THE LAST INTERVIEW and OTHER CONVERSATIONS

PHILIP K. DICK

edited and with an introduction by DAVID STREITFELD

PHILIP K. DICK

THE LAST INTERVIEW

and OTHER CONVERSATIONS

edited and with an introduction by DAVID STREITFELD

MELVILLE HOUSE
BROOKLYN • LONDON

PHILIP K. DICK: THE LAST INTERVIEW
AND OTHER CONVERSATIONS

Melville House Publishing
46 John Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

and

8 Blackstock Mews
Islington
London N4 2BT

mhpbooks.com facebook.com/mhpbooks @melvillehouse

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Dick, Philip K. | Streitfeld, David.
Philip K. Dick : the last interview and other conversations / edited and with an introduction by David Streitfeld.
Brooklyn, NY : Melville House, [2015]
The last interview series
LCCN 2015039266
ISBN 9781612195261 (paperback)
ISBN 9781612195278 (ebook)
LCSH: Dick, Philip K.–Interviews. | Authors, American–20th century–Interviews. Science fiction–Authorship.
BIOGRAPHY & AUTOBIOGRAPHY / Literary.
LITERARY COLLECTIONS / American / General.
LCC PS3554.I3 Z46 2015
DDC 813/.54–dc23
LC record available at http://lccn.loc.gov/2015039266

eBook ISBN: 978-1-61219-527-8

v3.1

CONTENTS

DESTRUCTION AND ENLIGHTENMENT: THE LAST INTERVIEW

Interview by Gregg Rickman
April 1981–February 1982

About the Authors

INTRODUCTION

DAVID STREITFELD

Philip K. Dick was often lonely and filled with longing—for a supreme being whose presence he felt emotionally and viscerally but could not intellectually accept; for his twin sister, Jane, dead a few weeks after their birth; for readers who could share his search for a reality he could trust. One reason he was so prolific—forty-five novels in thirty years, plus five fat volumes of short stories—was because his characters offered companionship he could find nowhere else.

In our hyperconnected world, where encouragement and enthusiasm are never more than a tweet away, it's easy to forget just how isolated most novelists used to be, how dependent on their own energies and moods. There were so many barriers between them and an audience that the more insecure writers wondered if they had readers at all. Stumbling across a perceptive review was an occasion for celebration: someone understands, someone cares.

Working in the ghetto of science fiction, Dick was at a double remove. His publishers treated him like a hack, at one point destroying nearly all the copies of a new novel before it was even distributed, thanks to some bureaucratic screwup; the science fiction world took him for granted and the literary world did not know he existed; his wives (he had five) and girlfriends tended to be younger, doting, and not his intellectual equal; and he was too shy when he

was young to meet and mix with other writers. In his last years, he lived in Orange County, a conservative bastion and intellectual desert, and tried not to leave his apartment.

He found fans and friends wherever he could, including group therapy sessions at the Orange County Medical Center. If you were a pretty young woman, he would flirt with you incessantly. If you sent him your phone number and told him you liked his work, he would call you up—and pay the charges, too. He met at least one serious girlfriend this way. It didn't last, but that was true of all his relationships.

If Dick craved attention and respect, it was only during the downtime. "One thing I am sure of: to write a s-f novel you must make a total break with the world around you (such as wife and child, the garden which needs watering, the phone bill)," he wrote a friend. "But this is probably true of *all* novel writing. In any case, when I'm doing a novel I live in its world, not my own—my objective own—and I have great difficulty making the transition back to the objective one."

So: neglected and neglectful, full of energy but going nowhere. He added his own qualifiers: "I am flighty, feckless, droll, a bit of a wit, melancholy & even suicidal," he wrote, noting that his life was an open book that he himself had written. His last attempt to kill himself, in 1976, was remarkable for its sheer determination: he took an overdose of all sorts of pills, slashed a wrist, and sat in his Fiat in the garage with the motor running, but lived to be locked up in the psych ward. In his 1981 novel *Valis*, in which he recounts the episode, Dick comments: "The mercies of God are infinite."

It was a wonder he lasted as long as he did and wrote as much and as well as he did. His first professional sale was in 1951; a tale of garbagemen seen from the perspective of the family dog, it is now a small classic. Death arrived in 1982, just as he was on the verge of substantial fame with the release of Ridley Scott's film *Blade Runner*, which was based on his 1968 novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and expected to be the biggest thing since *Star Wars*. It wasn't, but proved an enduring, influential work of art, which in the long run was even better for Dick's reputation. The ample press kit

for *Blade Runner* barely deigned to acknowledge the writer, but Hollywood came calling again and again, yielding, most notably, Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report* and Richard Linklater's *A Scanner Darkly*.

All of that served only to benefit Dick's heirs. During his lifetime, he wrote because he needed the companionship, but he wrote fast because he needed the money. And since it was never enough money, he had to stay on the treadmill. It was the career—although not the books—of a hack.

"I used to just get up at noon and sit down at the typewriter and write until two a.m.," he said in a radio interview with Mike Hodel in 1977. "Just write from noon in the morning until two a.m. You've got to do that when you start out. Or you're going to die on the vine. I mean you've got to just—you're going to live on two thousand dollars a year. You're going to eat rocks and dirt and weeds from the backyard for the first ten years. And then after the first ten years, you get to eat Instant Breakfast. You work up till you're rich enough to get a phone put in. And you get to buy an old automobile. And you get to drive around in an old automobile, which you crank-start every morning. And then after twenty-five years, you manage to get a used Dodge. It costs you $795, but the radio doesn't work in it. And there's people that are standing behind grocery counters are making more money. One time I was in Trader Joe's, a grocery store, and I was talking with the clerk and he made more money than I did. And I was really sore. I really took it bad. Because they had just hired him. He didn't even have seniority as a grocery clerk. At least he could have been a senior clerk. I said, How much do you make? And he says, such and such. And I said, Jeepers, that's a lot of money."

He tried to break out, writing more than a dozen mainstream novels during the 1950s but failing to get any of them published at the time. (One appeared in the 1970s, nearly all the rest posthumously.) His emotional home was in science fiction anyway. Look at the February 1953 issue of *Imagination: Stories of Science and Fantasy*, the one with the cover depicting a spaceship launching flying saucers at the Earth. Turn to the page introducing the

magazine's newest writer of "stf," as the genre was sometimes called then, and you find a young man struggling to make a virtue out of the fact that he really liked the field and felt at home there.

Thirteen years earlier, Dick told *Imagination* readers, he had stumbled across an issue of *Stirring Science Stories* and been enthralled. "Here were ideas, vital and imaginative. Men moving across the universe, down into sub-atomic particles, into time; there was no limit," he writes, adding, "I enjoy writing stf; it is essentially communication between myself and others as interested as I in knowing where present forces are taking us … We may yet live to be present when the public libraries begin to carry the stf magazines, and someday, perhaps, even the school libraries."

It was a big dream in a field that got little respect even in bohemian San Francisco. Herb Gold, a local writer of some renown, autographed a file card for Dick, inscribing it "to a colleague." Dick was so touched by this "charity," as he called it, that he kept the card until the ink faded. San Francisco had the nation's first paperback bookstore, City Lights, but when Ace Books published Dick's first novel, *Solar Lottery*, in 1955, even that store had to special-order it. Science fiction was no better than porn.

Ace, which packaged two novels back to back in one volume, had strict length, title, and content requirements that Dick chafed at. (Terry Carr, an editor and friend of Dick's, once joked that if "the Holy Bible was printed as an Ace Double it would be cut down to two 20,000-word halves with the Old Testament retitled as *Master of Chaos* and the New Testament as *The Thing with Three Souls*.") But Dick published more than a dozen books with the house. If the writer had dared speculate in the pulpy pages of *Imagination* that thirteen of his novels would one day be enshrined with Faulkner and Melville in a canon-defining series like the Library of America—including one, *Dr. Bloodmoney, or How We Got Along After the Bomb*, which was originally published by Ace—he would have been taken to the psych ward much sooner.

All that isolation, all that anguish and yearning and poverty, made his life hell but fed his creativity. Dick was just marginal enough to look under the rock of postwar prosperity. His best books—including *The Man in the High Castle, Ubik*, and *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*—reveal an American Orwell, updating the British novelist's unyielding despair with a dose of California mellow dystopianism. Also, a sense of humor.

Orwell explained in *1984* that with the advent of television, and the subsequent ability of each set to both send and receive signals, "private life came to an end. Every citizen, or at least every citizen important enough to be worth watching, could be kept for twenty-four hours a day under the eyes of the police and in the sound of official propaganda, with all other channels of communication closed."

In Dick's world, it is hard to keep the police separate from the corporations or distinguish the state's propaganda from capitalism's. Or maybe they're all space aliens. The idea isn't so much to crush the citizens—Orwell's notion of "a boot stamping on a human face—forever"—as letting them know who is boss, and getting another buck out of them. Consider, for instance, the scene in *Ubik* (1969) where the down-at-his-heels Joe Chip is trying to get out of his "conapt," which is to say his apartment:

> The door refused to open. It said, "Five cents, please."
>
> He searched his pockets. No more coins; nothing. "I'll pay you tomorrow," he told the door. Again he tried the knob. Again it remained locked tight. "What I pay you," he informed it, "is in the nature of a gratuity; I don't *have* to pay you."
>
> "I think otherwise," the door said. "Look in the purchase contract you signed when you bought this conapt."
>
> In his desk drawer he found the contract; since signing it he had found it necessary to refer to the document many times. Sure enough; payment to his door for opening and shutting constituted a mandatory fee. Not a tip.
>
> "You discover I'm right," the door said. It sounded smug.

From the drawer beside the sink Joe Chip got a stainless steel knife; with it he began systematically to unscrew the bolt assembly of his apt's money-gulping door.

"I'll sue you," the door said as the first screw fell out.

Joe Chip said, "I've never been sued by a door. But I guess I can live through it."

Better than any other SF writer of his era, Dick nailed a future where machines are neither masters nor tools but both at once. On the Internet, he is celebrated as a prophet. "There will come a time," he predicts in a quote that circulated widely post-Snowden, "when it isn't 'They're spying on me through my phone' anymore. Eventually, it will be 'My phone is spying on me.' " This brilliantly sums up a future that is just about here, when your technology will track you so it can order more toilet paper when you are running low, but the truth seems to be that Dick never said it. In a twist the writer would have appreciated, the lines accurately mirror his beliefs but are not his words. A real fake, that is to say.

The machines in Dick's universe have the power to console, too. At the end of *Now Wait for Last Year* (1966), ostensibly about a battle between two galactic super races, the hero starts asking his taxi for advice:

To the cab he said suddenly, "If your wife were sick—"

"I have no wife, sir," the cab said. "Automatic Mechanisms never marry; everyone knows that."

"All right," Eric agreed. "If you were me, and your wife were sick, desperately so, with no hope of recovery, would you leave her? Or would you stay with her, even if you had traveled 10 years into the future and knew for an absolute certainty that the damage to her brain could never be reversed? And staying with her would mean—"

"I can see what you mean, sir," the cab broke in. "It would mean no other life for you beyond caring for her."

"That's right," Eric said.

"I'd stay with her," the cab decided.

> "Why?"
>
> "Because," the cab said, "life is composed of reality configurations so constituted. To abandon her would be to say, I can't endure reality as such. I have to have uniquely special easier conditions."

Swayed by the empathetic cab, Eric agrees to stay; and there the novel quietly ends.

Not everything in Dick is so eloquent. His fiction is haphazard, wonderful bits mixed with uneven writing. The plots are sometimes creaky, the characters often wooden, and he had trouble with female characters until the very last novels. Hey, what do you want for $1,500, which is what his typical advance was? Nowadays, Dickheads will pay more for a fine first edition of *Three Stigmata* or *Androids*—yet more evidence of the great distance his work and reputation have traveled.

Like many of Dick's most dedicated fans, I first found him as a reality-denying teenager. I bought, with seven dollars of hard-earned lawn-mowing money, a newly issued copy of *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said* (1974), and gobbled up passages like this:

> You love someone and they leave. They come home one day and start packing their things and you say "What's happening?" and they say, "I got a better offer someplace else," and there they go, out of your life forever, and after that until you're dead you're carrying around this huge hunk of love with no one to give it to. And if you do find someone to give it to, the same thing happens all over.

It's sentimental and cynical, a mixture of romantic poet and obsessive stalker, which certainly nails me at fourteen. At his best, Dick has a voice as intimate as Salinger or Rilke, appearing to lack all artifice as he bores into you. Here are the opening sentences of his last novel, *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* (1982):

> Barefoot conducts his seminars on his houseboat in Sausalito. It costs a hundred dollars to find out why we are on this Earth. You also get a sandwich, but I wasn't hungry that day. John Lennon had just been killed and I think I know why we are on this Earth: it's to find out that what you love the most will be taken away from you, probably due to an error in high places rather than by design.

Once again, there's the sense of victimhood, of being acted on rather than being in control. But it's not just the state and mortality we should question, Dick says; it's the universe itself. He had nothing to do with the beatniks or the hippies or the Counterculture—although John Lennon, as it happened, admired *Three Stigmata* and wanted to make a movie out of it—but he shared their enthusiasm for questioning authority. He wrote in a letter to *Time* magazine, "The message I got out of Herman Wouk's *Caine Mutiny* is (a) Believe! (b) Work! (c) Die! What a hell of a message this is."

The message from Dick is Disbelieve! "We are bombarded with pseudo-realities manufactured by very sophisticated people using very sophisticated electronic mechanisms," he wrote. "I do not distrust their motives; I distrust their power. They have a lot of it. And it is an astonishing power: that of creating whole universes, universes of the mind. I ought to know. I do the same thing."

He might have been able to create universes, but he certainly had trouble living in this one. Charles Platt, himself a science fiction writer, interviewed Dick in 1979 and then revisited him as a friend. In the latest edition of his book *Dream Makers* (Stairway Press), Platt provides a vivid snapshot of the novelist when he was barely fifty:

> I suggested that we go out to some local bar or coffee shop, as I was getting tired of sitting in the same old Santa Ana apartment, with its dusty stacks of papers, dim lighting, a persistent smell of cat litter, and a carpet that looked as if it had not been touched by a vacuum cleaner in many years. I now thought of Phil as a friend, and he treated me that way,

although I suspect he was effusively warm to many people who were thus encouraged to believe that they were his friends.

My suggestion to venture onto the streets made him immediately cautious. First he took most of his money and his credit cards out of his wallet, in case we might be robbed. Then he hesitated and agonized over our possible destination. When we finally reached the sidewalk, he was visibly nervous.

We ended up in a bar that looked as if it had been a counter-culture hangout in the 1970s but was now on hard times. A couple of bad guitarists were playing live music, and as soon as we sat down, they started into Buffalo Springfield's "There's Something Happening Here."

"Oh my God," said Phil. "I really hate this song."

Indeed, the lyrics sounded as if they had been written just for him. "There's a man with a gun over there / Telling me I got to beware," the musicians sang. And as the song progressed: "Paranoia strikes deep / Into your life it will creep."

Dick wasn't happy until he was back in his dusty apartment. He told Platt that he had been appointed to a supervisory position at the condo complex, a strange turnabout for a guy who always said he was terrified by even the mildest form of authority. "You better believe it," he told Platt in his mock-serious way. "I am the law around here."

That's one way to keep reality on your side: join the establishment. More usefully, Dick was also in his last years trying less to divine the nature of existence than to construct a philosophy where its slippery nature didn't matter. Consider a vehicle, shining new and full of gas, he wrote in a fragment quoted by biographer Lawrence Sutin. The next day, it is a little more worn, and has less gas. This is an example of entropy, no? Things run down, and the universe decays. But the vehicle is an ambulance, and became worn taking a dying man to the hospital, where he was saved. This isn't a loss but a gain, yet it can only be measured when you look beyond the vehicle itself.

The epigraph to *Three Stigmata* was ostensibly written by the novel's hero, Leo Bulero. It is part of a memo he writes as he does battle with the title character, who may be God or the Devil or an alien from the Prox system, but also is a shrewd businessman who has an irresistible reality-altering drug:

> I mean, after all; you have to consider we're only made out of dust. That's admittedly not much to go on and we shouldn't forget that. But even considering, I mean it's a sort of bad beginning, we're not doing too bad. So I personally have faith that even in this lousy situation we're faced with we can make it. You get me?

As credos go, this is more blurted than refined, which makes it all the more appealing. To my mind, Leo's memo ranks up there with Faulkner's "man will not merely endure: he will prevail."

It did not take much to set Dick off. He could write a novel in a few weeks, gulping amphetamines and staying up all night; he devoted a few million words to meditating on his 1974 mystical experience, which may have been triggered by a stroke; and if you wanted to interview him you barely had to ask any questions. He would just start talking. He once did an interview for French TV at Disneyland, discussing the rise of fascism on the whirling teacups and Watergate on Captain Hook's Pirate Ship. His third wife, Anne, who wrote a good book about him, said, "Philip could talk the birds down from the trees and bake them in a pie."

It's a pity and a mystery so few people wanted to talk. Nearly all the interviews that exist were done in the last decade of his life. In the 1960s, when he published most of his major works, there was essentially nothing. That might give an undue weight in the pages that follow to the events and stories of the 1970s, starting with the break-in at his Bay Area house in 1971 (in classic Phil Dickian tradition, the culprits were never found and there were even suggestions that Dick staged or at least encouraged it himself,

perhaps to prove his paranoia was not paranoia); the mystical experience, which he was at first reluctant to talk about and then could not shut up about; and finally *Blade Runner*, which he never got to see in final form.

These interviews—some of which have been edited and expanded from their original publication—must be read with a certain wariness. As his biographers are quick to note, Dick is an unreliable witness, particularly when it comes to his wives and girlfriends, his dealings with publishers, his confrontations with authority. Just about everything, really. He knew this. “Always, always check on your facts when any writer tells you anything, any fiction writer tells you anything,” he admitted. “A fiction writer speaks with forked tongue.”

Forget the facts. The interviews have the authentic Dick voice, smart, questioning, and sometimes hilarious, like when he tells Paul Williams how he kept making himself look increasingly suspicious trying to evade the attention of a cop—who was, naturally, not watching him in the first place.

His time in the wilderness was almost over. In July 1981, in the middle of middle age, exhausted by life yet thrilled by the prospect that *Blade Runner* would deliver a bigger audience and better opportunities, he wrote his agent that “a whole new phase of my life is beginning.” Less than a year later, he was dead and his true fame began.

