Schreiber. I encountered Elizabeth Karr in the elevator, naturally I introduced myself and we chatted and I discovered she was the Producer on *RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH* movie directed by John Alan Simon that would be the feature presentation later that evening.

Brad Schreiber, the famous and active writer, gave an interesting talk on PKD and corporate and political paranoia. I have it recorded but I cannot at the moment listen to it for complicated technical reasons (ok, I run out of batteries for the audio recorder). I met Brad later and could see that spiritually we clicked. A good speaker and I'm going to buy all his books over a period of time. Gotta find him online...



Brad Schreiber

After Brad's presentation it was lunchtime and the assembly mostly moved outside to the *Café Rosso*, which in a conversation with Umberto Rossi, I learned was somehow grammatically incorrect. It should have a different name but I forget what.

It was certainly a nice sunny day and warm, too. The *Café Rosso* was doing a bang-up business with a sudden line of people ordering food. I'd found Henri again by now and as we approached the line we talked to Mark Haeefe, the ex-Doubleday editor who would enliven an upcoming biographical panel on PKD on Sunday. He was a bluff, good-natured guy. As we got

closer to the line I spotted Rudy Rucker, Charles Platt and Paul Sammon, Jr. all in line together! I jerked to a halt in sudden fan surprise. My eyes got big and my voice got loud. "Henri! That's Rudy Rucker and Charles Platt and Paul Sammon! Go stand in line with these famous guys and I'll get your photo!" So he did and I snapped his pic. And then he ushered me over and would take my pic! You can see this photo online somewhere. There's me wringing my hands in glee while these stars of the show grinned back, except Paul who was spacing out by then. Now all I had to do is get my picture with Jonathan Lethem but every time I ran into him he seemed such a gentle soul I didn't want to bother him too much, although he did later sign a copy of *PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS* for our gift to Michael Fisher in Indianapolis who couldn't make the fest.



Henri Wintz, Rudy Rucker, Charles Platt, Paul Sammon, Jr., unknown fan

The café was so busy that we had to make our order and take a number while they cooked it. During the wait I circulated the area and talked to several fans, including Paul Sammon. When the food came I sat at one of the outside circular tables with Henri Wintz, Kitty Gainer, Perry Kinman and Mike Oldham – another fan from Colorado who I'd met in 2010. I wish I'd recorded these conversations as well as the ones from the presentations inside. The time will *have* to come when we're not all so rushed in everything and can discuss PKD at our leisure!



Henri Wintz, Mike Oldham, Perry Kinman

And at this point I'll send this off to philipkdickfans.com and start the Saturday afternoon and evening recollections later.

Next: The heart of the order: Ted Hand, Erik Davis, Rudy Rucker, Doug Mackey, Suhail Rafidi and Dr. Laurence Rickels.

-- Lord Running Clam, 10-13-12

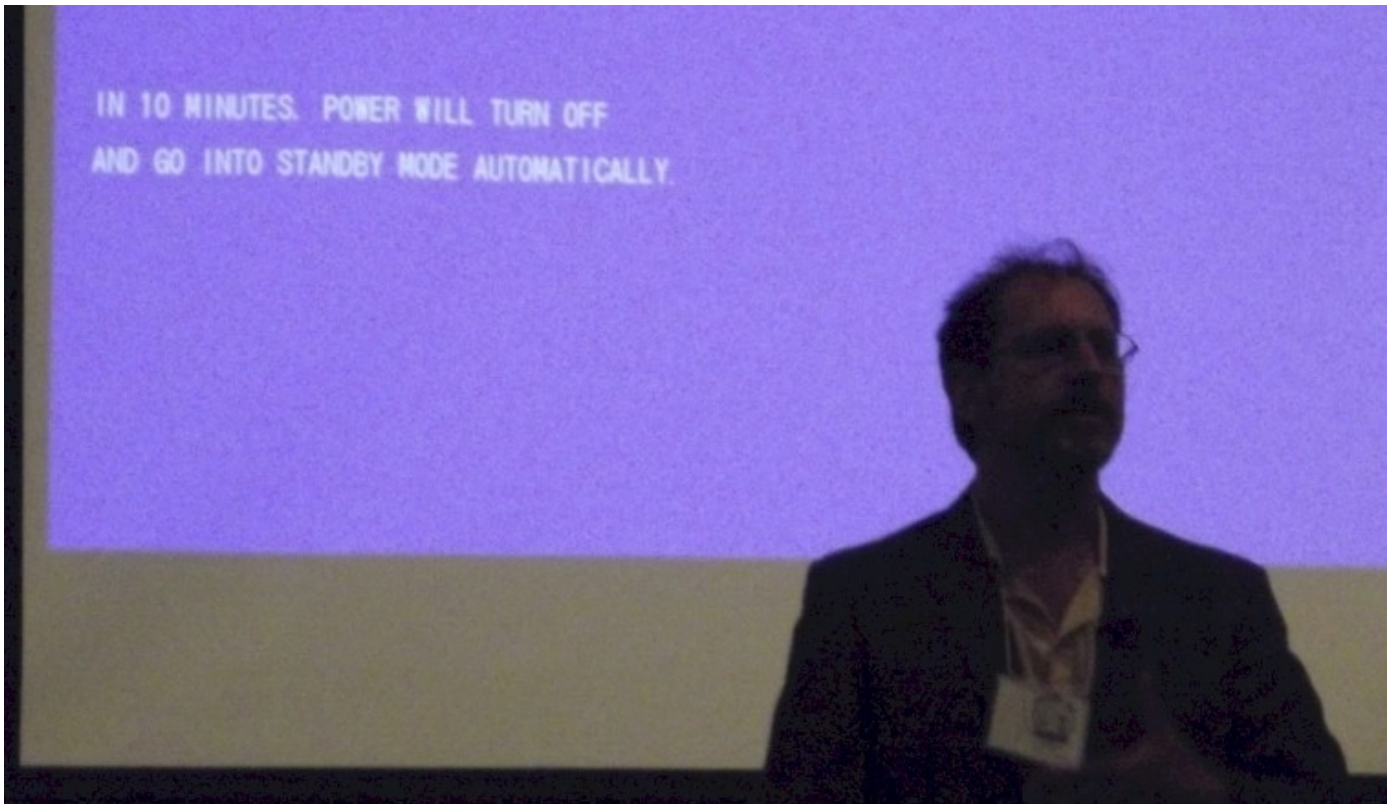


Lunch at Café Rosso

Philip K. Dick Festival 2012, San Francisco. Saturday Sep 22nd. The Afternoon.

Right after lunch it was time for Ted Hand's talk on PKD and Neoplatonism. Ted is Webmaster of the PKD and Religion Blog and is an excellent speaker with a nicely projected loud voice. His talk about Plotinus (which I learned was pronounced 'Plot-eye-nus' and not 'Plot-in-us' as I'd thought all along. ("Well, its Plot-in-us, innit?" No, Dave, it's Plot-eye-nus)) was an interesting one although I obviously cannot recall it all now. Again, it will bear viewing online soon.

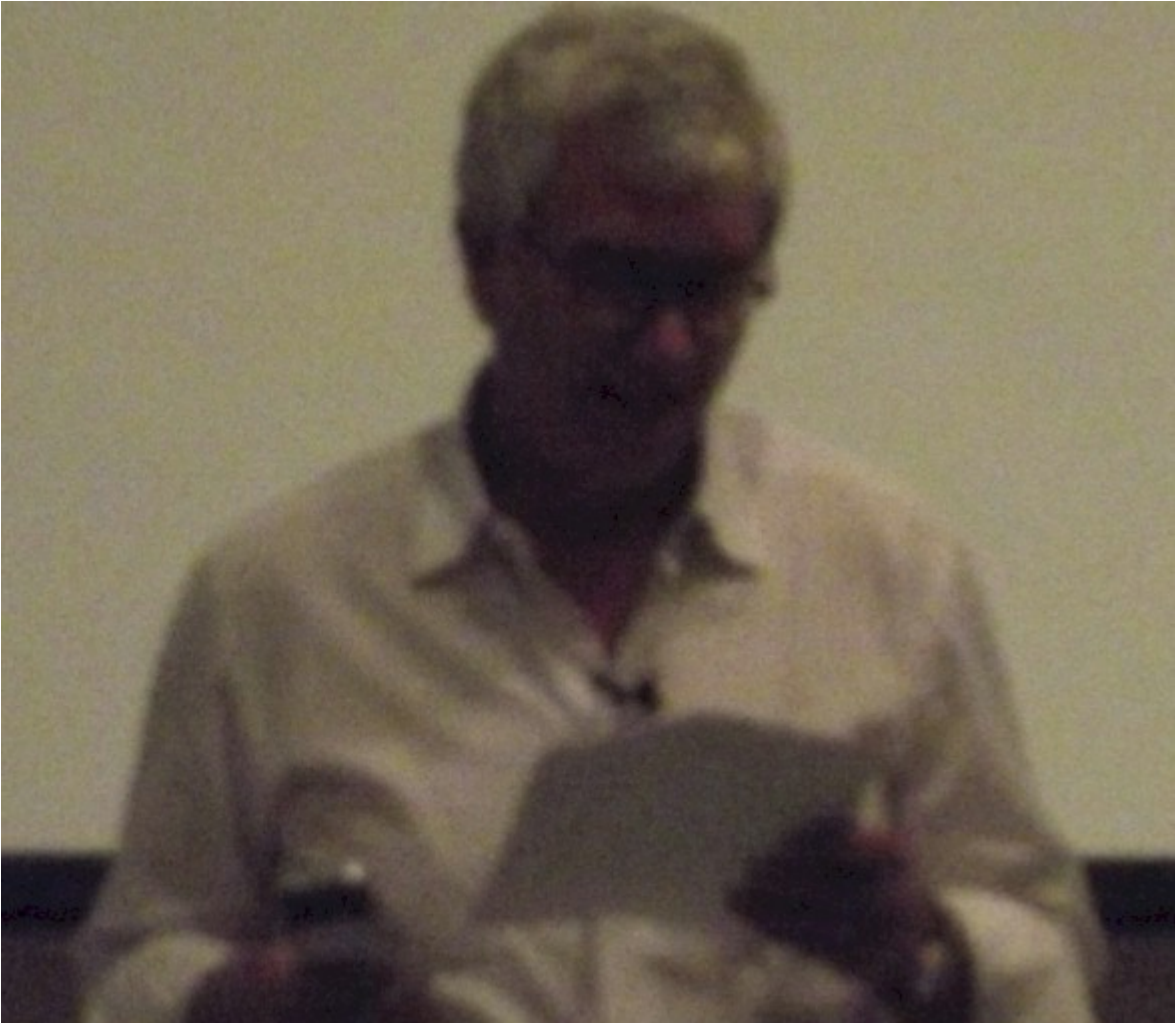
Ted handed off to Erik Davis, author of several books including *Techgnosis* and *Nomad Codes*, a speaker who is always interesting to listen to. I'd met Erik at the 2010 Colorado fest and appreciated his wit and discernment then. Now he was talking about Religious Studies approaches to Philip K. Dick. While he was talking the projector acted as a backlight so that he appeared as almost a silhouette with only his glasses flashing as he moved about the stage. Then the projector displayed a message that it was going into sleep mode in ten minutes. As we listened to Erik we idly watched the projector timer count down. When it reached zero the projector switched off. On the instant the screen also switched off and the afterimage of the backlight - a golden glow - suffused the sight around Erik, all unbeknownst to him! So there he is fringed in a shimmering rectangle of gold, an effect that faded momentarily as our eyes adjusted to the new light. I laughed to myself and wanted to tease Erik about it later - him looking like a man from the future teleporting in with peaceful gifts who had somehow found the right place to bestow them.



Erik Davis

Of course, my audio recorder doesn't have Erik's talk in its memory. Either I forgot to turn it on or haven't learned how to use it fully yet.

So, Erik Davis yielded to one of the writer stars of the conference: Rudy Rucker. To anyone reading this Rudy needs no introduction; his novels have entertained and challenged us for many years now. His address to the PKD fans at this 2012 PKD festival is already online as I write this, thanks to Kitty Gainer's speedy video work. I cannot access it at the moment, however, because we've lost our Internet connection at this new house and must find another ISP. Big sigh.



Rudy Rucker

But what can I say about Rudy Rucker who I met for the first time here at the PKD fest? My impression was of one of those people who are so used to being noticed and remarked upon that they're all relaxed with it. Silver hair, black glasses, big grin. That was Rudy for me. I did bump into him and Charles Platt later and had the wit to pull out one of my bizcards and asked them both to sign it, which they did. I suppose I could've buttonholed Rudy and laid some ramble on him but I'm too much a fan to infringe on his space. During his talk I sat in the middle of the crowd and had my audio recorder going on my knee. I listened intently to what he was saying but it's all gone now. At times it looked like he was addressing me directly, or perhaps it was merely my red hat that caught his attention.

And I must apologize that I cannot comment on what these speakers had to say. It's been, believe it or not, a month now since we all gathered together in San Francisco. A month for me to forget all but the highlights, so, then, that's all I can relate here. But Kitty assures me that all the talks will be available for us to see online eventually.

After a short break I went to Doug Mackey's speech on PKD and Time. I was late getting into the room and it was packed. I found a spot up front and listened to what Doug had to say. He is, of course, a long-time PKD fan and author of *PHILIP K. DICK* (Twayne, 1988) and I sat absorbed in what he had to say. Don't remember a thing now, though... But I was pleased to shake his hand later.