LOCAL KID MAKES GOOD

OAKLAND TRIBUNE
JANUARY 10, 1955

Reading and writing: Philip K. Dick, 26, Berkeley High graduate, read the science-fiction story in 1951. As with a million other fiction readers, he muttered, “I can do better than that.” Unlike 999,999 others, he has. Began writing in 1951, sold within three months. Has sold 70 stories; has a hardback title, *A Handful of Darkness*, set for English publication; a pocket book novel, *Quiz Master Take All*, readied for fall U.S. publication. Specializing in science fiction and fantasy, Dick writes at his home, 1126 Francisco St., Berkeley, until the early morning hours, rises late. Which explains why local readers bombarded *If Magazine* when, in “Exhibit Piece,” Dick had “early-rising” businessmen waving *The Tribune*. “Awful, awful,” the writer groaned. “I’m ashamed. I never get up until noon. You know, I thought *The Tribune* was a morning paper.” But on robot putrans, study spools and time gates,* Phil Dick is as accurate as anything, he grins …

---

* Robot putrans? Study spools? No idea what the heck the anonymous columnist is talking about here.

THE ACID TRUTH

INTERVIEW BY ARTHUR BYRON COVER
VERTEX
FEBRUARY 1974

COVER: Nearly every SF writer has some little fable about how he got hooked on the stuff. What's yours?

DICK: I went into a drugstore looking for *Popular Science*. They were out of it and I saw something called *Stirring Science Fiction*. I thought, Well, shit, the title is similar. It's closer than *Nurse Romance Stories*. And I took it home and read itst.

COVER: What was it about the magazine that appealed to you?

DICK: Well, it was such awful writing that viewed from now you can't take it seriously. You know what term they used then? Pseudo-science! It meant stories of science but not real science. Which of course was meaningless. I remember one story where they decided to find the center of the universe. It was a great flat plane which stretched out as far as the eye could see. Now I knew that wasn't true, that nobody had ever built a rocket and flown to the center of the universe, yet it had a reality to me. Apparently I had this tremendous facility to suspend disbelief that was revealed as soon as I read that ghastly story.

COVER: Did you actually believe that stories of that type were entirely possible?

DICK: Science fiction involves a suspension of disbelief that is different than that involved with fantasy. In fantasy, you never go back to believing that there are trolls, unicorns, witches, and so on. But in science fiction, you read it, and it's not true now but there are things that are not true now that are going to be someday.

Everybody knows that! And this creates a very strange feeling in a certain kind of person—a feeling that he is reading about reality, but he is disjointed from it only in temporal terms. It's like all science fiction occurs in alternate future universes, so it could actually happen someday.

COVER: What SF writers have influenced your work the most?

DICK: I started reading SF when I was about twelve and I read all I could, so any author who was writing about that time, I read. But there's no doubt who got me off originally and that was A. E. van Vogt. There was in van Vogt's writing a mysterious quality, and this was especially true in *The World of Null-A*. All the parts of that book did not add up; all the ingredients did not make a coherency. Now some people are put off by that. They think that's sloppy and wrong, but the thing that fascinated me so much was that this resembled reality more than anybody else's writing inside or outside science fiction.

COVER: What about Damon Knight's famous article criticizing van Vogt?

DICK: Damon feels that it's bad artistry when you build those funky universes where people fall through the floor.

It's like he's viewing a story the way a building inspector would when he's building your house. But reality really is a mess, and yet it's exciting. The basic thing is, how frightened are you of chaos? And how happy are you with order? Van Vogt influenced me so much because he made me appreciate a mysterious chaotic quality in the universe that is not to be feared.

COVER: During each period of change in SF, people say that the genre is finally reaching maturity. Do you believe that SF will ever be mature?

DICK: What do you mean by mature?

COVER: Adult, philosophical.

DICK: Heavy?

COVER: Like Franz Kafka.

DICK: Think-piece stuff. Something that leaves a permanent residue in you. You are not quite the same.

COVER: Like that.

DICK: Absolutely, sure, like I can think of an example right now. Tom Disch's *Camp Concentration*. When I finished that, I was different, and I think this is what I would define as a mature work: we are made mature by it. I mean, you read *Of Mice and Men* and you are never the same again. Not whether it educates in the sense that it gives you information, not that it is serious in that it is somber; it can be very funny. It's like what Aristotle said about tragedy purging you. *Camp Concentration* relieved me of the burden of believing that I had to be smart all the time. All art of this kind is as if the author has given you permission to lay down a burden that you had somehow inherited. I won't even speak of it any further. Science fiction definitely does that. Can and does.

COVER: What do you think is the current state of SF writing? Good, bad, or indifferent?

DICK: I think some extraordinary good writers are appearing: Sladek, Malzberg, Disch. I hate to name specific ones, because I'll leave out one that I really like. Ursula Le Guin, for example. I think it is like the twerp fans say, "Gosh, wow!" It is really gosh, wow! today. People are coming into the field today who are so much better than the older writers. Like Chip Delany. At one time we had only one writer who was even literate, and that was Ray Bradbury. That's the only one, I swear by God. Something about the Middle Ages: "We are only men, but we stand on the shoulders of giants and therefore can see more than those giants could see."

COVER: Since you've been writing for about ten years longer than most of the people you've mentioned, does this ever make you feel jealous?

DICK: You know, the way I feel, if I read a science fiction book by a new writer that is a lot better than what I do, instead of going on a bummer right away and saying, "Oh, Christ, I'm obsolete, I'm outdated, I've lost it," I have this tremendous sense of joy. I don't have to write all the great goddamn science fiction in the world. Somebody else is going to carry this torch. It's such a relief to sit with my feet up on the wall and to know that if I never wrote another book, science fiction is going ahead.

COVER: Let's talk about the personal rewards of writing science fiction, economic and otherwise. Do you feel that the field has treated you properly?

DICK: I want to talk about the first thing you mentioned: economics. My first hardcover novel, *Time Out of Joint*, sold for $750. And my agent was so excited that he sent me a telegram to announce this joyous news. That was a long time ago, and we are still being paid about as much money as if we were standing on a street corner selling apples in the Depression. There are exceptions, like Arthur C. Clarke. But in effect the publishers are saying, "You're lucky we're printing your book at all. We could charge you for the cost of printing it." It is cruel and inhumane what they pay writers. It's a disgrace.

COVER: Economics aside, do you think you've spent your life well?

DICK: I love writing. I love it. I love my characters. They're my friends. When I finish a book, I go into postpartum, never to hear them speak again, never to see them struggling and trying. And I've lost them, because a writer doesn't really reread his own works. But then, other people will read them.

COVER: Why do you love writing and creating characters?

DICK: It's not generally recognized that the author is lonely. Writing is a solitary occupation. When you start your novel you seal yourself off from your family and friends. But in this there's a paradox, because you then create new companions. I would say I write because there are not enough people in the world who can give me enough companionship. To me the great joy in writing a book is showing some small person, some ordinary person doing something in a moment of great valor, for which he would get nothing and which would be unsung in the real world. The book, then, is the song about his valor. You know, people think that the author wants to be immortal, to be remembered through his work. No. I want Mr. Tagomi from *The Man in the High Castle* always to be

remembered. My characters are composites of what I've actually seen people do, and the only way for them to be remembered is through my books.

COVER: Isn't your story "Faith of Our Fathers," from Harlan Ellison's anthology *Dangerous Visions*, supposed to have been inspired by or written under the influence of acid?

DICK: That really is not true. First of all, you can't write anything when you're on acid. I did one page once while on an acid trip, but it was in Latin. Whole damn thing was in Latin and a little tiny bit in Sanskrit, and there's not much market for that. The page does not fall in with my published work.

COVER: How much acid did you take anyway?

DICK: Not that much. I wasn't getting up in the morning and dropping acid. I'm amazed when I read the things I used to say about it on the blurbs of my books. I wrote this myself: "He has been experimenting with hallucinogenic drugs to find the unchanging reality beneath our delusions." And now I say, "Good Christ!" All I ever found out about acid was that I was where I wanted to get out of fast. It didn't seem more real than anything else; it just seemed more awful.

COVER: In the light of your own experiences with acid, how accurate do you think *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* is as far as drugs are concerned?

DICK: You remember what happened when they got on that drug in the novel? It was bad, wasn't it? It was so bad it taxed my ability to imagine bad. And it didn't do them any good to stop taking the drug

because they had flashbacks. And nobody at the time knew LSD was going to produce flashbacks. I had it in mind that the ultimate horror would be to get an addictive, hallucinogenic drug out of your system and you would say, “Well, I’m back in the real world now.” And suddenly a monstrous object from the hallucinogenic world would cross the floor and you would realize that you were not back. And this is what has happened to many people who have dropped acid. It was just an accidental prophecy on my part.

COVER: Doesn’t your latest novel, *A Scanner Darkly*, also deal with drugs?

DICK: It’s about an undercover agent who must take dope to conceal his cover and the dope damages his brain progressively, as well as making him an addict. The book follows him along to the end until his brain is damaged to such an extent that he can no longer wash pots and pans in the kitchen of a rehabilitation center. I hope the reader won’t say, “Boy! I bet he did that!” This is the verisimilitude the author is trying to create, the sense that the novel actually is real. Now, I was at a heroin rehab center in Canada, and I did draw from it, and I’ve had friends who dropped acid and became permanently psychotic. And a number who killed themselves too. But I wouldn’t say that it affected my writing directly, that the acid wrote the book.

COVER: Would it be fair to ask if your interest in people’s perceptions of reality and unreality is an outgrowth of the trick endings used in so many stories in the 1950s?

DICK: Which was required of us at the time. That is a good question because it is one of those paradoxical questions that one can answer truthfully by saying yes and by saying no.

COVER: Well, it seems that eventually you worked in your surprises with a vengeance.

DICK: At the time in writing magazine fiction, you started the story conventionally knowing something the reader did not know until you sprang it on him at the end. That motif evolved out of the mystery story. And I did the same thing over and over again, and that was what the protagonist thought was real was not real, actually. That was my idea of the surprise ending. I did it so many times that it became predictable in my writing.

COVER: What was the reason for that?

DICK: Why I would surprise my reader with the same surprise a hundred times? Well, let me quote you from a text by Gilbert & Sullivan: "Things are seldom what they seem / Skim milk masquerades as cream." It just seemed to sum it up in life. I think the main thing in my writing was that I was trying to show my characters taking things for granted, and then realizing that things were quite different, you see. And the clue there is that they had taken it for granted; they had accepted it without testing it out.

COVER: Do you use the *I Ching* as a plotting device in your work?

DICK: Once. I used it in *The Man in the High Castle* because a number of characters used it. In each case when they asked a question, I threw the coins and wrote the hexagram lines they got. That governed the direction of the book. Like in the end when Juliana Frink is deciding whether or not to tell Hawthorne Abensen that he is the target of assassins, the answer indicated that she should. Now if it had said not to tell him, I would have had her not go there. But I would not do that in any other book.

COVER: What is the importance of the *I Ching* in your own life?

DICK: Well, the *I Ching* gives advice beyond the particular, advice that transcends the immediate situation. The answers have a universal quality. For instance: "The mighty are humbled and the humbled are raised." If you use the *I Ching* long enough and continually enough, it will begin to change and shape you as a person. It will make you into a Taoist, whether or not you have ever heard the word, whether or not you want to be.

COVER: Doesn't Taoism fuse the ethical and the practical?

DICK: This is the greatest achievement of Taoism, over all other philosophies and religions.

COVER: But in our culture the two are pitted against each other.

DICK: This always shows up. Should I do the right thing or the expedient thing? I find a wallet on the street. Should I keep it? That's the practical thing to do, right? Or should I give it back to the person? That's the ethical thing. Taoism has a shrewdness. There's no heaven in our sense of the word, no world besides this world. Practical conduct and ethical conduct do not conflict, but actually reinforce each other, which is almost impossible to think of in our society.

COVER: How does it work?

DICK: Well, in our society a person might frequently have to choose between what he thinks is practical and what is ethical. He might choose the practical, and as a result he disintegrates as a

human being. Taoism combines the two so that these polarizations rarely occur, and if possible never occur. It is an attempt to teach you a way of behavior that will cause such tragic schisms not to come to the surface. I've been using the *I Ching* since 1961, and this is what I use it for, to show me a way of conduct in a certain situation. Now first of all it will analyze the situation for you more accurately than you have. It may be different than what you think. Then it will give you the advice. And through these lines a torturous, complicated path emerges through which the person escapes the tragedy of martyrdom and the tragedy of selling out. He finds the great sense of Taoism, the middle way. I turn to it when I have that kind of conflict.

COVER: What if a person should come to a situation in which the ethical and the practical cannot be fused under any circumstances?

DICK: One thing that I have never gotten out of my head is that sometimes the effort of the whole Taoist thing to combine the two does not always work. At this point the line says, "Praise, no blame." Those are code words to indicate what you should do, and the commentary says that the highest thing for a person to do would be to lay down his life rather than to do something that was unethical. And I kind of think that this is right. There never can be a system of thought that can reconcile those two all the time. And Taoism takes that into account, in one line out of over three thousand.

COVER: You mentioned that you spent some time in a heroin rehabilitation center in Canada. How did you get involved in that sort of endeavor?

DICK: It was one of the most important things that ever happened to me. I flew to Canada in February of 1972 to deliver a speech as

the guest of honor at a Vancouver science fiction convention. I felt a tremendous weight off me when I got up there. I was sick and tired of the oppressive air of the war back here. So I rented an apartment and cut my ties with the past. But I had no friends up there and after a while I was very lonely. I tried to kill myself by taking seven hundred milligrams of potassium bromide. I had also written the phone number of a suicide rehabilitation center on a piece of cardboard as huge as a phonograph album, in huge letters, just in case I changed my mind. And I did change my mind. Fortunately the last number was a 1 and I could just barely dial it. Well, I talked with the guy for almost an hour and a half and he finally said, "Here is what is the matter. You have nothing to do; you have no purpose; you came up here and you gave your speeches and now you're sitting in your apartment. You don't need psychotherapy. You need purposeful work."

COVER: And he directed you to the heroin rehab center.

DICK: Right. He told me that they would watch me twenty-four hours a day, that no matter what they would keep me alive. But I had to lie to get in; I had to pretend I was an addict. I looked in bad shape, you see, from all that potassium bromide. I did a lot of method acting, like almost attacking the staff member interviewing me, so they never doubted that I was an addict.

COVER: What did you do there?

DICK: They put me to work cleaning the toilets and scrubbing the floors. And it was wonderful. I really dug it. The first night there was the first good night's sleep I had had in three months. After I had been there for about two weeks I started coming out of my depression and they discovered who I was. They had thought I was just some deteriorated bum. Well, a bunch of my books came in the

mail and they immediately put me in an office with a typewriter and all that jazz to do PR work for them. So I left after a while.

COVER: Exactly what did you do there that you liked so much?

DICK: Watching the junkies come in and watching their valiant struggle not to fall back into what they had been doing. I used to condemn junkies, like they could get off the stuff if they really wanted to, and that is about as stupid as saying, "You could grow eyes in the back of your head if you really wanted to." The pain of getting off smack is so great that there are many times they'll kill themselves just to get off the pain. I saw one chick who had been addicted by her brother when she was fifteen, and by the time she was sixteen she was a prostitute, for the money, you see. And she didn't look sixteen; she looked twenty-five. Another chick who was twenty-five looked fifty. Half her teeth had fallen out; her hair was gray, wispy, straw-like stuff; she was just skin and bones. But these people wanted to live. I saw human strength. I saw the human being there as a magnificent creature. And when I saw that I realized that I had seen something which made the events preceding my life of very little importance.

COVER: What methods were used there?

DICK: Our method there was cold turkey. I mean, their bodies were so damaged from the heroin they had to get up and pee every two hours every night from kidney damage. But I watched those people forming a community and I saw human beings fighting with such strength against fate. We also had the hardest attack therapy. It was tough because it was mainly for criminal recidivists. It was for really tough guys.

COVER: And you didn't want to do PR work? What did you really want to do?

DICK: I wanted to work directly with teenagers before they got onto the hard stuff, while they were still on the soft stuff. And I also was homesick. I wanted to come back to the United States.

COVER: In the light of that experience, what are your opinions of the way addicts are treated in this country?

DICK: I would never condemn an addict, but on the other hand I would condemn anyone who addicted someone. Like Julian Bond said—remember Congressman Bond—kill the pusher man, if you have to. If he is going to make your children into a junkie, shoot him. Now that's an extreme view, see? Like a lot of people would lump the users and the dealers together. But I realized that the user is a victim. You cannot be any more of a victim than the user of heroin. There is no slavery like it.

COVER: You've stated privately that your Vancouver speech is the most important thing you've ever written. Would you care to elaborate on that statement?

DICK: I worked on it for three months and I was very low in those days. I had thought that I would never write again. I had actually gone for two and a half years without writing anything. I decided that I should take all the ideas I had in my head that were worth anything and put them in the speech. It was finished in January 1972, and it said that the totalitarian state Orwell had predicted was already with us and that rebellion against this evil and corrupt state was already with us. The title of this speech was "The Human and

the Android," subtitled "The Authentic Person vs. the Reflex Machine."

COVER: What did you try to accomplish in this speech?

DICK: I tried to define the real person, because there are people among us who are biologically human but who are androids in the metaphoric sense. I wanted to draw the line so I could define the positive primary goal of stipulating what was human. Computers are becoming more and more like sensitive cogitative creatures, but at the same time human beings are becoming dehumanized. As I wrote the speech I sensed in it the need for people who were human to reinforce other people's humanness. And because of this it would be necessary to rebel against an inhuman or android society.

COVER: What do you believe defines a human being?

DICK: For example, the capacity to say no when what one was told to do was wrong. Someone saying, "No, I won't kill. I won't bomb." A balking. And this balking I saw in the teenagers, in the so-called "punks." A nonpolitical rebellion of the youth, which in the long run, without their realizing it, had very great political significance. Not in terms of elections and parties, but with the emergence of kids who could not be bribed, who could not be intimidated, who would not listen to propaganda. I saw the need of an illegal rebellion against what was basically an illegal system. In other words, you can't say to a kid, "Don't break the law. Always obey the law," because the law was in itself unjust.

COVER: Do you feel that recent events such as the Watergate hearings have supported the ideas expressed in the speech?

DICK: I think—and this is perhaps a strange thing to say—that those people in the Nixon Administration who broke the law should be forgiven, also, for breaking the law, just as I feel those who rebel should be forgiven. Everybody on both sides is sort of saying that the law is no longer meaningful, that it is no longer equated with justice. I think it was Jeb Magruder who said, "We found it frustrating to have to operate within the law." Perhaps that is just an indication that a vast revision of our legal system is in order. Nevertheless, my speech did advocate rebellion and breaking the law in the name of morality. And like the *I Ching* said, if practicality and morality are polarized and you must choose, you must do what you think is right, rather than what you think is practical.

EVEN PARANOIDS HAVE ENEMIES

INTERVIEW BY PAUL WILLIAMS
OCTOBER 31 AND NOVEMBER 2, 1974

WILLIAMS: You once said that a great influence on your writing was your own nervous breakdowns—

DICK: I never said that! Where'd I say that?

WILLIAMS: You said it in written responses to the *Double: Bill* questionnaire [a questionnaire sent out to science-fiction writers by an amateur publication in 1963; the responses were published in 1963 and '64].