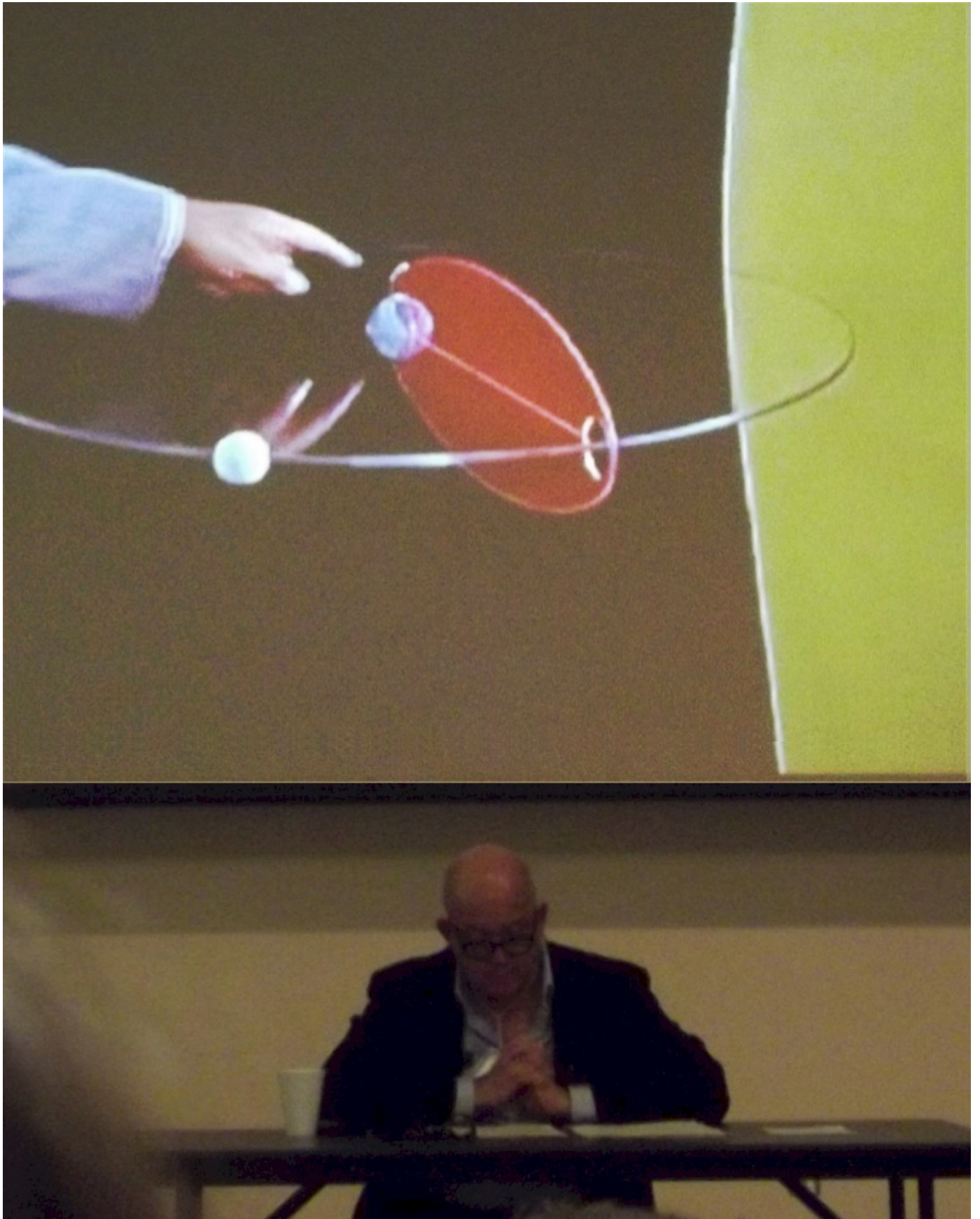


Doug Mackey

In the other room, according to the program, Suhail Rafidi was giving a talk on Philip K. Dick and Artificial Intelligence. I'll have to watch this one later too.

There was a short break after Doug Mackey's talk and the fans again milled about the lobby and outside. I hooked up with Perry Kinman and we moved to the middle of the auditorium to see Dr. Laurence Rickel's presentation.

His talk was titled "THE SIMULACRA and Post-War Integrations of Germany." Basically the Good Doctor sat at a desk and read his speech to us. He didn't speak very loudly and has a soft voice anyway so it was hard to follow what he was saying. It had something to do with German Chancellor Conrad Adenauer and THE SIMULACRA in 1950s Europe. Part way through his presentation the projector turned on and there on the screen looming over Rickel's head was Werner von Braun on some Disney TV show from the 50s earnestly expounding the benefits of space travel! This went into a loop and was repeated over and over until Dr. Rickels was done speaking. During the speech I wrote on my program a note for Perry to read. I drew an arrow pointing at Dr. Rickels and wrote 'Gregory Gloch', indicating that he reminded me of this character in THE UNTELEPORTED MAN. In which case, then, von Braun would be Dr. Lupov! It was a bizarre sight and much appreciated by the fans who strained to hear what Rickels was saying. A few questions followed his talk, Umberto Rossi, who had sat up front and could hear more clearly what Rickels was saying, asked some involved question which, again, I look forward to hearing on the video when done.



Dr. Laurence Rickels

By now I'd lost all track of time. It must've been mid-afternoon. I made a mad dash upstairs to room 408 and Stefan Schlensag's talk "Erinnerungen en Gros: Philip K. Dick in the

European Context.” This presentation was accompanied by slides of early German book editions of PKD’s novels, particularly TIME OUT OF JOINT. This was all interesting to me as information on these editions will eventually add to the content of Henri and I’s German PKD bibliography when we get around to it. Stefan is the organizer of the Dortmund PKD conference that is happening at the end of October – a week from now as I write this. Stefan is also a Doctor of some sort or other but looked more like a punk rocker in leather jacket hand-rolling cigarettes with Lord Running Clam by the ‘No Smoking’ signs next to the trash cans outside.



Stefan Schlensag

Unfortunately I could not be in two places at once so missed Dr. James Burton’s talk on self-induced amnesia. I’d chatted a bit with James and he’s from Wolverhampton in the English midlands. His upcoming book on PKD and Salvation in Science Fiction is one to anticipate in 2013.

A long-awaited break followed Stefan Schlensag’s riveting talk and I wandered around talking to people. I talked to Dore Ripley about the PKD comix adaptations and Paul Sammon, Jr. about his *FUTURE NOIR: The Making of Blade Runner* book. I found the last copy of this book on the sales table and snapped it up and Paul signed it “From one obsessive to another” which I thought was pretty cool. I’ve almost finished reading Paul’s book and shall write a brief review for the next *PKD OTAKU*.

Somewhere in here, too, one of PKD’s ‘dark-haired girls’, Linda Castellani – known to PKD fans by her earlier name of Linda Levy. She talked about her relationship with Phil and how she and her friends were the girls who brought him to Fullerton from Canada. A very interesting talk.

After the break there was a panel discussion with Lethem, Rucker, Rickels and John Alan Simon, led by David Gill. Don't remember a thing they discussed. My brain was about full of PKD, I needed a change of pace. And the organizers had provided just that! A special secret guest! This was a young lady belly dancer who danced sinuously and then talked passionately about what PKD meant to her. She was a fan and it was Phil's novel *THE TRANSMIGRATION OF TIMOTHY ARCHER* that had turned her on. This was much appreciated and after cheers and claps the fans moved to the Seven Hills Convention Center, which was a short walk away on campus.

We all jammed into the convention center, which had a reception area set up, and some students manned a bar with free beers and wine drinks. With so many people in a small space there was a loud buzz of conversation and as I moved towards the bar I got caught up in a few. I talked to Tandy Ford and her husband, David, and expressed my pleasure that they could make it to the festival. Finally I grabbed a Bud Lite and took it outside. Dusk was coming on and as I smoked my cigarette I ended up with the other smokers, well away from the main door of the convention center. So I'm hanging out with Philly Kyle and some cat from Atlanta and I'm rolling a joint on an invisible rolling paper – one of those clear plastic ones. In the gloom I hoped the pot was going in the paper and not on the ground. But I got the invisible joint rolled and fired it up and shared with those in the area who were up for it. Then back inside to grab another beer and then line up for some of the food.

I took my plate of food and beer into the main Nob Hill Room next to the reception area. This was a pretty fancy place with many round tables covered in white tablecloths and gleaming glass and silverware. One larger table in the center was marked 'reserved' and would seat the hosts and special guests: David Gill, Jonathan Lethem, Rudy Rucker, Pam Jackson, I think, John Alan Simon, maybe, and I forget who else. I espied Henri at a table by the right near the door and went and joined him. Sharing our table were three young PKD fans who were into *A SCANNER DARKLY*, and John Goodrich, a scholar from the UK, who would give a talk on the morrow about emotional expression in the work of Philip K. Dick. We chatted as we ate our food and John told me how he got to be a PhD and Doctor of Something or Other all after he turned 40! He is an expert on the Romantic poets of the late 19th century and told some funny stories.

One of the young fans left and returned with a piece of cheesecake and that looked good to me, so I get up and go back to the reception area mumbling "cheesecake, cheesecake" so I don't forget what it is I'm doing, and as I go I see Rudy Rucker coming towards me, grinning as usual, I said "Hey, man" and then "Cheesecake!" as I spotted the cheesecake and headed toward it. It was good, too.

Back in the Nob Hill room the eating was winding down and David Gill stood up at the main table and started thanking all the people who were there and all his aides and special guests. We all clapped as each person was mentioned. David then started talking about the showing of *RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH*, which would be in a few minutes back at the main auditorium. This movie was much anticipated by most of the fans, many of us, including me, had yet to see it. But first, snag one last beer and back outside to hang with the smokers, smoke another invisible joint and trade my Green Tree Medical Marijuana Clinic lighter to the dude from Atlanta. Erik Davis popped up, genie-like, as is his fashion, and we all chatted and finished the doobage.