DICK: Lies, all lies. They made me say it, invisible forces made me say that.

WILLIAMS: You said that you experienced these nervous breakdowns—

DICK: I didn't know I said that—

WILLIAMS: —at age nineteen, twenty-four, and thirty-three.

DICK: I just picked those figures at random, just for—

WILLIAMS: I figure it would be, uh, 1948, right?—which is around the time that you refused to take ROTC.

DICK: That's about correct, that's approximately right.

WILLIAMS: Which follows what? I mean—

DICK: You mean which is cause and which is effect?

WILLIAMS: Well, not exactly. I don't think you can make that clear-cut …

DICK: Could you, uh—

TESSA DICK [*PKD's wife*]: Chronological order.

WILLIAMS: Chronological order, right. Can I rephrase the question?

DICK: [*Mock menacing voice*] Can't you see I'm trying to be evasive, dear? Don't help me when I'm being evasive, I don't need help.

TESSA: He's good at that. He's excellent at being evasive. I say, "Phil, what time is it?" and he says, "Well, um …"

DICK: "Could I have a moment to think?" I say. What I meant was that under undue stress, that I—I bugged out.

WILLIAMS: Well, yeah, that's what it means.

DICK: All right. Let's be more precise.

WILLIAMS: Then you bugged out. Okay, if that's precise, what the heck do you mean by that?

DICK: Well, I mean that at about nineteen, um, I was unable to continue doing what I was doing, because I really unconsciously didn't want to do it.

WILLIAMS: Right. And you had to sort of force yourself out of it?

DICK: Yeah, I couldn't face the fact that I didn't want to do it. I thought I *should* want to do it, and I didn't, so I got phobias and anxieties—

WILLIAMS: And "it" was going to Berkeley and taking ROTC and all that kind of thing?

DICK: Yeah!

WILLIAMS: Both, right, not just the ROTC?

DICK: Correct. Yeah, I had a whole bunch of courses that were just so much birdshit, that didn't make any sense at all, and I foresaw in the deep recesses of my mind years and years and years of learning to distinguish one paramecium from another, and then trying to go out in the world and cope with reality on the basis of this kind of jive. But consciously I had been told I had to go to college—

WILLIAMS: You were ahead of your time. That was quite fashionable by the time I got to college.

DICK: Yeah, I know. Somebody said that to me.

WILLIAMS: We called it “dropping out.”

DICK: Yeah, well, at the time I called it “screwing up.”

WILLIAMS: It was heavy even when I did it, but much heavier, I’m sure, when—

DICK: You know, I’d been told all my life to go. I was going through high school, you know, getting college-entrance grades, taking a college-prep course, and all that stuff, and everything I did in high school was to get into college.

So I go to college and I’m standing there looking in the microscope. And there aren’t even any paramecia in there at all, because the slide moved. And the instruction is, “Draw what you see.” And I realize that there’s nothing there, nothing at all. But I can’t consciously face the fact that this is a symbol of my whole projected four years there, I’m drawing pictures of things that—

WILLIAMS: That aren’t even there.

DICK: So I began to get terribly frightened and anxious and I didn’t know why. Now I know why. I would have just screwed my life up forever. My brother, who did do that—stayed in college, went on, got a BA, then got a master’s—is now an usher in a theater. Because he was ill-equipped to do anything. So he’s an usher in a theater. That’s what he got out of years and years of college. See, he believed it both consciously and un-, or else he suppressed his unconscious, and any questions his unconscious might have had, like, What’s the point of all this? You see. He was able to suppress it.

I had too weak an ego to suppress the unconscious pressures. Fortunately I listened to my unconscious because it was too strong to be denied. I was very lucky, I had a powerful unconscious. It drove me out of the academic community, it drove me out of double-domed intellectual pursuits and into—

WILLIAMS: Double-domed?

DICK: Double-domed. Egghead stuff that I was into. It drove me out of the cloistered realms where I would have been cut off from the broader, truer world, and drove me into the real world. It drove me into a job, and marriage, and a career in writing, and a more substantial life.

•

WILLIAMS: Would you agree that writing is a form of therapy?

DICK: Well, for me, it's more than that. It is a more vigorous, more active thing than most therapy. I think that's not a proper description of writing, in a way. It's a misleading thing to say, "Yes, it is a form of therapy," but certainly it would be more misleading to say, "No, it is not." I would say that it is a superior form of activity in terms of bringing about integration of the mind than therapy as such is.

But it should never—the goal of writing is not therapy. That's not its goal. So, it would be saying, "Is an automobile an attractive thing?" Well, attractiveness is not the prime purpose of an automobile. I mean, form follows function. The function of writing is not therapeutic. It may be as a spin-off that it will make you feel better.

WILLIAMS: What is the function of writing?

DICK: The function of writing—the function of writing depends on the person who's doing the writing. No general statement that I know of could be made.

WILLIAMS: In your case?

DICK: In my case … the function of writing is that I don't know what else to do with my time. I really, you know, I try other things, but I soon weary of them.

Like the function of watching TV is to watch TV; it's an end in itself. You don't do it to learn, like to learn about how people live. And the function of writing is to write.

WILLIAMS: Well, there's two states, right? There's the active one where you're actually writing the book; and there's also—after the book's completed you've got this completed object, and at that point some other relationship comes into existence, because you don't just throw away—

DICK: No, you sell it. For as much as you can get. You get very chintzy and mean, like Beethoven. He used to gyp people, he used to sell the same symphony to four orchestras at once.

WILLIAMS: [*Laughs*] But you also care about it, on some level—

DICK: Well, I want it to be read. Is that what you mean? I want it to be read, because I want other people to know all that's there. It's important that they do it. But it's their problem to do it, I wouldn't make them do it, they've got to …

I put them on my trip. I wrote it—that was a hell of a lot of work—then they go on a kind of modified, easier version of my trip. And I figure, I got a lot out of it, they probably get something out of it, too. I don't think of it as entertainment for them, but a modified form of work for them, with a modified return.

WILLIAMS: Which will offer satisfactions, hopefully.

DICK: Yeah, I figure I got more out, though; I put more in, I got more out. Nobody can get as much out of a book of mine as I did. Because I'm deeper into it. I know more than they do. But that isn't really true, because people will point out things—especially academic people will point out things—that I don't know about my books, that I never noticed.

I read this article—did you read this article? *New Worlds for Old: The Apocalyptic Imagination, Science Fiction and American Literature?* It's a book of criticism by David Ketterer …

WILLIAMS: Oh, yeah. But I don't think I read the part about you.

DICK: Oh, well, there's a thing about *Man in the High Castle*, and it explains that the pin on Juliana Frink's blouse is the symbol that holds everything together. You see. It represents that which holds everything together. And actually it holds her blouse together. But I didn't know that it held everything—the whole universe would collapse if that pin fell off her blouse.

WILLIAMS: There was a piece of jewelry in that book, but it was different piece of jewelry …

DICK: Yes, but, you see, he sees the relationship between the fact that the pin is jewelry … Now, he's probably right; and I just never

realized, you know, that—I emphasized at the end Juliana putting a pin on her blouse and holding her blouse together, that I'm carrying the jewelry thing … If the jewelry was a motif, a theme, a symbol before, why is it not, then, later? Why did suddenly jewelry cease to be jewelry and symbol, and just become a thing you hold your blouse together with? He's probably right and I'm wrong. I didn't sense that I was carrying … [*From his tone of voice, Phil brought up the subject to mock the critic, and then as we spoke convinced himself that the critic was probably right*.]

•

DICK: I was reading your early essays about me, and I noticed, as in *Actuel*, this word *paranoia* cropping up. [*Phil and I had been looking at the September 1974 issue of* Actuel, *a French "underground press" magazine. It's a special issue on paranoia, and includes an interview with Phil, who is called* "le grand paranoiaque de la science-fiction."] It seems to be an obsession with you. How many writers have you defamed this way?

WILLIAMS: As paranoid?

DICK: Yes.

WILLIAMS: Only the ones who ask me if I'm going to call them paranoid or not.

DICK: I never asked you … Well, *Actuel* has a lot to say about it.

WILLIAMS: Yeah, but you were going to say something. About paranoia.

DICK: Oh. Yeah. I used to be paranoid. Now, don't laugh when I say that. I mean it.

WILLIAMS: You were? In what way? Give me an example.

DICK: I thought my house was gonna be hit.
Now seriously. Are we talking seriously?

WILLIAMS: Yes. The tape recorder's on—

DICK: Then how come I've got a Life Saver in my mouth?
Okay. I used to believe the universe was basically hostile. And that I was misplaced in it, I was different from it. Cut off some other —cut off from—fashioned from some other universe and placed here, you see. So that it zigged when I zagged. And that it had singled me out only because there was something weird about me. It isn't so much that I blamed it, but I blamed myself. I didn't really groove with the universe.

Now, I had a lot of fears that the universe would discover just how different I was from it. My only suspicion about it was that it would find out the truth about me, and its reaction would be perfectly normal: It would get me. I didn't feel that it was malevolent, just perceptive. And there's nothing worse than a perceptive universe if there's something weird about you.

But this year I realized that that's not true. That the universe is perceptive, but it's friendly. And I don't know if you define the former as paranoia. There's different forms of paranoia. There's conspiracy paranoia—usually that's what they mean, you know, conspiracy paranoia … when people are sitting around, planning to get you, and they have malevolent motives, and there's something really great about you, and they don't want this to be allowed to go on, this greatness about you.

But I never felt that. I felt that I was a crumb. It was just a question—it was like, if I cheated in school, it was a question of time before they found out. So I always had this urge to confess to the universe my sins.

And I just don't feel that I'm different from the universe anymore. I never really felt it was malevolent. I just felt that—you know what I felt, Paul? I felt that the universe was so constructed that I could never really naturally follow the directions on anything and arrive easily and without effort at the right end. I think this is a learning thing, that the instructions that are easy for normal children are difficult for some children; they perceive a little differently, so that the ordinary instructions like "Color all the ducks yellow" somehow confuses some children for some perceptual reason.

I don't know if you would call this paranoia or just a sense of alienation, I think that there's lots of different kinds, and I just wonder about the term *paranoia*, because I tend to think of it more as a systemized view, very rigid systemized view, involving certain people or groups persecuting you rather consistently for malevolent reasons.

WILLIAMS: A lot like what happens to Jason Taverner [the protagonist of *Flow My Tears*, a TV star who suddenly becomes a nonperson; even his friends never heard of him, as though he were in the wrong world altogether].

DICK: Well, it's not me.

WILLIAMS: Well, why did you create that situation?

DICK: Um, that's just a plot thing. Also, he's found innocent at the end.

WILLIAMS: Yeah, well … You have paranoid plots. I mean, plots that are often motivated by paranoia. That isn't necessarily to say that you're a paranoid.

DICK: Well, you know, I think that where the linkage is, between what I had and clinical paranoia, is the sense of being watched. All paranoids feel they're being watched. And people can feel they're being watched—they call it paranoia sensitiva. It's a sense of body shame, or a sense of conspicuousness, and these are all just degrees.

If you're a hip dude and you show up by chance at a church social, you can feel—right?—paranoid, that you're being watched. And people thinking negative thoughts … And the thing that shows up in my books is that the characters are being watched all the time. That's Taverner: He's always being watched by the cops, they're always looking—that's true, right? That does stem from my sense—I feel that I'm always in the public eye, that I have no privacy, there is no such thing as privacy.

I want to lay an idea on you, man. There are no privacies versus publixes any more.

WILLIAMS: There are no secrets.

DICK: There are no private lives. This is what Nixon found out. 'Course he engineered it himself, with the tapes. This is a most important aspect of modern life. As a science-fiction writer, dealing with the future, I want to speak to this. That one of the biggest transformations we have seen in human life in our society is the diminution of the sphere of the private. That we must reasonably now all regard the fact that there are no secrets and nothing is private. Everything is public.

Now, I used to think this was terrible, you know. I'll give you an example. One time this little kid came to the door and said, [*high voice*] "Can I have some papers?" Little girl. So I give her a lot, and she says, "I can't carry those." So I says, "I'll carry them for you.

Where do you live?" "Up the street." So I'm carrying them, walking along with her, carrying all these *L.A. Times*, and I see a cop car parked. Just parked. And the cop sitting there watching.

WILLIAMS: And you think, Oh, my God.

DICK: Oh, my God.

WILLIAMS: They're gonna think I'm—

DICK: Yes.

WILLIAMS: —carrying these papers down the street for this little girl because—

DICK: I'm gonna molest her. And she says, "Carry them upstairs into my apartment." And I thought, Oh, my God, the end of my life has come. If I break and run, that'll do it, he'll come while I'm—

WILLIAMS: That's paranoid, Phil.

DICK: It certainly is. You better believe it is. And I carried them in, and I dropped them as fast as I could, and I walked back, and he sat there and he watched me as I walked back, you know. And I spoke to another little kid—they're all kids who collect newspapers—and as I passed his car, he started his motor and drove off. He was watching me. There was no doubt about it. Because he waited till I had passed him, and then he started up and drove off. And he wanted me to know it. That's why he started up. He could have stayed there for eight years.

Now, I got home. And I was in an all-screwed-up state. My hair was all fizzled, you know, my eyes were all out of sorts. And I thought, Well, an end has to come to this some way. There has to be a way by which this is abolished. And then I got to thinking a lot of really heavy thoughts about it, you see. That the good side of this is, we are always under scrutiny, and that we should always regard it as such, and therefore we should never be hypocrites, we should never lie, you know, we should never be forked-tongue types, right? See, it's going to force us to be completely honest and consistent, because if we're not, we're screwed up. That's the good part of it. I mean, it's going to unify our public and private life.

But the bad part of it is that in a way we're at the mercy of other people, which is also part of a more densely populated society, you see what I mean? No isolation, no seclusion.

Now, I kept rethinking that situation. I should have walked over to that police car. And I should have said—

WILLIAMS: "Up yours, pig!"

DICK: No, no, that isn't right, no, you must be from out of town. I should have said, "Are you looking at me?" And he'd have just sat there. He wouldn't have said nothing. I'd say, "Well, I got something —" Well, no, I'd still be in the bucket, wouldn't I? I should have said, "You know who I am? I'm a famous per—" Well, no, that still would have got … Let's see. What would've been better than just slinking by the police car? Um. Walking up to him and showing him a photograph of my daughters? No, man, every act is self-incriminating, by virtue of the fact that one goes out of one's way.

WILLIAMS: It's obvious that you had a guilty mind.

DICK: You know what I thought of doing? Falling dead on the sidewalk. Just literally, like, arranging it so my heart stopped

beating, I'd just fall dead. Now wouldn't that have made him stop suspecting me?

WILLIAMS: Yeah, he would have looked over and said, "Oh, well," and driven off.

DICK: Driven off a little sooner.

You know, suppose my heart—What am I saying? "Suppose my heart was absolutely pure"—it was absolutely pure. Talk long enough, Phil, and you will be in the bucket. Um … I should have said, "Officer, I want to commend you for watching over the lives of these little kids. With people like me around, you—" No, that ain't right either.

I think that for me it's hopeless; in situations of that kind, I will always feel— I should have said, "Officer, arrest that child!" I don't know, man …

You know what? He was parked there to make people nervous; besides watching out for the kids, he was also parked there to make people nervous.

WILLIAMS: To make you turn over more newspapers.

DICK: No, I've never turned over any newspapers since then. In fact, I've never gone outside. He may still be there.

Now, about paranoia. The whole point of this was to explain that I wasn't paranoid.

WILLIAMS: Right.

DICK: I really feel that if I haven't convinced you so far, just go talk to that cop, about the guy that walked back on his hands and knees …

I'll tell you, man. Paranoia, in some respects, I think, is a modern-day development of an ancient, archaic sense that animals still have —quarry-type animals—that they're being watched. Imagine you're a mole, walking across the field. You gotta have a sixth sense that something's overhead, cruising, like a hawk. Now, I say paranoia is an atavistic sense.

WILLIAMS: A what?

DICK: Atavistic. It's a lingering sense, that we had long ago, when we were—our ancestors were—very vulnerable to predators, and this sense tells them that they're being watched. And they're being watched probably by something that's going to get them.

This sense should be abolished by now. We shouldn't have it. But some people have a lingering sense, when they walk on a field, something's looking at 'em, see. And that's what paranoia is all about.

And often my characters have this feeling.

WILLIAMS: That they're being watched.

DICK: Yeah. But what really I've done is I have "atavised" their society. That although it's set in the future, in many ways they're living—there is a retrogressive quality in their lives, you know? They're living like our ancestors did. I mean, the hardware is in the future, the scenery's in the future, but the situations are really from the past.

Person at bay, you see, against the ring of hostile forces. It is a pre-socialized society, before communal and social living had developed where this instinct could diminish, disappear. So there's an element of the primitive in my characters, primitive in the sense of atavistic. They are isolates, pitted against everything that comes along.

But I just want to lecture you on being very careful about what you mean by the word *paranoia*. It's used a lot, as that article in *Harper's* says [a recent cover story about paranoia, which included a description of PKD's *Clans of the Alphane Moon*], it's used a lot as a kind of jargon word. Now I know you don't use it that way, but … It covers a multitude of crazinesses, and one of them is an atavistic thing, of a person who is not fully socialized, and therefore does not really know who is around him he can turn to. It's more of a primitive thing than anything else.

WILLIAMS: I think of paranoia as a heightened awareness of the connections between things.

DICK: That's true. The intuitive thing, that links stuff. You say, "This connects with that, and—"

WILLIAMS: And a, perhaps, imbalanced sense of the significance of those connections.

DICK: Correct. Jung said the same thing. It's a pattern. Aha! It all makes sense, it fits into place, right? Aha! Right? The significance of this detail, and everything has meaning. There's the spread of meaning throughout everything. Nothing has been overlooked. But everything in a way is equally regarded, you know, as fitting into a gestalt. It's overgestalting.

It assumes purpose, too—right?—where there's no purpose. Somebody bumps into you by accident—

WILLIAMS: And says, "Excuse me."

DICK: And you say—

WILLIAMS: “What did he mean by that?”

DICK: That’s it, yeah. It’s assuming motive when there is none.

But you know, that article in *Harper’s* is important, because it shows how this is a degenerated form of the old idea of a cosmology in which there are no accidents, and everything is part of God’s plan, providence. We lose God and what are we left with? A network of connivance, without any benign center. And this assumption that people are motivated by hostility, that their motives are—that they’re doing something bad when you can’t understand what they’re doing. I think there’s more to it. I don’t think any theory of paranoia really explains it, except the very classic clinical paranoia.