As usual, I was late getting back to the theatre and John Alan Simon was briefing the fans. He said he made this movie for us and hoped we enjoyed it. To the fans of Philip K. Dick, *RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH* is his first attempt to describe the pink beam events of 1974 in novel form. I will not describe the plot here. Undoubtedly most of the over 100 people who attended

the showing of *RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH* the movie were familiar with Dick's novel and were wondering how this movie would present it on the screen.

I sat in an empty seat next to, I think, the girl with the pink hair, debated with myself whether I should get out my audio recorder and record the sound of the movie, but decided against it figuring this would probably be some sort of copyright violation. So I settled back to watch the movie. I had high expectations for this although PKD movies generally are just like every other movie.

This movie, however, was different. It was science fiction, of course -- and I'm reminded of PKD's quote, when asked if *RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH* was science fiction, he replied "Oh yes, its definitely science fiction, because the people who overthrow him (the tyrannical president in the novel) are picked at random by an extra-terrestrial satellite system that informs them what to do." So the movie is science fiction too, but a subtle sf that assumes a knowledge of the sf film genre on the part of the viewers and decides to tell a good story rather than conventional sf movie fare with its heavy reliance on special effects and feel-good plots. The movie moves from a common portrayal of family life with husband, wife, baby and best friend Philip K. Dick to a place where these ordinary people are suddenly at the centre of a vast conspiracy on two levels: an alien satellite will not soon go unnoticed by the authorities and the contactees will be hunted down and eliminated. So, an alien invasion is underway and the police authorities use it as another excuse for repression and conjure up a vast Communist conspiracy called 'Aramchek'. Like the disgraced US president Richard Nixon, the president in the movie, Ferris F. Fremont, uses everything as grist for his mill of total control of the populace using police tactics like spying on your neighbors, loyalty checks, and the like to keep the people in fear.

Nicholas Brady and his friend Phil realise they are in danger but have no choice but to continue doing the things the satellite has told them to do. As a music executive Brady has the capability to produce recordings of popular music that may subvert the dominant notions of the State. Of course, in this activity they do not go unnoticed for long and one of the moving scenes of the movie is when Nicholas Brady is dragged outside by the police and summarily shot. No muss, no fuss, no super slo motion blood splattering everywhere. Just a suddenly dead Nicholas Brady.

In the end we find Phil in a concentration camp listening to a pop song with subversive lyrics produced by another record company. He finds hope in the kids.

What I liked about the movie is its close adherence to PKD's plot and how it all starts out nice and normal and then changes, without the viewer truly realizing it, into one of the strangest science fiction movies ever to grace the silver screen. I do not recall the names of the actors but would single out the one who played the part of Nicholas Brady as outstanding and also the actress who played the role of Vivian Kaplan, the FAP-er girl who slept with the character Phil and was instrumental in his incarceration and the death of Nicholas Brady. A good film that takes the entirety of PKD's novel plot and paints it on the screen.

After the movie the director, John Alan Simon, joined us in the seats and invited questions. I hollered out (being half drunk) "Best damn Philip K. Dick movie I ever seen!" I don't recall the discussion at this later date. It was getting late and after wandering around and chatting with some fans I found Henri and we drove home, me talking about my theory that we are involved in a time war and the Empire is pissed and that all those present at the PKD festival were in danger of being rounded up by the Empire's minions as soon as we all got home. But that's another story for another time. Tomorrow was Sunday, the last day of the PKD festival. This was the day Henri Wintz and I were to do our presentation of our PKD bibliography *PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS* and I

was to give a talk titled, in the program, “Dick’s Evolution” but I would actually talk about something else.

So, then, I’ll write the final installment of this remembrance next.

Sunday, Sep 23rd 2012. Philip K. Dick Festival, San Francisco.



“A fog can drift in from outside and get you; it can invade.” – Opening sentence in *THE PENULTIMATE TRUTH*.

Sunday morning we were again up early to do some sightseeing before going to the last day of the PKD fest. In our previous travels I’d been nattering on about the celebrated San Francisco fog and Henri suggested a trip into Marin County and then cross the Golden Gate Bridge down into San Francisco and SFSU. This sounded like a good idea to me; I’d get to see this iconic structure and even drive across it!

First thing for the day was to go to the store and get something for lunch later at SFSU. I got a sandwich and a banana. As it was still early Henri drove us to a prominence overlooking the Bay where we parked the car for a few minutes and I enjoyed the dense fog. I took some great photos but, unfortunately, they all turned out gray. Now, perhaps this is a silly thing, but to experience the morning San Francisco fog means something to me. In some small way I can imagine what it was like for PKD to sit there at his typewriter and look out the window at a rectangle of gray and imagine strange beings coming in to get you, like the cover of Paul Williams’ book *ONLY APPARENTLY REAL*.



Then we pattered up through San Rafael and Henri pointed out landmarks to me: San Quentin, Alcatraz... I'm wondering if he wants to drop me off... I noticed that Tiburon was nearby, I remember this because my sister, Perky Pat, used to live there. Now I had a rough idea of where it was.

I saw a sign that said Point Reyes and mentioned to Henri that Anne Dick was still living up there. He told me that it wasn't very far away. This bamboozled me as I thought Pt. Reyes was a great distance from San Francisco. When I read PKD's stories set in Marin County I always had the impression it was a grim, half-day trip to San Francisco down something called the '101'. I'd visited Anne before and would've liked to see her again but, once again, my mis-comprehension of Earth's concepts of space and time as a basis for geographical reference had confused me.

Although I was unable to see Anne this trip - and I note that some of the fans did go see her on the Monday when I and most of us went back to wherever we came from - I had the pleasure of meeting her daughter, Tandy, and husband, David at the reception last night. They were familiar with the area of Colorado where I lived and, indeed, even knew my local bar, the Millsite Inn, near Ward!

The Golden Gate Bridge and the trip across it are a vague memory to me now. And on the other side it was a city with a lot of traffic. I know Henri took us through many interesting areas and I spotted all these buildings, antique and modern; what stands out for me, though, is the houses on the hilly roads. They all looked like they'd been there forever and were built in defiance of plumbobs and levels, all sort of leaning on each other. Originally, I supposed, they were painted in gay colors of red and purple, yellow, blue and green, but over the eternity of their existence they have faded to pastels and now hunker down as if to say to Mother Nature, even though you've whipped and beaten us with your winds and rains, we're still here.



We reached the university in time for Paul Sammon's talk about *BLADE RUNNER*. This I found inspirational in that I'm not a big *BLADE RUNNER* fan but Paul intrigued me in *how* the movie was made. I became interested and when I got home I began reading Paul's book, *FUTURE NOIR: The Making of BLADE RUNNER*, which is fascinatingly full of all the inside info on how the movie was made. I shall write a review of this book for upcoming *PKD OTAKU*.

The panel discussion on *THE EXEGESIS* with Ted Hand, Jonathan Lethem, Erik Davis, David Gill, Richard Doyle and Pamela Jackson is another event I do not recall. I was there and it was a lively discussion but, again, I rely on Kitty Gainer to get this to us video-wise.

At lunch both Henri and I - and everyone else, it seemed - were frantically busy setting up the sales table for all our books. We hauled a pile of *PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS* from their boxes and set them on the table and told the students how much the books were and they wrote out price tags. I also piled up my book *PINK BEAM: A Philip K. Dick Companion* and some of the PKD books and zines and bracelets left over from the 2010 festival in the mountains. Even as we're setting this up I'm chatting with sundry fans while Henri is trying to keep track of our book sales, which were booming. Many thanks, again, to the cheerful students manning the sales desk and to Chris Mays for photo-copying some of Perry Kinman's *Rouzeleweave* for handouts to the fans.

But we did find time to go outside and sit at one of the round tables by the closed *Café Rosso*. I sat with Henri and Kitty Gainer and a PKD fan whose name I regretfully forget now. I ate my sandwich and banana and as we're eating two seagulls in the neighborhood started hanging

around, especially when I threw them pieces of my sandwich. Luckily for the birds neither of them came too close to the table else no doubt Henri would've brained them with his banana! Kitty took photos of the gulls with her cellphone and will send the pix to me later.

After lunch the biographical panel fired up and this was most interesting as people who knew Philip K. Dick talked about their relations with him. Charles Platt, of course, is a writer and the man who interviewed PKD for *Dream Makers: The Uncommon People Who Write Science Fiction* (1980), the first interview where Dick told the world of his pink beam experiences. Accompanying him on the panel were Marc Haefele, PKD's onetime editor at Doubleday, and William Sarrill, a friend of PKD's whose ideas helped our writer establish the religion in his novel *A MAZE OF DEATH*, a fact established in the Author's Foreword to the novel. Grania Davis was also on the panel; this lady was also a good friend of Dick's when he was alive. I only recall a part of this panel and that was where Charles Platt and Marc Haefele got into it over the paperback rights for PKD's novel *FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID?* At the time - 1974 - Doubleday would publish the first edition of this novel and they had to choose who to sell the paperback rights to. Avon - where Platt was an editor - was in the market but, ultimately, Doubleday sold the paperback rights to DAW Books. This issue, for those interested, can be followed to some degree in *THE SELECTED LETTERS OF PHILIP K. DICK: 1974*.

William Sarrill's memories of hanging with Phil and the general talk on what drugs were going around then was interesting. It seems PKD was not an aficionado of LSD despite Harlan Ellison's introduction to his story "Faith Of Our Fathers" in *DANGEROUS VISIONS*.

At the close of the panel I had to make another decision, but one that had been made for me at dinner the night before where one of my dining partners was John Goodridge, and I had promised to attend his talk today. I regretted missing Richard Doyle's talk on Mysticism vs. Religion and, also, the fact that I was not able to meet him in person during the conference. His Afterword to *THE EXEGESIS* I'd read and it had struck me as excellent commentary, his notes in this volume are also useful to help understand passages in the *EXEGESIS*. Still, John Goodridge's talk was worthwhile. He pointed out that the perception of PKD as somehow emotionally withdrawn from his characters and that this is a weakness in his style is refuted by many examples where Dick portrays emotional interactions and feelings through his dialogue. I particularly enjoyed John's English accent - straight out of the streets of Birmingham.

With the end of John's talk I knew it was time to start worrying about my own speech, which was up next on Track A. That meant I would miss Laura Tonesi's talk on *EYE IN THE SKY*, one of my favorite novels. Now, I had handwritten a brief talk before I came to San Francisco and will copy what I *meant* to say (as compared to what I did say) to the fans:

Hello Philip K. Dick fans! I'm Lord Running Clam though I appear before you today in my human guise of Dave Hyde because to manifest as my ordinary appearance - a gelatinous greenish-yellow blob, pulsating on the floor here - would make you all sick.

Ganymedeian slime molds as you know from PKD's novel *THE CLANS OF THE ALPHANE MOON*, have several characteristics noted by humans. We collect things: stamps, books, I myself have a collection of Zippo lighters that is the envy of the Jupiter System. Ahem. But our main characteristic is that we are... telepathic! That's right! I'm reading all y'all's minds right now.

This dude is thinking, "Whoozthis? I thought this was a convention of Dickheads, not an asshole convention." And over here someone else is thinking, "Looks like a damn Hippie." And the young lady back there is certainly glad she got high before coming here as this is some weird shit.

I shall return to my Ganymedeian attributes shortly, but now I must become more formal.

I am so pleased to be here today at the invitation of our host Professor David Gill and to find myself in this great San Francisco State University in the sunny state of California.

This is a big year for Philip K. Dick celebrations. Besides our gathering here, and before the end of the year, there is a PKD Film Festival happening in New York City, our friend Stefan

Schlensag's bash is coming up in Dortmund, Germany, and Eros Perin in Italy is conducting an extended PKD celebration in the area of Venice. I just learned in the last couple days that a fan in France – Etienne Barillier – is also collecting French PKD fans together for a conference very shortly in Paris. Philip K. Dick is truly an international writer as all these celebrations demonstrate and to hear the cosmopolitan conversation here also attests to this fact.

Now I must, if you will bear with me for a few minutes, acknowledge some of our friends in foreign lands who couldn't make it all the way out here to San Francisco.

The continent of Australia has always been an outpost of PKD Fandom and scholarship. There in Melbourne we have the pioneer in Dickian studies, Bruce Gillespie, who, since the 60s has published his magazine *SF Commentary* which always contains much PKD discussion. Bruce is one of those people who's name pops up in the footnotes of many of the books we consider as standards in our field of Phildickian studies. Cheers Bruce!

Also in Australia is a young writer, Guy Salvidge, much influenced by PKD and a fan involved in the main online PKD forums. Guy's novels, including "Yellowcake Springs" are winning awards Down Under and give us PKD fans something good to read. Here's a shout-out to Bruce and Guy in the land of Oz.

In England our friend Nick Buchanan, who actually attended a PKD celebration in England back in 1994 where he talked with John Fairchild and Paul Williams at the bar, couldn't make it here either but he keeps the PKD flag flying there from his home near Liverpool and is the designer for *PKD OTAKU* – the new edition coming online at the end of October.

In France, it seems, there is so much going on I can't keep up with it all. But here's a 'hello' to Etienne Barillier in Gay Paree and Sebastien Berruyer who designed the spray-can logo for our festival here.

In Germany I'd like to say 'hi' to Tommi Brem and Markus Schurr. And, of course, Stefan Schlensag is here with us from Dortmund. And a big hello to Stefan Marcinski in some unpronounceable-named town in Poland.

But our most fervent tributes go to Paul Williams, PKD's friend and literary executor, writer, publisher of *The Philip K. Dick Society Newsletter* and premier fan. Unfortunately, Paul cannot be with us today. And, even though we're all here I doubt we would be without Paul's inspiration. Thanks, Paul, from PKD fans everywhere for all you have done for PKD. And I'm sure that we can all contribute to Paul's welfare by making a donation to the Paul Williams Fund online: www.paulwilliams.com

Look. I can't name all the active fans the world over who I know. Since Henri Wintz and I have published our PKD bibliography, *PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS*, we have been contacted by PKD fans and book collectors all over the world – not to mention by people who collect bibliographies! Right now in darkest Europe a fan, Joan Fuste, is trolling used bookstores for strange international editions of Dick's books. He's even found some in Braille!

There are now so many of us fans everywhere. PKD has broached the mass consciousness of the world and in a mostly positive way. His only detractors seem to be a few sour academics and poplit writers jumping on the bandwagon for a quick piece in some coastal literary magazine. These happy campers repeat the same old crap about insanity and drugs that they read in magazines and blogs similar to their own. They can safely be ignored.

But someone who cannot be ignored in PKDland is our friend Patrick Clark, Patrick is publisher of *PKD OTAKU*, which is now online and just had its 25th anniversary issue. This is where you find the real PKD commentary. After many years of correspondence I was pleased to meet Patrick at the Colorado PKD fest in 2010.

Also, my friend Frank Bertrand in New Hampshire, an independent PKD scholar known to us all for his perceptive articles on everything PKD. Frank sends his regards and asks any academicians present to kindly go get fucked. Hi Frank!

Jami Morgan, another fan I met in Colorado, sends her regards. Jami's novel, *A KINDRED SPIRIT*, which includes PKD and Bishop Pike as characters, is available for purchase in the lobby.

OK, one more fan is Michael Fisher who ended up running Jason Koornick's old philipkdickfans.com website. Michael has revitalized this PKD nexus and once again this main fansite is a hub of international PKD connectivity. Thanks Michael!

And, it is my daughter's birthday today, Happy birthday, Kristen! I'll bring you back a sea lion.