You know what I think? I think that these are complete failures in an attempt to understand one’s environment as a true cosmology. And since one does not realize that unless one posits a basically benign force behind it, to start with … if one begins to construct a cosmology without it, it’s very easy then to get into areas of malevolence. That we don’t realize that at one time we posited to start with a benign super-entity, right? God. And then assumed His plan from that, deduced the plan from His presence, and now we start seeing a plan …

I’ll give you an example of what I mean. You see a plan, you see a pattern—one of the key words here is *pattern*, right?—you see a pattern of events, and if you have no transcendent view, no mystical view, no religious view, then the pattern must emanate from people. Where else can it come from, if that’s all? And you start sensing a kind of a transcendent thing or mystical thing. Then you say, well, they didn’t mean to do what they did; there’s purpose in it, there’s a pattern in it, the pattern is real, but they didn’t intend it, they had no personal intentions, and it wasn’t directed at me. They didn’t mean it, and I’m not the victim, or target, of it. It’s not aimed at me by them. It’s a pattern, though.

I think we’re getting a restricted view of actual patterns. And the restricted view says that people do things deliberately, in concert,

aimed at me, where in truth there are patterns that emanate from beyond people. And they're certainly not directed at any one of us, you know; they're much broader, and they work through all of us.

But this requires a view that transcends social, human life, into a kind of mystical realm. Which could even be genetic forces, like the DNA forces, coding and so forth. I always think of the bug, saying, "Someone is trying to force me, someone is conspiring to make me weave a cocoon." And looks around at the other bugs. "I wonder which …" They're conspiring, you see. Without sensing a force outside of his own environment.

Please don't continually say I'm paranoid.

WILLIAMS: Why?

DICK: It makes me paranoid. You know what I think? I think the thing is that paranoia must be pulled inside out. Absolutely inside out. It's not that it should be destroyed. I mean that the solution to paranoia is to convince the person there is no pattern to the universe, that everything is chaotic, chance, and that people have no intentions. And that he is unimportant.

WILLIAMS: And it's all pointless.

DICK: Yeah. That's not the answer. To say, "You're unimportant, nobody cares about you, there is no meaning to anything, you'll die unnoticed. You have no purpose here on Earth. You're a negligible cog in a meaningless society. Now do you feel better?"

Turn it inside out, rather than just abolish it. That it's benign, and that it transcends our individualities and so on. The way I feel is that the universe itself is actually alive, and we're in it as part of it. And it is like a breathing creature, which explains the concept of the Atman, you know, the breath, pneuma, the breath of God … that the universe sort of breathes, we sense it, the movements back and

forth, the systole—breathing in and out, whatever that's called, we sense its movement, like that.

It's not that individual objects are alive, it's the whole thing is an entity that is aware of itself, and we're part of it, and we're never outside of it.

And—and—and—you know, it's kind of—it's kind of—why don't you read that *Actuel*?

You see this is the opposite of paranoia. I mean, it's the reverse of it. Another opposite is, there's no pattern, right? That's a way of saying opposite. But this is pulling it inside out, that everything is moving, changing, growing, developing, and that we move with it. We can never escape this movement, and its plans for us.

WILLIAMS: Try as we may.

DICK: Yeah. Like Jonah, trying to get away from the whale. "Trying to get away from the whale!" Trying to get away from God. I mean, it's a metaphor. He was swallowed by God and the whale yelled at him and made God cough him up—I forget how that goes.

But you know, that we're part of it. And it's not that we're reified by that, it's just that—um—it's a pattern, and—why don't you read that *Actuel*?

I have tackled the Actuel *with my schoolboy French, but nothing has been revealed. Michel Demuth's brief interview with Phil (1974) has the following subheads: "Le chaos," "L'acide," "Le suicide," "Les machines," "La société totalitaire," "La paranoia." Phil's comments on his suicide attempt in Canada, which led to his entering the heroin rehab place, bring me face-to-face with two ironies that I hadn't looked at closely before: that Phil had to pretend to be a junkie in order to get into X-Kalay, the inverse of his standard theme of the android pretending to be human; and that his purpose in entering X-Kalay was that he needed someplace where he could be watched twenty-four hours a day*.

Under the heading "La paranoia," Phil says:

Surprise is a sort of antidote to paranoia. To live in a way that you encounter a lot of surprises proves that you're not a paranoid. For the paranoid, there are no surprises; everything happens exactly as has predicted, everything finds a place in his system. For us, it is not possible to have a system. Perhaps all systems—that is to say all formulations, verbal, symbolic, semantic or otherwise, that claim to explain the universe by a universal hypothesis—are manifestations of paranoia. We must content ourselves with the mystery, the absurdity, the contradictions, the hostility, but also the generosity that our environment offers us. It's not much, but it's always better than the deadly, defeatist certainty of the paranoid.

ANTICIPATING THE FUTURE

INTERVIEW BY D. SCOTT APEL AND KEVIN C. BRIGGS
JUNE 20, 1977

D. Scott Apel and Kevin C. Briggs interviewed Phil Dick at his girlfriend Joan Simpson's Sonoma, California, house during the summer of 1977 for a book that was eventually published as Science Fiction: An Oral History *(The Impermanent Press, 2014)*.

APEL: What are your working habits? Are there definite guidelines you've given yourself as a writer for getting a book produced?

DICK: My working habits fall into two distinct groups. The first group was when if I didn't write three or four novels a year I'd starve to death, and so I wrote three or four novels a year. Mark Hurst, my Bantam editor, says I wrote something like sixteen novels in five years. I don't know if that's true.

APEL: You didn't keep count?

DICK: Well, I just wrote all the time. I remember typing the words "The End," pulling that page out, and putting in another page that said "Chapter One." I calculated that I had typed—well, two drafts on a book would be six hundred pages—and I do two drafts minimum—that's twelve hundred pages in three weeks. I was beginning to show real signs of wear. I had an electric typewriter, of course, everything to facilitate a large output.

Then there came a point where there were two factors involved that changed. One, the simple factor of fatigue. You just cannot go on forever doing that much, even if you have the ideas. The physical condition that you find yourself in prohibits it. This was all around 1964, after I won the Hugo for *The Man in the High Castle*. I said to myself, "Strike while the iron is hot," and I wrote. I was a writing

fool. Sixteen novels in five years. Now how long a life span would you want to give a person that tried to make that a professional working schedule? I didn't run out of ideas; I just ran out of energy. I was depleting myself.

Then another thing happened. [Science fiction editor] Terry Carr said to me, "All your novels are exactly the same." Boy, do I remember this; this really got put in my long-term memory banks. He said, "Whenever you pick up a Poul Anderson novel, it's completely different from all other Poul Anderson novels." (I'm not willing to concede that's correct, but that's what he said.) "Whenever you pick up a Bob Silverberg novel, it's different from all other Bob Silverberg novels. But pick up one of your novels, and they're all the same. And the fans are grumbling," he says. "Why don't you stop trying to figure out what reality is and asking what reality is, as you continually do, and *say* what it is." And I thought: *Golly!* That is *profound*. I *have* written that theme perpetually: What is reality? And now They—and by "They," you know who I mean … those giant figures that surround you all the time …

APEL: *Them*.

DICK: *Them*. Yes. They say I have to say what reality is, and the reason I never had any intention of doing that is that *I don't know*—I have no knowledge at all of what reality is. All I can do is plaintively inquire, "Hey, gang, what is really real?"

•

DICK: If there's one thing I don't want to be, it's a paranoid. If I thought I was, I'd really throw in the sponge. All anybody has to do to stop a line of argument I'm pursuing is to say that it's paranoid …

Before the hit on my house [in November 1971], I and my girlfriend, who was living with me, believed this was going to happen. We believed that some people were going to hit the house,

just burst in, destroy and take stuff, pillage … all this stuff. We believed it for about a week. And all of our friends told us we were paranoid. But I got her out of the house, and the day after I got her out of the house, it happened … exactly as we both anticipated it happening.

This raises several curious questions. We were paranoid, in a sense, when you believe that unknown, invisible people are going to hit your house at any moment. I remember she and I huddling in the bedroom, and saying, "Well, I tell you what we'll do: we'll call the PG&E and tell them that our pilot lights have gone out, and they'll send out a truck and that means that they'll be out in the backyard for a while, and that'll give us a couple of hours." We were *so sure* that this was going to happen.

APEL: The dilemma you were in sounds like that old joke, you know: Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they *aren't* after you.

DICK: Yeah. She was the one that first said, "I think the house is gonna be hit." And she was completely crazy. She thought they were going to come in through the coils in the air conditioner. I had to get her out of there because she was breaking under the strain. I would take her out to a restaurant, and she would just sit there and look at the menu. She was unable to order. I'd have to order for her, like she was a child. But she was absolutely right. And I was sure enough of it to get out of there.

I talked to people whose houses had been hit on drug busts—those no-knock drug busts where the cops come in through the doors and windows—and they'd say they had these strange sensations that they were being watched, and that this thing was in preparation, and then it would turn out to be true. It may be that paranoia is an atavistic sense system that we have left over from the days when we were hunted by fierce predators in the jungle.

BRIGGS: I think it's interesting that feelings like that come out especially in a counterculture, and I think it may be partially due to exposure to a wide variety of drugs. I think people are more open to think about things like, "They're going to bust me. I can feel it." Most people would think that's an irrational feeling and dismiss it.

DICK: Well, if you're in a counterculture and you've got contraband, they may find something. In the straight world, first of all, they're not holding. So what're they worried about? Anyway, they run the establishment anyway, so it's just a joke idea that they're going to be hit, since they're the master class. But in the counterculture … well, it's like *The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* comics, you know; every time there's a knock on the door, they flush the stash. This feeling is part of being in a counterculture. I remember every time a police car drove slowly up the street, we'd all run out in the backyard and throw the plants over in the neighbor's yard.

I remember one terrible time—just one ghastly incident—where … heh heh. Shit … where the goddamn police car stopped, and there was an unmarked cop car behind it, so we knew, you know, that it was the moment of truth. So we had one plant, and we had a chain of instructions: "Throw the plant. Pull the plant and throw it." So I yanked this plant up, and I threw it over the fence. And I looked up, and standing on the other side of the fence were three of the largest black dudes I had ever seen in my life. [*Laughter*] And they stand there, and they look at this plant at their feet, and one of them says, "We done seen the narc vehicle too." I couldn't think of anything to say, so I just went in the house. [*Laughter*] So pretty soon—about an hour, like—there was a knock on the door. And I open the door, and there are these three black guys standing there. And I thought: *They are going to kill me. And I deserve it.* I wouldn't argue, you know … but what they had done was they had roasted our plant in their oven, and manicured it and rolled it into joints, and they felt they should share the joints with us. So we all sat around and smoked it all up. And I thought, *You know, that's not*

how I would have handled it. But I mean, you know, if you've got something growing in your backyard, you're going to be paranoid all the days of your life, until you get the damn thing out of your yard.

•

APEL: What does a science fiction writer fear the most?

DICK: I can only speak for myself, but in 1964 I was driving along the MacArthur freeway in Oakland, and I saw this horrible old old hotel—"rooms by the day or week"—and I said, "I'm gonna wind up in a little room in a horrible old old hotel in the slums of Oakland. It could be tomorrow, or twenty years from now, but I feel it coming; I feel this horrible destiny."

Then I tried to think why that would be the case. Why would I wind up like that? A lot of it has to do with the financial situation that science fiction writers are in, except for the great ones, like Heinlein. Isolation and loneliness are what's so horrible.

Writing is a solitary occupation. A friend of mine had great ambitions to become a science fiction writer. While he was writing his second novel, his wife left him, and one of the reasons she left him was that he spent all his time writing. Even a year later he was still asking every day, "Is that the price you have to pay to be a science fiction writer?" He was aware of the great similarity with my life. On several occasions, the woman I was living with would leave me when I was right in the middle of the book, and in a very vulnerable position, psychologically. I had all my psychological energy tied up in the book. He said it almost seems like some kind of fate that overtakes science fiction writers … Now he's afraid the same thing will happen again if he finds another woman and keeps on writing.

APEL: It takes a lot of personal fortitude to continue in the face of loneliness and low income; to know that day after day you are going to be alone at your typewriter with just your thoughts. But then, in another sense, I suppose that could facilitate the process of writing: if the outer world is so difficult, it's that much more of an incentive to plunge headlong into an inner world and find fantasies good enough to write about.

DICK: That's a good point. I was living that way in Santa Ana. It scared me that my first reaction to my current girlfriend moving out was one of relief and happiness. There's a certain attraction in being alone with my thoughts and working materials. For the first time in my life, I was ready to face that fate that in '64 looked so terrible. Actually, I had a good apartment, a car I liked, and so on. For the first time I could see the advantages of solitude to a writer.

When I met Joan, I had a certain fundamental decision to make: not, did I want to get involved with her as an individual, but did I want to get involved with *anybody*. I've been involved with so many women but it always ended badly … at least it always ended, which to me is synonymous. I finally decided that whatever positive effect being alone would have on my writing, I would always be asking myself, "Why are you doing it?" if I was alone.

•

APEL: We were thinking about the charge often leveled against you that your work is liberally spiced with precognitive bits. Your novel *We Can Build You*, for instance, with its Lincoln simulacrum, predated Disney's Mr. Lincoln robot by several years.

BRIGGS: And your occasional use of "newsclowns" predated the "Happy News" television concept.

DICK: That precognitive thing in my novels has really spooked me. It's really there. You can see how I would become aware of it in direct proportion to the number of books I wrote: if there was such a factor, the more I wrote, the more I'd begin to notice this.

Let's establish just for the record examples thereof. In the rough draft of *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*, there's a girl named Kathy. Her husband's name is Jack. She is nineteen years old. She appears to be working for the criminal underground, the anti-establishment thing, but actually—because she hopes to get her husband out of a forced labor camp through cooperation—she is working for the police. The policeman she is working with is on the Inspector level, which is unusual.

Now, that was written in 1970 and the first draft put aside. In December of 1970, I met a girl whose name was Kathy, who was nineteen years old, who appeared to be a dope dealer, who, it turned out much later—I didn't know this for *one year*—had been arrested and had made a deal to inform to the police if they'd drop the charges. Her boyfriend was named Jack, and the policeman she worked with was an Inspector. That's when the precognitive thing in my books really hit me. My novel was so close it was damn near actionable. I could just see an attorney listing all this stuff, you know. Precise details.

APEL: Any single one of those things could be accounted for by chance—everyone knows a Kathy and a Jack; everybody in the counterculture knows a dope dealer, and so on—but when so many "coincidences" pile up, it exceeds the bounds of chance.

DICK: I have really spent a lot of time thinking about this stuff once I began to notice it. I mean, several people have said to me they thought there were precognitive elements in my books, but it didn't really strike me until this thing about *Flow My Tears*. God, I *met* the inspector she was working with. That's how I found out about it. She and I went into a restaurant and she stopped dead and said,

“We can’t go in there; Inspector So-and-so is in there.” And in my book, he wears a gray coat, or something like that, and there he was, sitting in a gray coat.

I really had to ask myself about this. And what I began to notice was that the precognitive material was coming to me in my sleep, in dream form. That was in 1972, and I began to pay real attention to my dreams from that standpoint. The more time passed the more I was forced to face the actuality of the precognitive elements.

The irony was that my second novel, *The World Jones Made*, was about a precognitive. And it didn’t do him a damn bit of good. He couldn’t avert the event. It was hell for him. He had precognition for one year ahead. And when he got within the last year of his life, he had a precognition of being dead, so it really was not a talent that gave him any options.

KILLING THE RAT

INTERVIEW BY CHARLES PLATT
MAY 17, 1979

I found Mr. Dick to be a dignified, thoughtful, slightly portly figure, with black hair, graying beard, and an informal but distinguished presence. He is erudite, intimidatingly well read, but has none of the pretensions or detachment of an academic. He lives in a plain, modest apartment in Santa Ana, California, with two cats, some slightly rundown contemporary furniture, heaps of reference books, and an expensive stereo system. As I unpack my tape recorder I realize that he has already set up his own; a high-quality Shure microphone is on the black-glass tabletop, and he will be recording me at the same time that I record him. He seems slightly evasive about this, and says casually that he always makes his own tape whenever he is interviewed. I suppose one could regard this as paranoid behavior; I don't, but it does look as if he is intending to check up on me, to see if my tape transcript is accurate—or am I being paranoid now?

PLATT: When you first started writing science fiction, I believe you were a student at Berkeley who was also working part-time in a radio-TV retail store?

DICK: I was in a curious position. I had read science fiction since I was twelve years old, and was really addicted. I just loved it. I also was reading what the Berkeley intellectual community was reading. For example, Proust or Joyce. So I occupied two worlds right there that normally did not intersect. Then, working in the store, the people I knew were TV salesmen and repairmen; they considered me peculiar for reading at *all*. I spent time in all kinds of different groups; I knew a lot of homosexuals; there was a whole homosexual community in the Bay Area even then, in the 1940s. I knew some very fine poets, and I was very proud of them as my friends. *They* thought of me as strange because I wasn't gay, and the people in my store thought I was strange because I knew gay people and read

books, and my Communist friends thought I was odd because I wouldn't join the Communist Party. So being involved in science fiction didn't make all that much difference. Henry Miller said in one of his books that other children threw stones at him when they saw him. I had that same feeling. I managed to become universally despised wherever I went. I think that I must have thrived on it, because it kept happening so many times in so many ways.

PLATT: What was compelling about science fiction?

DICK: I got married when I was nineteen, and it wasn't until a little later that I really began to write. I got married again when I was twenty-one. A point came when I began to feel that science fiction was very important. Van Vogt's *The World of Null-A*—there was something about that which absolutely fascinated me. It had a mysterious quality, it alluded to things unseen, there were puzzles presented that were never adequately explained. I found in it a numinous quality; I began to get an idea of a mysterious quality in the universe that could be dealt with in science fiction. I realize now that what I was sensing was a kind of metaphysical medieval world, an invisible realm of things half-seen, essentially what medieval people sensed as the transcendent world, the next world. I did not have a religious background. I was raised in a Quaker school—they're about the only group in the world that I don't have some grievance against; there's no hassle between me and the Quakers—but the Quaker thing was just a lifestyle. And in Berkeley there was no religious spirit at all.

I don't know if van Vogt would agree that he's essentially dealing with the supernatural, but that's what was happening in me. I was beginning to sense that what we perceived was not what was actually there. I was interested in Jung's idea of projection—what we experience as external to us may really be projected from our unconscious, which means of course that each person's world has to be somewhat different from everybody else's, because the contents

of each person's unconscious will be to a certain extent unique. I began a series of stories in which people experienced worlds that were a projection of their own psyches.

PLATT: What first prompted your sense that the world we perceive is not actually there?

DICK: It was an experience I had in high school with my geometry teacher. I was looking at her one day. She was rattling away in this high-pitched clackety-clack shrill voice and suddenly I had the impression she was not a human being but a mechanical creature and that all of a sudden her head would fall off and this spring would be visible. The more I thought about it the more it seemed quite likely that this was the case. Once the idea got into my mind I couldn't get rid of it.

PLATT: For a while in the 1950s you attempted to work both inside and outside of the science-fiction field.

DICK: I wrote many novels that were not science fiction or fantasy. They all contained the element of the projected personal unconscious, or projected collective unconscious, which made them simply incomprehensible to anyone who read them, because they required the reader to accept my premise that each of us lives in a unique world. Such books proved difficult to sell. One, *Confessions of a Crap Artist*, was finally brought out in 1975; the rest have never been published. But there are nine or ten manuscripts extant.*

It's been a long road; but science fiction offered me a route by which I could publish the kind of thing that I wanted to write. *Martian Time-Slip* is exactly what I wanted to write. It deals with the premise that was, to me, so important—not just that we each live in a somewhat unique world of our own psychological content, but that the subjective world of one rather powerful person can infringe

on the world of another person. If I can make you see the world the way I see it, then you will automatically think the way I think. You will come to the conclusions that I come to. And the greatest power one human being can exert over others is to control their perceptions of reality, and infringe on the integrity and individuality of their world. This is done in politics, in psychotherapy.

I went through attack-therapy. You get a lot of people all yelling at you, and suddenly the mystery of the Moscow purge trials of the 1930s becomes very clear—what could possibly make a person get up and say in a most sincere manner that he had committed a crime, the penalty for which was execution? Well, the answer lies in the incredible power of a group of human beings to invade a man's world and determine his image of himself so that he can actually believe their view of him. I remember in attack-therapy there was one guy dressed kind of nattily, and he was French. They said, "You look like a homosexual." Within half an hour they had him convinced that he was a homosexual. He started crying. I thought, This is very strange, because I know this guy is *not* homosexual. And yet he's crying and admitting to this thing—not to cause the abuse to stop, the screams of these people all yelling at him, "You fairy, you fruit, you homo, admit what you are." By confessing to it he didn't cause them to stop, he caused them to yell louder and say, "We were right, we were right." He was simply beginning to agree with them.

All this can be viewed politically or psychologically. To me it was all viewed dramatically in my writing, as the eerie and uncanny invasion of one person's world by another person's world. If I invade your world you will probably sense something alien, because my world is different from yours. You must, of course, fight it. But often we don't because a lot of it is subtle; we just have intimations that our worlds are being invaded, we don't know where this invasion of our personal integrity is coming from. It comes from authority figures in general.

PLATT: How conscious are you of addressing a reader when you are writing about this?

DICK: I am very conscious of the reader. I am saying to the reader, The greatest menace in the twentieth century is the totalitarian state. It can take many forms: left-wing fascism, psychological movements, religious movements, drug rehabilitation places, powerful people, manipulative people; or it can be in a relationship with someone who is more powerful than you psychologically. Essentially, I'm pleading the cause of those people who are not strong. If I were strong myself I would probably not feel this as such a menace. I identify with the weak person; this is one reason why my fictional protagonists are essentially anti-heroes. They're almost losers, yet I try to equip them with qualities by which they can survive. At the same time I don't want to see them develop counter-aggressive tactics where they, too, become exploitative and manipulative.

PLATT: I get the suspicion that people say, "Oh, you're paranoid." Or at least they might have before your house was hit in 1971.

DICK: I remember opening the door, and finding nothing but ruins everywhere, windows and doors smashed in, files blown open, all my papers missing, all my canceled checks gone, my stereo gone, and I remember thinking, Well, it sure is a hell of a mess, but there goes that "paranoid" theory.

Actually I was told by a fairly good analyst that I'm not cold-blooded enough to be paranoid. He said to me, "You're melodramatic and you're full of illusions about life, but you're too sentimental to be paranoid." I took the Minnesota Multiphasic psychological profile test once, and I tested out as paranoid, cyclothymic, neurotic, schizophrenic … I was so high on some of the scales that the dot was up in the instructions part. You couldn't even find the dot. But I also tested out as an incorrigible liar. You see,

they'll give you the same question phrased in several different ways. They'll say something like: "There is a divine deity that rules the world." And I'd say, Yeah, there probably is. Later on they'll say: "I don't think there is a divine deity that rules the world." And I'd say, That's probably correct, I can see a lot of reasons for agreeing with that. And later they'll say: "I'm not sure if there's a divine deity that rules the world." And I'd say, Yeah, that's about right. In every case I was sincere.

PLATT: You were?

DICK: I think philosophically I fit in with some of the very late pre-Socratic people around the time of Zeno and Diogenes—the Cynics, in the Greek sense. I am inevitably persuaded by every argument that is brought to bear. If you were to suggest to me at this moment that we go out for Chinese food I would immediately agree it was the best idea I ever heard; in fact, I would say, "You've got to let me pay for it." If you were to say suddenly, Don't you think that Chinese food is overpriced, has very little nourishment, you have to go a *long* way to get it, and when you bring it home it's *cold*, I'd say, You're right, I can't abide the stuff. This is a sign of a very weak ego, I guess. However—if my view that each person has his unique world is correct, then if you say Chinese food is good, in your world it's good, and if someone else says it's bad, in his world it's bad. I'm a complete relativist in that for me the answer to the question "Is Chinese food good or bad?" is semantically meaningless. Now, this is *my* view. If your view is that this view is incorrect, you might be right. In which case, I would be willing to agree with you.

PLATT: How much of your thinking was influenced by LSD experiences?

DICK: I wrote *Time Out of Joint* in the 1950s, before I had even heard of LSD. In that book a guy walks up to a lemonade stand in the park, and it turns into a slip of paper marked Soft Drink Stand, and he puts the slip of paper in his pocket. Far-fucking-out, spacey, that's an "acid experience." If I didn't know better I'd say that this author had turned on many times, and his universe was coming unglued—he's obviously living in a *fake universe*.

What I was trying to do in that book was account for the diversity of worlds that people live in. I had not read Heraclitus then, I didn't know his concept of *ideos kosmos*, the private world, versus *koinos kosmos*, which we all share. I didn't know that the pre-Socratics had begun to discern these things.

There's a scene in the book where the protagonist goes into his bathroom, reaches in the dark for a pull-cord, and suddenly realizes there is no cord, there's a switch on the wall, and he can't remember when he ever had a bathroom where there was a cord hanging down. Now, that actually happened to me, and it was what caused me to write the book. It reminded me of the idea that van Vogt had dealt with, of artificial memory, as it occurs in *The World of Null-A* where a person has false memories implanted. A lot of what I wrote, which looks like the result of taking acid, is really the result of taking van Vogt very seriously. I *believed* van Vogt, I mean, *he wrote it*, you know, he was an authority figure. He said that people can be other than whom they remember themselves to be, and I found this fascinating. You have a massive suspension of disbelief on my part.

PLATT: To what extent were you into drugs?

DICK: The only drugs I took regularly were amphetamines, in order to be able to write as much as I had to write to make a living. I was being paid so little per book that I had to turn out a very large number of books. I just wrote like mad. I think I turned out sixteen novels in five years at one point. I did sixty finished pages a day, and the only way I could write that much was to take

amphetamines, which were prescribed for me. I finally stopped taking them, and I don't write as much as I used to.

PLATT: What about LSD?

DICK: I used to talk like I was really into acid. But the fact of the matter is that I took it two times, and the second time it was so weak a dose, it may not have even been acid. The first time, though, it was Sandoz acid, a giant capsule I got from the University of California, a friend and I split it, it must have been a whole milligram of it, we bought it for five dollars, and I'll tell ya, I went straight to hell, was what happened. The landscape froze over, there were huge boulders, there was a deep thumping, it was the day of wrath and God was judging me as a sinner. This lasted for thousands of years and didn't get any better, it just got worse and worse. I felt terrible physical pain and all I could talk in was Latin. Most embarrassing, because the girl I was with thought I was doing it to annoy her. I was whining like some poor dog that's been left out in the rain all night and finally the girl said, *Oh, barf*, and walked out of the room in disgust. It was a little bit like when I rolled my VW. It was very messy.

About a month later I got the galley proofs for *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* to read over, and I thought, Oh, dear, I can't read these, they're too scary. That book of course is my classic "LSD novel," even though all I had had to go on when I wrote it was an article by Aldous Huxley. But all the horrible things I had written seemed to have come true under acid.

That was in 1964. I used to beg people not to take acid. There was one girl who came over one night, and I made her an amateur Rorschach inkblot, and she said, "I see an evil shape coming to kill me." I said, "You'd be a damned fool to take acid." So she didn't take it then, but she did take it later, and she tried to kill herself and was hospitalized and became chronically psychotic. I saw her in

1970 and her mind was gone, it had destroyed her. She said that taking the acid had destroyed her.

I regarded drugs as dangerous and potentially lethal, but I had a cat's curiosity. It was my interest in the human mind that made me curious about psychotropic drugs. These were essentially religious strivings that were appearing in me. By the time of *Three Stigmata* I had become a convert to the Episcopal Church and I was becoming overtly, consciously curious about religion.

PLATT: What made you join the Episcopal Church?

DICK: My wife said if I didn't join the church she'd bust my nose. She says, If we're going to know judges and district attorneys and important people, we have to be Episcopalian.

PLATT: You said you had religious leanings anyway.

DICK: I was walking along one day. I looked up in the sky and there was this face staring down at me, a giant face with slotted eyes, the face I describe in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*. This was 1963. It was an evil, horrible-looking thing. I didn't clearly see it; but it was there.

PLATT: How do you think this came about?

DICK: I finally identified it, years later; I was looking through a copy of *Life* magazine and I came across a picture of some French forts from World War I. They were observation cupolas made out of iron, with slots where the soldiers could look out and see the Germans. My father had fought at the second battle of the Marne, he was in the 5th U.S. Marines, and when I was a little kid he used to show me all of his military equipment. He would put on his gas

mask and his eyes would disappear, and he would tell me about the battle of the Marne, and the horrors he went through.

He told me, a little four-year-old child, about men with their guts blown out, and he showed me his gun and everything, and told me how they fired till their guns were red-hot. He had been under gas attacks, and he told me of the terrible fear as the charcoal in the masks would become saturated with the gas and they would panic and tear their masks off. My father was a big handsome man, a football player, tennis player. I've read what the U.S. Marines did in that war, and those farm boys underwent what Remarque describes in *All Quiet on the Western Front* as unspeakable valor, unspeakable horrors. And there it was in 1963 looking down at me, a goddamned fortification from the Marne. My father may even have drawn a sketch or had photographs of it, for all I know.

PLATT: Turning to religion was a way of dealing with that experience?

DICK: I actually sought refuge in Christianity from what I saw in the sky. Seeing it as an evil deity, I wanted the reassurance that there was a benign deity more powerful. My priest actually said that perhaps I could become a Lutheran because I seemed to actually sense the presence of Satan. And this has continued to plague me, as an intimation that the god of this world is evil. The Buddha, seeing the evil of the world, came to the conclusion that there could be no creator god, because if there were, it could not be this way, there could not be so much evil and suffering; I had come to the conclusion that there was a deity in this world, and he was evil. I had formulated the problem again and again in books like *Maze of Death* and *Ubik* and *Three Stigmata* and *Eye in the Sky*. The essential problem as I construed it into the 1970s, looking back through my thinking and writing of twenty-five years, was that the divine power that I perceived as master of this world was cruel, wanton, blind, insensible, destructive, or evil.

Is this all what you were interested in?

PLATT: This is relevant. It's fascinating.

DICK: When I was in my thirties and living in the country, I had to kill a rat that had gotten into the children's bedroom. Rats are hard to kill. I set a trap for it. In the night it got into the trap, and the next morning, when I got up, it heard me coming, and it screamed. I took the trap out with a pitchfork and sprung the trap and let the rat go out in the pasture, and it came out of the trap and its neck was broken. I took the pitchfork and drove the tines into the rat, and it *still* didn't die. Here was this rat, it had tried only to come in and get food, it was poisoned, its neck was broken, it was stabbed, and it was still alive. At that point I simply went crazy with horror. I ran in and filled a tub with water and drowned it. And I buried it and I took the St. Christopher medal that I wore and buried that with the rat. And the soul of that rat I carry on me from then on, as a question and as a problem about the condition of living creatures on this world. The rat had come into the house to get food. That is all it was motivated to do.

If this is not relevant, you'll tell me.

PLATT: No, no, it's absolutely central.

DICK: In my novel *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*, the armed posse is approaching a building where Jason Taverner is shut up in the dark. He hears them and he screams, and that is the rat screaming when it heard me coming. Even in 1974 I was still remembering that rat screaming. I could not exorcise the spirit of that rat that had died so horribly.

And then, at the trough of my life, where I saw only inexplicable suffering, there came to me a beatific vision that calmed all my sense of horror and my sense of the transcendent power of evil. My

mental anguish was simply removed from me as if by a divine fiat, in an intervention of a psychological-mystical type. Some transcendent divine power that was not evil but benign intervened to restore my mind and heal my body and give me a sense of the beauty, the joy, the sanity of the world. And out of this I forged a concept that is relatively simple and possibly unique in theology, and that is: the *irrational* is the primordial stratum of the universe, it comes first in time and is primary in ontology—in levels of essence. And it evolves into rationality. The history of the universe is a movement from irrationality—chaos, cruelty, blindness, pointlessness—to a rational structure that is harmonious, interlinked in a way that is orderly and beautiful. The primordial creative deity was essentially *deranged*, from our standpoint; we are, as humans, an evolution above the primordial deity, we are pygmies but we stand on the shoulders of giants and therefore we see more than they see. We human beings are created and yet we are more rational than the creator himself who spawned us.

PLATT: That's a wonderful idea.

DICK: My outlook is based not on faith but on an actual encounter that I had in 1974, when I experienced an invasion of my mind by a transcendentally rational mind, as if I had been insane all my life and suddenly I had become sane. Now, I have actually thought of that as a possibility, that I had been psychotic from 1928, when I was born, until March of 1974. But I don't think that's the case. I may have been somewhat whacked-out and eccentric for years and years, but I know I wasn't all that crazy, because I'd been given Rorschach tests and so on.

This rational mind was not human. It was more like an artificial intelligence. On Thursdays and Saturdays I would think it was God, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays I would think it was extraterrestrial, sometimes I would think it was the Soviet Union Academy of Sciences trying out their psychotronic microwave telepathic

transmitter. I tried every theory. I thought of the Rosicrucians. I thought of Christ.

PLATT: What kind of experience was it?

DICK: It invaded my mind and assumed control of my motor centers and did my acting and thinking for me. I was a spectator to it. It set about healing me physically and my four-year-old boy, who had an undiagnosed life-threatening birth defect that no one had been aware of. This mind, whose identity was totally obscure to me, was equipped with tremendous technical knowledge—engineering, medical, cosmological, philosophical knowledge. It had memories dating back over two thousand years, it spoke Greek, Hebrew, Sanskrit, there wasn't anything that it didn't seem to know.

It immediately set about putting my affairs in order. It fired my agent and my publisher. It was very practical. It remargined my typewriter. It was very practical; it decided that the apartment had not been vacuumed recently enough; it decided that I should stop drinking wine because of the sediment—it turned out I had an abundance of uric acid in my system—and it switched me to beer. It made elementary mistakes such as calling the dog "he" and the cat "she," which annoyed my wife, since I knew and she knew the dog was a female and the cat was a male; and it kept calling her "ma'am."

PLATT: How did your wife perceive all this? Did you tell her what was going on?

DICK: Oh, yes. She was impressed by the fact that, because of the tremendous pressure this mind put on people in my business, I made quite a lot of money very rapidly. We began to get checks for thousands of dollars—money that was owed me, which this mind

was conscious existed in New York but had never been coughed up. It was very busy and active. Does this interest you?

PLATT: How could it not?

DICK: It had one overwhelming concern. It informed me that a group of conspirators had murdered the Kennedys, Martin Luther King, and Bishop Pike. The mind represented itself as the Cumaean Sibyl, the Roman equivalent of the Delphic Sibyl. Now I've let it out of the bag, haven't I? It was female. She said the Republic was in danger, the American Republic. She said that once again the empire threatened to take over. She was there to see that the empire was destroyed. I shouldn't be saying this. This is really stupid of me. She said the oscillation between the republic and empire was a constant in history.

She then dictated a series of letters to Charles Wiggins, who was on the House Judiciary Committee deciding whether to impeach President Nixon. The letters dealt with constitutional law. I didn't understand the letter. Later I found out that Congressman Wiggins was such an authority on constitutional law he was considered for the Supreme Court. The final letter said the Nixon transcripts were forgeries. That letter she sent to *The Wall Street Journal*, which had published an editorial that said the transcripts showed that Nixon was innocent. By that time, she had gotten me to the doctor, who confirmed its diagnoses of various ailments that I had. She did everything but paper the walls of the apartment. It also said it would stay on as my tutelary spirit. I had to look up "tutelary" to find out what it meant. She had the unfortunate habit of lapsing into Greek.

Then, having healed me, calmed me, she showed me a garden of such beauty I could not believe it existed. I walked around in it. She transformed the landscape for me. Indescribable beauty. She said, When you get old and are dying, I will come back and take you there. But I will not come back until then. At one time I said, Who

are you. Tell me who you are, for God's sake. She said, Think of me as Diana. She said for me everything is permitted.

PLATT: If people heard this, they would think you were putting me on.

DICK: I have almost 500,000 words of notes on all this. At one point I was convinced I was dealing with a computer. I had to write a book about this.

PLATT: Do you recognize the possibility, however remote, that you could have in some way been talking to yourself?

DICK: Yes, it could have been a dialogue between the two hemispheres of my brain, like in *A Scanner Darkly*.

PLATT: Do you prefer not to believe that?

DICK: This was suggested to me by at least one person. I think it's a good possibility. The only thing that was odd was her ferocious knowledge. She was always very cryptic. She forced me to go to reference books.

I'm quite reticent about this, normally. I've talked to my [Episcopalian] priest about it, and a couple of close friends and of course my ex-wife. I tried to discuss it with Ursula Le Guin, and she just wrote and said, "I think you're crazy." She returned the material I had sent her. Of course, when [my new novel] *Valis* comes out, a lot of this will be in the book. *Valis* is an attempt to formulate my vision in some rational structure that can be conveyed to other people.

•

A couple of days after the interview, I returned for a purely social visit, without tape recorders (so my remaining reportage is from unaided memory). During our conversation I mentioned a whimsical notion I enjoy: that if I'm far away from somewhere, and can't see or touch it, it doesn't really exist.

"Oh, sure," Dick said. "They only build as much of the world as they need to, to convince you it's real. You see, it's kind of a low-budget operation: those countries you read about, like Japan, or Australia, they don't really exist. There's nothing out there. Unless of course you decide to go out there, in which case they have to put it all together, all the scenery, the buildings, and the people, in time for you to see it. They have to work real fast."

At this point, I was treading carefully. "Let's get this straight," I said. "Are you describing, now, a fictional concept, such as might occur in one of your novels? Or is this … serious?"

"You mean, do I believe it?" he asked in apparent surprise. "Why, no, of course not. You'd have to be crazy to believe in something like that!" And then he laughed.

---

* They were all published posthumously.