So many Philip K. Dick fans the world over. What are we all to do? Here we are right here, artists, writers, musicians, scientists, scholars, mystics, stoners and possible a Mormon or two, all here celebrating a writer, not a sports figure, not a 'voice', not a business mogul, but a writer! Something anyone can do and all you need to do it is a pencil and a piece of paper.

We've been busy. Online in diffused fashion there are thousands of websites and forums ranging from the completely dedicated, like philipkdickfans.com, the Total Dickhead Blog, and my friend Henri Wintz's PKDickbooks.com – the most complete online bibliography of Philip K. Dick editions, to the sites that go out and grab content from anywhere they can find it and repost it as their own. A Google search of "Philip K. Dick" returns millions of hits – I think I've generated several thousand myself.

This is all good. The Internet is the ninth wonder of the modern world (for we must not forget the eighth: Donald Trump's hair). I'm sure there is not a one of us here who has not been sidetracked into many hours of online cruising for PKD info.

Just think what we all could do in the realm of virtual reality! Imagine building The Bonds of Erotic Polymorphism warehouse on a virtual Moon! Create the ant-tanks from THE PENULTIMATE TRUTH as an online dungeon! Expand it all into a giant online game where you, as player, help Rachmael ben Applebaum get the deep-sleep components he needs to take the slow trip to Whale's Mouth, or stand with Arnie Kott as he battles the "picnickers" on the sands of Mars. In virtuality the possibilities for PKD activity are endless.

But what of reality? All these festivals and celebrations bring us fans together for a good time and some interesting lectures. What will come of it all, who knows? PKD is a freight train gathering speed and rolling over everything else on the track. The track being the field of human endeavor. Right here and now among all us fans I might get away with saying that PKD impacts the world on a level with, say, Pythagoras, or Einstein or Chaucer. I'm sure we've all seen the TV series hosted by Ridley Scott titled "The Prophets of Science Fiction". In the PKD one he is credited, it seems to me, with inventing teleportation, precognition and parallel worlds, among other things. But whether this is true or not (probably not), in the fields of physics, astronomy, philosophy, religion, mysticism, art and literature, to mention a few, the imagination of Philip K. Dick has inspired new avenues of research and expression. Who can deny it? We live in a Phildickian world.

We may revel in its Phildickness but we still don't know what it is. What is Reality? Phil asked, and found too many answers. We fans don't think it strange – or anymore we don't – that we look to a science fiction writer to not give us answers but to sharpen our questions. I think I can safely say that all of us here have had our ideas altered by reading Philip K. Dick's stories. He's like LSD; once you've taken a hit the world is never the same again.

All this global fuss over a *writer*, isn't it great!? A writer is causing fundamental progress in many scientific and humanitarian fields. You know what? English literature is once again *the* critical field of study today. Which I'm sure makes Professor Gill happy! Few people realise this or if they do think my claim nonsense, but I believe that, like Chaucer, it will be many years before the effects of Dick's writing are fully recognized.

Here we are in this fine university in San Francisco. I haven't been in a university in many years. When I was in college we had these little ceramic inkwells in the corners of our flip-top desks, but I'm waffling, reluctant to get to my point, I sense you all getting restless – I'm telepathic, remember? Its time to cut to the chase.

The one thing I sense deep in all our minds here – except for that dude over there who is simply crazy - is a sublime yearning, a need unacknowledged, a burning desire for *a place of our own!*

That's right! An independent institution for Philip K. Dick studies, with the motto "We Seek Reality". A place to go to work and relax with all modern conveniences, with a comprehensive library of PKD books in many languages, and an impressive selection of secondary texts, with guest lecturers, guest rooms and peace and quiet. Imagine! For a few weeks or months or years a place to go free of office politics, deadlines, choking commutes, publishing and perishing and punching that time clock. We here in these last few days have formed a community and we represent a much larger community in the world. We've all enjoyed many conversations with our fellow fans here in San Francisco, but it has been a whirlwind and these conversations are all too short. A place to go, my friends, where we have time to relax, to study, to talk. Call it what you will; I think the closest I've heard it called to what I envision is a 'retreat', although I imagine something more dynamic, like a think tank. Some place where this internationally celebrated writer, this great *American* writer, can receive his just attention from our visionaries of today and the future.

Let's face it. Something like I propose is inevitable, it will come into being eventually, It's just a matter of time. If not here in America then most likely in France...

So it will happen. It's the American way to build monuments and libraries to preserve, honor and further the work of our great people. And even Richard Nixon got a library.

But where would such a place be? Where would it be located, here in San Francisco where PKD lived? In Los Angeles where he died? In Orange County next to Disneyland? Hmm. These places seem too busy already, too much going on. A PKD institute would get lost in the lights. When you get down to it there is only one viable alternative to the big cities and that is the final resting place of PKD and his sister, Jane: Fort Morgan, Colorado...

What!? I sense you all recoil in horror! Ft. Morgan, Colorado, its in the fields, there's nothing there but Phil and Jane's grave!

Well, exactly, why else would we want to do anything there?

On the bright side Ft. Morgan is on Interstate 76, only a couple hours from the snowy peaks of the Rocky Mountains, and they *do* have a Burger King. Such an enterprise as I propose would be a big deal in Ft. Morgan, they would welcome us there.

We can do this, and I call on all of us here and fans the worlds over to join together to do this. We don't have to start out fancy, build the Taj Mahal right away. We can rent a suitable building in Ft. Morgan for a few thousand dollars a month. I also invite your consideration and discussion of this idea. After we all go home from here I shall start the ball rolling in Ft. Morgan and putting things together. There's a lot to do. But its been my experience in life that when you try to do something you are not alone. It reminded me of when we interviewed Abbie Hoffman back in 1988. He said, when you do something the people stand up and cheer, they're with you. Half the people are with you the other half are idle. Or something like that. My point is that I'm not a lone fanatic trying to do something idiotic, I *know* that at least half of the PKD fans are with me on this. So let's get it done.

The main problem, of course, as it always seems to be, is money. My task is to determine how much money we will need for different levels of the enterprise – from the Taj Mahal to the bare minimum – and then go about raising it. Perhaps we will use some of these new online fund-raising companies like Kickstarter. But, honestly, I think this idea funds itself, we just have to get it before someone who agrees with us who has a lot of money. So, if anyone knows Bill Gates, give him a call!

I appreciate any of your ideas and you can best contact me by email: pink-beam<at>hotmail<dot>com.

Thank you for your patience and attention. Any questions?

And at this point in my talk I paused for questions. There were none and I quickly realised that I had to talk for another ten minutes or so! I figured a lot of the people in the room didn't know who I was or what I had to do with Philip K. Dick, so I talked about how I first got into PKD when I found a copy of *EYE IN THE SKY* in a factory I worked at in 1984, and how I contributed to *The Philip K. Dick Society Newsletter* and published *For Dickheads Only* in the 90s and posted all my PKD notes online in 1999 and how I wrote my book *PINK BEAM: A Philip K. Dick Companion*, which I published in 2007, and how I came to present the first Philip K. Dick Festival in Colorado in 2010. I felt I had to establish my credibility as a PKD fan.

I have no idea of what I said precisely, but no doubt Kitty will capture every word of it although I forgot about the microphone after a while.

Before my talk I'd hung the PKD Fan Zone banner from the Rocky Mountain fest on the podium so Kitty would have something to focus in on instead of me. This banner was signed by many of the people who attended this fest in 2010 with red and black markers. As I got done talking I told Kitty to bar the doors and invited all those fans in the room to come forward and sign the banner using the green or blue markers, which they did.

Phew! After a few short conversations with some fans and shaking hands with Doug Mackey, it was over. I rolled the banner up and headed downstairs for a well-earned smoke. I got waylaid in the lobby, though, talking to more people. I unrolled the banner on the book table in the lobby and signed the thing myself, leaving the markers for others to use. I found time for another cigarette before dashing inside to join Henri Wintz in the main auditorium for our *PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS* presentation. We'd discussed this over the weekend and saw that we'd have to fill an hour, but we had it covered. First I'd introduce us and our book then had off to Henri to tell how it was done.