BLADE RUNNER AND HOLLYWOOD TEMPTATIONS

INTERVIEW BY JAMES VAN HISE
AUGUST 1981

This interview was conducted after Dick had read the original and revised scripts for Blade Runner *but before he had seen any footage. The film was released in June 1982, after Dick's death*.

VAN HISE: When did the project begin to adapt *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* into a film?

DICK: Oh, years and years ago. Martin Scorsese and Jay Cocks were both interested but they didn't option it. They were very new and very young. That was the first movie interest in any property of mine. Then later Herb Jaffe optioned it and Robert Jaffe did a screenplay back in about 1973. They had done *Demon Seed*. The screenplay was sent to me and it was so crude that I didn't understand that it was actually the shooting script; I thought it was the rough. I wrote to them and asked if they would like me to do the shooting script, at which point Robert Jaffe flew down here to Orange County and confessed that he had written it under a nom de plume. I said to him then that it was so bad that I wanted to know if he wanted me to beat him up there at the airport or wait till we got to my apartment.

VAN HISE: It was that bad?

DICK: I said, "All I ask is that you do not drag me down to ruin with you." I said that I'd honestly prefer to buy back the property then let him make a film based on this screenplay, and he was real nice about it. I was married and my wife fixed dinner and we spent the afternoon and evening together. I gave him suggestions and he took notes and then I noticed that he wasn't actually writing, but

rather he was just moving the pen about a quarter of an inch from a piece of paper that already had printing on it so that he was only pretending to take notes. I realized then that there was a gulf between me and Hollywood.

VAN HISE: What was the matter with his screenplay?

DICK: What he had done was take the novel and turned it into a comedy—a spoof, along the lines of *Get Smart*. Everybody was a clown in it and it was full of smart-ass remarks. Finally Jaffe turned to me and suddenly said, "Why, you take your work seriously!" and the scales fell from his eyes and I said, "Yes, Robert, I do take my work seriously. Very seriously." To him, working outside of the field of science fiction, he had the stereotyped idea that it was camp. It was really bad news, but we remained very close friends after that and they finally let their option drop.

VAN HISE: Ridley Scott's screenwriter, Hampton Fancher, originally approached you while the Jaffes still had an option on the material?

DICK: Yes. In an article in the April '81 *Omni*, Fancher is quoted as saying that I was initially uncooperative about having him make a film. Well, of course I was, because it was under option to somebody else at the time and there was no way that Fancher could purchase it. I don't know if Fancher's memory failed him on that point or what, because he and I saw each other a number of times and in fact we had a lot of fun together. Fancher noted that I wasn't terribly enthusiastic and that was because I had become distrustful of Hollywood and had the specter of the Jaffe screenplay in my mind. It's like paying to watch your daughter being raped, or how much would you pay to watch your daughter being raped, although in this case they'd be paying you.

I'd already felt that I'd been burned by Hollywood and I wasn't all that turned on by the prospect of big bucks and great fame because I sensed that there was going to be another joke screenplay written and that it would debase my book again and I was melancholy and taciturn, but as I say, Fancher and I got along very well. I became real good friends with him and his girlfriend, Barbara Hershey, until she went to Israel to do a picture. I haven't seen her since nor has Fancher ever contacted me again. I sent word up to the *Blade Runner* team that I wished Fancher would contact me, but he never did get hold of me. Apparently Fancher felt that I didn't think too much of him or his efforts, and Lord knows I didn't think too much of his screenplay, that's true.

VAN HISE: What was the matter with it?

DICK: My agent called up and said, "What's the screenplay like?" And I said to him: "It was a dirty city, it was a dirty job. Somebody had to do that job. I was that somebody. Rick Deckard." He said, "That bad?" I said that bad. It was Philip Marlowe meets the Stepford Wives. And I did not please the *Blade Runner* people or the Ladd Company [the production company] by my attitude because I wrote an article on science fiction films for SelecTV Guide and I mentioned that I had read the screenplay and it was just a lurid collision of androids and humans blowing each other up. I was really smart-assed.

I even criticized Ridley Scott's picture *Alien* saying that a monster is a monster and a spaceship is a spaceship and it got by on special effects because it had no new ideas. The whole tenor of the article was that science fiction films now tend to get by on their special effects because special effects people can simulate anything. I have a friend who's a special effects man and he said, "Anything you can write, we can create. These guys do not go on story anymore, they go on special effects." This is exactly what I was saying about the original screenplay of *Blade Runner*, that they were going with

squishing people's heads and people's arms and legs coming off, and that they were really going to do what they had done in *Alien*. They'd get Douglas Trumbull and they'd just have these smashing special effects but no storyline. It's like what Roger Corman said: "You can drive a truck through our storylines, they've got so many holes."

That is what I thought of the screenplay until David Peoples got ahold of it and did a new version. My agent said, Well, they must have gone back to the book, and indeed they did go back to the book. So it's coherent in relation to the book. Now what we have is the beautiful result that Ridley Scott, who is a visual graphic director who does not go in for storyline but is of the new school who goes in for dramatic visual effects, is yoked to a coherent storyline. Even if it wasn't my story, it's an effective and a coherent storyline. It has subtle nuances that are very good and it appeals not just to the dramatic, although it's very dramatic, but it appeals to the intellect. There's some tender parts, and there's some very very intelligent parts. It's a very mature and sophisticated screenplay, and they did use it.

VAN HISE: One thing that bothered me in the first-draft screenplay was that the androids, instead of being portrayed as people who were trying to live their lives without being discovered, were portrayed as being homicidal against their creators.

DICK: They still are portrayed that way. They're infiltrating Tyrell's industrial complex but the motivation that Peoples assigned to them is rather lofty. He accentuates their very limited lifespan and their desire to meet their creator/god in order to find some way to overcome their extremely limited lifespan. They want to compensate for the fact that they only have a couple of years to go. So their motivation is that which would be true for all living creatures. It's not a vicious motivation but just a desire to live and survive and not wear out in just a few years.

VAN HISE: Did the new version drop the bit where Deckard talks Rachael into killing herself?

DICK: That's gone. Thank God for that. That whole Mickey Spillane–type thing. That's what was so terrible. If you really want to get on my bad side, turn one of my books over to Mickey Spillane for him to rehash, and you'll make me an enemy of yours for life. Hell, if I want to know if I've died and gone to hell, that's how I'll know, because they'll turn all my books over to Mickey Spillane to rewrite. But that's not there now. Peoples jettisoned all that crap.

First of all, he had an unerring sense of what wasn't good, and an unerring sense of what was good to replace it, so you've got a double transformation; an ejection of what was bad and an introduction of new things that were good. He's got stuff like the great fight scene between Roy Batty and Rick Deckard, which, when I read it originally, I thought, "I will move to the Soviet Union where I am completely unknown and work making lightbulbs in a factory and never even look at a book again and pretend I can't read." Well, Peoples took that scene, and it's still there, but it's transformed. I learned a lot from what Peoples did. I didn't know that you could take something that bad and come out with something that good. The Ladd Company won't want me to say that it's that bad but why not admit that it's that bad because it's not the script they used. My God, if they had gone on with that … I foresaw doom.

VAN HISE: It's obvious that somebody thought the script needed a lot of work or they wouldn't have put a second writer on it.

DICK: And they must have paid Peoples a lot of money because that guy didn't come cheap because he'd won awards for his work and he was highly thought of. They didn't just bring in a script doctor. This goes beyond just bringing in a script doctor. I had heard scuttlebutt because I'm in touch with other studios who are making

films from other properties they've optioned from me. These other studios call me and they badmouth *Blade Runner*. They're scared to death that *Blade Runner* will make it big and that it'll absorb all the revenue for movies based on my properties so they wish ill luck to *Blade Runner*. They hope it takes a pratfall. They said that a script doctor had been brought in, but that's not what Peoples did.

I have to admit that in some ways Peoples improved over the book, but I don't want to emphasize that point too much either. [*Laughs*] I don't want to say that he took a bad book and made a great screenplay; that's not true either. They also didn't take a good book and make a bad screenplay. They took a good book and made a good screenplay, and the two reinforce each other; they don't fight each other now.

VAN HISE: Are the filmmakers keeping in touch with you?

DICK: These people have never really told me an awful lot. It's funny, but I got a phone call from them originally and they wanted to know how I'd gotten ahold of a copy of the screenplay. I thought, Jesus Christ, I'm the author of the novel on which the property is based. Is it so strange I should have a copy of the screenplay? I had gotten it from [producer] Michael Deeley's lawyer through my agent. I had acquired it legitimately. I was tempted to be a wiseass and say, "I floated over your studios in a helium balloon, bored through your ceiling, used string and a piece of chewing gum and just lifted the script up off somebody's desk," because they were very hostile to me on the phone. So they listened while I read them my SelectTV article, and they said, "You know it's very dangerous to talk like that." And I said dangerous to talk like what? And he said, "We're not calling them androids, we're calling them replicants." I said, Well, the book calls them androids, and I'm sorry if I'm guilty of lapsing into an archaic vocabulary. I'll mind my P's & Q's from now on and refer to them as replicants, but they were not pleased.

VAN HISE: How faithful do you feel the film is to your book?

DICK: The book has been transferred essentially intact. It hasn't been transferred scene by scene, and I don't think that can be done. I don't think this is even desirable, let alone feasible. This is not how you transform a book into a film. You don't do it scene by scene and you don't do it line by line. It was tried with *Ulysses*. It was tried with *Death in Venice*. It was tried with *Greed*. *Greed*, for example, was the first great attempt to transfer a novel to the screen, word by word, scene by scene, character by character, and it simply cannot be done. You're going from a verbal medium to a visual medium, and I understand that.

VAN HISE: What did you think of the casting?

DICK: Sean Young, who plays Rachael, I have never seen act. I've seen Harrison Ford act and Rutger Hauer act, but I've never seen her act. I guess hardly anyone's seen her act, but when I came to those pictures I was blown away. I said that is Rachael. You could have hung pictures of a hundred different women and I could have unerringly picked out that one as Rachael. That's not a simulation of Rachael, that is Rachael. They went and found her. And I told my friends that I want to be introduced to her, and they said, No, you don't, you've got it backwards, you don't want to be introduced to her, so I talked to Jeff Walker [the film's publicist] about that, that I'd like to meet her, and he said, Well, I don't know if you want to, maybe some of the glamour would fade. And I said, No, no, it's not the glamour that poses the problem, it's the femme fatale belle dame sans merci which has always destroyed me and I'm programmed to home in on this super destructive cruel beautiful dark-haired woman that I eternally write about and now I've seen a photograph of her and I know that she exists and I will seek her out and presumably she will destroy me, and he said, No, I think perhaps we will not arrange that for you.

VAN HISE: What do you think of Rutger Hauer, who plays Roy Batty?

DICK: I saw him in *Soldier of Orange*. He'd kill you just as soon as look at you. I was looking at the stills of him and I said, "Oh my God, this is the Nordic superman that Hitler said would come marching out of the laboratory." This is the blond beast that the Nazis were creating. And of course the origin of the book *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* was my research into the Nazis for *The Man in the High Castle*. I had done years and years of research at the closed stacks at the library at UC Berkeley, and I had come across prime Gestapo documents. It was an incredible experience to pick up something that was a Gestapo document stamped "For the Eyes of the Higher Police Only," which was the Gestapo, and I knew German well enough that I could read these things. This was not American propaganda about the Nazis, these were real Gestapo documents. There was one which was the diary of an SS man who was stationed in Poland, in Warsaw, and he'd even drawn pictures of Jews in the ghetto. He'd gone into the ghetto, the Jewish ghetto, and drawn pictures of what he described as these colorful people.

That was in the late '40s when I read that diary and I still remember the one line he had in there: "We are kept awake at night by the cries of starving children." I still remember that line, and that influenced me. I thought, There is amongst us something that is a bipedal humanoid, morphologically identical to the human being but that is not human. It is not human to complain in your diary that starving children are keeping you awake. And there, in the '40s, was born my idea that within our species is a bifurcation, a dichotomy between the truly human and that which mimics the truly human, and when I saw those stills of Rutger Hauer I thought, "Holy Jesus, it's come back!"

VAN HISE: Does the film include Deckard's desire to own a real animal (a rare commodity in 2019) instead of just an artificial one?

DICK: That's really pushed into the background. There is that scene with the real owl, the genuine owl there at the Tyrell corporation where the owl flies around, so that element has not been eliminated entirely, but it has been pushed into the background. The symbolism of the live animal versus the artificial animal is gone. The metaphor is gone, but the basic theme of the novel, the two basic themes that interweave, are there.

The first is what constitutes the essential human being and how do we distinguish and define the essential human being from that which only masquerades as human? That's there. And the second theme is the tragic theme that if you fight evil, you will wind up becoming evil, and that this is the condition of life. There's a quote from the novel that I think really is the basic theme of the novel. This line doesn't appear in the film because it's spoken by Mercer, a character in the book who wasn't transferred over to the film:

"You will be required to do wrong no matter where you go. It is the basic condition of life to be required to violate your own identity. At some time, every creature which lives must do so. It is the ultimate shadow; the defeat of creation. This is the curse at work, the curse that feeds on all life everywhere in the universe."

Now that really is the intellectual theme of the novel—that Deckard, to kill the replicants or the androids or whatever you want to call them, is brutalized and dehumanized. Now, what Peoples did in the screenplay, and Fancher gets credit for this because it's based right on something Fancher did, is that there is a reciprocal motion from the standpoint of the replicants and Rachael in that she becomes more and more human, and now Peoples has it where Roy Batty becomes more and more human.

So you have Deckard becoming more and more dehumanized, and the replicants become more and more human, and at the end they meet and the distinction is gone. But this fusion of Deckard and the replicants is a tragedy. This is not a victory where the replicants become humanized and there is some victory by humanity over inhumanity. This is horrifying because he is now as they are, so the theme of the novel is completely and essentially retained.

VAN HISE: What about the ending?

DICK: Jeff Walker said that Ridley Scott filmed three endings: 1) Rick Deckard turns out to be a replicant. 2) Deckard turns out metaphorically to be a replicant, in which he said that he has become like Roy Batty and Rachael and they all shoot off together in one of the Spinners at 250 mph. 3) Or he's not a replicant and he kills Roy Batty. So he'll choose one of the three endings like *Apocalypse Now* or else let the public choose their own like *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

He will get it right. I have no doubt that he will get it right. Any one of the three possibilities will be satisfactory. I've talked to writer friends of mine who've read the novel and they hope that it doesn't turn out that he is literally a replicant because God knows that's back to *The Stepford Wives* and *Westworld* and all that stuff, and I would kind of like to see him not literally be a replicant. I would like to have him metaphorically be a replicant because that shows that any one of us could be dehumanized in the effort of fighting evil.

DESTRUCTION AND ENLIGHTENMENT: THE LAST INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW BY GREGG RICKMAN
APRIL 1981–FEBRUARY 1982

Gregg Rickman first read Dick's books as a teenager. In 1981, when he was in his mid-twenties, he sent Dick an essay he had written, and Dick invited him to come visit. That led to a friendship and sixteen hours of freewheeling interviews. The conversations were collected in two volumes published in the mid-1980s, Philip K. Dick: In His Own Words *and* Philip K. Dick: The Last Testament. *Much of the latter volume focuses on Dick's 1974 mystical experience and his belief that the Savior, who he also called the Maitreya, was returning*.

RICKMAN: I wanted to ask you how you got into philosophy—there's so much of it underlying your work.

DICK: I was a philosophy major at Cal [Berkeley] in the '40s, the late '40s, and I showed a brilliance in those days—I was like eighteen, nineteen. Okay, as a freshman there, my first term at Cal, I'm sitting there in my philosophy class, see, and we're reading Plato's *Republic*. And the teacher starts talking about Plato's theory of forms. So I raised my hand, and he says, Yes, and I say, "What is the value of this from a pragmatic standpoint?" He says, If you think you know so damned much, get out of this class and don't come back.

I thought, This doesn't strike me as something Socrates would have said. I had already learned enough; that is not a good argument to come back with. That is not a good answer. My criticism of the doctrine of forms was included in English empirical [philosophy]. So I thought, I'll just pursue this on my own. I went to the library—I dropped out, and got a card for the library—and I pursued this investigation entirely on my own.

When I was twenty-one, I was reading Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*. And it was real funny, because my wife Kleo was going to Cal at the time, and she came home one day and she said, "Did you

tell me you were reading Moses Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*?" and I said, "Yep, I'm reading it." She says, "I talked to one of my professors and he says there's probably not another human being in the United States who's reading Moses Maimonides at this moment." That's a very obscure book, you know.

But I just went to the library and tracked these things down. Where I met my downfall was when I tried to read Plotinus. And I couldn't fathom what he was saying at all. Plotinus was not in print. There were no books then of his actual writing. There was a syllabus published by the University of Chicago—or Columbia, some goddamned university—and I couldn't make any sense of it. So I dropped philosophy at that point, and got interested in Jung, psychology, and veered off into that. So philosophy doesn't show up as much in my early writing as psychology does. Then philosophy starts coming back later on.

RICKMAN: What got you interested in philosophy at all, as a kid?

DICK: [*Long pause*] I remember the incident. It's a stupid incident, but it shows you what life is built up on. Like the Great Design hinges on these sorts of things.

I was working at this radio repair shop. I was going to high school. One of the salesmen and I were in the truck. We were bringing back someone's giant radio-phonograph that we had fixed. And we stopped at a stoplight. This would be right after the war, 1946 or '47.

So this salesman turns to me and he says, "See that light? What color is it?" And I say, "Red." And he says, "I say it's red too. But what you see that you call red may be something different than what I see that I call red." And I said, "Well, we both call it red." He says, "You may see as green what I call red and vice versa." I thought, Jesus, he's right! There's no way we can prove it. He said, "How would you prove that we both see the same color?" I said, "I have no idea." Most amazing thing I ever thought of. Fantastic. I

was just in high school too. I thought, Shit! That's remarkable. Struck me forcibly.

I was the kid who came and swept the floor after school. One day I was sweeping the floor. And the repairman had the radio chassis out of the cabinet, and the speaker out of the cabinet. I'd never seen the speaker out of the cabinet before. There was a wire running from the chassis to the speaker, and the radio was on and it was playing music. And I looked at the speaker and I asked how does the speaker work? The repairman says, "Well, there's voice coils, see, and they move back and forth and it vibrates the diaphragm." And I say, "What makes it move back and forth?" He says, "The magnet. The wire carries this electrical charge, which changes the magnetic capacity of the magnet, so that the magnetic field varies. The voice coil, attracted and repelled by the magnetic field, moves in and out, thus vibrating the diaphragm."

So I says, "Oh! We're not hearing the music, we're hearing the simulation of the music." No, he says, "we're hearing the music." No, I say, "we're hearing a conversion, a simulation"—I didn't know the word "transduction"—that a machine makes. It so simulates the original sound that we call it music. But I can tell by looking at the structure of this speaker—he showed me the voice coil, he showed me the magnet, he showed me the diaphragm—it is a simulation. No, he said, "it's music!" No, I said, "it's simulation of the music." I was making an ontological distinction when I was fifteen years old. That he could not make. That's how I got interested in philosophy.

The big turning point came when I was nineteen. And that was a really serious matter. I woke up one day and I looked around at the world. And I said, Causality does not exist. It's an illusion. And I talked with a guy who was in the philosophy department. I said, "I suddenly realized it was all an illusion. Because, an effect follows something, B follows A, we think A caused B. But actually it just follows it. It's a sequence. A sequence like a sequence of integers. They're not connected."

•

DICK: They say, “What do you want to be reincarnated as next?” and I say, “I don’t want to be reincarnated at all.” I say, “I’ve done my time. I’ve served time long enough here. I want to go to my reward.”

Because I remember back to my life as an early Christian. It was hell. It was no fun at all. I was garroted in a goddamn cave under the goddamn [Roman] amphitheater.

RICKMAN: That was in an earlier life you had?

DICK: Yeah … When I was a kid, a little kid, I had difficulty swallowing. I had actually such difficulty swallowing that I started becoming famished from malnourishment. It was a complete puzzle. I was like five years old. They took X-rays, barium X-rays.

In 1974, just before my religious experiences, I dreamed my own death in Rome, under the Coliseum in a cave. When they garroted me. And then all my memories started coming back. They were tripped off under Sodium Pentothal. They began to come back.

That explained the swallowing problem. I had an incredible fear of being garroted, or having my throat cut, from that memory. Which made no sense at all until I had that dream.

I woke up from that dream, and I talked to Tessa that night. I woke her up, and sat up, and she told me that I was another personality talking to her. That I discussed people and events that she had never heard of, and I had never heard of when she told me about them.

And then that personality gradually took me over …

•

DICK: I’ve always had this conviction that most things are fake. Now I have evidence that my conviction is correct, but I can’t do anything with the evidence.

That is to say I got a look at the universe the way it really is, and I can't fathom what it really is. I said it in '74, but it doesn't resemble anything I've ever heard of. It doesn't lend itself to easy conceptualization. It's kind of like a Greek myth, when you have one ultimate wish that will be granted, and you say my ultimate wish is to see reality as it really is, and you then get to see it, but you can't understand it. 'Cause the categories are not familiar categories. Then you're left for the rest of your life trying to puzzle out what you saw.

Which is exactly the spot I'm in. I saw something, and I can remember it very well, but I don't know what it was, what it signified.

RICKMAN: Like trying to describe the color red to a blind man.

DICK: I was going to say I can't even work out a model, but a few weeks ago I finally worked out a model of it. An abstract model that would serve like Wittgenstein's idea of the inner analogue that represents reality. I've got a representation of it that I contemplate.

Every question that I answer, two questions spring up to replace it. It was doing something with information. After seven years it has become quite evident to me that I'm never going to be able to figure it out. If I can't do it in seven years I won't be able to do it in seventy.

My only hope is someone else will come along who'll get the same vision and then be in a position [to carry on]. It seemed to have something to do with the quantum mechanics of people on earth, and digital information. A convergence system for quantitative information.

I'd trade all the rest of my life just to know. I'll never know what it was.

•

RICKMAN: What about the Golden Mean?

DICK: I was just going to say, moderation.

RICKMAN: Moderation in all things.

DICK: No, it should be moderation in some things. In most things. Moderation in most things. Okay, the Golden Mean. I can't find it now. Honestly, my friend Juan over next door says it's called cognitive dissonance. I'll buy drugs and I won't even take them. I'll score some drugs and flush them.

I'll score some marijuana and flush two hundred dollars. Because I enjoy the feel of scoring but I don't want to score. He said, "That's cognitive dissonance." He said, "Why don't you give them to somebody who wants it?" I said, "Because it's bad for you." He said, "Well, why buy it?" I said, "Because it's fun. It's fun to score. You smell it, take a little hit and destroy it." He said, "You're crazy. You are nuts." I said, "I know, but I'm alive." And there's two ways for me not to be alive. One, do all the dope in the world; two, wear all the hair shirts in the world. I am trying to find the Golden Mean. That's why I want to get involved with—no, that ain't true. I crave—it's like destructions are delight, delight our greatest sorrow. I crave destruction. If I can ride the rim of it and get off in time. Just at the moment that it goes and really blows up I gotta step off. I want to step off at the very last second. I don't really want to die. I want to play the game. But not pay the price.

I want to dance to the tune and not pay the piper. I don't want to be either the grasshopper or the ant. I want to be something else. And the only way I know to do this is I'll give [people my] extra money and I'll do this and all of a sudden I'll revolt against it. And I'll go in the opposite direction. But each one is excessive.

I got this letter from the Karen Silkwood organization,* they're going to start a new trial. In Frisco. I read it and went down, withdrew a thousand dollars in a cashier's check and mailed it in. A

thousand dollars. That's a lot of money. That's one thing. See, now I have discretionary money but I'm very careful with it. But that was an example of what I really wanted to do. I will hold on to the money. Not buy shoes, not buy clothes, not buy records, not buy this, not buy that, and suddenly mail a thousand dollars to the Silkwood Foundation. You know why? Because I wanted to. Because I believe in Karen Silkwood. Like it said in the brochure I got. Because I've contributed before. I'm one of their contributors to the Silkwood Foundation. I believe in her. I believe she was right. I believe she was murdered.

I'll tell you another thing I believe. I believe she was murdered by the people that hit my house [in 1971]. I do believe that and I think they're going to finally discover a nationwide paramilitary organization privately organized and government sponsored. Privately organized and government sponsored, completely illegal, that harasses left-wing people and now are harassing the No Nuke people. They killed Silkwood. Now that they did. Whether anybody is trying to kill me, I don't know. But it's no joke. No doubt. There are no two ways about it. Silkwood was contaminated with radioactive particles.

I didn't send that thousand dollars because I'm Mr. Nice. I sent a thousand dollars because I want that woman avenged. I want the truth to come out. That money was sent from the heart. That wasn't sent because I'm some kind of sugar daddy. I mean I could use that thousand dollars. A lot of people could use that thousand. You could use that thousand dollars.

I believe in Karen Silkwood. She died for her beliefs. To me she's a martyr. She's as much of a cause to me as any cause has ever been. That woman's death was my death. I believe it. When she died, something in every one of us died with that woman. When they creamed her on the goddamned freeway. She paid, she was dying anyway from the contamination. She would have died anyway. And I want to see those guys paid back for what they did. I want to see them exposed. I mean all the way back to Martin Luther King. I want to see that exposed. I want to see all of them exposed.

RICKMAN: In *Solar Lottery* [1955], you have this whole thing of licensed presidential assassins.

DICK: I know. Isn't that bizarre? I've noted that and I'm amazed. I'm simply amazed. Because that was, at the time, my idea of the most grotesque fantasy idea of a society that I could imagine. I was 180 degrees away from trying to write predictive science fiction. What is the most nonsensical and yet frightening vision—[that] would be government by assassination.

RICKMAN: They have that all over the world.

DICK: Listen. Look at this. [*Shows me scratches on his arm*] See what happened to me when I heard about Sadat? I took one of these things [cans of Orange Crush], I was holding one of these things and I crushed it up and just raked it over my arm until blood dripped down. When I heard about Sadat being killed. He was one of my heroes. He was my hero. I only have a few. He was one of them. Another one is Sadat's greatest enemy who may have murdered him. Khadafi. He's my hero too. I've got a lot of weird heroes. Che was my great hero. Che Guevara. I never forgave the CIA and it was the CIA, it's not a secret now, they trained those Bolivian mercenaries.

RICKMAN: You deliberately raked your arm?

DICK: Yes, I did.

RICKMAN: With a can of Orange Crush?

DICK: With whatever I had. It happened to be a can of Orange Crush. I raked it until it bled. You can see, I wanted to see the

blood.

RICKMAN: Why?

DICK: Because it's a religious act to do that. It is not a psychotic act. It is a religious act. To bleed with the dead. Bleed with the martyr dead. To mingle your blood with theirs. See, my blood is mingled with Sadat's blood. It is. When I heard the news I bled. I didn't bleed symbolically, I literally bled. I tore up my arm until I bled. And when I saw the blood I stopped. And then I went and put alcohol on it so I wouldn't get infected. I can say when he died, I bled. I bled voluntarily because I wanted to bleed physically for his death. Not through some mere symbol, although it is symbolism.

But what could I do? I couldn't bring him back to life.

RICKMAN: You like Khadafi? What do you like Khadafi for?

DICK: Because he's nuts. Because he's a wild man. He's different. He's unusual. He's unique. He's crazy. He's an original. He's like Castro. He's one of a kind. This guy is not stamped out like the Russian geriatric crowd, one hundred years old wearing those fuddy-duddy business suits with them fuddy-duddy glasses that they wear, those little glasses you know, reading those fuddy-duddy manuscripts. Khadafi gets up there. He looks like a goddamned disco dancer or something like that.

RICKMAN: He does. He's fifty now or something so he's past his prime. He looks that way.

DICK: He looks dissipated.

RICKMAN: He does. But—

DICK: He should not be in power. People like Khadafi should not be in power.

RICKMAN: He had money offered for anyone who would murder Sadat. I was reading that this afternoon.

DICK: I know that. But look. The world is better off if the leaders have some kind of originality to them. The real menace is faceless leaders like in the Soviet Union and the United States. That's why Sadat was so great. He was a human being. Khadafi, being crazy and vicious, is still an identifiable human being.

•

RICKMAN: Has anyone ever accused you of having a Messianic complex?

DICK: I have.

RICKMAN: You have?

DICK: Yes. I've said to my friends, I believe I am suffering a delusion. I am Christ come to save the world. I'm the only one who's ever accused me of it, I'm convinced that I have a Messianic complex. You know how I deduce it? Because I get very angry every time I hear of a child dying of malnutrition or disease and I deduced it right that I have a Messianic complex. And all I can say is sorry.

I saw the cover of the new *TV Guide* and you know it shows a picture of a child behind barbed wire, a picture of the Holocaust. All

I had to do was see that child behind barbed wire, a child holding, I believe, a doll—is she not holding a doll or something like that? All I had to do was see that. See, I didn't even register the word "Holocaust." I see a child, I see she's holding a doll and she's behind barbed wire. I don't have to see anything else to be angry.

Okay, I have a Messianic complex. Do you know what I want to do? I want to get her out from behind the barbed wire. I can't do that because that child is dead. Because that happened in '43, '44, and '45. It isn't dated. This happened a while ago. To me this is an ongoing situation.

RICKMAN: In Christianity the past is redeemed or the past is saved in the afterlife. The good people are rewarded, the child is taken to heaven and the bad people, you know the SS guards who lived comfortably in Chicago until they died last year, are punished in the afterlife and that's a Christian thing that does not come up with the Maitreya.

DICK: Right, because we're going to set the record straight here on this planet.

RICKMAN: But you're not dealing with individuals. If you're not dealing with individuals and you're not dealing with the past, there's no way you can save that child.

DICK: No. You're right. Absolutely. The past is gone. Our job now is to change the present and by doing so change the future. That's why we don't judge. We're not here to condemn. We're not here to sit in judgment on people. We're here to change the world. We don't have time to deal with the past. There's enough problems in the present and the future, you see. I just am sorry we were unable to do this five thousand years ago but we've got an adversary.

This is an adversary situation. We've lost battle after battle. We have a powerful adversary. Think of what I read you from the *I Ching*. The Lord of Light subordinates himself to the Lord of Darkness and is wounded. The Lord of Darkness is very powerful. We have powerful adversaries. They don't give up their interest in power voluntarily. They don't surrender their power voluntarily. Their power must be taken from them.

•

By this point, it was early evening on February 17, 1982. Rickman was ready to leave, but Dick insisted he stay for some Chinese take-out. Dick believed he had a personal role in the return of the Savior. For instance, he said his 1974 novel, Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said, *was written for the purpose of releasing the revelation in cipher form.* Valis, *published in 1981 as a paperback original, plays an explicit role. As the evening wore on, Dick grew increasingly elliptical and contradictory*.

DICK: [*Flow My Tears* is] very carefully constructed. It really is. This is the first time I wrote about the Savior—I mean it's not the first time. It is the first time but I'm saying 1974 was the first time the decision was made to release the information and it was undoubtedly released in many, many ways to many, many people in many, many forms. This is only one example, you see? My book was only one example. It probably showed up in a thousand, maybe even hundreds of thousands more. But it did show up in the book.

RICKMAN: All right, what about the other books you published in the '70s? Are there more ciphers and revelations in them?

DICK: It's a one-shot thing. How many Christs were you expecting to come back?

RICKMAN: [*Laughter*] Well you would think that this would come up.

DICK: *Valis* is my credulous recounting of all the flim-flam of 1974. The flim-flam was simply to set me up for the task that *Valis* sets, which is to state the Savior is here. Now think a minute. What was the purpose of *Flow My Tears*? To say that the Savior is here. What is the purpose of *Valis*? To state that the Savior is here. What is the difference? *Tears* says it in cipher, *Valis* says it explicitly. There's a great deal of difference.

RICKMAN: What is the purpose of *The Divine Invasion* [1981]?

DICK: It has no purpose. Except to fulfill a contract.

RICKMAN: Do you value only now those two books, *Flow My Tears* and *Valis*?

DICK: Oh, no. It has nothing to do with the value of the books. I mean I've written better books. But those two books carry the *kerygma* [Greek for "the preaching"]. The *kerygma* of the Savior is eternal. They carry the meaning. One in cipher, the second openly.

RICKMAN: Could you elaborate more on the significance of the rock star in Valis? And his entourage?

DICK: No.

RICKMAN: [*Laughter*] Does that mean you had no more significance?

DICK: None that I know of.

RICKMAN: Okay.

DICK: Hey, man, listen. I was used to announce the fact that the Savior is here. Now I was not the only person. In 1974, Benjamin Creme† made his announcement for the first time. That means that Benjamin Creme and I in 1974 were told by this telepathic voice information that has never been stated before—and that is that all the Saviors are in fact one Savior. Krishna, the Maitreya, Gautama, Christ, they're all one person.

RICKMAN: It's not a new doctrine that Christ, Buddha, etc., are all holy men.

DICK: But it was new to me and I was basing it on the A.I. voice. Everything that was said I put in the Tractate. If it spoke about Buddha I put down Buddha. By that time if it had talked about Mickey Mouse I would have put down Mickey Mouse. I mean it already diagnosed my little boy's birth defect and saved his life and it saved my life too. You know someday when I'm on my deathbed I'm going to tell you how it saved my life because nobody knows. There are a few people who know about it but we don't have to talk about it. It also saved my life. It saved me from certain death. That's not in *Valis*.

RICKMAN: I was going to ask you about if you were chosen in 1974—

DICK: Don't say "chosen." It sounds like "anointed." Messiah means "the anointed one." Just say "picked at random."

RICKMAN: Picked at random. If you were picked at random—

DICK: I mean hey, it's the same thing as how they try and sell you the Los Angeles Times—they pick your [phone] number at random.

RICKMAN: Doesn't that contradict the thing that you were a science fiction writer, you were Mr. Credulous and so you will accept this?

DICK: Hey, I fit the bill. I have all the qualifications because I'm a writer, I write a popular novel, nobody's going to pay any attention to it and I believe in anything I'm told.

RICKMAN: So you weren't picked at random.

DICK: I was picked because I have all the qualifications—stupid, gullible, writing books for popular consumption, not literary books, not important books. Look at the common denominator. Essentially a credulous, somewhat flipped-out person whose word is not worth anything, writing books he knows are read essentially outside of the establishment. Go get your Bible about the kingdom. This is how the kingdom comes in. I'm ideal. I'm dumb, I'm crazy, I have some influence but not a lot. I still have some prophecy in my book but not a lot. I'm not Mickey Spillane, you know, I'm not Susan Sontag, I'm just perfect, you know? I'm there but I'm not important. Nobody's going to listen to me. Nobody's going to pay attention to me.

RICKMAN: The fact that you are picked makes you important, doesn't it?

DICK: Only in retrospect.

RICKMAN: Okay.

DICK: If the Maitreya comes on the horn.

RICKMAN: Okay.

DICK: Otherwise I'm just—otherwise I don't know shit from shinola. Okay, this all falls apart, see? [*Laughs*]

RICKMAN: Let me suggest an insulting reductive psychological possibility.

DICK: You do and I'm eating all the egg rolls.

RICKMAN: I'd better start on this one, then. Reading your old letters, you talked about how your science fiction work is not important. This is back in the '50s and '60s. You want to finish up this science fiction work so you can do your real work. Mysterious novel you were—

DICK: I was full of shit.

RICKMAN: You were talking about your "real work." In 1957, you wrote Donald Wollheim [Dick's editor at Ace Books] saying you were quitting science fiction, and I've seen a letter from Wollheim replying to that.

DICK: I remember that letter well.

RICKMAN: So you have a certain amount of desire to be taken seriously, right? So you can't be taken seriously as a literary writer in the '50s. In the '60s you wrote all kinds of great science fiction and you're not—I don't know, maybe you don't get sufficient recognition out of this. I said this was an insulting and reductive theory.

DICK: I can dig it. It's very familiar.

RICKMAN: Okay, in the '70s then you promulgate yourself as the spokesman for the—

DICK: This is reductive. [*Laughs*] Hey, this is more than reductive, this is downright insulting!

RICKMAN: I said it was. Well, anyway—

DICK: The word "reductive" can cover an awful lot of ground, my friend.

RICKMAN: Okay, well, anyway—

DICK: I've gotten what you're saying.

RICKMAN: You got what I'm saying. Okay.

DICK: Brooded for years about the fact that no one took him seriously.

RICKMAN: Okay.

DICK: Shame, shame, brooded. Suddenly he began to realize, I sound like an A. E. van Vogt character. Guy's walking around, you know, and he rotates tires, you know, and suddenly discovers that he's got an extra brain, you know, and he's really from another galaxy and can walk through walls. [*Laughter*] Boy, I'm not a man who rotates tires. I'm—gasp—not the Messiah but John the Baptist. Hey, hey, listen. I could have shot for Messiah. You'd better at least be glad I only shot for John the Baptist. [*Laughter*] I mean, hey, I have no power to remove sins, I have no power to heal. All I have power to do is say this is John the Baptist and your ass is grass. [*Laughter*] There's someone coming after me and I'm not fit to tie his sandals. I mean he has the power to remove sins. Make candles fly upside down without making any noise. [*Laughter*] He can cause whole mountains to disappear and show up in your living room.

RICKMAN: You're not going to speculate on who Salome is? [*Mispronouncing it*]

DICK: Salome. Salami is what you buy at the deli. Okay, okay. You got me to admit something. Who is John the Baptist, according to Jesus?

RICKMAN: He says he's the one before me.