So, clutching my notes, I joined Henri at the table on the stage. Kitty handed me a microphone and I looked up. The auditorium had a lot of people in it, all looking in my direction. I introduced us and described *PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS: A Philip K. Dick Bibliography, 1955-2012, USA and UK Editions* (Wide Books, 2012) and our two editions, the trade paperback and the limited hardcover edition of 100.

Then I handed the microphone to Henri and he talked about how we had produced the books and some of the publishing technicalities. As he talked, I looked around at the audience, spotting individuals – its amazing how you can clearly see people in their seats from the stage.

Henri gave me the microphone and I talked of our plans to produce a series of international PKD bibliographies. We're already half-way done with the English short-story bibliography, and after that on to the French editions. This is great fun for Henri and me, although also a lot of diligent work at computers all day and night long.

Then I whipped out my copy of *DR. FUTURITY* and went into a demonstration of how to determine the condition of a book for collecting purposes. I showed this shiny Vintage trade paperback to the assembly and said, this is a new book, I waved it around, I bought it at the Denver airport before I came here. A bookseller would categorize this book as new. But, its not new, a close inspection will reveal that it has a dent in the front cover from banging around on my luggage roller during the flight to San Francisco. So, it was no longer a new book but one in Very Fine or VF condition. If this was a first hardcover edition of *A MAZE OF DEATH* from 1970 worth untold thousands of dollars then this dent, which would have to be described by the seller, would lessen the value a bit. I then proceeded to destroy the book as a collectible by writing my name in it, underlining a critical passage, dog-eared the page, bending it open, banging it around and sneezing into it, describing each degrading condition in terms of book collectors: Fine, Near Fine, Very Good, Good, Reading Copy. When I was done with it the new 3-days ago copy of *DR. FUTURITY* was collectible junk: a reading copy.

That was fun and then we moved on to the 'Antiques Roadshow' part of our presentation: fans could bring books up to us and we would try to determine their edition and value.

All of a sudden there were a lot of fans on stage, clutching books and grinning. We first evaluated a hardcover edition of *UBIK*, which we determined by reference to *PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS* was a true first edition. We did this for several books and were able to sort out the particular editions but when it came to valuation I was all at sea; I'm tossing out figures but to value any of these high-end editions takes a critical study of the book itself.

A highlight of the 'Roadshow' was a newspaper section from 1982, which contained PKD's short story "The Alien Mind". Neither I nor Henri nor Frank Hollander or any of the other collectors had seen this paper artifact from 30 years ago. It caused a minor sensation for all of us and we were soon snapping photos of it and Henri and I will be sure to include it in our short-story bibliography. Many thanks to Candi Strecker of Hand-Picked Books for bringing this item in. (www.amazon.com/shops/handpickedbooks)

So, Henri and me are talking to all these collectors about their books on the stage and I think we were not communicating well with the rest of the auditorium because when I looked up they had mostly gone. It was sometime after 4pm and the next event was coming up.

And now confusion sets in. My event schedule says 5 – 6.30 Dinner, but I don't remember any dinner, and this was followed by the belly dancer, but I thought the belly dancer was last night? By now I do not recall what happened. I remember somewhere along the line John Alan Simon doing a short interview with me about the *RADIO FREE ALBEMUTH* movie, and talking to a fan name Joe who gave me some of his Bee lip balm, and buttonholing Umberto Rossi and David Gill to sign a copy of *PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS* for Michael Fisher in Indianapolis. I also

cautiously approached Pam Jackson to do the same and plonked my ass down next to Jonathan Lethem in the auditorium for a few minutes so he could autograph this book too.

Well, I guess I must've skipped dinner somehow but that's okay I don't eat much anyway. Somewhere along the way David Gill asked me for the DVD of the 'Neo' video we'd shown in Colorado. This short video was sent to me by Enrique Stone from Denver; it was in Spanish with English subtitles and based on PKD's short story "The Electric Ant." It was worth seeing again and got a good reception from the fans.

'Neo' served as introduction to the Keynote Speaker, our very own Jonathan Lethem. Even though Jonathan said he was only going to talk about four things, and even numbered and listed them on a handy white board, I can only remember the first one which was a long and involved joke about goats and ghosts. Very funny it was too. As he talked he sort of bounced around the stage, stepping forward as he made his points and then stepping back. To have Jonathan Lethem as our closing speaker was an honor I think well-deserved. I'm reading his collection of essays, *THE DISAPPOINTMENT ARTIST* (Doubleday, 2005) and find that he grew up in Brooklyn and that *The Warriors* was filmed at his local railway station. I meant to ask him to show us his famous UBIK tattoo but spaced it out.

And that's about it! The festival was over. Henri and I went to the lobby and rounded up our stuff. I bumped into Elizabeth Karr and asked her if John Alan Simon was a *BLADE RUNNER* fan. She said yes and I went and gave him a copy of the Japanese *BLADE RUNNER* magazine that they give to moviegoers in Japanese cinemas that Perry had brought. We agreed to stay in touch and I promised to send Elizabeth some obscure PKD videos I have. I also talked to more of the fans there and said goodbye to Laura and Randall and Ben and Chris and everyone else I could see. My last farewell was to Perry who was being picked up by his brother and his wife, who I met. Perry's brother is even taller than him! See you in Los Angeles in 2 years, Perry!

The last thing I remember is William Sarrill approaching me and shaking my hand and saying, "It's good to meet a *real* Dickhead." I appreciated that.

How we got back to Henri's I do not know. We felt good about the way things had gone and were pleased with the sales of *PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS*. Tomorrow I would have to take the long flapple flight to Ganymede and to do that I would finally have to face the dreaded BART.



San Francisco with Bay Bridge on the left and Golden Gate Bridge on the right

Monday, Sept 24th 2012. Going Home.

I jammed my rolling bag with all my stuff early Monday morning and arranged with Henri for him to send my books on to me as I had no room to lug them around. My flapple departed from San Francisco airport at 1pm and Henri had delayed going to work to personally escort me to the nearest BART station. I didn't want to take the BART but like a reluctant hero I knew I had to face this last dragon to finish my quest and go home again.

Of course, it all fell apart at the very start. The BART was due to arrive at 9.20am and we got there just in time to hear the awful roar of the train arriving. Both Henri and I are rushing down the steps and I head towards the noise, only to see the train whiz by. I'd missed it but it didn't matter as I was in the wrong place anyway. You don't just dash onto the BART you have to get a ticket first from an automatic dispenser. So as I'm looking around taking all this in, Henri gets my ticket and leads me to a turnstile. We entered the station proper through the turnstile and found the right platform. Henri consulted the schedule and told me to get on the next train *after* the one that would arrive in ten minutes. Then get off at the MacArthur stop then get on the train going to Balboa, get off there and get on the one going to the airport. Ever provident Henri had printed out maps of the BART system and the airport for me.

We said our farewells and Henri left me standing there waiting for the train. Many thanks, Henri and Hsu Ching for your kind hospitality, a pleasure, too, to meet your son. Good luck with the weights, Martin!

I started chatting with a fellow traveler at the station. He told me that it was the *next* train to arrive that would take me towards the airport, in contradiction to what Henri told me. The danger was that I would get on the wrong train and end up in Fremont, which is as far away as you can get from the airport on the BART system. So I jumped on the train when it arrived; all that noise and speed and mechanical perturbation practically ordered me aboard. So it takes off and I try to find a seat, there were few available as the car was packed. I sat down next to a Hispanic-looking dude listening to something on his headphones. When he started fiddling with his music device I asked him if this was the right train to the airport. He was familiar with the BART and told me that I was on the right train, I should just get off at the Balboa Park Station – just as Henri had instructed! Then get on the train to the airport there.