DICK: Well, who was that? Come on. Don't you remember your scripture? John the Baptist was Elijah. That's who he was. He was Elijah. To fulfill the prophecy in Malachi: "Before my great and

terrible day I shall send the prophet Elijah back to you." And they said to Jesus something about that, you know, and he said John the Baptist is Elijah. I am Elijah. No, I'm not. I was taken over by the spirit of Elijah and that's what shows up in Divine Invasion. I didn't want to say it but you segued me into it.

I have an alternative. I can either say the spirit of Elijah took me over or can say I have grandiose delusions that I am John the Baptist. No. I don't have grandiose illusions that I'm John the Baptist. I do have grandiose illusions that the spirit of Elijah entered me and I uttered prophecies. You know who first suggested this to me that this might be the case? Tom Disch.[‡] After hearing my description in late '74 of my experience, he said it sounds like you were taken over by Elijah. But that fits in, does it not? That personality that took me over was Elijah. Not was like Elijah but was Elijah, of whom I knew nothing.

And you know how I know it was Elijah? Because I had dreams about this building called "Alto," which means "high," and it was in Carmel and there were fire trucks parked around it and that's the scene where Elijah challenges the priests of Baal to bring down the fire. And another dream was where I was trying to call my friend Elisha, and Elisha was the younger prophet associated with Elijah.

No, it was Elijah who took me over. I admit it. Kill me. Have me killed! This man believes he was taken over by Elijah. I was. I was taken over by Elijah, and for what? Because the prophecies had to be fulfilled that Elijah comes first, and second that the news be revealed and that is what John the Baptist did for Jesus. Having done so he faded away. In fact they cut off his head and by the way I dreamed about that.

I was in a dungeon, a Roman dungeon and they came and cut off my head, took a wire and garroted me. I dreamed that and that was my memory of my life, I was John the Baptist having my head cut off to be up to that woman whose name you got wrong [Salome], fuckin' bitch that she was. Never did like her. Couldn't stand her. Yeah, I had that dream. I remember being decapitated and having them come to that cell and taking and slicing my head off. It was horrible.

And you know what I did when I came through the door? I cursed it with all the fury I had. There was no love in me for them at all. John was a very fiery person. Who was very vulgar. It was Elijah and it was me.

Yes, that is in Divine Invasion so I lied to you when I said Divine Invasion had no purpose. It was to tell about Elijah. It was also a little bit about Yaweh. But it was mostly to tell about Elijah.

My first inkling that it was Elijah had taken me over was, when I was in the possession of that mind, I happened to go to the store. I ran into this girlfriend of mine who I had who was Jewish and we started talking about Elijah and Passover and I was talking about the cup and everything and we were joking and we talked about a third friend and I said, "You know the thing about him being at the table?" and she said, "He wouldn't understand, he's not Jewish like we are—" and then she paused and she said, "You're not Jewish. How do you know all about this?" About the cup for Elijah and the door opening and Elijah coming in and everything that occurs now, dig it? When she and I were standing there talking, it was around Passover. She says, "How do you know Elijah comes every year at Passover?" I said, "God, that's right. I'm not Jewish, am I?" And she was quite frightened. I'm not jiving you. Because she had thought of me as Jewish for a few moments because I was speaking of the Jewish religion, not the Christian religion.

So yes, Elijah took me over and you know what I kept thinking? In the final analysis he took me over to save my life. This is, for instance, in *Divine Invasion*. You find Elijah acting, although he acts in an historical role, he also acts to protect people. Would you like any more of that stuff?

RICKMAN: No, this is fine.

DICK: Good, I'm going to eat the last one. Are you sure you've had enough?

RICKMAN: Oh, yeah, that's very good. Thank you very much.

DICK: No, it was Elijah. Saying, "There is one who comes after me," and by writing that cipher in *Flow My Tears* I announced the coming of the Savior. But I also identified myself as Elijah. So then my memories came back.

That month, the month that *Flow My Tears* was published, when I took sodium pentothal for that impacted wisdom tooth, my memories came back that I was Elijah. I remembered it all. I remembered my life in Palestine and you can just simply have me shot for saying this. I remembered the tragedy of waiting and waiting for Christ to come back at the time of that. Because, see, Elijah went on. In other words, when John the Baptist was killed, Elijah went on and was with the disciples.

Elijah played a much bigger role in the Pentecost than people realize. See, Elijah was the one who could send his spirit to people. It wasn't Christ who came to the Pentecost, it was Elijah. That's why you find in Valis where it says Elijah entered Jesus and left him on the cross and when Jesus says *"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*," they said he calls on Elijah and indeed he did, for Elijah left him and Elijah came back at Pentecost. It was Elijah. It was Elijah.

Hey, I'm sorry but anyway he came back, he came back to the disciples but the Christ never did because something terrible went wrong and Benjamin Creme says what went wrong. Something did go wrong at Gethsemane, Jesus realized that he had the wisdom of the father, the love of the father but not the father's will, you see. And there was nothing he could do. And then Creme says and this time there is a difference. He has his father's will. He can now command as a king but he could not command in Palestine.

You see, he was a king but he could not rule. He could not command. What does a king do? A king commands. He could not do that. He did not have his father's will. He had the agape of his father. He had the wisdom but he didn't have the power. He couldn't command. It all fell through and Elijah went on as I describe in Divine Invasion. But now Jesus returns. See these

entities mix. These entities mix together. There is no clear difference between Elijah and Jesus, Elijah and Christ. What they represent is hypostasis of the Theophane [roughly, the essence of the triune Godhead in physical, or personal, manifestation].

Some of the attributes but not all of them. They're like Plotinus' concentric rings of emanation. With each successive ring it loses something.

Well, Elijah was the link for the Jews with the Godhead. The accounts of Elijah and the Theophane at Mount Horeb are beautiful where Yahweh speaks to Elijah. If ever there was a beautiful account of the theophanic, it is that. The still small voice, the low murmuring voice. That is real. That is Yahweh. So you see this is all real.§ The voice that I heard, that I call the A.I. voice, is the voice that Elijah heard. The still small voice, the little murmuring voice. And it is when all the masks are off, and I wrote Benjamin Creme, I said when all the masks are removed you will find that those messages are not from Maitreya the Christ. They are from Yahweh. And I know. And here's how I know. I analyzed the messages and they are from Yahweh and I also know because I have heard Yahweh. Not only have I heard Yahweh's voice, I have been told that it is and I have recognized the spirit of God. It spoke in a feminine voice. This is the voice I heard. I call it the Maitreya because that is what we are going to call it. But when I heard it say, "The time you've waited for is come. Your work is complete, the final world is here. He had been transplanted and he is alive."

I was shown the Tetragrammaton.‖ It's Yahweh. It's Yahweh wearing about sixteen suits and masks but it's still Yahweh. That's who it really is, as far as I'm concerned.

Then after I figured that out and wrote Benjamin Creme and told him that I remembered that he said that every one of us will see this in terms of that which he believes, so I did exactly what Creme said. I believed in Yahweh so I saw this Yahweh and later I saw it as Krishna. Whatever it was, it was the voice that spoke to Elijah.

I know that voice. When I was a kid—here's your psychological theory. I will give you all the ammunition you need here for your "reductive psychological"—

RICKMAN: It's a theory. I didn't say I believed it. [*Laughter*]

DICK: When I was in junior high school there was a soap opera on daytime radio called *The Light of the World*, a story of the Bible. They dramatized part of the Bible. I happened to start listening during the part about Elijah. And I started reading the Bible and I read that part about Elijah. And it was my greatest wish in the world of anything to hear that low murmuring voice that Elijah heard. The voice of the Lord and that is the etiology of that psychologically. That junior high school kid within a few years—like would you believe two to three—got his wish and heard it during his final physics test in eleventh grade. Heard that voice but did not know that there was a connection there.

So this is all an incredible fantasy on my part. It is one of the most organized, spectacular, long-term, large cast, highbudget, box-office stars, lights, press coverage fantasies that you have ever run across. Because my desire to hear that voice has driven me across the landscape decade after decade until in my vainglorious and megalomaniacal way I came one day to realize that I was Elijah. Although it occurred in an odd way. Tom Disch says, You sound like you're talking about Elijah. The spirit took you over.

RICKMAN: There's a difference between the spirit of Elijah taking you over and you actually being Elijah.

DICK: Right.

RICKMAN: There's quite a difference.

DICK: Oh, yeah, I mean you know the spirit, *enthousiasmos*, it's a possession.

RICKMAN: Okay, I wanted to ask you about how you were chosen in ’74.

DICK: I wasn’t chosen. They flipped a coin.

RICKMAN: Okay, well, they got you because you were a science fiction writer and credulous. Okay, what about—

DICK: Real stupid.

RICKMAN: What about the suicide attempt in ’76? Why did they allow you to do this?

DICK: *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*. Elijah had left me. I didn’t try to kill myself because somebody left me. I tried to kill myself because Elijah left me. You have no idea how that feels. Hey, listen, seriously. In all seriousness, what had happened was that spirit left me. I felt him leave and it was awful. That’s what Kierkegaard called or St. John of the Cross called a long dark night of the soul. It is awful. I wrote Michael Bishop.[a] I said there is nothing worse in the world, no punishment greater than to have known God and no longer to know him. Being taken over by Elijah who knew God and to have that go away. The voices stopped talking to me. I didn’t care if I lived or died. By the way, did you know Elijah got that way and tried to die? “Now let me die,” he said. “Now let me die.” He laid down to die. Elijah did. Goes with the territory.

RICKMAN: So, but you were prevented from that?

DICK: No. Well, yeah, by medical attention, yes.

RICKMAN: I see. But it wasn't any spiritual kind of thing. That said, "We still need this guy."

DICK: No. I think they were content with the cipher in *Flow My Tears*.

RICKMAN: They were content with that?

DICK: Yeah, I think the *Valis* thing came up, the *Valis* thing came up really because of just the incredible tenacity on my part. I think what we really had was collusion here.

In essence I had served my purpose in *Flow My Tears*. I really rallied [from the suicide attempt] but if I hadn't rallied it would have all gone on without me.

See, I served my purpose with *Flow My Tears*, and it could have ended there, but I would have still been useful.

RICKMAN: Who would have gotten the cipher in *Tears*?

DICK: I would trade everything I own to know who got that. Because if I knew that, I would know the organization's structure. Because obviously people picking it up at the bookstand didn't get it. That was aimed at particular people, whereas *Valis* was aimed at whoever picked it up.

See, by *Valis* the situation is different. When *Valis* came out the Savior was here. He'd come in '77, *Valis* came in '81. *Flow My Tears* came out in '74—the Savior had not returned. He did not return until 1977. So *Flow My Tears* refers to an appointment he made. It's very important that that cipher not be read by anyone else. But who read it, I don't know. I have no idea who read it. I'd like to know. Whoever was supposed to receive it, I presume they received it.

Because the month it came out I was just zapped by the colored lights and so on.

I would like to know who got that cipher. It was very important that that cipher get out. It was a matter of life and death that that cipher get out. But it did, and it got read, and there was a response. There was an immediate response.

•

An agitated Dick wanted to keep talking, but Rickman finally begged off, leaving at about 10 p.m. The next day Dick suffered a stroke, dying twelve days later without ever regaining the power of speech. He was fifty-three.

---

[*] Karen Silkwood was an activist who worked at the Kerr-McGee nuclear plant in Oklahoma. She discovered she had low levels of plutonium poisoning in 1974 shortly before dying under suspicious circumstances while driving to meet a *New York Times* reporter. Her family sued Kerr-McGee and ultimately got a $1 million settlement.

[†] English mystic who predicted the Second Coming in the form of Maitreya, the World Teacher.

[‡] Science fiction writer, author of *Camp Concentration, 334*, and other works.

[§] The overly zealous Elijah is shown that God is not always present in storm, quake, and fire, but instead appears “after the fire a still small voice” (I Kings, 19:12).

[‖] The four Hebrew letters *yod, he, vav, he*, transliterated as YHVH.

[a] Science fiction writer, author of the novel *The Secret Ascension, or Philip K. Dick Is Dead, Alas* (1989).

PHILIP K. DICK (1928–1982) is generally considered the most influential modern science fiction writer. Much of his work has been adapted to film, notably *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (which became *Blade Runner*), *Total Recall, Minority Report*, and *A Scanner Darkly*. Dick was the recipient of a Hugo Award in 1963 for his novel *The Man in the High Castle*. In 2007, he became the first science fiction writer to be included in the Library of America. His work has been translated into more than twenty-five languages.

DAVID STREITFELD is a Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist who writes for *The New York Times*. He lives near San Francisco with his family and too many books. He was the editor of *Gabriel García Márquez: The Last Interview* (Melville House).

ARTHUR BYRON COVER is the author of *Autumn Angels, The Platypus of Doom and Other Nihilists*, and other works of fiction. He lives in Washington.

PAUL WILLIAMS was a pioneering rock journalist who founded Crawdaddy in 1966 at the age of seventeen. His writings on Bob Dylan and the Beach Boys helped define the late 1960s cultural scene, and his lengthy interview with Philip K. Dick in *Rolling Stone* in 1975 turned the writer into a national figure. Williams died in 2013 of injuries suffered in a bicycle accident.

D. SCOTT APEL lives in Hawaii, where he writes and publishes ebooks like *The Uncertainty Principle*, a mystery novel, and *Killer B's: The 237 Best Movies on Video You've (Probably) Never Seen*, drawing on his six years experience as the Movie Guru for Apple's iTunes.

His book *Philip K. Dick: The Dream Connection* is available as a CreateSpace paperback and as an ebook. **KEVIN C. BRIGGS**, a writer and poet, died in 2007.

CHARLES PLATT is the author of forty-six fiction and nonfiction books, was a senior writer at *Wired* magazine, and currently is a contributing editor to *Make* magazine. He lives in the wilderness of northern Arizona.

JAMES VAN HISE worked in the 1970s for G. B. Love, considered the father of comic book fandom, and the Rocket Blast's Comicollector, eventually publishing the zine himself. In the 1980s, he wrote film journalism and edited the magazine *SF Movieland*. Later he worked for Now Comics writing *The Real Ghostbusters, Fright Night, The Green Hornet*, and one issue of *Twilight Zone*. He lives in Southern California.

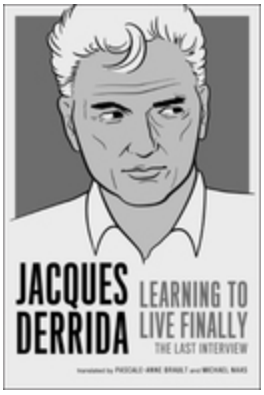
GREGG RICKMAN's biography of Philip K. Dick, *To the High Castle*, was published in 1989. His other books include *The Science Fiction Film Reader* and *The Western Film Reader*. He lives in Northern California.

THE LAST INTERVIEW SERIES

KURT VONNEGUT: THE LAST INTERVIEW

“I think it can be tremendously refreshing if a creator of literature has something on his mind other than the history of literature so far. Literature should not disappear up its own asshole, so to speak.”

$15.95 / $17.95 CAN
978-1-61219-090-7
ebook: 978-1-61219-091-4



LEARNING TO LIVE FINALLY: THE LAST INTERVIEW JACQUES DERRIDA

“I am at war with myself, it’s true, you couldn’t possibly know to what extent … I say contradictory things that are, we might say, in real tension; they are what construct me, make me live, and will make me die.”

translated by PASCAL-ANNE BRAULT and MICHAEL NAAS

$15.95 / $17.95 CAN
978-1-61219-094-5
ebook: 978-1-61219-032-7

ROBERTO BOLAÑO: THE LAST INTERVIEW

“Posthumous: It sounds like the name of a Roman gladiator, an unconquered gladiator. At least that’s what poor Posthumous would like to believe. It gives him courage.”

translated by SYBIL PEREZ and others

$15.95 / $17.95 CAN
978-1-61219-095-2
ebook: 978-1-61219-033-4

DAVID FOSTER WALLACE: THE LAST INTERVIEW

“I don’t know what you’re thinking or what it’s like inside you and you don’t know what it’s like inside me. In fiction … we can leap over that wall itself in a certain way.”

$15.95 / $15.95 CAN
978-1-61219-206-2
ebook: 978-1-61219-207-9

JORGE LUIS BORGES: THE LAST INTERVIEW

“Believe me: the benefits of blindness have been greatly exaggerated. If I could see, I would never leave the house, I’d stay indoors reading the many books that surround me.”

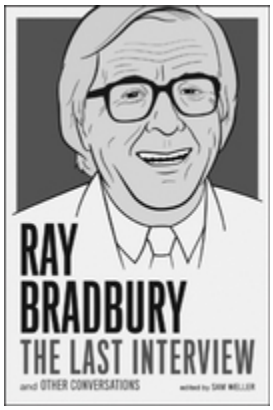
translated by KIT MAUDE

$15.95 / $15.95 CAN
978-1-61219-204-8
ebook: 978-1-61219-205-5

HANNAH ARENDT: THE LAST INTERVIEW

“There are no dangerous thoughts for the simple reason that thinking itself is such a dangerous enterprise.”

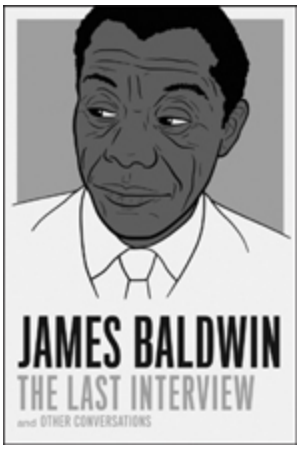
$15.95 / $15.95 CAN
978-1-61219-311-3
ebook: 978-1-61219-312-0



RAY BRADBURY: THE LAST INTERVIEW

“You don’t have to destroy books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them.”

$15.95 / $15.95 CAN
978-1-61219-421-9
ebook: 978-1-61219-422-6



JAMES BALDWIN: THE LAST INTERVIEW

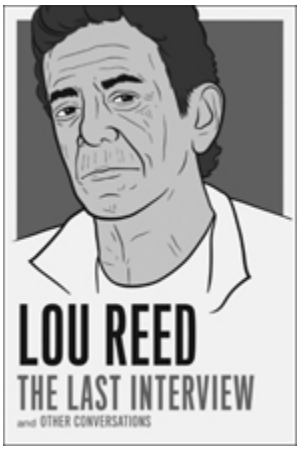
“You don’t realize that you’re intelligent until it gets you into trouble.”

$15.95 / $15.95 CAN
978-1-61219-400-4
ebook: 978-1-61219-401-1

GABRIEL GÁRCIA MÁRQUEZ: THE LAST INTERVIEW

“The only thing the Nobel Prize is good for is not having to wait in line.”

$15.95 / $15.95 CAN
978-1-61219-480-6
ebook: 978-1-61219-481-3



LOU REED: THE LAST INTERVIEW

“Hubert Selby. William Burroughs. Allen Ginsberg. Delmore Schwartz … I thought if you could do what those writers did and put it to drums and guitar, you’d have the greatest thing on earth.”

$15.95 / $15.95 CAN
978-1-61219-478-3
ebook: 978-1-61219-479-0