I settled back, realizing I had no choice in the matter, the BART had me in its mouth and who knows where it would spit me out. I noticed a map of the BART on the wall of the train car and studied it closely in relation to the stations we passed: West Oakland, Embarcadero, Montgomery Street. It looked like I was going in the right direction.

Opposite me one row up on the other side of the aisle a man got on and he pulled out a book and started glancing through it. It was *The Sibley Field Guide To Birds Of Western North America*, the very same field guide I had in my luggage! This is the first time in all my travels that I have ever been in the same place with a stranger with the same book! I was sorely tempted to dig my copy of the book from my luggage and go chat with the guy but decided I'd better not, thinking we'd get into a deep conversation and I'd forget to get off the train, so I didn't.

My companion exited at the UN Plaza station and I stared out the window at nothing until we got to the Balboa Park stop and I got off.

My luck held at this station as I espied a woman with a pile of luggage who looked like she might be going to the airport. I asked her if this was where to get the airport train and she confirmed it was and would be here in 5 minutes. So I started chatting with her and told her I was on my way home from a big conference in San Francisco. Naturally I mentioned the name of Philip K. Dick (and didn't even have to mention *BLADE RUNNER*) and she brightened up and said she'd read *THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE*. She was going home to Chicago after visiting family in the Bay Area. Soon we were in deep conversation and I ended up giving her one of my bizcards and we almost forgot to get on the train when it arrived. But we did.

This train, too, was crowded. I sat on a sideways seat and scanned the passengers. Right in front of me, hanging on the poles, was a bunch of leather-clad people. On the back of one man's leather jacket was written, in silver studs, 'Washington State Mr. Leather 2012'. I supposed he and his crew were in town for the big XO festival that was going on then.

I got off at the airport ok. I had survived the BART! Now all I had to do was get on the right flapple to Denver.

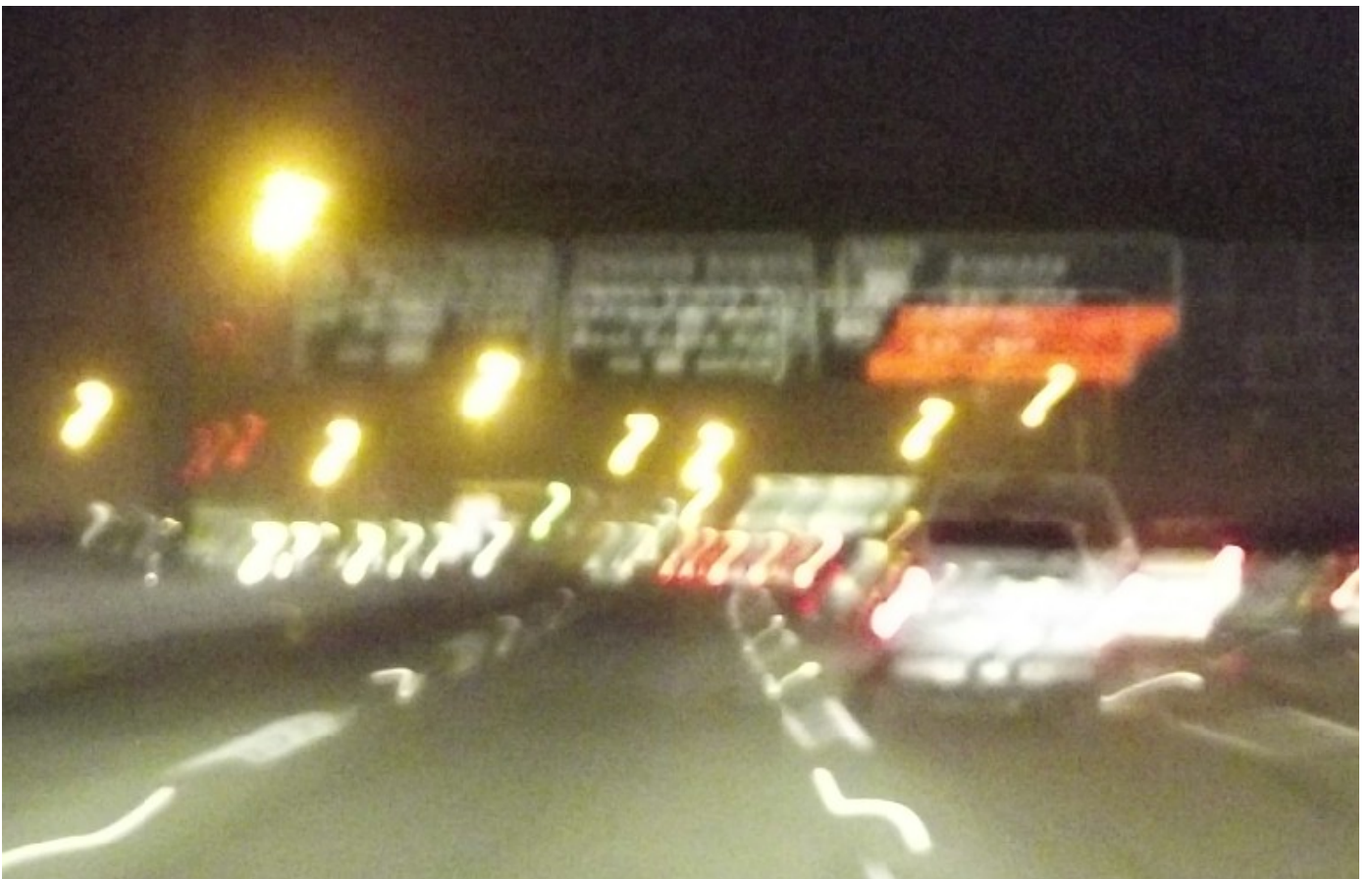
After much wandering around I found a bookstore and bought the day's *USA Today* and checked the PKD books in the back. Here I bought the Mariner edition of *EYE IN THE SKY*. When I boarded the flapple I found myself with a window seat overlooking the wing. This was a big flapple, a Boeing 767, I think, with the row of seats down the center of the fuselage. My seatmate arrived and sat down and immediately closed his eyes. I rustled my newspaper. Then an announcement came over the Tannoy that there would be a delay while the wind shear detector was replaced. This, the cheerful voice confidently announced would be done in ten minutes. I said, skeptically, to my seatmate, who'd woken up at the announcement, that I thought

it would take them at least an hour. He shook his head, no, got out his cellphone and made a call. "What's up with flight 87?" I heard him say. He ended the call and told me, "Ten minutes." My curiosity aroused I wondered how he knew for sure. "I'm a United Flight Engineer", he said.

So we started talking. His name was Simon and he was from Palestine. Like me he had served in the US Air Force back in Vietnam days. We talked flapples for a while and he told me of his travels while on active duty. With this man obviously knowledgeable in the workings of the modern flapple I took the opportunity to engage him more fully in technical conversation regarding the devices attached to the wing that we could see out the window. I learned that the four rods on the back point of the wingtip are lightning dispersers, the little upturned wingtip is to reduce turbulence, the huge jet engine had four times the thrust of your typical flapple, and if a Canada goose were foolish enough to fly into the whirling blades it would be sliced and diced in short order with no damage to the engine, this due to the latest design of turbojet blades which do not present a straight edge to incoming objects but instead show a curved edge which acts as a knife through butter to a Canada goose. What happened to Sully Sullenberger on the Hudson River a couple years back is not an issue for these latest models of giant flapples. It was an interesting conversation and our 2-hour flight was soon over. I was glad to feel the concrete of DIA bounce beneath our wheels.

After disemflapping I followed the other passengers to the main terminal and then found the United Intermoonetary Flapple bay for flapples to the Moon, Io, Callisto, Ganymede and points beyond. I slept for most of the journey to Ganymede where I met my family who greeted me joyously, happy that I had survived my adventure on Earth.

-- Lord Running Clam, Oct 24th 2012



Henri's GPS takes us to a parallel world